



**Start-Up Visa Endorsement Scheme
Guidelines for Students
August 2020**

Eligibility

1. Open to applicants who have a demonstrable close relationship with the University of Edinburgh (for example, students or alumni).
Students may be from any discipline at the university.
2. Students must have a **genuine and credible** business intention that will meet the following criteria:
 - a. **Innovation:** There must be a genuine business plan that meets new or existing market needs and/or creates a competitive advantage;
 - b. **Viability:** The applicant must have the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and market awareness to successfully run the business;
 - c. **Scalability:** There must be evidence of structured planning and of potential for job creation and growth into national and international markets.
3. Priority will be given to those ideas demonstrating innovation and best growth potential in line to achieving the required level of funds for continuing to Innovator or other successor visas.
4. The business proposition must be sustainable and the student must demonstrate a commitment to developing the business.
5. The student must be prepared to commit the majority of their time to developing the business. Part-time work is permitted within the rules of the visa to help with financial support but this must not be the main activity.
6. Students must be fully engaged with Edinburgh Innovations for a minimum of 3 months prior to application or be able to provide evidence they have been developing their idea independently for at least 3 months.
7. Students can apply from the UK if their Tier 4 Visa has not expired or from their home country if it has already expired. Students wishing to apply from the UK should ensure they apply for endorsement at least 3 months prior to their visa expiry date.
8. The student may work in collaboration with others but must have at least, a co-founder role in the organisation.
9. The expectation is that a limited company will be formed during the duration of the visa.
10. Students must be willing to attend regular progress meetings with a written update on progress required at least every 3 months.



11. If progress is not maintained, the University of Edinburgh is required to notify UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). UKVI will in turn get in touch with the Start-up visa holder to let them know that their visa has been curtailed and that they are required to leave the UK within 60 days of notification.
12. The visa is not transferable.

PhD students wishing to start their own business can do so under the Doctoral Extension Scheme for up to 12 months before considering the Start-up visa or alternatives such as Tier 1 (Exceptional Talent).

Full details of the visa are available here and all applicants are requested to read these in full prior to application: <https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa>

Evidence

1. Potential applicants for Start-up endorsement must provide evidence that meets the maintenance funds requirement of **£945 in cash funds in their name, as a minimum balance across 90 days**, with the evidence dated within 31 days of visa application. Dependants will require further funds in order to successfully apply. Guidance on dependant applications is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-dependants-of-uk-visa-applicants-tiers-1-2-4-5>
2. Applicants will need to demonstrate that they meet the B2 English language requirement via one of the following:
 - a. National of a majority English-speaking country as defined in Appendix B (Table 2) of the Immigration Rules;
 - b. Degree taught in English as defined in Appendix B (Table 2) of the Immigration Rules;
 - c. Passed a UKVI-approved Secure English language test as defined in Appendix B (Table 2) of the Immigration Rules;
 - d. Already met requirement via a previous grant of leave (successful visa application) as a Tier 1 (General) migrant or a Tier 1 (Post-Study Work) migrant, a Tier 2 (Minister of Religion) migrant, a Tier 4 (General) student where a CAS was assigned on or after 21 April 2011, a Tier 1 (Entrepreneur) migrant (if the leave was granted under the Rules in place before 13 December 2012), a Start-up or Innovator migrant.

Appendix B of the Immigration Rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-b-english-language>

3. Where applicants were sponsored financially by any official financial sponsor during their studies (governmental, international scholarship agency, British Council, international organisation/company or an overseas university), **written confirmation from the sponsoring organisation confirming that they can remain in the UK** for an unlimited period of time must be provided.
4. **A photocopy of the current UK visa and passport.**



5. This evidence must be made available to and will be retained securely and confidentially as electronic copy by the Student Immigration Service **for the duration of the Start-up visa sponsorship and for four additional years thereafter** in line with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC)'s data retention requirements (e.g, total of 6 years).

Process

1. **Register your interest.** If you are interested in applying for the Start-Up visa, you should complete and submit the pre-application form attached below. If considered eligible, an appointment will be arranged for an initial discussion with an Edinburgh Innovations adviser. At this initial meeting your proposal will be discussed along with the application procedure.
2. After the initial discussion, develop your proposal for application. Depending on how developed your idea is, this may involve several follow up meetings with an adviser and attendance at workshops or boot-camps.
3. **Making an application.** Applications are currently accepted all year round, however, we expect you to have completed your studies before switching to a Start-Up Visa. If you are wishing to apply from the UK you **MUST** ensure you apply for endorsement at least 3 months prior to your visa expiry date.
4. Following submission your application will be reviewed to decide whether you should be invited to present your proposal to the University of Edinburgh Start-up visa Endorsement panel. Please note there are limited endorsements per annum and not all applications submitted will be put forward to selection panel. Students will be advised within 3 weeks of the submission date if they are to be put forward to the next stage.
5. If selected you will be invited to present the proposal to an independent judging panel. You will be advised of the date of the next available panel.
6. The applicant attends the panel meeting and does a 10 minute pitch of their idea followed by a 10 minute Q&A session.
7. The decision of the panel is final.
8. If successful the case is then passed to the Student Immigration Service who will assist with final documentation and submission of a visa application, assign one of the endorsement numbers and ensure evidence is retained suitable for audit.

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