

# Start-up visa route November 2020

From Newcastle. For entrepreneurship.

## Introduction

The Start-up category is for those who require immigration permission to live in the UK and set-up a business for the first time. It offers a one-off, 2-year visa, during which successful applicants will spend most their time developing their business.

This category is for early stage but high potential entrepreneurs. Your business idea must be **innovative, viable** and **scalable** with the potential to become fully integrated and a contributing part of the UK economy.

You must not have registered or incorporated a business in the UK or commenced trading in the UK before you have been granted a Start-up endorsement.

**Please read this document in full, including the final 'Guidance' section.**

Some exceptions apply including if you have been granted leave under the doctorate extension scheme. Please read the UK Home Office guidance and relevant immigration rules in full at: [www.gov.uk/start-up-visa](http://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa)

## Endorsement

To apply for a Start-up visa, applicants must first obtain an endorsement from an approved endorsing body.

Newcastle University endorses and sponsors up to 20 Newcastle graduates for a Start-up visa each (financial) year.

- We will consider requests from individuals and teams however, each team member must be a Newcastle University student/graduate and be an equal founding director/partner of the business. Each member must be able to fully meet the requirements of the category and must receive their own individual endorsement

- Newcastle University will not endorse anyone seeking to join an already trading business.

The START UP Team may ask you to confirm your visa status, this is because you may have visa conditions that restrict you from engaging in business activity whilst you are studying in the UK on a Tier 4/Student Route visa or other type of visa.

## Endorsement Criteria

In order to be considered for endorsement you must be able to demonstrate how you and your idea meets the following criteria.

Please also refer to the full Home Office guidance: [www.gov.uk/start-up-visa](http://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa)

- **Innovation**

Are you offering a new or significantly improved product or process? Does your idea meet new or existing market needs?

- **Viability**

Is there evidence of market research/ validation and structured planning? Have you/are you actively developing, the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and market awareness to run the business successfully?

- **Scalability**

Is the business likely to gain sufficient traction? Is there potential for job creation and growth into national markets? Have you got access to finance to drive the business forward during the period of the visa?

- **Sector(s)\***

Could your idea significantly impact any, or all, of the following sectors:

- Healthcare and Life Sciences incl. Ageing
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Offshore and Energy Technologies
- Digital (including Data) and Tech
- Culture and Creative Arts

\*By aligning Start-up visas with University and regional strengths, we can leverage nationally important resources and know-how to accelerate innovation and business progress and connect you with bigger innovation clusters.

#### ▪ **Market(s)**

Can you provide a clear and convincing argument for why your business needs to be launched in the UK? Why can you only do this in the UK and not elsewhere?

### Endorsement Criteria Continued...

- You should be an international student, who is graduating or has graduated within the last 3 years. Whilst you do not need to have been awarded your degree before applying, if your application is successful, we cannot issue endorsement until you officially feature on a pass list
- You must have attended the Immigration Routes into Employment workshop delivered by the Visa Team to establish eligibility for this visa and associated costs and Home Office requirements
- You must have been actively working with a START UP Business Adviser no less than 4 months before your current Student visa expires
- You must not have registered or incorporated the business in the UK or commenced trading in the UK prior to your endorsement being granted. One exception to this is where you have already been granted leave under the Doctorate Extension Scheme.

- You will maintain significant influence and control over the activities of the business for the duration of the visa
- You own the intellectual property related to your idea/business or have written authorisation from the owners to use it to establish a business in the UK
- You can financially support yourself for the duration of the visa whilst spending most of your time developing your idea/business
- You are intending to base yourself in the North East of England for the duration of the visa to develop your idea/business. Exceptions can be considered, at the discretion of the Endorsing Officer, where a compelling case can be made to locate you/the business elsewhere in the UK and you agree to travel at your own expense for monitoring meetings
- Usually, we would require you to be a resident in the UK throughout the endorsement process to ensure you have full access to the networks, resources and support you need to develop your idea and build the evidence required to meet the Home Office criteria. However, given the current global situation due to Covid-19, if you are currently outside of the UK but you meet the rest of the criteria for endorsement, we would be happy to consider you.

You must first consider:

- Can you undertake the level of research and development required to evidence how you meet the criteria?
- If you are awarded an endorsement will you be able to make your visa application within the 3-month timeframe?
- If you are awarded a Start-up visa will you be able to travel back to the UK and develop your business within the 2-year timeframe of the visa?
- Will you be able to develop your business in the UK under the current situation?

## Process for Endorsement

### **1. Find out more about the Start-up visa from our Visa Team**

Attend the 'Immigration Routes into Employment' workshop. Attend visa advice appointment, if required.

### **2. Review Newcastle University's Endorsement Criteria**

Start working with a START UP Adviser for 121 business advice as early as possible, no less than 4 months before your student visa expires.

### **3. START UP Business Adviser Assessment**

Together with your START UP Adviser, you will assess yourself against the criteria for Start-up endorsement and our guidelines as an endorsing body. If you show sufficient level of fit, your START UP Adviser will recommend you progress to panel.

### **4. Endorsement Panel**

You will be invited to present your proposal to a small panel of internal and external experts with more in-depth knowledge of your specific market and sector, who are therefore better positioned to assess your proposal against the criteria.

### **5. Endorsement Decision**

The Start-up Manager will issue endorsements to those applicants who make the strongest case. The endorsement is valid for 3 months from date of issue, although it does not guarantee a visa. All visa decisions are made by the Home Office.

Newcastle University reserves the right to amend its criteria at any time.

## Guidance for Current International Students

To ensure that you do not risk being in breach of your Student visa, the Home Office has issued the following guidance (September 2020) on how far you can engage in business activity whilst studying in the UK.

As it's not considered to be engaging in business activity, [students can:](#)

- Do preliminary activities like writing business plans or negotiating contracts
- Incur pre-trading costs whilst deciding whether to start a business

However, [students can't:](#)

- Register with HM Revenue & Customs as self-employed
- Work for companies in which they are controlling shareholders
- Work for companies in statutory roles, such as Director
- Trade or establish a trading presence (including test marketing)

The point at which students can start undertaking business activity depends on when they were last granted permission:

- Students who had their last visa granted before 1 October 2019 may only engage in business activities once their Start-up visas have been granted
- Students who had their last visa granted on or after 1 October 2019 may engage in business activities once they have applied to the Home Office for their Start-up visa.

In either case listed above, students will not have been able to be self-employed or engage in business activity during the visa endorsement process.

For more information or to enquire, please email us via [MyCareer:](#)

[www.mycareer.ncl.ac.uk](http://www.mycareer.ncl.ac.uk)