







Last updated: November 2025

START UP Grant Funding is equity-free seed funding to support the development of genuine and credible business opportunities and early-stage start-ups.

Applying for START UP Grant Funding is competitive, and awards are subject to the availability of funds. START UP Grant Funding is awarded at the sole discretion of Newcastle University. Other members of Newcastle University staff and/or third-party individuals or organisations may be involved in assessing applications. The panel's decision is final, and feedback will always be provided.

Application Process

You move at your pace through our support, starting off by working with one of our Entrepreneurship & Start-up Consultants. They'll help you explore and validate your business opportunity.

Once you have a clearly defined opportunity supported by market research (both primary and secondary), they'll refer you to a Business Adviser.

A Business Adviser will then work with you to advance your business or idea, including exploring its fit with the grant funding criteria.

Please note: We don't fast-track support based on funding calls. Our goal is to ensure you're fully prepared to make the most of any opportunity, at the right pace.

Important Information:

- You **must** be actively working with the START UP team with a **minimum of two meetings** with a Business Adviser before you can access grant funding.
- A nomination from a Start-up Business Adviser is required to be considered for grant funding.
- Grant funding applications will be reviewed and shortlisted. **Please note** that not all applicants will be invited to the selection panel.
- If shortlisted, you'll be invited to present at the grant funding panel. As part of this panel, we'll ask you to do a short pitch to explain what you would spend the funds on and why. The 'why' is the most important part.

Application Criteria

The panel assess all grant requests against the following criteria:

- The Opportunity - what problem are you solving? Who is your customer? How will you reach your customer? How will you generate revenue? What is the minimum viable product?
- The Context – does your solution address a genuine need? How do you know? How big is the market? The panel will expect to see evidence of primary and secondary market research including competitors and what would give you a competitive edge. What are the challenges e.g. regulatory considerations?
- The People – do you/the team have, or how are you actively developing, the necessary skills, knowledge, experience and market awareness to successfully drive this opportunity forward/run the business?
- The Ask – what are your total start-up costs? What are the most important costs inherent to your business model? How much START UP Grant Funding are you applying for? What would a START UP Grant enable you to do? What are your options to bridge any finance/ funding gaps?
- Communication – have you been able to present a clear and convincing proposition based on evidence?



Pete Kendall, Thrifty Chef

Introduction to Grant Funding

We recommend a range of resources which will help you to be at the stage of applying for a START UP grant. Your Business Adviser can help you work through these resources.

- [Value Proposition Canvas](#)
- [MOM Test](#)
- [Business Model Canvas](#)

For access to a range of resources to support you to develop your business proposition, please go to www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/startup/online-resources/

If you have any questions regarding how grant requests are assessed, please speak to a member of the START UP team before submitting your application.



Henrietta Newble, AnFiTest

START UP Grants support individuals with developed business opportunities at the pre-trading stage, or early-stage businesses that have been trading for less than 18 months. Awards are made to individuals (not to their businesses) and take the form of experiential learning grants.

The University has the right to change its approach to how it promotes and administers START UP Grant Funding. All updates will be set out at: www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/startup/grant-funding

Your application will fall into the grant opportunity that is live at the point in time your application is made.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for START UP Grant Funding, you must be a registered student at Newcastle University (UK) or a recent Newcastle University graduate within two years at the point of applying for grant funding (you must access support from START UP within two years from the point you graduated from your studies). You must also be eligible to engage in business activity/start a business in the UK.

- **International students** - You must have the necessary immigration permission to engage in business activity and be self-employed in the UK and be legally residing within the UK. Please seek advice from the University's Visa Team, if required. [START UP Support for International Students | Newcastle University](#)
- **Team Applications** - You can apply as an individual or as part of a team, but only one request per idea or business will be considered, and the team must be led by a Newcastle University student or graduate. Once a business is formed, the Newcastle University student or graduate must own a majority share and be responsible for the direction and leadership of the business.
- **Intellectual Property (IP)** - You must own the Intellectual Property (IP) or have permission to exploit any IP related to your idea/business.
- **Maximum Award** - The maximum award that can be made to an individual/business opportunity is £3,000.
- **Re-application** - Previous recipients of the maximum amount of START UP Grant Funding are ineligible to re-apply with the same idea or business for which they received the award. Previous unsuccessful applicants may re-apply for START UP Grant Funding but must demonstrate progress made and fit with the criteria.
- **Business setup** - That you are in a position to launch a business within the next 12 months, contingent on a viable market opportunity. If you successfully go on to start a business after receiving grant funding, we ask that you provide the START UP team with evidence of company formation or registration with HMRC. Please see further details on the next page about our annual Higher Education Business & Community Interaction Survey (HE-BCI).

Use of START UP Grant Funding

START UP Grant Funding can be used for legitimate business costs that support you to advance your business opportunity including relevant professional development. START UP Grant Funding cannot cover salaries or living costs or be used to cover retroactive expenses where products or services have already been purchased. Any funding awarded must be used solely for the purpose as outlined in your application.

Successful applicants

Payment of a START UP Grant

The funds will be paid into the personal bank account of the sole applicant or, in the case of a team, to the lead person as identified in the grant application. The lead person must be a current Newcastle University UK student or recent graduate (up to two years). We advise you not to make a commitment to any purchases before an offer of a grant is made and the funds have cleared.

Continued Support

Grant recipients are required to meet with their Business Adviser a minimum of x2 times after receiving a grant. This is to provide continued support but also to inform the panel of your progress and the impact the funding has had.

Tracking

All successful applicants will be required to inform us about the impact of the funding and support provided by completing a survey each year, from when you first receive support from the University to start your business, until your involvement with your business ends or it ceases to trade. This survey is called the Higher Education Business & Community Interaction Survey, and this is a requirement by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). At its core, the aim is to highlight the social, cultural and economic impact our community of Newcastle University founders are having – as a collective. We will reach out to you in September/October each year via email and/or telephone. Your data will be held in the strictest of confidence and only aggregated totals from all respondents will be reported. We won't share your individual figures or any of your data with anyone outside of the University without your additional consent unless we're required by law. All data will be stored securely within the EEA. [Learn more about our data protection.](#)

Successful applicants might also be invited to participate in promotional material such as press releases, case studies and video content for our website and social media.

If you decide not to progress with your business opportunity after receiving START UP Grant Funding, and some or all the grant remains unspent, you agree to inform the Start-Up and Entrepreneurship Manager, so that unused funding can be returned to the University to benefit other students and graduates.

Intellectual Property

It is the responsibility of each applicant to confirm that you have the right to exploit any Intellectual Property (IP). You are wholly responsible for the protection of your own IP and should acknowledge that it is advisable to not disclose information that you regard as being particularly commercially valuable. Where appropriate, we would advise you seek independent advice from an IP specialist. The UK Intellectual Property Office website is a good source of information on IP and confidentiality. For more information, visit www.gov.uk/intellectual-property-an-overview or the Business & IP Centre at Newcastle City Library [BIPC North East - Business & IP Support in the North East](#)

Involvement of Third Parties

The University may engage internal and external partners in evaluating grant applications. Partners involved in a Grant Panel will be given access to your grant application in advance of a Grant Panel and will be present at Grant Panel(s).

It is prudent not to disclose commercially sensitive information in your application. Please see IP section above. Where appropriate, it is advisable to seek independent legal advice. You can also talk to your START UP Business Adviser, if you would like further advice on how to manage levels of disclosure related to your business opportunity/ business.

Criminal Activity

START UP Grant Funding recipients must not be involved in any form of illegal activity or activity which in the sole determination of Newcastle University may bring the University into disrepute. The University may reject applicants at any stage of the application process and may terminate an offer and require the repayment of a START UP Grant where activity is not in line with the values of the University or presents a potential reputational risk for the University. Assessment of grant requests will be made in the context of the University's values and in line with University processes and procedures.

Media and PR

Newcastle University's START UP team reserves the right to publish information relating to grant funding awards such as successful applicants' names, degrees, graduation years, testimonial quotes, and business information such as business name, summary, and URLs in the form of press releases, case studies and video content on our website and social media.

As part of Newcastle University's widening participation agenda to support under-represented groups, we may ask applicants if they meet one or more of the widening participation eligibility criteria and if they consent to us sharing as part of the promotional materials mentioned above. Applicants can choose not to provide widening participation information. Whether or not applicants provide widening participation information has no impact on the outcome of their START UP Grant Funding application. Applicants can give or withdraw their consent for us to use widening participation information at any point during the application process or after being awarded START UP Grant Funding.

Privacy Notice

Newcastle University Careers Service must collect your personal data to process your START UP Grant Funding application, record the outcome and make you aware of other legitimate opportunities from the Careers Service and its trusted partners.

The personal data we will process are:

Your name, student number or date of birth, email address and personal bank details.

Your personal data is processed to deliver a contract between the University and you in relation to the START UP programme. We may share your data with third parties for the purpose of administering the START UP Grant Funding application process, where we are required to report to programme funders and/or where we use external assessors with relevant expertise. Your data may be held locally by Careers Service staff for up to a year following the conclusion of this process before it will be deleted to leave only a record of participation on your central student or alumni record.

If you would like more information about how we manage personal data, including your rights under law and the contact details of the University's Data Protection Officer, please visit: [Data Protection Policy | Newcastle University \(ncl.ac.uk\)](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/data-protection-policy/).

Further Information

Newcastle University reserves the right to amend all details of this opportunity at any time and change the Terms and Conditions without notice.

If you have any questions about START UP Grant Funding, please email careers@ncl.ac.uk



Eva Masterman, The Clay Commons

Photo Credit: Felicity Crawshaw



START UP

www.ncl.ac.uk/careers/startup