**University of Southampton**

Start Up Visa Endorsement Application Form

The University of Southampton has been approved as an endorsing institution under the Start Up Visa route. The University may endorse graduating students or graduates (from the University of Southampton) in their application to the Home Office to move into the Start Up Visa category, which is for graduates to develop a viable, innovative and scalable business in the UK.

If approved for endorsement from the University, then candidates can make their application to the Home Office for the Start Up Visa. If successful, they will be able to reside in the UK for a period of 24 months during which time they will have the opportunity to develop their business idea. After the first 12 month period, the University of Southampton Start Up Visa Panel will hold a review meeting to review progress and confirm continuation for the remaining 12 months.

Those who meet the eligibility criteria below are invited to apply for Start Up Visa endorsement using this application form:

**Eligibility criteria**

* Non-EEA national graduates from the University of Southampton can apply for endorsement
* You must have a genuine, credible, viable, innovative and scalable business idea.
* You can apply if you have been or are going to be awarded a University of Southampton degree (Bachelors, Masters or PhD).
* You can only apply from the UK if you are switching from a Student or Tier 2 visa\* and you are still within your immigration permission period, otherwise you will need to apply from your home country
* You must demonstrate that you have a genuine and credible business idea, with evidence demonstrated through clear market research to demonstrate market opportunity and realistic costings and financial planning
* The University of Southampton *will not* endorse graduates from other universities
* If endorsed, the point at which holders of a Student visa\* can start undertaking business activity depends on when they were last granted leave under their Student visa\*:
	+ Holders of a Student visa\* who had their last Student\* visa granted **before 1 October 2019** may only engage in business activities once their Start-up visas have been granted.
	+ Holders of a Student visa\* who had their last Student 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 when they apply for endorsement. (holders of a Student visa\* cannot apply for Innovator visas, unless they do so from outside the UK.) It is the students’ responsibility to ensure they are aware of the restrictions of the Student visa.

* **You must be able to demonstrate why this business cannot operate from your home country**
* Please note that should your application for endorsement be shortlisted, you will be expected to **pitch your business to the University of Southampton Start Up Visa Panel**, with representation from Student Services, the Visa Team, staff members from the Future Worlds accelerator at the University of Southampton and if required, specialist technical advisors (internal to the university). They will assess your application based on your business being credible, viable and innovative and scalable, and determine whether they have confidence in you and the approach you outline based on their expertise. There will be four possible outcomes from the panel meeting: 1) you will gain endorsement, 2) you will be required to attend a meeting for further exploration of the business you are proposing before a decision can be made (this subsequent meeting may involve specially selected technical advisors that are relevant to your business/proposal) AND/OR you will be required to provide further evidence requested by the panel which may or may not result in endorsement being offered 3) you will be required to make some modifications to your proposed business model before the University will consider endorsing you 4) you will not gain endorsement from the University. If you do not gain endorsement you will have no right to appeal.

**Start Up Visa candidate responsibilities if successful in gaining a visa:**

* You must spend the majority of your working time developing your business idea, although you can also take on other work outside of your business to help support yourself.
* You must stay in regular contact with the University, and meetings will take place every three months with your contact from the Student Enterprise Team, University of Southampton in the first year, and every six months in the following year following the 12 month review meeting. One week ahead of each meeting you should email your supervisor a progress monitoring report following the required template
* You should notify your contact from the Student Enterprise team if you are due to be out of the country for any longer than a fortnight
* If endorsed, you will need to demonstrate in your application to the Home Office that you have the required level of funds (£945) in your bank account 90 days ahead of your application.
* Should your circumstances change at any point, you must notify your contact from the Student Enterprise team, and it is your responsibility to inform the Home Office
* Should you change (or plan to change) your business model from the one shared with the University at point of application for endorsement, *you must inform the University immediately*.
* Any business activity being undertaken must not be detrimental to the standards and reputation of the University of Southampton
* The visa will be valid for 24 months. After the first 12 months, the University of Southampton Start Up Visa Panel will hold a review meeting to review progress and confirm continuation for the remaining 12 months. The University will expect to see that suitable progress has been made and that your business is on the trajectory proposed.
* **If the University is, at any time, not satisfied with the progress being made on the business idea, or your compliance with the visa regulations, they may choose to withdraw endorsement with immediate effect. There will be no right of appeal following this decision being made.**

Full details of the Start Up Visa scheme can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa>

**It is a requirement that all those interested in applying for the Start Up visa read this government guidance in full before applying.** We also recommend that you contact the Student Enterprise Team at the University of Southampton Careers and Employability Service for support ahead of your application: studententerprise@soton.ac.uk.

When submitting this application form, any additional supporting documentation (e.g. business plans) may also be submitted.

\****The term 'Student Visa' refers to both the Tier 4 (general) visa and also the new Student visa, which has replaced the Tier 4 (general) visa on 5th October 2020.***

**Applicant Details**

The University of Southampton Start Up Visa Panel will decide whether to shortlist your application, based on the information you provide in this application form, and a **short one minute video** you are required to submit. This video does not need to be hi tech, and needs to be a one minute pitch of your business idea. You should upload your video to a hosting service such as YouTube or Vimeo.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First Name |  | Surname |  |
| Student ID |  | Date of Birth  |  |
| Address |  | Contact Number  |  |
| Passport Number |  | Nationality  |  |
| Current Visa type and Number  |  | Current Visa Expiry Date  |  |
| Email address for all correspondence |  | Are you a current student at the University? Please also state whether UG, Masters or PhD  | Yes/No |
| Only if you are currently on a Student visa\*:I confirm that I have read and fully understand the Government restrictions on Student visa\* business activity and am compliant | Yes/No/NA |
| I confirm that I have read and fully understand the Government visa guidance on the start up visa (<https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa>) and I have read and understood all of the criteria and responsibilities outlined above in this application form | Yes/No |
| When did you graduate/When will you graduate from the University of Southampton? |  |
| Please provide the URL to your one minute video pitch (outlining your business idea, what makes it innovative, and how it will be scalable): |  |
| Are you currently living in the UK? | Yes/No |
| Have you previously been on a PSW, IGS or SEGS visa? | Yes/No |
| Are you or have you been a Government Sponsored student within the last 12 months? | Yes/No |
| If YES, do you have consent from your Government to apply? | Yes/No/ Not applicable |
| Do you have or intend to bring in, any dependants, if so how many? |  |
| Are you the sole founder of the business, or a member of an entrepreneurial team? Please name any other people involved and their roles in the business. Please state their status (e.g. also students, industry professionals, etc) | Individual/Partnership/Team |
| Will you have the required level of funds in your personal savings account for 90 days before applying to the Home Office, as per the Home Office guidance (£945)? | Yes/No |

**Course Details**

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| Qualification Level |  | Qualification Title |  |
| Date Qualification Awarded |  | (Expected) Award Result |  |

**Business Details**

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| Please describe your business idea (250 words max) |
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| What is different about your idea that will make it a success? What makes it innovative? (250 words max) |
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| Please describe what strengths you have to offer, in order to give confidence in your ability to deliver this business plan. Please include skills, capabilities and experience (200 words) |
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| How do you propose to develop this into a commercial business? Please include financial projections. |
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| What stage are you at with this idea? (250 words max)  |
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| Have you run your own business before? (250 words max) |
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| What legal structure is your business going to be and why? Sole trader, LTD, LLP etc |
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| Where do you want your business to be in 24 months? (250 words max) |
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| What resources (please include type and costs) do you require in order to establish your business?  |
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| What targets have you set for your business, month by month, over the next 12 months? (250 words max)  |
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| What targets have you set for your business over the 12-24 month period? (250 words max) |
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| What steps will you take to reach them? (250 words max)  |
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| Can you provide evidence of any market research you have completed? (250 words max) |
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| Who are your direct competitors? (250 words max) |
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| How will you scale-up your business? |
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| Why is it that your business needs to be set up in the UK? |
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| If successful, where in the country would your business be based? |
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| If successful, what type of mentor would you find helpful? |
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| If successful, what knowledge/skills gaps do you have that would need developing to make your business a success? |
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**Supporting Statement**

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| Please use this section to convince us of your suitability for the scheme (500 words max) |
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| **Referee 1** (a referee is a person willing to testify in writing about the character or ability of someone)(Name, position, contact details)*Please note that we may approach referees when considering applications* | **Referee 2**(Name, position, contact details) |

**Declaration**

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| I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the information given in this application is correct. I understand that deliberate omissions and incorrect statements could lead to my application being rejected or to my removal from the programme.I understand that all data contained within this form (and attachments relevant to this application) and all following records kept during the course of the Start Up Visa period (e.g. review meeting update reports and notes) will be held by the Student Enterprise Team for up to 12 months after the expiry date of the Start Up Visa. In the instance that the application is not successful data will be held in accordance with standard university GDPR guidelines.I confirm that I have read the <https://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa> guidance, and the University of Southampton criteria and responsibilities outlined in this application form, and, if successful, will abide by them fully.I understand that if I am subsequently found not to be in a position to meet all UK visa requirements, the University reserves the right to refuse to allocate to me a Start Up Visa endorsement.I declare that I am not currently, nor have ever been, in the United Kingdom for any purpose without valid immigration permissions. I understand that if, during the assessment of this application, or subsequently, it comes to the University’s attention that I have been in the United Kingdom without such valid permissions, it will be required to inform the immigration authorities and/or withdraw its considerations of my application and/or refuse to provide me with an endorsement.I confirm that my business is not currently active and have not started trading. Signature:Date: |