

SAFEGUARDING WATER
IMPROVING HEALTH
COMBATTING WASTE
PROTECTING HERITAGE
CURING DISEASE
CLEANING OCEANS
TACKLING INEQUALITY

You know the
why behind your
business idea.

Let us help with
the how.

Guide for applicants

CONVERGE

Empowering Academic Entrepreneurs



What is Converge?

We work with Scotland's universities to empower staff, students and recent graduates to transform academic research and innovation into sustainable businesses.

We do this by offering expertise, knowledge and connections to support the creation of impactful businesses that contribute to a brighter future.

As the only organisation of its kind working across Scotland's university sector, our 2025 programme can help you develop and grow your venture through a blend of bespoke, expert-led business training, professional connections, funding and peer-to-peer support.

If you succeed in securing a place, you'll be one of the 100 most promising and innovative projects emerging from Scottish universities this year.



Our track record

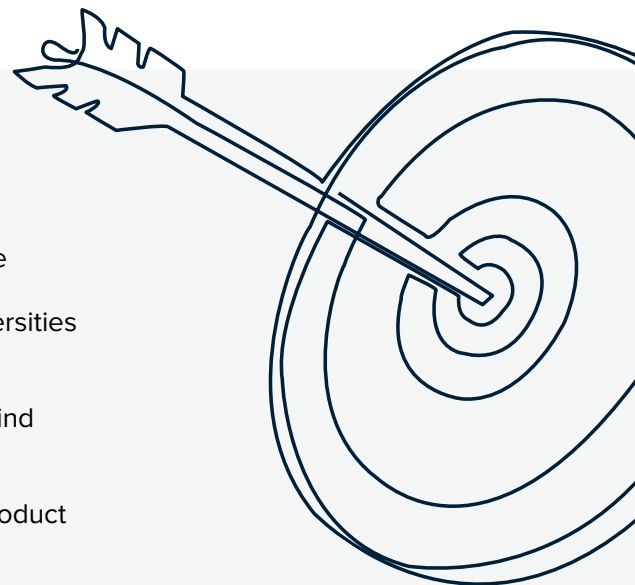
Since 2011, we have been privileged to support a diverse cohort of academic innovators -

- 800+ aspiring entrepreneurs trained
- 425+ businesses supported
- which have raised £450m+ in follow on funding
- with an 80% average survival rate after 3 years

What's in it for me?

If you gain a place on our 2025 programme, you'll get -

- A place on our highly valuable, expert-led training programme
- Peer support from a diverse cohort from across Scottish universities embarking on a similar journey to you
- The chance to win equity-free cash prizes and invaluable in-kind business support
- Access to professional partners - including legal, financial, product design and IP - who can help you on your way
- Exposure to experienced business experts who can help assess your ideas and provide feedback



Our Programme

There are four Challenges

Our Programme consists of four Challenges tailored to your stage of development, sector and mission.



Converge Challenge

For novel business propositions with solid IP foundations, high commercial potential and scalability.

£50k winner

£25k runner-up
£15k runner-up

Net Zero Challenge

For green entrepreneurs developing sustainable solutions to our planet's biggest environmental challenges

£30k winner

£10k runner-up

Create Change Challenge

For creative, cultural and social impact projects looking to become sustainable businesses.

£30k winner

£10k runner-up

KickStart Challenge

For aspiring entrepreneurs with innovative business ideas they'd like to test, validate and prepare to launch.

£10k winner

£7.5k runner-up x 2
£5k entrepreneurial spirit award
£5k creative award
£5k social impact award

Special Prizes

With generous support from a group of sponsors, we are excited to offer additional sector-specific prizes to help boost your business.

These awards include both cash and, where relevant, in-kind business support.



Blue Economy Award

For the best innovations in sustainable ocean economy.
£35k cash fund



Ventures Lab Award

Sponsored by Challenges Group

For the best innovation that addresses a significant societal challenge.
£10k cash prize plus a package of business benefits



IBioIC Award

Sponsored by IBioIC

For the best innovation in the industrial biotechnology space.
£20k cash prize for the university where the project originated.



What will it cost me?

Nothing.

We are funded by the Scottish Funding Council, Scottish Universities and our network of strategic and professional partners.

All we ask from you is to commit to taking part in our training and events. You'll also need to do your prep and stick to our programme deadlines.



What will I learn from the business training?

If you gain a place on our programme, you'll participate in a highly valuable, expert-led training programme.

Designed by the Entrepreneur Business School specifically for academic entrepreneurs, our bespoke course will give you an excellent grounding in all aspects of starting a business, including -

- Creating a financial forecast and plan to secure capital
- Identifying your target market & developing product pricing strategies
- Building a bottom-up sales plan and sales forecast
- Learning about fulfilling legal and statutory obligations

Our bespoke entrepreneurial training brings together businesses with diverse stages of growth, across a wide range of sectors and is delivered through blended learning, including online modules and face-to-face training sessions, masterclasses and events.

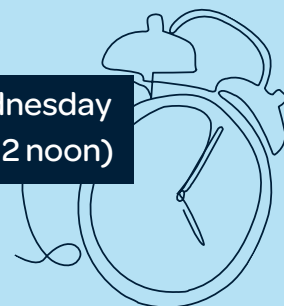


Ready to apply?

Here are some resources to get you started:

- Read more about our various [Challenges](#) and decide which one is for you.
- Attend our short online [workshops](#) designed to cover some of the key topics you will need to answer as part of your application.
- Talk to our [Enterprise team](#). They'll help you decide which Challenge is right for you and give you hints and tips on how to write a winning application.
- Take a look at our programme [FAQS](#).
- Create your account on our [application portal](#). You don't have to fill it all in at once - you can come back later to finish your application.
- Download the sample application template so you know the questions you'll need to answer -
 - [Converge Challenge](#)
 - [Net Zero Challenge](#)
 - [Create Change Challenge](#)
 - [KickStart Challenge](#)

**Deadline: Wednesday
2 April 2025 (12 noon)**



What happens next?

All completed applications go into a judging process and we will let you know by 8 May 2025 if you're successful.

You've made it onto the programme.

If you gain a place on our programme, you'll become a member of our 2025 cohort and will receive more detailed information about the training programme via e-mail. But in the meantime, take a look at some key dates below -



Even if you don't make it onto our programme, we can still support you in many ways including business workshops and one-to-one advice from our regional enterprise team. You could also be eligible to apply again next year.

Who's done this before?

You'll be following in the footsteps of some great businesses who also took part in our transformative programme.

Browse a selection of inspiring [stories](#) from people who have bridged the gap from academia to real-world businesses.

Where can I get more information?

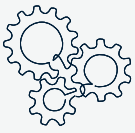
- [Need help with your application?](#)
- [Our Challenges](#)
- [Enterprise Support](#)
- [Our Training](#)



Programme Overview

From the moment you're accepted onto our cohort in May until our Awards celebration in October, you'll be part of our exclusive programme to help transform your research or innovation into an impactful business.

What you can expect.



**Expert-led
business
training**



**Access to
professional
networks**



**Equity-free
cash prizes for
top projects**



**Part of a diverse
cohort from
Scottish
universities**



**Live pitching
& networking
opportunities**



“There’s no right time to start a business. Now is the right time. The sooner the better, so jump right in!”

Dr Alireza Abbassi Monjezi
Waterwhelm
KickStart Challenge Winner 2019

We are funded by



Scottish Funding Council

Promoting further and higher education

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