

Venture Catalyst

Application Guidelines

Venture Catalyst is an initiative of the South Australian Government and UniSA encouraging student entrepreneurship and the creation of local startups. Current UniSA students and recent graduates may apply for up to \$50,000 seed funding to develop their idea for a product, service, or process and take it to market.

Eligibility Requirements

- Project teams must include at least one current student or recent graduate (36 months from graduation) from UniSA.
- Applications must be proposing the idea for a startup, which Venture Catalyst defines as a product, service, or process that is both innovative and scalable.
- The business proposed must benefit South Australian economic development.
- Applicants must own the IP or have the option to acquire it.

Merit criteria

Venture Catalyst is a competitive merit-based initiative. Only applicants who satisfy the merit criteria (as deemed by an external industry assessment panel) will be successful. If there are no applications that meet the merit criteria no funds will be awarded.

The merit criteria by which applications will be evaluated include:

- **A lead customer:** evidence that the product, service or process is demand driven, which includes an evidenced willingness from a lead customer to contribute to further development or to purchase the product, service or process.
- **Business scalability:** evidence of scalability i.e. it has a larger (potentially global) market and distribution channel(s), which provide opportunities for sales growth of the product, process or service.
- **Business sustainability and differentiation:** a demonstration of how the concept is different from others in the market and how that competitive advantage would be sustained.
- **A business model:** a clearly articulated description of the business model with a brief business plan, which is logical, has realistic cash flow models, is achievable and identifies the current stage of development and how the seed funding will be spent (The assessment panel is not looking for a rigid plan, they are looking for evidence that you have considered, and have plans to address, the opportunities, processes and challenges.)
- **Team:** evidence of an understanding of, and access to, the appropriate skills, experience and determination to advance the commercialisation of their product, service or process.

Generally speaking, Venture Catalyst will not fund applications for the following reasons:

- The venture is a 'small business' (e.g. cafes, restaurants, and fee-for-service consultancies).
- The idea is too similar to other products/services in the market and the point of differentiation is not adequately demonstrated.
- The venture requires a different level or type of support beyond the scope of Venture Catalyst (e.g. venture capital or R&D funds).
- The application proposed is for a technology to be licensed not for the creation of a startup.
- The business is not economically viable to be undertaken in South Australia.

Application Process

1. Fill out an Expression of Interest form located on the website icc.unisa.edu.au.
2. If your Expression of Interest form is shortlisted, you will need to be prepare a brief business plan that will be assessed by an Independent Assessment Panel in Adelaide, potentially on short notice.
3. The applicants whose business plan's have been shortlisted will then pitch their product, service, or process to an Independent Assessment Panel. You will have approximately five minutes to deliver your presentation, followed by questions and feedback from the Panel. Note that being invited to pitch does not guarantee the approval of any funding.
4. The steering committee will endeavour to notify you of the outcome of your pitch as soon as possible. Decisions of the Assessment Panel are final.
5. Should you be invited to pitch and are unsuccessful in receiving funding, you may be contacted by the Assessment Panel for guidance/mentorship. This will depend on the Assessment Panel's determination of your application and business proposal.
6. Funding for agreements will be signed with successful projects and startups. Planning and work commences.

Business Plan Requirements

Your business plan will be evaluated against the merit criteria and should include clearly defined sections and headings including the following:

1. **Executive Summary** – summary of who you are and the business opportunity, ie, what is your value proposition, what problem do you solve, for whom, and why your solution is better than alternatives.
2. **Team Overview** – role and responsibilities of each member and how their expertise and experience is relevant to advancing the venture.

3. **Marketing Strategy** – what is the market opportunity for your venture, who are your customers, do you have evidence from a lead customer/end user (e.g. a letter or email communication), how will you bring your product or service into the market (e.g., distribution channels, potential or existing partners).

4. **Competitive Advantage** – who are your competitors and why your concept is sustainable.

5. **Key Resources and Development Plan** – what resources do you require, what is the production process and plan to transform into end products.

6. **Financial Plan** – this section should include detailed information about your startup costs and how you will meet them, as well as how you will make money. Types of financial tables to consider including: sales forecast, expenses budget, projected cash flow statement, profit and loss statement (P&L), projected balance sheet, and break-even analysis.

7. **Risk Management** – outline the key challenges in the development and commercialization of this product, service, or process, what could go wrong and mitigating strategies.

8. **Action Plan** – i.e., goals and key steps to undertake to achieve your business objectives.

Terms and Conditions

Eligible activities and expenditure

- Development of the product, service or process.
- Prototype development.
- Marketing activities to achieve sales.
- Market research activities.
- Filing of provisional patent application or the development of an IP strategy.
- Other activities as agreed with the funder. NB You will be required to verify that your expenditure has been on eligible activities.

Ineligible activities and expenditure

- Salaries
- PCT or national phase filings (The panel may allow restricted expenditure on a case by case basis)

Funding agreement process

Those ventures that accept the funding will be required to sign a funding agreement with UniSA. The funding agreement will need to be signed within 30 calendar days from the offer or the offer may be withdrawn (unless and extension is agreed). Expenditure incurred or accrued before the funding agreement has been executed by all parties or after the funding agreement has ended will be at the applicants' own risk.

Obligations

During the timeframe of the funding deed:

- Any changes to the funded business strategy must be referred to the Venture Catalyst Steering Committee.
- Assets purchased for the project cannot be liquidated without the agreement of the Venture Catalyst Steering Committee.
- Every three months, participants will be required to report on their project. Grant payments will be based on these progress reports.
- Participants will be required to contribute to the promotion of VC, which may include a non-confidential description of their projects for other students, media organisations and for public announcements.
- Participants must inform the funder if any unexpected circumstances impact on the project and/or you wish to voluntarily terminate the project.

Confidentiality

Your application will be viewed by nominated staff from UniSA, government and the external assessment panel. Your application will be treated as confidential.

As outlined above, some non-confidential information about successful applications will be provided publicly, including, but not limited to, the names of successful applicants, the amount of the grant and a brief description of the project. Applicants will have the opportunity to approve this material before use.

Conflicts of interest

Members of the Independent Assessment Panel will be required to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest and remove themselves from the assessment of those applications wherever those conflicts exist.

Further information

Further information is available from Jasmine Vreugdenburg, Manager Innovation & Collaboration Centre and Member of the Venture Catalyst Steering Committee.

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