ACCELERATOR

Membership Policy

(*Effective as of March 1, 2022*)

Program Overview

Startup Accelerator is an industry-agnostic, 12-week program designed to help program members conduct rapid market testing, concept validation, and business modeling for their early-stage business ideas. Its curriculum is intended to quickly get program members to the point of a minimum viable product (MVP) suitable for testing in relevant markets and establishing an applicable business model to support advancement.

Startup Accelerator culminates in Startup Demo Day, a company expo and pitch event where program members have the opportunity to present their businesses to an audience of entrepreneurs, mentors, partners, investors and community organizations.

Membership Offerings

Startup Accelerator's structured curriculum leads participants toward the rapid creation of an MVP suitable for market and product testing, as well as the development of applicable business models to take that MVP to market. Program members are offered:

- skills training in customer validation, market testing and business modeling
- weekly one-on-one coaching sessions with program staff
- weekly cohort strategy sessions
- biweekly mentor support sessions with external partners
- 24-7 access to dedicated coworking spaces
- $5,000 in AWS Activate Credits valid for two (2) years (if eligible)
- one (1) year of AWS Business Support (up to $1,500) (if eligible)
- access to critical prototyping services and equipment (if applicable)
- use of in-house production equipment and services (as applicable)

Membership Intake Process

Total membership in Startup Accelerator may not exceed five (5) companies, though this figure may be altered at the discretion of OU Startup Programs staff.

Startup Accelerator offers admission to the program two (2) times per year, with applications opening in early fall and early spring. Applications to the fall and spring cohorts will remain open for a period of approximately one (1) month. Prospective members are required to complete the Startup Accelerator Application, which is evaluated by OU Startup Programs staff members.

If evaluated positively, prospective members are invited to interview before a panel comprising OU Startup Programs staff members, which may also include internal or other University partners. The interview period will begin within one (1) week from the close of Startup Accelerator applications and continue for a period of approximately one (1) week. Selections for Startup Accelerator are reported to prospective members within one (1) week of the close of the interview period.

Cohort Options

Startup Accelerator offers two (2) cohort options: Fall and Spring. Fall Cohort runs between August and November. One-on-one coaching sessions, cohort strategy sessions, mentor support sessions, and community building events are primarily held in Norman. Spring Cohort runs between January and April. One-on-one coaching sessions, cohort strategy sessions, mentor support sessions, and community building events are held primarily in Oklahoma City.

Startup Demo Day
Each Startup Accelerator cohort concludes with Startup Demo Day, a biannual pitch and expo event. Startup Demo Day features companies exiting from Startup Accelerator, as well as promising business projects from academic and other non-academic entrepreneurship-focused programs at the University of Oklahoma. Startup Demo Days highlight the groundbreaking companies emerging from the University of Oklahoma while bringing together the local community of entrepreneurs, mentors, partners, investors and community organizations to support the next generation of founders.

Membership Responsibilities
Startup Accelerator program members are required to attend at least one (1) one-on-one with an OU Startup Programs staff member, as well as one (1) cohort strategy session and (1) mentor support session or community building event, per week. Program members are permitted to schedule a max of two (2) one-on-one sessions with an OU Startup Programs staff member per week. If a program member fails to meet this attendance requirement for a cumulative period of two (2) weeks, the program member will be expelled from the program. Expulsion from the program will result in the program member's ineligibility to present at Startup Expo and/or Startup Demo Day and to be considered for the Startup Venture Competition, if otherwise eligible for consideration.

Team Conflicts
In any event where conflicts emerge which cause breakdowns in team communications, delays in project progression, or otherwise, it is the responsibility of program members to inform OU Startup Programs staff members of such conflicts. If applicable, program members are required to submit to mediation led by an OU Startup Programs staff member.

If any such conflict touches upon any legal matter, such conflicts will be referred to an Entrepreneurial Law Center staff member, if applicable. In no event will mediation be binding, nor will it be given any legal consideration if any such conflict advances to the point of litigation.

Startup Venture Competition Eligibility
Program members who are current University students or alumni that have graduated from any University of Oklahoma degree program within the last five years are also eligible to compete in a Startup Venture Competition for seed funding (while participating in Startup Accelerator), which takes place during Startup Demo Day.

Additional Information
Any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the Startup Accelerator Membership Policy or its terms should be addressed to OU Startup Programs at startups@ou.edu.