

# COMMUNITY

## Membership Policy

*(Effective as of February 1, 2022)*

### Program Overview

Startup Community is the point of entry for all University of Oklahoma students and University affiliates actively pursuing a business idea or interested in exploring entrepreneurial ecosystem opportunities. This program connects individuals from multidisciplinary backgrounds to create, design and explore entrepreneurial ideas.

Startup Community offers program members the opportunity to form a team and work on their own entrepreneurial idea, or join a team and employ their skills in supporting another's business.

### Membership Offerings

Startup Community Pre-Accelerator offers structured curriculum that leads program members through the early but critical stages of business development. Pre-Accelerator members are offered:

- skills training in market discovery and consumer insight research
- weekly one-on-one coaching sessions with program staff
- pop-up seminars, workshops and community building events dedicated to critical issues
- potential seed funding through Startup Innovation Fund (if eligible)
- 24-7 access to dedicated coworking spaces
- access to critical prototyping services and equipment (if applicable)
- use of in-house production equipment (as applicable)

### Membership Intake Process

Total membership in Startup Community may not exceed thirty (30) individuals, which includes five (5) members in the Pre-Accelerator and twenty-five (25) members in the Workforce Program. Startup Community offers admission to each program two (2) times per year, with applications to the Pre-Accelerator and skills assessments to the Workforce Program opening in early fall and early spring.

Applications to the Pre-Accelerator will remain open for a period of approximately one (1) month. Prospective members to the Pre-Accelerator are required to complete the Startup Community Pre-Accelerator Application, which is evaluated by OU Startup Programs staff members. If evaluated positively, prospective members may be 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 Community Pre-Accelerator applications and continue for a period of approximately one (1) week. Selections for the Pre-Accelerator are reported to prospective members within one (1) week of the close of the interview period.

Skills assessments to the Workforce Program are available on a rolling basis until the program reaches capacity. Prospective members to the Workforce Program must submit the Startup Community Skills Assessment, which is periodically reviewed by OU Startup Programs staff members. OU Startup Programs staff will review submitted assessments one (1) time per month, whereupon prospective members will be notified of their status as a Workforce member, if they were placed on a waitlist, or if they were rejected.

### Program Options

Startup Community is home to two (2) core programs: Pre-Accelerator and Workforce.

The Pre-Accelerator is an on-ramp to entrepreneurship for individuals actively pursuing any idea, prototype or business model.



Pre-Accelerator members engage in structured curriculum focused on ideation, effective market sizing, concept validation, and customer identification. Members are expected to obtain information from a combination of secondary market analyses and primary research methods (e.g., screener surveys, focus groups, quantitative surveys, in-depth interviews, etc.).

The Workforce Program is for individuals interested in exploring entrepreneurial ecosystem opportunities. Workforce members engage with the entrepreneurial ecosystem at the University of Oklahoma, which includes participating in pop-up seminars and workshops dedicated to critical issues in entrepreneurship. These members are encouraged to utilize their unique skill sets to support emerging startups and small businesses participating in the Pre-Accelerator and other programs.

### **Membership Responsibilities**

Startup Community Pre-Accelerator members are required to attend at least one (1) one-on-one with an OU Startup Programs staff member per week. Additionally, members are required to attend at least two (2) pop-up seminars or workshops per academic semester. Pre-Accelerator 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 Pre-Accelerator member fails to meet this attendance requirement for a cumulative period of one (1) month, the member may be expelled from the program.

Startup Community Workforce members are required to attend at least two (2) pop-up seminars or workshops per academic semester. Workforce members are also required to attend at least one (1) one-on-one session with an OU Startup Programs staff member. If a Workforce member fails to meet this attendance requirement for a cumulative period of one (1) academic semester, the member may be expelled from the program.

In either case, expulsion from Startup Community is not an admonition, and any program member expelled from the Startup Community is permitted and encouraged to re-submit an application or skill assessment.

### **Payment for Services**

Startup Community's structure is intended to facilitate the creation of cohesive, multidisciplinary teams capable of moving a business idea forward. Therefore, OU Startup Programs discourages but does not prohibit payment between Pre-Accelerator and Workforce members for services performed. The terms of any payments received are the sole responsibility of Startup Community member(s); however, either party may request advice regarding such terms from an OU Startup Programs staff member.

### **Team Conflicts**

In any event where conflicts emerge which cause breakdowns in team communications, delays in project progression, or otherwise, Startup Community 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. 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.

### **Additional Information**

Any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the Startup Community Membership Policy or its terms should be addressed to OU Startup Programs at [startups@ou.edu](mailto:startups@ou.edu).

