What is the Start-up visa?

- The Start-up visa is a UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) initiative under which the University of Bristol can endorse entrepreneurs wishing to start a business in the UK for the first time either as sole founders or as part of an entrepreneurial team.
- It is a 2-year visa, with the possibility of extending for a further 3 years under the Innovator route to stay and develop your business – please note the University is not an endorser for Innovator.
- Tier 4 students switching into this category may have already begun setting up their business, but should not have commenced trading.
- Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) and Tier 4 Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) applicants switching into this category can have already set up their business and have commenced trading.
- Applicants do not need to demonstrate funds to invest in their business – although there is a personal funds requirement – see ‘What are the Start-up visa requirements?’ for details.
- Businesses must be innovative, viable and scalable and have the potential to become fully integrated and a contributing part of the UK economy, for full details read Part W5 of the Appendix W – immigration rules for workers - [https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-w-immigration-rules-for-workers](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-appendix-w-immigration-rules-for-workers).
- The Careers Service and Student Visa Services are working together to assess and endorse candidates.
- The Start-up visa allows you to work outside of your business as well as develop other businesses but the majority of your time should be developing your business as outlined in the endorsement letter.
- You can study but a condition of the visa is, if the course requires ATAS, you hold an ATAS certificate.
- You can bring family members (spouse/partner and children under 18) as your dependants.

How can you start the process?

- If you are interested in applying for Start-up, please read the Careers Service information online [https://bristol.careercentre.me/Resources/VideoFiles/CareerModules/itutorials/Tutorial.aspx?id=3683](https://bristol.careercentre.me/Resources/VideoFiles/CareerModules/itutorials/Tutorial.aspx?id=3683) This will tell you:
  - How to arrange a one to one appointment with an Enterprise Adviser to discuss your business idea
  - How to submit a full business plan to the Careers Service for the first round of judging
- If your business plan is successful, you will be asked to present a 10-minute pitch to a panel.

When can you be endorsed?

- There are two opportunities to be endorsed every year (following your 10-minute pitch of your business plan to panel): in June and November.
- You can present to the panel before you have been awarded your qualification, although you cannot be endorsed and apply for the Start-up visa until after you have been awarded your qualification.
- Student Visa Services will ensure you have been awarded your degree at the relevant exam board in July or December and issue the appropriate documents to support you in applying for the visa.
- The earliest you can apply is 6 months prior to being awarded your qualification.
- The latest you can apply is up to 1 year after graduation from the UK or abroad (e.g. your home country) if you have left the UK you can present to the panel by Skype.

Key dates 2020:

- **16 March** – submission for business plans opens
- **1 May** - deadline for submission of business plans
- **9 June** – pitch to panel

Student Visa Services, February 2020
What are the University requirements?

- You will be required to:
  - sign a student declaration and consent form:
    - declaring that you will act in accordance with the Start-Up visa rules and policy and
    - confirming your personal and business details and
    - consenting to the disclosure of your information to the UKVI and consenting to the University of Bristol monitoring your progress in your business and
  - maintain regular contact with the Careers Service regarding the progress of your business and
  - complete and return two monitoring forms after 6 and 12 months. These forms will be sent by email (once you have secured your visa) and will be sent to the Careers Service for confirmation of regular contact with them
- If you miss a monitoring point or are unable to demonstrate that you are i) continuing to work on your business ventures and ii) are making reasonable progress with your original ideas or iii) if you are no longer pursuing business ideas that are innovative, viable and scalable, your endorsement under the scheme will be withdrawn

What are the Start-up visa requirements?

- You must be a non-EEA national
- You must not have previously established a business in the UK
- You must not have previously had 2 years’ leave in Start-up and/or Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visas
- You must have been awarded a Bachelor’s degree, Master’s degree or PhD from University of Bristol
- You must have a signed endorsement letter with unique reference number issued by the University
- You must show evidence that you have held at least £945 in your bank account every day for a consecutive 90-day period
- If applicable, you must have a police registration certificate. This must be up to date.
- If you are applying from overseas, you may require a TB test certificate [www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa](http://www.gov.uk/tb-test-visa)
- If you have received sponsorship from your government or an international scholarship agency in the 12 months before you apply for Start-up, you will require a letter of consent from them to confirm they agree to you making the Start-up application and to you remaining in the UK
- You must pay the visa fees = an application fee of £493 if you are applying inside the UK or £363 if you are applying outside the UK, as well as the IHS fee of £800 and a biometrics fee of £19.20

Applying for the visa

In the UK

- You can apply to switch from a Tier 4 visa to Start-up visa in the UK - [www.gov.uk/start-up-visa/switch-to-this-visa](http://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa/switch-to-this-visa)
- Fill in the application form, but stop when you get to the Declaration Section. Once you agree to the Declaration, your answers become locked and you will not be able to change them when you attend an appointment with an adviser
- Email us at student-visa-adviser@bristol.ac.uk when you are ready to submit your application. We will make you an appointment with an adviser to check through your application.
- Bring all the required documents to your appointment for an adviser to check. Also remember to bring a debit/credit card to pay for the visa application fees and IHS fee
- After submitting your application online, you will be directed to the Sopra Steria website to book an appointment to attend biometrics and verify your documents. You will also need to upload copies of your documents – passport, BRP, endorsement letter, bank statement, degree certificate/transcript, police registration (if applicable)

Outside the UK

- Apply online [www.gov.uk/start-up-visa/apply](http://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa/apply)
- Pay the visa application fee and IHS fee online as part of the application, book an appointment to attend biometrics and verify your documents and upload copies of your documents – passport, BRP, endorsement letter, bank statement, degree certificate/transcript, police registration (if applicable) and TB test (if applicable)

For full details and to check up to date information, please see the following websites:

- Our website: [www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/after-study/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/after-study/)
- UKVI Start-up information: [www.gov.uk/start-up-visa](http://www.gov.uk/start-up-visa)
For queries about the requirements or applying, email: student-visa-advice@bristol.ac.uk