CONVERGE

Entrepreneurship

has its ups...

and downs...

Let us keep
you on track

What is Converge?

Converge is a programme specially designed to help aspiring academic entrepreneurs turn their business idea into a reality. We provide tailored training, networking opportunities and one to one support over an eight-month period to help you test, validate, launch and progress your business idea.

As well as the training programme, there's a competitive element with substantial equity-free cash prizes up for grabs for the winning projects.

And when your time in the programme is over, that's not the end. You'll become part of our Converge alumni family with us providing support, networking and guidance for as long as you need it.

We've trained over 500 academic entrepreneurs and helped create more than 300 businesses so you are in safe hands with us.
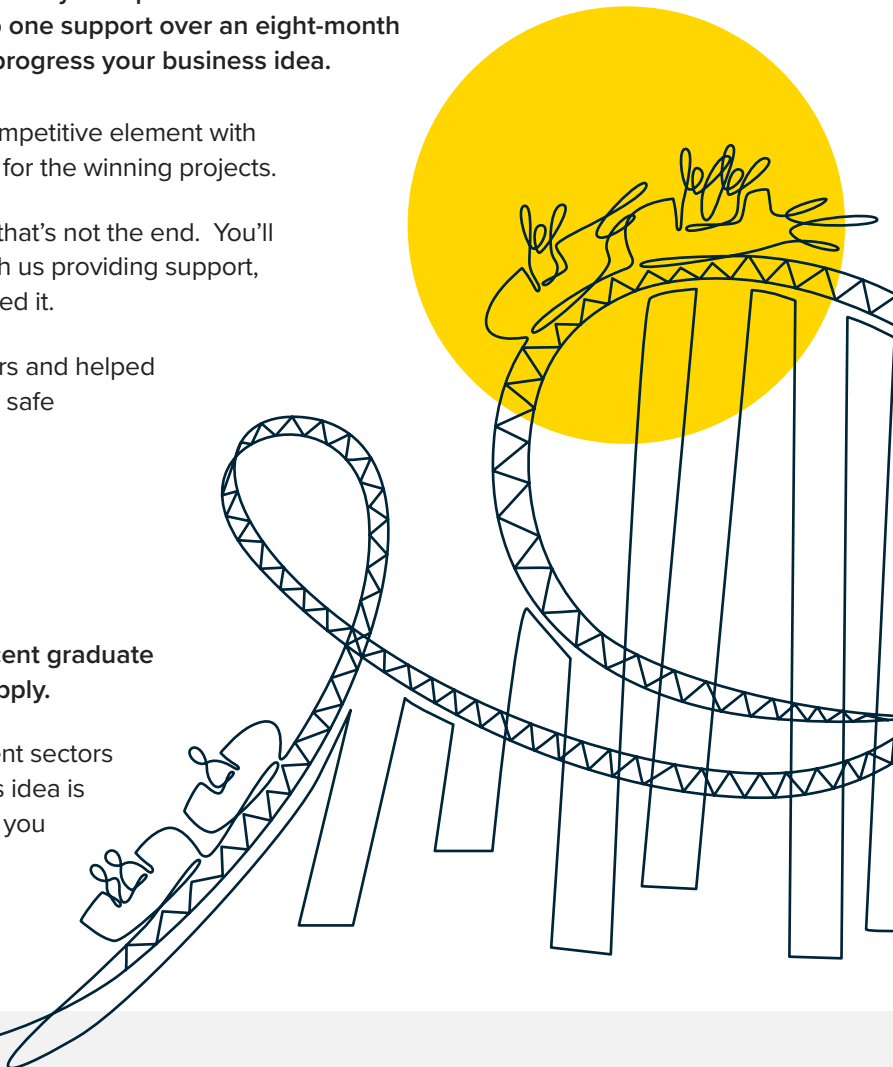
Who is it for?

Anyone who is a staff member, student or recent graduate (within 2 years) of a Scottish University can apply.

There are various Challenges tailored to different sectors and stages, so it doesn't matter if your business idea is at an early stage or fully fledged – we can help you take it to the next level.

Why should I apply?

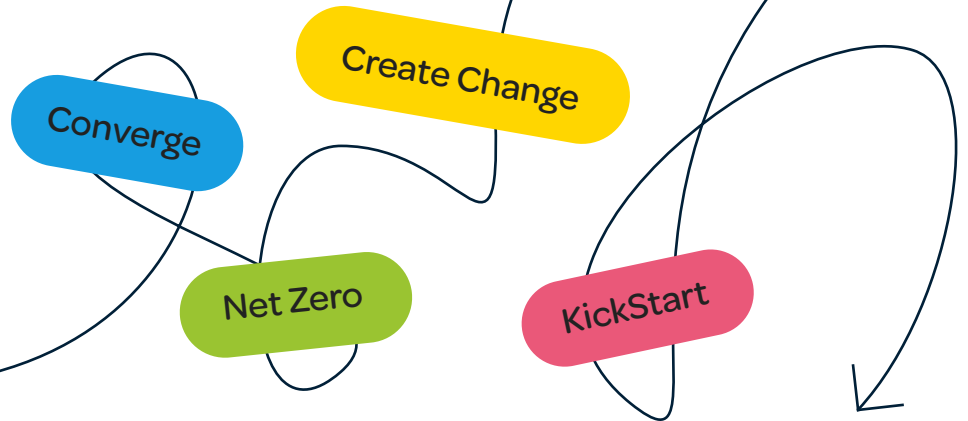If you're successful in gaining a place on the programme, you'll get:

- **Entry onto a first-class training programme specially-designed for aspiring entrepreneurs just like you**

- The chance to win substantial equity-free cash prizes

- **Networking opportunities to meet other participants embarking on the same journey**

- Exposure to experienced business experts who can help assess your ideas and provide feedback

- **Visibility to the investment community**

- Access to our network of professional partners – legal, financial, HR, product design, process innovation and IP – who can help you on your way

- **The support of the experienced team at Converge who are always here to help**

Which Challenge is for me?

There are four Challenges

Choose the one which best fits your business idea:

Converge

Create Change

Net Zero

KickStart

Converge Challenge

For novel business ideas with solid IP foundations, high commercial potential and evident scalability

£50k Winner | £20k Runner-up

Net Zero Challenge

For climate-conscious entrepreneurs developing innovative solutions for carbon reduction

£30k Winner | £10k Runner-up

Create Change Challenge

For creative projects with a social purpose and social enterprises with a creative or cultural edge.

£30k Winner | £10k Runner-up x2

KickStart

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

£10k Winner | £7.5k Runner-up x2

£5k Special prizes x3

Special prizes for: ● Entrepreneurial spirit ● Wellbeing ● Climate Action

What else is there?

We also have some special awards you can apply for.

Participants who progress to submitting their business plans in August are eligible to apply.

Rose Award
Sponsored by The Royal Bank of Scotland

For aspiring female entrepreneurs.
£10k cash prize plus a mentoring session with Alison Rose, chief executive of NatWest bank.

FutureTech Award
sponsored by Cisco

For the best innovation in the technology space.
£10k cash prize plus a mentoring session with Chintan Patel, chief technology officer of Cisco UK and Ireland.

What does it cost?

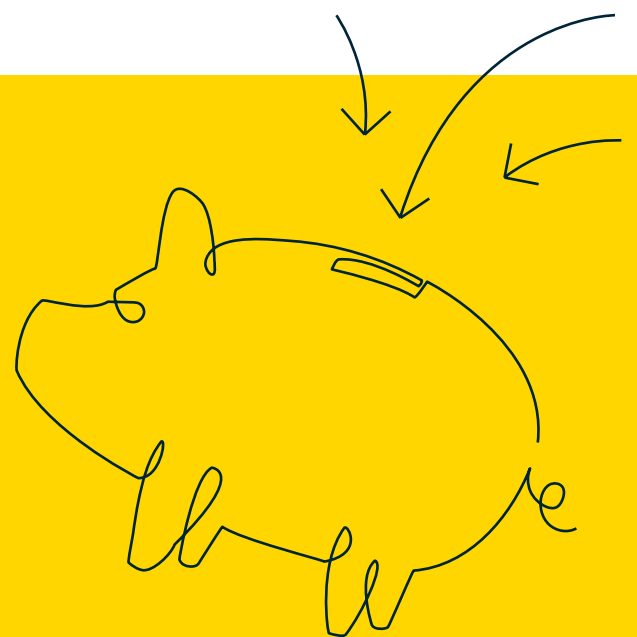## Absolutely nothing!

We are funded by the Scottish Funding Council, all 18 Scottish Universities, Creative Scotland and our network of strategic and professional partners so it doesn't cost anything for participants.

For your part, all we ask is that you are committed to taking part in the training and events. You'll need to do your preparation, and comply with the deadlines provided.

What will I learn from the training programme?

The training programme will give you an excellent grounding in all aspects of starting a business. You'll get specialist coaching on preparing and delivering a pitch, and how to prepare your business plan.

Later on in the programme, finalists in the Converge, Create Change and Net Zero Challenges will also receive extra training on routes to market, funding and investor-readiness, in preparation for taking your business to the next level.

If you're interested in applying for a place on our 2022 programme, here's a list of hints and tips to get you started:

- **Read more about our various Challenges and decide which one's for you: Find out more**

- Attend our short online workshops to get a head start on what you might need to do to get your business started: Find out more

- **Have a one-to-one chat with one of our Enterprise team about your business idea for hints and tips on how to select your Challenge and complete your application form: Find out more**

- Download the application form template for your chosen challenge so you know what information you'll have to complete when you apply. Find the Challenge pages here: Converge, Net Zero, Create Change, KickStart

- 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.

- Complete your application before 12 noon on Tuesday 5 April 2022 – and don't leave it till the last minute!

What happens next?

After you've submitted your application, you'll get an email acknowledging receipt. Then all completed applications go into a judging process where we select the successful applicants.

> We will notify everyone of the results by **10 May 2022**

If you are successful, you will become a member of our 2022 cohort – congratulations! You'll get more detailed information about the training programme then, but in the meantime, please note the dates on the timeline on the next page.

If you're not successful in gaining a place on the programme, don't despair. We can still provide support to you on our "open to all" workshops and one-to-one feedback. And you may be eligible to apply again next year!

Who's done this before?

You'll be following in the footsteps of some great businesses who started with help from Converge.   Take a look at some of these video case studies of successful alumni, and read more in the alumni section of our website.

Our website is packed full of helpful information on the overall programme and the four Challenges. Check out these pages for more detailed information:

Where can I get more information?

How it works

Converge Challenge

Net Zero Challenge

Create Change Challenge

KickStart Challenge

Workshops

Special awards

About us

Other help

2022 Challenge Calendar

Date	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change	Kickstart	Event
Jan 26	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change	Kickstart	Open for applications
Apr 5	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change	Kickstart	**Deadline for applications (12 noon)**
May 10	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change	Kickstart	Successful candidates announced
May 23 - 25				Kickstart	Training online
May 26				Kickstart	Masterclass and pitching event in-person
Jun 6 - 10	Converge	Net Zero			Training online
Jun 13 - 17			Create Change		Training online
Jun 21 - 23	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change		Training and masterclasses in-person
Jun 23	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change		Inside Innovation pitching event (evening)
Aug 1	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change		**Deadline for business plan submission**
Aug 1				Kickstart	**Deadline for business case submission**
Sep 6	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change	Kickstart	Announcement of finalists
Sep 12	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change		Training online
Sep 26	Converge	Net Zero *(or)*			Training in person
Sep 27		Net Zero	Create Change		Training in person
Oct 10			Create Change		Final pitches in person
Oct 11		Net Zero			Final pitches in person
Oct 13 - 14	Converge				Final pitches in person
Nov 3	Converge	Net Zero	Create Change	Kickstart	**Converge Awards for all Challenges in person**

While we hope that in-person events can take place in 2022, the ongoing uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic may mean that events may need to be run online instead.

We are funded by

Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoineachaidh na h-Alba

CREATIVE SCOTLAND
ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

All 18 Scottish Universities

Strategic partners

CISCO

Royal Bank of Scotland

sse

SIS VENTURES

Professional partners

BeyondHR

Chiene+Tait
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

cpi

Haseltine Lake Kempner

product design

MBM ENTREPRENEURIAL BUSINESS LAWYERS

CONVERGE

www.convergechallenge.com