

PROBLEM SOLVER
INNOVATOR
RISK-TAKER
CREATIVE
IDEAS PERSON
ENTREPRENEUR
FOUNDER
PIONEER

**Whatever you
call yourself,
you've come to
the right place**



What is Converge?

Regardless of your background, gender or race; whether you're a complete business novice or whether you see yourself as a founder, innovator or creative - we can give you the tools, funding, support and community to springboard your idea into the world.

Over a six month period, through tailored training, investor connections, networking opportunities and 1-2-1 support, we will help you test, validate and launch your big business idea.

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 600 academic entrepreneurs and helped create more than 330 businesses so you are in safe hands with us.

Who is it for?

Anyone who is a staff member, student or recent graduate 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:

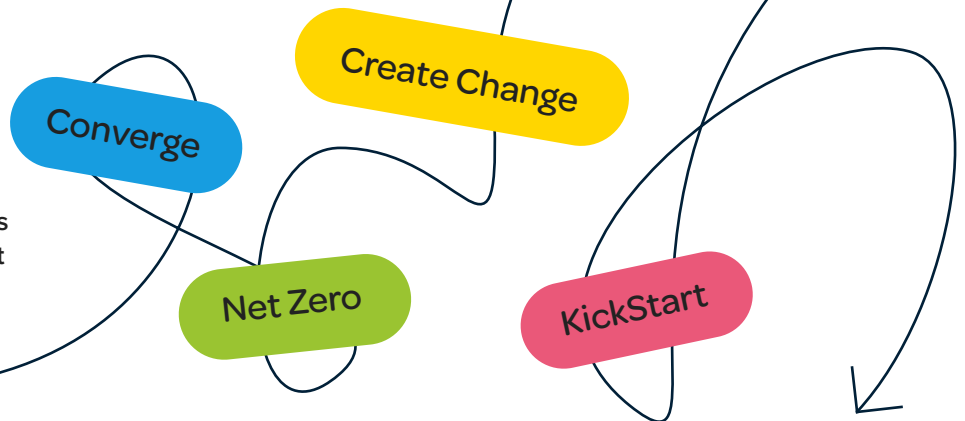
- Entry onto our first-class training programme which has been specially designed for aspiring innovators, founders, creatives and entrepreneurs - just like you
- The chance to win substantial equity-free cash prizes
- Networking opportunities to meet other participants embarking on the same journey
- Exposure to experienced business experts who can help assess your ideas and provide feedback
- Valuable investor connections
- 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 our experienced team who are always here to help



Which Challenge is for me?

There are four Challenges

Choose the one which best fits your business idea or speak to us for advice on the Challenge most suitable for you.



Converge Challenge

£50k Winner

£20k Runner-up

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

Net Zero Challenge

£30k Winner

£10k Runner-up

For climate-conscious entrepreneurs developing innovative solutions for carbon reduction

Create Change Challenge

£30k Winner

£10k Runner-up x2

For creative, social and cultural projects looking to become sustainable businesses.

KickStart

£10k Winner

£7.5k Runner-up x2

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

Special prizes for: ● Creativity ● CENSIS

£5k Special prizes x2

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.



IBiolC Award

Sponsored by IBiolC

For the best innovation in the industrial biotechnology space. £20k cash prize to the winning project plus a package of valuable in-kind support from the IBiolC team.

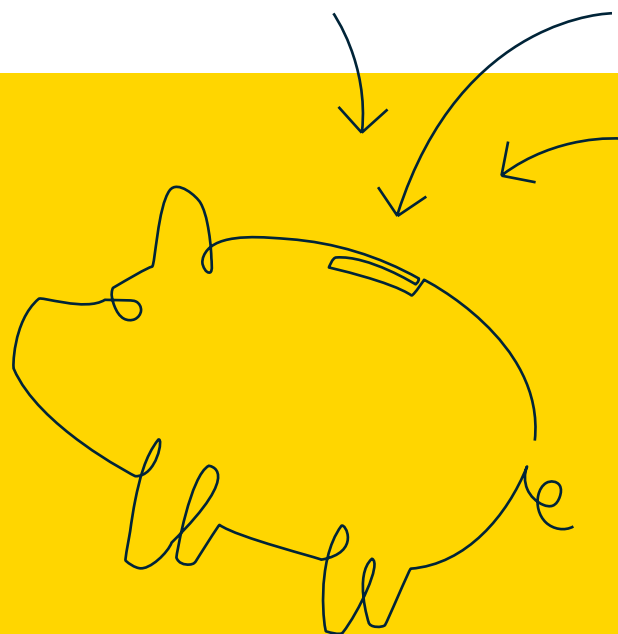


What does it cost?

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.

All we ask from you is to commit to taking part in our training and events. You'll also need to do your prep and make sure you stick to our programme deadlines.



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.

Our world-class entrepreneurial training is delivered through a mix of online on-demand modules and face-to-face sessions including masterclasses and networking events.

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.

Ready to apply?

Here are some 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 1-2-1 chat with one of our Enterprise team about your business idea. They'll help you decide which Challenge is right for you and give you hints and tips on how to write a winning application: [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 the deadline and don't leave it till the last minute!

Deadline:

12 noon, Wednesday 29 March 2023



What happens next?

All completed applications go into a judging process and we will let you know by 5 May 2023 if you're successful.

You've made it. What next?

If you're successful, you'll become a member of our 2023 cohort – congratulations! You'll get more detailed information about the training programme then, but in the meantime, take a look at the timeline on the next page to get an idea of what's involved.

Even if you don't make it onto our programme, we can still support you in many ways including [free workshops](#) and 1-2-1 advice from our regional enterprise team. And, who knows, you might 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](#) or listen to these [podcasts](#) from 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](#)

Programme overview

From the moment you're accepted onto our cohort in May until our Awards celebration in October, you'll be part of our exclusive programme of support to springboard your business.

Here's what you can expect:



8 week
programme



Business
training



Investment
readiness &
fundraising



Pitching &
networking



Award
ceremony &
celebration



PROBLEM SOLVER
ENTREPRENEUR
RISK-TAKER
IDEAS PERSON

**“There’s no right time to start
a business. Now is the right
time. The sooner the better,
so jump right in!”**

Alireza Abbassi Monjezi
Waterwhelm
KickStart Challenge Winner 2019

We are funded by



Scottish Funding Council
Comhairle Maoinachaidh na h-Alba



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

All 18 Scottish Universities

Strategic partners



Professional partners

BeyondHR

Chiene+Tait
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS



Haseltine Lake
Kempner



CONVERGE

www.convergechallenge.com