Am I eligible to apply for a Start-up Visa?
You may be eligible to apply if:
- you have participated in the LSE Generate process and been offered an endorsement from the LSE after an interview; and
- you are an LSE student or non-LSE student working on an LSE team; and
- you have been awarded your degree; and
- you have agreed to the conditions of endorsement; and
- you have not established a business in the UK before; and
- you can meet the requirements outlined in Appendix W of the immigration rules.

Can I apply for the visa from the UK?
If you currently hold a valid Tier 4 visa, a valid Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa or a valid Tier 2 visa you may apply in the UK but you must ensure that you are able to apply before your current visa expires. The application fee is £493 except for Macedonian and Turkish nationals who will pay £438. The application form is online.

Can I apply for the visa from overseas?
You can apply from your home country. The application fee is £363 (£308 for Macedonian and Turkish nationals). The application form is online.

What is the date of application?
If you apply in the UK, the date of application is the date that you submit and pay for the online application.

If you apply online from overseas, the date of application is the date that you submit and pay for the online application (not the date of your visa appointment).

What evidence do I require from LSE?
You will need a valid Endorsement letter, which you can only request from the Visa Compliance Team once you have signed the endorsement agreement with the School.

What are the financial requirements?
You must show that you have held £945 in an acceptable account in your own name for a consecutive 90 day period which ends within 31 days before you submit the online visa application.

Please refer to Appendix W for more information about the financial requirements.

Do I need to pay the Immigration Healthcare Surcharge (IHS)?
Yes, you will need to pay £800 for a full two year Start-up visa. If you fail to pay the IHS, your visa application will be refused.

How long does an application take to be processed?
If you apply for the visa in the UK, the standard processing time is 8 weeks from the date that the payment is accepted.

If you apply overseas, the standard processing time is approximately 3 weeks but you can get an indication of recent times here.

Can I pay for priority service to get the application processed more quickly?
Differing service standards are available both in the UK and overseas.

If you are applying from your home country, check whether priority services are available with your local visa application centre.

Can you help me with my application?
Yes. If you are applying from the UK, please contact us if you would like an appointment to check through your application form and supporting documents before you apply. You must have prepared all documents in advance of the appointment so that we can check and advise accordingly. If you are applying from you home country, contact us for advice.

Could my application be refused and what does this mean?
It is not possible to guarantee that a visa application will be successful. If your visa is refused after your previous visa has expired, it may affect your ability to remain in the UK. If your application is refused, please contact us immediately for advice.

How long is the visa issued for?
The visa will be granted for two years. It is not possible to extend this visa.
**When can I officially set up my own business?**

There is currently a contradiction between the immigration rules and guidance on when you are able to start work. Please refer to the information on the UKCISA web pages.

If you are switching from Tier 2 or Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur you can work whilst your application is in progress.

**Am I permitted to supplement my income by working for another employer whilst setting up my own business?**

Yes, work is permitted however your main focus should be your business. If it appeared that a Start-up visa is being used for the primary purpose of working for another employer rather than for developing a business in the UK, the visa could be affected.

**Can my visa be cancelled?**

If you do not use the visa for its intended purpose, if you do not comply with the conditions of the visa or you decide not to continue working on your business, LSE will inform the Home Office which will result in the visa being curtailed (cancelled).

**How will the LSE monitor my progress?**

Monitoring will be carried out by the Generate Team in Careers and also by the Visa Compliance team. You will be required to remain in contact with the Generate Team throughout your visa and you will need to submit reports to show how your business plan is progressing. You will receive further information about this from each team if you are offered an endorsement.

**Is it possible to switch to another visa type after the Start-up Route?**

If you wish to continue developing your business in the UK, you may want to consider applying for the Innovator visa. However, you should note you require endorsement for this route and these are currently limited.

If you no longer wish to continue with the business but have been offered employment, you may be able to switch to Tier 2.

Applying for further visas beyond the Start-up Route is not something that we can provide detailed advice about so you would need to seek advice externally about such options.

You can find regulated immigration advisers at OISC and ILPA.

**Can I join an established business?**

The Home Office has confirmed that if a business is in its set-up phase you can still apply for the route. However, if it is already trading you cannot be endorsed under the Start-up route and will need to apply to the Innovator route. If you plan to go into business with someone who doesn’t require a visa, we recommend you do not start trading until you are in possession of your visa and do not get a co-founder or another individual to set up the business and recruit you as an employee. This includes working on a business that is set-up overseas as you may be classed as self-employed.

**Conditions of endorsement:**

1. Endorsees confirm they have not established a business in the UK.
2. Endorsees agree that they will apply within three months of receiving the endorsement and before it expires on 1st April the following year;
3. Endorsees agree to bring their Biometric Residence Permit to the Student Services Centre within five days of receipt;
4. Endorsees agree that they will complete the required monitoring at 6, 12 and 24 months as required by paragraph W5.3 (c) (i) of Appendix W of the immigration rules.
5. Endorsees agree that they will inform LSE Generate and the Visa Compliance Team of any change of circumstances including but not limited to:
   - Closing the business for which they were endorsed;
   - Pursuing a new business venture or changing the nature of the initial business endorsed;
   - A change in immigration status e.g. obtaining a Tier 2 visa;
   - The business which is being endorsed is moved to operate overseas.
6. Endorsees agree that the School reserves the right to withdraw their endorsement under the Start-up visa route should they not complete the monitoring requirements within the timeframes, fail to inform the School of any major changes of circumstances, or breach the conditions of their visa.
7. Endorsees agree that they will be based in the UK for the majority of the time.
8. Endorsees agree that their main purpose for requiring an endorsement is to develop their business in the UK and that they will not undertake full-time work whilst endorsed on a Start-up visa, particularly for the School.
9. Endorsees agree that they will not start working on their business until they have received their BRP.
10. Endorsees agree that LSE reserves the right not to issue a new endorsement in the case of a refusal.

**Who do I contact for help?** For further immigration advice contact ISVAT online.