



Mini-Grants for Enterprise 2010

Purpose

The purpose of the Mini-grant scheme is to fund expenses in developing an entrepreneurial idea with potential for a sustainable commercial OR social enterprise. The activity should strengthen or validate the entrepreneurial idea e.g. a prototype or pilot. A *brief report* (max 1,000 words), is required at the end of the project period.

Ideas developed in this way could be robust enough to enable the team to go on to seek additional funding.

Designed to encourage entrepreneurial behaviour, Mini-grant applicants are expected to invest their own time and effort *without immediate reward* in pursuit of the opportunity they have identified.

How much?

Ten Mini-Grants of £2,000 each are available to qualifying enterprise teams across the University. Mini-grants are “seed funding” rather than project funding, to be used to demonstrate the viability and value of the idea to potential customers, investors or sponsors.

The funds are to be spent only on what teams cannot get for free from themselves or others. The total value of the non-cash inputs to the project should be many times higher than the £2,000 award. This should be reflected in the ambition of the proposal

Who can be in an enterprise team?

The team must include both student (s) and member(s) of academic staff - teams are strongly urged to include alumni. Alumni can be expected to bring real world knowledge and even inside knowledge of the business or social area the team plans to operate in. Please note that alumni are not eligible themselves to apply directly for Mini-grants.

The member of academic staff should also have the technical skills and experience to guide the project and the students the energy and commitment to complete the project. The member of academic staff will be the budget holder.

What restrictions are there on the projects?

Projects do not have to be profit making but they must be sustainable, innovative and ethical. The University reserves the right to disqualify any project that appears to be unethical – even if this arises post award.

The scheme aims to fund ideas that are innovative and could become genuinely investable and or sustainable enterprises that meet unmet needs, so it is vital to



check this before effort goes into developing the idea and the application. For ideas involving patents this means checking that there are no prior patents in the field, for others eg social enterprise, it must be novel in its proposed application.

It is the team's responsibility to conduct some simple due diligence by searching

- the European Patent Office database:
<http://ep.espacenet.com/quickSearch?locale=en> EP
- academic publication databases eg for Biosciences (academic staff team members can point you in the right direction here):
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/>
- and of course Google.

Applications should demonstrate that this early research has been undertaken by supplying search terms used and results.

Key Dates

- Deadline for final proposal submission: 10am, 15 March 2010
- Results will be announced 15 April 2010

All projects should be completed by 30 September 2010, with final report due 15 October 2010.

The top three Westminster applications will be put forward for a head-to-head competition with the top three applications from Royal Holloway University and the winning three entries will receive book tokens. (Date to be confirmed, but likely to be announced May 2010).

Who decides?

The applications will be reviewed by one University Governor, one PVC, two School research directors, Managing Director of WestmInnovation, member of Student Enterprise Club Executive, member of Student Union Executive and external reviewers.

What about the IP?

It is a condition of the competition that by signing the entry form the student(s) member(s) of staff and alumnus/a/i agree to assign all the IP generated by the project to the University. On receipt of a project report the University will either reassign the IP to the student (because it was originally a student idea that has been incubated through the project) or retain the IP (because the idea originated from a member of academic staff and the IP belongs to the University as the employer) according to the prior agreement on the entry form.

The idea must come from the students or members of academic staff. Alumni that have ideas to be developed are invited to get in touch for two month ideas (eg placements <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-7287>, Shell STEP scheme (<http://www.step.org.uk/>) or for longer/bigger ideas eg Knowledge Connect



(<http://www.knowledgeconnect.org.uk>) or Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (www.ktponline.co.uk) via Denis Carroll d.c.carroll@wmin.ac.uk or for consultancy or contract research Dr Alun Tlusty-Sheen on tlustya@wmin.ac.uk

Why should students get involved?

A chance to try out a great idea with a little bit of funding and support from staff and alumni. At best you may be taking the first steps to creating a successful enterprise. At worst you will learn a lot about *making things happen* and have something interesting to put on your CV and talk about at a job interview.

Why should staff get involved?

A member of academic staff may have an idea that needs some early exploration to establish the grounds for a successful research application or bid for commercialisation funding. This scheme provides a structure and some funds for taking that forward. Alternatively, supporting students to achieve in the social and commercial sphere by applying their University acquired knowledge can be as rewarding as providing academic support.

Why should alumni get involved?

It is a way of sharing something unique and personal – your knowledge and your insights and experience with students. You might find your next star recruit from the University. If you don't have the time to get involved with a project you could always sponsor an additional award, or two. Contact Eilidh Macdonald (macdone@westminster.ac.uk) to sponsor additional awards.

How to apply

An application form will be released early January 2010.

Help

For help please contact Monika, Enterprise Coordinator, (gierszmo@westminster.ac.uk) or Eilidh Macdonald, Business Development & Commercialisation Manager (macdone@westminster.ac.uk).