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Funded by:



民政及青年事務局
Home and Youth Affairs Bureau



青年發展委員會
Youth Development Commission



大灣區香港青年
創新創業基地聯盟

CityU Business Innovation Education - GBA Youth Entrepreneurship Fund Application Guidelines

The GBA Youth Entrepreneurship Fund of City University (CityU) of Hong Kong's College of Business (CB)-Business Innovation Education (BIE) is supported by Home & Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) through the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Entrepreneurship Scheme), under the Youth Development Fund (YDF) of the Youth Development Commission (YDC).

This dynamic three-year incubation program provides comprehensive entrepreneurial support to empower Hong Kong youth entrepreneurs and startups in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA).

The program connects youth with entrepreneurial resources, including mentorship, business guidance, professional consultation, networking, financing options and sector-focused support.

Leveraging CityU's extensive alumni and industry networks, the Young Entrepreneurship Applicant (YEA) Scheme fosters startup success in high-potential sectors such as innovation and technology, cultural industries, and modern professional services.

Eligibility

To be eligible for this scheme, please note the following requirements:

The team leader and the team member(s) for each application must meet these criteria:

1. Age between 18-39 (as of the application deadline).
2. Hong Kong permanent resident with valid HKIDs.
3. The team leader must be a CityU student (full-time or part-time), or alumnus pursuing or having obtained a postgraduate degree/diploma, undergraduate degree, associate degree, or any other qualification offered by the university.
4. Have established or plan to establish operations in Hong Kong or GBA cities.
5. Each team must include at least one CityU staff member serving as an advisor or consultant, who does not hold any ownership in the startup. If this member is also a shareholder, they MUST meet conditions 1-4 above.
6. The start-up and its sole proprietor/all shareholders/all partners must:
 - Not have previously received funding from the Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship under the "Youth Development Fund" and/or Capital funding from the last round.
 - Not be recipients of any other public or Government funding during the proposed project/business period unless with prior written approval from the Government.
 - Not be recipients of funding sources or entrepreneurial and incubation support from other NGOs under the YDF's sponsorship.
 - Not be bankrupt or involved in any bankruptcy proceedings at the time of application.

The **team leader** must be the person-in-charge of the company, with the following responsibilities:

7. Holding at least 20% ownership of the company.
8. Engaging in the company's business full-time in a senior position.
9. Overseeing the company's operations.
10. Being consistently reachable during normal business hours.
11. Playing a central role in the team's decision-making and proposal execution.

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As a team, you should meet the following criteria:

12. Applications must be submitted by a team of more than one person through this designated CityU online platform.
13. An eligible applicant can only be the team leader for ONE application.
14. Eligible team members must collectively hold a majority stake (more than 50%) in the company when it is formed.
15. Some shareholders may be individuals or organizations not covered above, provided that their total shareholding does not exceed 20% of the start-up's equity. However, approved non-governmental organizations and their related persons (including chairpersons, directors, organization heads, project coordinators, etc.) must not, under any circumstances, be shareholders of the start-up.
16. If the start-up has already established a company, it must be a limited company incorporated in Hong Kong under the Business Registration Ordinance (Cap. 310) and must not have been operating for more than 3 years as of the application deadline.
17. While the start-up project/ business is not required to hold a valid business registration certificate at the time of application, successful applicants must complete the business registration process under the Business Registration Ordinance (Cap. 310) to accept funding.
18. The company's business must
 - Not be unlawful, illegal or involve tobacco, advocacy of gambling, obscenity, or activities likely to constitute or cause offences endangering national security or be contrary to the interest of national security.
 - Not be a franchise.
 - Not be planning a change in business nature or to be taken over by successful YEAs.
19. Unless with prior written approval from the government, funded start-up teams shall not assign, transfer, sub-contract or dispose any of their interests, rights, benefits or obligations under their business during the project period. If any new core member(s), partner(s) or shareholder(s) are added, they must meet the eligibility criteria stated above and report to CityU BIE for approval.

Beyond the age and nationality requirements set by the Youth Development Council (YDC), the following additional criteria apply to this scheme:

- Startups that align with CityU's research strengths, such as artificial intelligence, FinTech, data science, or sustainable development, will be prioritized. This alignment allows startups to leverage the university's expertise and resources in these fields, enhancing their competitive edge and increasing their chances of success.
- Applicants are strongly advised to engage in entrepreneurship training programs offered by CityU's College of Business. These programs aim to provide students and alumni with deep insights, robust networks, and access to CityU researchers and industry experts. By participating in these programs, applicants will be better equipped to succeed not only in Hong Kong but also throughout the Greater Bay Area.
- Students or alumni should assume the position of team head and play a pivotal role in the startup's planning and management. Consequently, the team head is expected to maintain significant control over the company through shareholding and to oversee the company's operations on a full-time basis. Nevertheless, students and alumni are encouraged to build teams that include external members, such as students from other universities who bring complementary skills and knowledge essential for the venture's success.

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- Startups must demonstrate a strong commitment to ethical business practices, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability. Additional consideration will be given to startups that prioritize these values and show potential for generating positive social or environmental impact.
- Participating applicants and/ or companies must submit periodic reports detailing key learnings, developmental milestones, and overall progress, as requested by CityU BIE.

By entering the program, the applicant and/ or company grant CityU BIE and government the right to use their photographs, case materials and related visuals for publicity, promotional, and educational purposes across media platforms, including but not limited to print, digital and social media.

Selection Criteria

1. Market Potential and Sustainability (30%)
2. Innovation and Technical Viability (25%)
3. Team Capability and Partnership (20%)
4. Social Impact and Corporate Social Responsibility (25%)

Application Timeline

Date	Event
21 Aug 2025	Information Session (Online)
Sep 2025 – date TBC	Briefing Session & Teaser Class
30 Sep 2025	Application Deadline
Mid of Oct 2025	Eligibility Check and Initial Screening
Early Nov 2025	Detail Evaluation (In-person/ Online Presentation)
End of Nov 2025	Final Selection (Panel Interview)
Early Dec 2025	Result Announcement
31 Dec 2025	Meeting with Funded Start-ups and Collection of Fund Agreement

Due diligence meetings may be required if necessary.

Applications will only be considered when the online application form is completed with the necessary documents and submitted by the deadline mentioned above. Submissions through email or any other channel will not be accepted.

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Funding amount

Each awarded start-up will sign a funding agreement that includes specific milestone objectives. Funds will be released in stages, with each disbursement subject to the achievement of the agreed milestones.

With contributions from the HYAB Funding Scheme for Youth Entrepreneurship in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay and CityU at a matching fund ratio of 4 to 1, each Awarded Start-up will receive up to HK\$600,000 in funding support, consisting of HK\$480,000 grant and HK\$120,000 subsidy. The funding amount granted is subject to the final funding budget plan approved by the vetting panel.

Funding Scope

The approved funding can be used to support the following areas for each Awarded Start-up:

- Business registration in Hong Kong and/or Mainland Greater Bay Area cities.
- Start-up establishment and operation, including office setup, equipment, legal and accounting services, and other essential business infrastructure.
- Essential hardware, software, furniture, equipment, and services (e.g., cloud services, corporate secretarial services, e-commerce platforms, and necessary rental of space or equipment).
- Product or service development, encompassing research, prototyping, and related direct costs.
- Marketing and promotional activities for the product or service, including justifiable materials.

The funding **does not support** the following expenses:

- Any unjustifiable costs or those irrelevant to the start-up's operation.
- Recoverable rental deposits.
- Investments of any kind.
- Repayment of any loans (including student or tuition loans) taken by the start-up, its members, employees, or any team member.
- Trips or participation in activities unnecessary or irrelevant to the start-up's operation.
- Compensation-related expenses, including salaries, honorariums, remuneration, bonuses, general fringe benefits and allowances (e.g., housing, education, training, passage and travel, food, medical, dental, and overtime).
- Costs related to forming associations or membership subscriptions.
- Entertainment expenses not directly related to business needs.
- Expenses for providing gifts (e.g., cash coupons) for marketing and/or promotional purposes.
- Events or activities inconsistent with the laws or regulations of Hong Kong or other applicable jurisdictions.

Awarded Start-ups are encouraged to consult CityU BIE for clarification on any doubtful expenses. This list is not exhaustive.

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Disbursement Conditions

The funding will be disbursed to the funded start-up's company via local bank transfer or cheque by installments upon acceptance of all the terms and conditions set out in the Funding Agreement at Annex & execution of the Funding Agreement by all parties thereto:

Installment	Percentage of Total Funding	Condition and Submission Requirement
1 st installment	40%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accept the grant offer, sign the agreement.Complete business registration in Hong Kong and set up a company bank account.Submit milestone schedule & assessment questionnaire I.
2 nd installment	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Achieve the pre-agreed milestone plan.1st installment is insufficient.Submit 1st -3rd progress report.
3 rd installment (Final, based on actual expenditure)	30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Submit all milestones reports & assessment questionnaires.

Awarded start-ups are required to complete and submit written milestone reports to CityU BIE in accordance with the project timeline. They must also maintain and provide detailed financial records for all expenditure items outlined in the budget plan.

All milestones must be achieved, and the necessary documentation for the final installment must be submitted by the end of the support period, as agreed upon between the funded start-ups and CityU BIE. Once these submissions are approved by CityU BIE, the funding installments will be transferred to the bank account of the funded start-up within eight to ten weeks, or within a reasonable timeframe.

Audited financial documents and complete supporting financial records may be requested for submission.

Funded start-ups are expected to maintain communication with CityU BIE on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to provide updates on their development progress and to receive necessary support for their business growth.

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Milestone

Stage	Milestone Details	Expected Latest Completion Date (From the Date of Signing the Funding Agreement)
1	Incorporation of the company in Hong Kong with business registration completed; opening of a bank account for business transactions, including the disbursement of funding.	Within 12 months
2	Recruitment of key personnel (e.g., chief technology officer, marketing manager, business development executive).	Within 18 months
3	Development of a minimum viable product (MVP) or prototype of products/services.	Within 24 months
4	Completion of a comprehensive and viable business plan.	Within 30 months
5	Establishment of a presence in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) through co-working spaces, incubation bases, or partnerships.	Within 36 months
6	Launch and commercialization of products/services, with a focus on customer acquisition and revenue generation.	Within 36 months

Changes to Business in Approved Project/ Business Period

Any significant modifications to the project or business proposal, including but not limited to changes in team members, co-founders, shareholders, business scope, business nature, or expenditure items in the approved budget, require prior approval from CityU BIE. Failure to obtain this approval may result in CityU BIE exercising its right to recover any disbursed grants, reduce the funding amount, or cease further disbursement to the funded start-up.

If the funded start-up terminates its business during the project period as outlined in the proposal and agreement, it must notify CityU BIE in writing and submit any relevant reports. CityU BIE will then halt disbursement of any unpaid installments, recover any unspent grants, and/or request the return of any spent grants from the funded start-up to the Government via CityU. CityU also reserves the right to recover any usable items purchased with grant funds.

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Intellectual Property

Funded start-ups who plan to adopt existing CityUHK IP should contact CityU Knowledge Transfer Office for the procedures to obtain a proper license before using the CityUHK IP.

For non-CityUHK IP, funded start-ups must obtain proper licenses from the relevant external parties before use.

If the funded start-ups have developed new IP during the project/ business period, and:

- If the IP is developed by CityU employees or CityU Research Postgraduates (RPGs) supervised by CityU employees, whether working alone or with others, the ownership of the IP shall belong to CityUHK;
- If the IP is developed by the start-up team with CityU employees or RPGs supervised by CityU employees and CityUHK, the ownership of the IP shall be subject to negotiation between the start-up and CityUHK; or
- If the IP is solely developed by CityU students (except RPGs supervised by CityU employees) and/or alumni, the ownership of the IP shall belong to the students and/or alumni.

For details of the CityU Intellectual Property Policy, please visit the website

<https://www.cityu.edu.hk/policies/ippolicy/IPPolicy.pdf>

Acknowledgement & Publicity Requirements

Awarded start-ups must acknowledge the support of CityU and HYAB in their equipment, facilities, publications, publicity, and media events whenever appropriate. Additionally, the following disclaimer must be included in all publications and media events:

"Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this material/publication (or by members of this company) do not reflect the views of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau, or The City University of Hong Kong."

Upon reasonable request from CityU, awarded start-ups are required to provide updated information regarding their business status, including but not limited to product development and fundraising activities.

Confidentiality & Information Disclosure

HYAB and CityU will maintain the confidentiality of applicants' information in accordance with Hong Kong's Privacy Ordinance (Cap. 486). However, they reserve the right to disclose relevant data to government entities, third parties, or the public via their website as necessary. By submitting applications or reports, applicants and awarded start-ups automatically authorize such disclosures without requiring further consent.

Compliance & Indemnification Requirements

Applicants and awarded start-ups must fully comply with all legislation, including the Laws of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, as well as all regulations and by-laws of the region. They are required to indemnify and hold harmless CityU and HYAB from any liabilities or damages arising from their business activities.

For Enquiries, please email cb.bie@cityu.edu.hk