PARTICIPANT COURSE OUTLINE

Entrepreneurship Programme

Course outline: what the programme is, how it runs, what you produce and how you certify.

PREPARED BY

The Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme

VERSION

1.0 · September 2026

What this programme is

A twelve-week, evidence-led, studio-based entrepreneurship programme, preceded by a Week 0 diagnostic, built around a real venture — yours.

You will not sit through a lecture series. You will not work through a sequence of canvases. You will develop one venture continuously, from an initial hypothesis to a demonstrable minimum viable product, and you will be required to show the evidence behind every consequential decision you make along the way.

WHAT IT IS NOT: a lecture series, a toolkit course, a pitch competition, or a sequence of canvases.

The promise

By the end of the programme, you should have taken a venture from an initial opportunity or product hypothesis through customer and system research, value design, experimentation and commercial investigation to real-world market entry — arriving at an evidence-shaped MVP, or equivalent minimum viable service, that you can demonstrate and defend.

What this asks of you

Your venture is the curriculum. Theory is introduced when your venture needs a better lens, not on a schedule of its own. Tools are introduced only when you have a real problem the tool helps you solve — the tool is never the point.

You will be asked, repeatedly: *How do you know?* and *What would change your mind?* Being able to answer both is the substance of the programme.

Certification is earned through demonstrated competence and evidence. It is not earned through attendance.

How the programme is built

Six stages, each answering one question about your venture.

STAGE	WEEKS	THE QUESTION YOU ARE ANSWERING	WHERE YOUR VENTURE SHOULD BE
0. Selection and diagnostic	Week 0	Are you prepared to work this way?	Initial hypothesis documented; baseline assumptions visible
1. Discover and frame	1–2	What is happening, why does it matter, and what opportunity might exist?	Opportunity investigated and selected or reframed
2. Understand people, experience and systems	3–4	How do people experience this, and what system produces it?	Evidence-backed customer and system requirements
3. Design value and possible futures	5–6	What new configuration could enable better value?	Multiple concepts; a preferred value and experience thesis
4. Experiment, build and learn	7–8	What must we learn before committing more resources?	Testable implementation; MVP components materially iterated
5. Shape the market and make the venture viable	9–10	What market could emerge, and can the venture participate sustainably?	Market thesis, pricing, operating model, cash and viability evidence
6. Launch, lead and adapt	11–12	Can we put it into the world, mobilise others and defend our judgment?	Market-entry evidence, MVP demonstration and 90-day operating plan

The weekly rhythm

Each week has two formal encounters of approximately three hours, including a fifteen-minute break in each.

	ENCOUNTER A	ENCOUNTER B
Focus	Research, concept and venture studio	Lab, critique, leadership and communication
What happens	Theory is introduced because your venture needs a better lens. Cases are met as live decisions under uncertainty, before you know how they turned out.	Methods are practised, evidence is challenged and decisions are rehearsed. You apply the week's learning to your own venture immediately.
How it ends	With a consequential question about your venture	With a concrete action, evidence requirement or field assignment

TIME OUTSIDE THE ROOM. Expect six to ten additional hours each week of fieldwork, research, venture work and preparation. This is not optional reading time — the evidence you are assessed on is produced in these hours, not in the sessions.

HOW THE LEARNING MOVES. Experience → evidence → reflection → theory → interpretation → decision → action → new experience. You will meet a case, make a decision, defend it, and only then encounter the theory that lets you reinterpret what you did.

Week by week

WEEK	THEME	THE QUESTION IN FRONT OF YOU	WHAT YOU PRODUCE	GATE
0	Admission, diagnostic and programme covenant	Are you prepared to work this way?	Initial hypothesis and signed covenant	Diagnostic
1	Seeing before solving	What is actually happening here?	Opportunity landscape; field evidence	—
2	Framing what matters	Which explanation holds, and what opportunity follows?	**Opportunity Case**	**Gate 1**
3	Understanding experience	How do people actually experience this?	**Customer Evidence Dossier**	—
4	Understanding the system	What produces the experience you found?	**Experience and System Case**	**Gate 2**
5	Imagining possible futures	What else could this be?	Three or more materially different concepts	—
6	Designing value	Where does value actually arise, and for whom?	**Value and Experience Thesis**	**Gate 3**
7	Designing experiments	What must you learn before spending more?	**Experiment Strategy**	—
8	Building to learn	What does behaviour tell you that opinion did not?	**Experiment and Product Record**	**Gate 4**
9	Markets as systems	What market could exist, and who shapes it?	**Market and Ecosystem Thesis**	—

WEEK	THEME	THE QUESTION IN FRONT OF YOU	WHAT YOU PRODUCE	GATE
10	Making the venture work	Can this sustain itself?	**Venture Viability Case**	**Gate 5**
11	Entering the world	Can you put it in front of real people?	**Market Entry Case** and 90-day plan	—
12	Lead, communicate and defend	Can you defend your judgment on the evidence?	**MVP demonstration** and **Venture Defence**	**Gate 6**

Five strands that run the whole way through

These are not modules. They are present in every week and assessed continuously.

VENTURE BUILD TRACK. You develop one venture throughout. Early product ideas stay provisional for longer than is comfortable. What is expected is visible product evolution with a traceable reason behind every consequential change.

EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH DISCIPLINE. You are expected to distinguish what you observed from what you concluded from what you assumed. That means primary evidence, traceable sources, contradictory evidence reported rather than dropped, and honest statements of uncertainty.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP. Leadership here is behaviour under uncertainty, not charisma. What is looked for: listening, ownership, constructive disagreement, integrity, adaptability and the ability to mobilise others.

COMMUNICATION AND STORYTELLING. Practised every week, not saved for a final pitch. Clear explanation, adaptation to the audience, evidence-based narrative, and the ability to hold up under questioning.

ECONOMIC REASONING. Scarcity, incentives, trade-offs, prices, costs, cash and unintended consequences recur as lenses throughout. You will be asked to explain the economic consequences of your venture decisions, not merely to complete financial templates.

Competencies and certification

Eight competencies. Each has a primary evidence point in the programme, and each is reconfirmed at the final gate.

COMPETENCY	PRIMARY EVIDENCE POINT
1. Problem and opportunity judgment	Gate 1; reconfirmed at Gate 6
2. Customer and context understanding	Gate 2; reconfirmed at Gate 6
3. Experience and service design	Gates 2–3; reconfirmed at Gate 6
4. Value creation and service-dominant logic	Gate 3; reconfirmed at Gate 6
5. Experimentation and product development	Gate 4; final MVP at Gate 6
6. Commercial, market and venture viability	Gate 5; reconfirmed at Gate 6
7. Entrepreneurial leadership	Continuous; Gate 6
8. Communication and storytelling	Continuous; Gate 6

THE CERTIFICATION RULE. All eight competencies must reach the competent standard. There is no compensatory averaging — strength in one area does not offset a shortfall in another. A strong team venture does not automatically certify every member of the team. You will be asked individually to explain your team's evidence.

Gates: how progression works

A gate is a decision about your venture, taken on the evidence in front of it. It is not a grade, and it is not a judgment of you. Three outcomes are possible.

PROCEED. The evidence and your judgment justify moving to the next stage.

PROCEED WITH CONDITIONS. The venture continues, but a specific evidence gap must be closed. The condition will be stated precisely and you will know what closes it.

DO NOT PROCEED. The work has not yet earned further resource commitment. This may mean going back to investigate more, or changing direction. It is a normal outcome in venture development and it is treated as one here.

You will not encounter criteria at a gate that you were not told about in advance. Gates do not reward confidence, charisma, or an idea a trainer happens to like.

What is expected of you

EVIDENCE, NOT ASSERTION. Every consequential claim about your customers, your market or your product must be traceable to something you actually gathered. Where you are uncertain, say so — declared uncertainty is treated as competence, undeclared uncertainty as a failure of discipline.

REPORT WHAT DISCONFIRMS YOU. Evidence that undermines your preferred direction is worth more to your venture than evidence that supports it, and it is assessed accordingly. Useful negative results from an experiment count as fully as positive ones.

INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN A TEAM. You may work in a team. You will be assessed as an individual, and you will be asked to explain your team's evidence and reasoning yourself. Carrying, or being carried, is visible.

USING AI. AI tools may support your work where appropriate, provided you verify sources and retain accountability for everything you submit. AI-generated customer evidence and fabricated or unverified citations are not evidence. Submitting either is a matter of academic integrity, not a technique choice.

THE COVENANT. You will document an initial hypothesis and agree a programme covenant in Week 0. Both are the baseline against which your later work is read.

What you receive

PARTICIPANT ACADEMIC READER — what you are expected to know: the theory, the definitions, the debates and the limits of each concept.

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK — what you are expected to do, record and submit each week.

Core references

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