



Business Start-up Investment FAQ

To provide best use of the funds and meet the stated objective of providing targeted support to grow the number of new start social enterprises the following criteria applies: -

Start-up Investment	
Question	Answer
Funding amount	
How much funding can I apply for?	You can apply for a maximum investment of £5,000.00
What is the minimum investment amount?	The minimum investment is £1,000 (excluding VAT).
Can the total cost include VAT?	No, the investment excludes VAT so the minimum project spend would need to be £1000 excluding VAT.
Can I pay for several things such as insurance, website, and accountancy advice?	Yes, you can use the investment to pay for several eligible items of spend needed to start your venture as agreed by the investment panel.
Can I apply for funding for something I have already paid for?	Retrospective applications will not be acceptable. If you have already paid for an item, you will not be able to apply the investment to reimburse that cost. You must wait to receive an approval letter from WNSET before paying a supplier.



Funded by UK Government

When will I receive the investment?

Upon receipt of an application it will be assessed by UON within 15 days. It will then be passed to members of the investment panel for scoring. Investment panels will take place regularly (depending on demand). The payment of investment monies will be made to a nominated bank account within 28 days of the investment panel's unconditional approval

Eligibility





<p>Do I need to have registered my social enterprise?</p>	<p>You must provide evidence that the social enterprise has been registered with either Companies House, HMRC, the CIC registrar, or other regulatory body. This would be either a Companies House/CIC registration number or a letter from HMRC with your Unique Tax Reference (UTR) number and your date of registration.</p>
<p>What is classed as a start-up social enterprise?</p>	<p>The start-up investment is available to any social enterprise venture at the per start and early start stages (up to 2 years of trading). All pre-start ventures must start trading within 6 months of the awarding of the investment.</p>
<p>If I registered my social enterprise more than 2 years ago but have been trading for less than that, am I eligible?</p>	<p>Yes, you must provide registration documents which demonstrate your social enterprise is less than 2 years old (from date of incorporation/registration). If you are a registered limited company of any description, which has not been trading for more than 2 years, you must also provide dormant accounts information.</p>
<p>Can my business partner(s) or members of by social enterprise also apply for investment?</p>	<p>No, we can only approve one investment per social enterprise.</p>

<p>Can I apply more than once?</p>	<p>There is a limit of one investment application per social enterprise regardless of the £5,000 overall maximum.</p>
<p>Can I use it to pay for equipment?</p>	<p>The investment can be used to purchase capital I items excluding IT hardware, and other equipment related to IT. Applications for specialist software or software upgrades that improve efficiency or support new processes and/or service/ product introduction can be considered.</p>
<p>What are classed as eligible items for investment</p>	<p>The investment fund is here to support the starting and development of early start social enterprise and does not want to be prescriptive in what is and isn't eligible as all ventures are different. The investment panel will decide what is appropriate based on the application and information provided, however the following are examples of items that can be included as eligible spend: -</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing costs • Specialist Business Planning support and consultancy not available through other sources. • Purchase of items such as bikes where they would be used for delivery or goods • Rental of additional or new shop/delivery/office space • Equipment essential for the delivery of the product or service offered by the social enterprise. • New or upgraded IT software required to enhance efficiency or introduce new product, processes, or services.
<p>What are classed as ineligible items for investment?</p>	<p>The investment fund is here to support the starting and development of early start social enterprise and does not want to be prescriptive in what is and isn't eligible as all ventures are different. The investment panel will decide what is appropriate based on the application and information provided, however the following are examples of items that cannot be included as eligible spend: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay for existing staff • Stationery or other office supplies • Payment of personal or business bills and liabilities incurred prior to approval of the application. • Repairs to business or other premises • salary costs of directors or social entrepreneur • . the provision of an investment/grant fund
<p>Do I need to provide quotations for the items I would like to spend the investment on?</p>	<p>It would be very helpful and may well improve your chances of obtaining investment if you provide quotations verifying what you want the investment for. You only need to provide one quotation for any single item up to the value of £2,500 with three quotations favoured for items costing £2,501 to £5,000.</p> <p>You do not need to go with best value considerations, i.e., cheapest quotation, with quotations from social enterprise suppliers favoured to maximise social value.</p>
<p>Can I use my spouse's business as one of the suppliers?</p>	<p>We do not accept applications for working with suppliers which are closely associated with the applicant's business.</p>



Do the quotes have to be of a similar value?	The quotes need to be for a similar specification of services. Whilst the overall total costs would be expected to be broadly similar, they do not have to be very close in value.
Can the quotes be on email?	We will accept emailed quotes if they have the email address and contact details of the supplier as part of the email message. The investment panel may check details with the supplier as part of the appraisal
Do I have to choose the cheapest quote?	You do not have to choose the cheapest quote, but you will be required to state your reason for the decision. We will favour quotes provided by social enterprises as a way of maximising social value created through the investment
Can I pay for training?	Training, which is a legal requirement for the business, is included as is any other technical training needed to enhance the social enterprises capacity to succeed.
The Application	
How do I apply for investment?	Please use the application form on the WNSET website, this can be emailed to business_support@northampton.ac.uk . Once received, if further information or clarifications are needed WNSET will be in touch to arrange to meet and discuss your application.
Do I need to write a business plan?	Applicants must submit an outline business plan including projections, using the template available on the WNSET application portal. Access to support on business planning is available through several sources across the town again details are available on the WNSET website. Once an application is received an adviser may contact you to review the plan and clarify assumptions.
How much do I need to write in the application?	Please write a short paragraph to clearly explain under each section: What your business does; why you are applying for your funding and what the benefits will be. Please try and provide as much information as possible to enable the panel to make a valid assessment, but do not exceed the stated word count. Make every word count.



Can I email it all through to you?	Yes. Please email application and supporting information to: business_support@northampton.ac.uk
Getting the funding	
Can I pay for my items by credit card?	You can pay by credit card, but we may need to see your credit card statement as proof of payment.
If I decide not to use the agreed supplier what happens?	You will not be permitted to change supplier once your application has been approved. Please contact us to discuss any issues with this and obtain approval for any variation.
If the investment is taking a while to get approved, can I go ahead and pay my supplier?	You will need to wait to receive an approval letter from WNSET before making the purchase. We cannot accept proof of payment which is made before receipt of our approval letter.
How soon will I get the money?	WNSET intends to make an investment payment within 28 days of the date of the approval letter. If there is any delay WNSET will advise the applicant and provide details of when the payment will be received.
Do I need to pay the full invoice before the investment funds are released?	No, however you may be required to provide proof of purchase and payment (as detailed in the offer letter). The applicant will need to utilise their own funds if they wish to pay for the items prior to receipt of monies. The following applied to the provision of evidence if required: -



	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Supplier Invoices must be dated after the date of the letter from WNSET and need to clearly show that they have been paid (i.e. ask the supplier for a receipt) or provide separate proof of payment.2. Provide proof of the money going out of your account (i.e., copy of your bank statement) may be required for higher amounts.3. Invoices for the total amount (excluding VAT) must be submitted all together, so rather than piecemeal to assist with administration will make one payment into your bank account4. Provide us with your bank account name, sort code and number5. Failure to comply and provide any required evidence may result in WNSET clawing investment back.
Do I have to pay this funding back to you?	If you comply with the terms and conditions of the Offer Letter there will be no requirement to repay any investment back to WNSET. However, failure to comply to the terms and conditions and/or there is a misappropriation of the investment WNSET reserves the right to require a refund of the funds released. Applicants will be personally at risk for any refund requests.
Will the investment funding come to an end?	There is a total amount allocated for investment over the 2 years of the fund. Applications will be reviewed on a first come first served basis until the funds have been expended. Once all funds have been spent there will be no more investments made.