

# IMPERIAL

## Startup Launchpad Summer School

21<sup>st</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> August 2025 at Imperial College London



### IMPERIAL COLLEGE LONDON

Imperial College London is consistently ranked among the world's top universities, currently **ranked 2nd globally** in the **QS World University Rankings 2025**. As a science and technology-focused institution, Imperial has a long-standing reputation for research excellence and innovation, attracting over 22,000 students and 8,000 faculty members from more than 126 countries.

With a legacy that includes groundbreaking discoveries such as penicillin and fiber optics, Imperial continues to foster interdisciplinary research tackling global challenges in health, climate change, sustainability, and technology.

Imperial is home to one of the most dynamic entrepreneurship ecosystems in the UK. It offers a number of innovative degree programmes, such as MScs in Artificial Intelligence, Financial Technology, and Bioscience Futures. Beyond the degree education, it has incredible entrepreneurship support structures, such as the [Imperial Enterprise Lab and Advanced Hackspace](#). Imperial startups have collectively raised billions in funding, with successful ventures emerging in sectors such as DeepTech, healthcare, AI, and sustainability.

The **Startup Launchpad Summer School** connects students with this vibrant ecosystem, offering access to **entrepreneurship experts, potential investors, and other key stakeholders** and immersing them in **real-world startup methodologies**.

### SUMMER SCHOOL OVERVIEW

This summer school is an **intensive, hands-on programme** designed to help participants **turn ideas into validated startup opportunities**. Whether you have a business idea already or are looking to join someone else who does, this is a great opportunity for you to find team members and test an idea in the real world.

As the name suggests, in this programme, we are going to focus on startups specifically. We define a startup as a high-growth, innovation-driven company designed to scale rapidly, often through disruptive technology or business model, and most times needing risk capital investment (Angel, Accelerators or VC) in order to achieve scale prior to profitable operations or well-proven IP, and therefore with a view to creating an exit typically within a 5-10 year timeframe.

Through a mix of **workshops, coaching, and expert panels**, participants will learn how to:

- Identify and validate business opportunities.
- Develop and test value propositions.
- Acquire initial customers and understand market demand.
- Build an early-stage business model.
- Develop a pitch and implementation plan.

By the end of the program, students will **pitch their ideas to a panel of experts**, with a **prize awarded to the best startup pitch**.

## **Learning Objectives**

By the end of the summer school, students will be able to:

- Understand the entrepreneurial process and key factors that contribute to startup success,
- Identify and validate business opportunities using structured frameworks and customer insights,
- Identify and engage early adopters by exploring practical ways to acquire first customers and optimize for speed of execution,
- Test their ideas with different approaches, including a minimum viable product (MVP),
- Understand the fundamentals of entrepreneurial finance, including cost estimation, revenue modeling, and funding options,
- Create a compelling pitch that effectively communicates a business idea to investors and other stakeholders,
- Develop an actionable roadmap to launch and scale a startup.

## **PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND FORMAT**

60 contact hours spread over 2 weeks covering workshops, coaching sessions, team work, and social activities. Classes will be delivered on weekdays.

Students will develop their ventures with supervision from our team of experts. Final pitches will be presented to a panel of experts at the end of the programme. A prize will be awarded to the team with the best pitch.

## **SESSIONS DESCRIPTION**

Below are the key sessions included in the programme. Each session is designed to build essential entrepreneurial skills and help students develop their startup ideas.

1. Forming an Effective Startup Team – Learn how to find the right co-founders and collaborators, align on goals, and establish a strong working dynamic to kickstart your startup.
2. Ideating & Design Thinking for Startups – Use design thinking to generate and refine business ideas by identifying customer challenges and creating innovative solutions.
3. Validating Your Business Idea & Getting Customer Insights – Test key assumptions, conduct customer interviews, and gather market feedback to refine your startup idea.
4. Acquiring Your First Customers – Identify early adopters and explore practical strategies for customer acquisition and early traction.
5. Building Your MVP – Develop a minimum viable product (MVP) to test and iterate your idea based on real-world feedback.
6. Understanding Your Startup Financials – Learn cost estimation, revenue modeling, and funding options for early-stage startups.
7. Telling Your Best Story – Master storytelling and pitching to effectively communicate your startup vision.
8. Developing Your Implementation & Fundraising Plan – Structure an actionable roadmap to launch and grow your startup while exploring fundraising strategies.
9. Scaling Your Venture – Explore growth strategies, advanced fundraising approaches, and expansion planning.

## **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

All students are expected to be studying an undergraduate degree or graduate degree, in any subject discipline.

### English requirements:

All students are required to have a good command of English, and if it is not their first language, they will need to satisfy the College requirement as follows:

- a minimum score of IELTS (Academic Test) 6.5 overall (with no less than 6.0 in any element) or equivalent.
- TOEFL (iBT) 92 overall (minimum 20 in all elements)

## **TEACHING FACULTY**

The summer school will be led by Lisa Portz, Andrew Humphries, and Gregory Theyel alongside Imperial faculty and guest entrepreneurs.

### About Dr Lisa Portz

Lisa is an expert in entrepreneurship program design and training, working with early-stage founders to help them build and scale successful businesses. She has designed and led multiple accelerator and entrepreneurship training programs, supporting founders through customer validation, fundraising, and business growth.

With firsthand experience in launching and funding ventures, Lisa brings practical insights from her direct experience, combined with having supported over a thousand of founders in their startup journey. She holds a PhD in Entrepreneurship from Imperial College London,

specializing in the experience of first-time founders and the effectiveness of startup support programs.

#### About Andrew Humphries

Andrew is a serial entrepreneur with multiple exits. Most recently co-founder of The Bakery, a world leading accelerator and corporate innovation consultancy, he has extensive and senior experience helping organisations to innovate better and faster, coaching founders, building and scaling startups, and in corporate venturing and venture building.

Prior to The Bakery, he was co-founder of Adepta, a Fintech Startup, raising \$43M before being acquired by FICO in 2013 for \$135M. Between 2009 and 2019 he acted as a Senior Dealmaker for the Global Entrepreneur Programme for the UK Government, supporting international founders of high-growth startups to headquarter themselves in the UK. He is a visiting lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Imperial College London.

#### About Gregory Theyel

Gregory is a passionate entrepreneur, product designer, and manufacturing engineer with a proven track record of crafting innovative, user-centric products from concept to launch. Gregory has founded, launched, and scaled three ventures in energy and life sciences. He has also been an advisor for the Tech Futures Group for 10 years helping startups with engineering, product design, and manufacturing, where he and his colleagues have helped companies raise nearly \$1 Billion in funding.

Gregory is a Senior Professorial Fellow at Imperial College London where he is the Academic Director for the MSc. in Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Management. He has a doctorate from Clark University, has published more than 50 peer-reviewed academic articles and two academic press books and has taught industrial engineering and management courses in Brazil, Hong Kong, Singapore, Moscow, Austria, Switzerland, the UK, and the United States.

### **CERTIFICATION**

Students will receive a Imperial College London certificate on successful completion of the summer school. Each student will also receive a document for their programme marks.

### **LOCATION**

The summer school will take place at Imperial College London's South Kensington Campus, located amongst many famous [attractions](#) in London.

The culture triangle: neighbour to three of London's most prestigious (and free) museums. Right next door, the Science Museum. Across the road, the Victoria & Albert Museum, and around the corner. The Natural History Museum. From Neolithic to the latest scientific breakthroughs, experience it all just minutes from Imperial's doorstep.

The campus is also next to the famous Royal Albert Hall, one of London's most iconic music venues, established in 1871, host to the BBC Proms and countless world-famous international artists.

In addition, the beautiful Hyde Park and the famous Harrods Department Store are just a short walk from the campus.

