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## Could you be an entrepreneur?

Northumbria University, Newcastle, and Gateshead Council are inviting recent graduates to join a free business start-up programme designed to help aspiring entrepreneurs launch new ventures.

Research shows that up to 75% of Britons would like to set up their own business, but most never get around to it.

New to the North East, the SparkTank course is driven by the belief that the best time to succeed is straight after graduation, when innovators can afford to take risks and don't have too many responsibilities. It has been designed to support, develop and test business ideas.

The free 10-week course starts on Monday 21 September and is sponsored by the University's Newcastle Business School and Gateshead Council.

As well as being free, Gateshead Council will provide support of up to £1,000 for the first seven successful applicants, funded through the Scape Reinvest programme, toward the costs of participating on the programme.

Professor Jane Turner, Associate Dean Business and Engagement, Newcastle Business School, said: "Northumbria University has one of the best records amongst UK universities for supporting and nurturing business start-ups and for the jobs created by its graduate entrepreneurs. In sponsoring SparkTank, we are further demonstrating our commitment to provide opportunities and experiences for graduates to seriously consider an entrepreneurial pathway whilst encouraging and supporting innovation in the North East region and beyond."

Michael Fowle, Enterprise Fellow at Newcastle Business School, added: "This is an intense accelerator programme compressed into 10 weeks, where delegates will find out a great deal about themselves and their business ideas. They will have access to mentors who are experienced entrepreneurs, and get specialist input from experts in marketing, legal, product development, raising finance and much more. Delegates will also gain valuable, and I suspect, life-long support from each other as they share the learning experience.

Councillor Mary Foy, Cabinet Member for Economy at Gateshead Council, said: "Gateshead has a history of harnessing local talent, providing the foundations from which young businesses can grow and flourish. We are thrilled to be supporting the University's SparkTank programme, which will be invaluable in helping entrepreneurs focus on the development of their business idea; moving from ideas to trading quickly and helping them to make their mark in the region."

For more information about the programme please email: [info@sparktank.biz](mailto:info@sparktank.biz) or call Peter Pease, the programme manager on 0191 603 1566

You can also visit [www.facebook.com/sparktankaccelerator](https://www.facebook.com/sparktankaccelerator) or @SparkTankNBS on Twitter.

For more information on Northumbria University visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

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If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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