



Artist impression of the new Innovation Northumbria: Incubator

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University incubator helps create tomorrow's entrepreneurs

Northumbria University, Newcastle, is developing a purpose-built incubator hub to support its flourishing community of student and graduate start-ups – and is urging business partners to offer mentoring and financial backing.

Innovation Northumbria: Incubator will open in October as a pre-accelerator for aspiring entrepreneurs. Located next to the University's main campus, the state-of the-art facility has already received financial support from Santander Universities UK, Sir James Knott Trust, North East Times Magazine, Space

Group and the North East Local Enterprise Partnership. A sponsorship agreement for a series and profile and fund-raising events has also been secured with Newcastle-based creative agency Gardiner Richardson.

Northumbria is now looking for additional support to set up an Enterprise Club, where members can offer pro-bono advice and expertise, and an Enterprise Fund through which they can pledge financial support to help fledgling start-ups develop proof-of-concept and feasibility business plans.

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The initiative reinforces Northumbria's reputation as a university that champions enterprise and innovation through its teaching, and the support it offers start-ups through the [Student and Graduate Enterprise Service](#). Pioneering courses such as Entrepreneurial Business Management, where students run their own businesses, and the student-led consultancy service delivered on the Business Clinic programme, have also established Northumbria as a leader in entrepreneurial education.

The initiative also comes as Northumbria once again tops the UK university rankings for graduate start-ups based on turnover. In the Higher Education Business and Communities Interaction survey for 2017/18, turnover for Northumbria graduate start-ups exceeded £81.4 million – exceeding the second placed institution by more than £34 million. Since 2009 Northumbria has supported the development of over 370 graduate companies that now employ almost 1,100 people.

Lucy Winskell OBE, Pro Vice-Chancellor for Employability and Partnerships at Northumbria, said: “We are extremely proud of our entrepreneurial students and graduates and the significant contribution their businesses are making to economic growth, social prosperity and indeed jobs. Their success is down to remarkable creativity, drive and innovation, but it also reflects the focus we have as a university on entrepreneurship both in education and research and the support we offer our start-ups.

“Our new Incubator will take this to the next level as a purpose-built workspace with access to a range of support and mentoring services and a central location in Newcastle close to all transport links. The aim is to offer the perfect environment to grow the next generation of student and graduate entrepreneurs.

“Looking ahead, our ambitions include creating a shared vision and facility for accelerator and scale-ups in partnership with key stakeholders across the North East, and I would encourage business organisations to support our Enterprise Club and Enterprise Fund.”

Darren Richardson, Co-Founder & Creative Director, Gardiner Richardson, added: “As an established creative business founded by Northumbria University, Newcastle alumni and based in the North East, we understand what it takes to develop and grow a successful company. From our beginnings in a small start-up space we have grown a national and international client base. Today nearly 60% of our clients trade outside the North East, many of them internationally.

“Our company is living proof that with the right environment, support and collaboration – plus plenty of great people and innovative ideas – the North East can lead from the front. That’s why we are supporting Innovation Northumbria: Incubator, to help entrepreneurs grow, scale and succeed.”

To find out more about the Innovation Northumbria: Incubator and how to offer your support please visit: www.northumbria.ac.uk/incubatorlaunch

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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