



INNOVATION AND INCUBATION POLICY 2023

**Incubation Centre
University of Allahabad
Prayagraj**

1. About the Incubation Centre

The University of Allahabad Incubation Centre (UoA-IC) was established for fostering innovation and entrepreneurship by supporting and promoting startups and facilitating their growth by incubating in the Centre. The Centre was established in the year 2022. A Section 8 company, **Navkalpana Innovation and Entrepreneurship Foundation (NIEF)** was incorporated to act as the special purpose vehicle (SPV) of UoA-IC. The Incubation Centre is actively involved in creating and strengthening an ecosystem for promoting entrepreneurship within and outside the University. It is dedicated to promoting a culture of innovative thinking for creating sustainable commercial ventures aligned to the core theme of the Centre so as to enable economic and social transformation.

The main aim of the UoA-IC is to establish collaboration with the corporate sector, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and knowledge hubs for promoting and nurturing technology-based startups. Such partnerships will facilitate swift commercialization of innovative products and services. Apart from providing support to startup companies, UoA-IC also aims at incubating potential ideas that may lead to successful, financially viable and independent firms. The ultimate aim is to enable incubatees for commercializing new products, services, processes and technologies, and create jobs, thereby adding to the economic growth of India. Incubated startups shall not only benefit from business and technical assistance, they will also benefit from affiliation with the incubator, a supportive community with an entrepreneurial environment, direct link to entrepreneurs, cohorts and with other incubated companies. and immediate networking and commercial opportunities

2. Objectives

The UoA-IC aims at providing a platform to entrepreneurs for creating innovative solutions to address business problems as well as create a social impact. This Incubation Policy aims at providing guidance and management structure to facilitate startups and promote entrepreneurship to realize the vision for building and bolstering an ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship. The main objectives of the UoA-IC are:

- i. To promote entrepreneurship by supporting UoA community including students and alumni, and others in the community, in creating successful business ventures.
- ii. To promote innovation by providing physical infrastructure to start-ups to help them transform innovative ideas to products/solutions/services.
- iii. To provide incubation and acceleration to start-up companies by facilitating with mentoring, guidance and networking.
- iv. To encourage the activities leading to promotion of entrepreneurship.
- v. To organise training and awareness programs in entrepreneurship.

3. Thrust areas

UoA-IC will endeavour to promote technology-based innovative business ventures. Preferred thrust areas for the Incubation are:

- 1) Agriculture and allied fields
- 2) Energy & Environmental sustainability
- 3) Healthcare
- 4) Education
- 5) E-commerce

The Incubator will focus on incubating start-ups in the domains such that start-ups can leverage expertise of UoA by associating with mentors from academia, industry, research institutes or any other field.

4. Operating Model

The Centre Coordinator and the members of the Incubation Centre will be nominated by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor from among the faculty members of the UoA. The Centre Coordinator, along with the members shall assist in running the UoA-IC. The Centre Coordinator may invite external experts to the meetings, as required. The Coordinator and the members of the UoA-IC may give recommendations to facilitate the functioning of NIEF. NIEF shall be governed by the Board of Directors (BoD), as per its article of association, which will make subsequent appointments for the smooth functioning of NIEF. An Advisory Board of NIEF, nominated by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, may consist of faculty members, administrators, representatives from industry, investors, academia, and administration, or any other experts. BoD hold absolute power to take decisions related to the functioning of NIEF and the programmes run by the UoA-IC.

5. Incubation Policy and Guidelines

UoA-IC shall be primarily responsible for nurturing startup-incubatees, as well as for identifying promising pre-company stage incubatees through its SPV. The UoA-IC will help startups in building capacity and scaling. This policy document shall serve as guideline in the process of nurturing startup ideas and ventures. The policy is subject to periodical review and amendments. It will be the responsibility of the startups admitted to UoA-IC to update themselves from time to time on amendments in Incubation policy and procedures. UoA-IC reserves the rights to make an exception to all or any of the terms of policy. Such exceptions shall be ratified by the BoD.

6. Support for Incubatees

The UoA-IC will nurture and facilitate startup ventures at all stages, that is, pre-incubation of promising business ideas as well as incubation and acceleration of businesses. UoA provides an enabling environment for both student and faculty researchers of the University interested in initiating business ventures or social enterprises. The scope of support is broad-based ranging from providing necessary infrastructure to capacity development to network development for business growth. Such support services include the following:

1. Mentoring
2. Facilitating professional (legal, financial etc.) advice
3. Marketing connections
4. Connecting with investors
5. Workspace and available infrastructure

7. Programmes

The Centre shall run any/all of the following programmes at any point of time:

- Pre-incubation Programme (Virtual mode and/or Physical Mode)
- Incubation Programme (Virtual Mode and/or Physical mode)
- Acceleration Programme

- Any Other (including short-term courses related to startup management)

i) Pre-Incubation Programme:

The programme will be targeted at an individual/team from within UoA having a promising and innovative business idea. The programme shall be offered in virtual and/or physical mode, as decided by the Board of Directors of NIEF. The duration of the Virtual pre-incubation Programme shall be 3 months and Physical pre-incubation Programme shall be 6 months.

ii) Incubation Programme

The programme is meant for individuals who have incorporated a private limited company/limited liability partnership/registered partnership firm, registered as per the laws of India. Entity should not have been formed by splitting up or reconstructing an already existing business. Incubation shall be offered in physical mode and/or virtual mode, as decided by the BoD. The maximum duration of the programme in Virtual mode shall be 12 months and that in physical mode shall be 24 months.

iii) Accelerator Programme

The programme will aim at helping individuals having a registered company to scale up the business through various activities.

iv) Any other

UoA-IC may run any other programme that may include short term online and offline certificate courses or any other programme related to entrepreneurship as decided by the BoD.

The duration of the various Programmes run by UoA-IC may be modified by BoD, as and when required.

8. Broad Eligibility Criteria

- i) Admission to the Incubation Programmes of the UoA-IC is open to any person desirous of incubation, who has registered a company/limited liability partnership/registered partnership firm as per the laws of India. This condition may be relaxed for recent graduates for 6 months, provided they register their startup within 3 months of incubation at UoA-IC.
- ii) Applications for admission to UoA-IC will be made in the name of individuals in the case of Pre-Incubation Programme and in the name of registered companies/limited liability partnership/registered partnership firms for Incubation and Acceleration Programmes.
- iii) The companies promoted by faculty of UoA shall be governed by the policies of UoA.
- iv) Other start-ups, not linked with UoA will be required to have a mentor or consultant from UoA. Any other exceptions will be decided by the BoD.
- v) UoA-IC will not be responsible for any impact on the academic activities of the students who are desirous of incubation at UoA-IC in physical or virtual mode.
- vi) Any exceptions shall be decided by the BoD.

9. Selection Process

Application for various programmes run by UoA-IC shall be accepted online mode. There shall be two-stage process for selection:

Stage 1: Submission of business plan/idea, with other necessary details, as required for the purpose by the UoA-IC which shall be assessed by an internal review committee to evaluate the strength of the proposal on the criteria decided by the BoD.

Stage 2: Presentation

After the initial screening, the shortlisted individuals/teams will be required to present critical aspects of the business plan/idea to the evaluation committee.

Research & Due Diligence:

Throughout the application process, as required, UoA-IC will perform research and due diligence of the company, the management team, the industry, and the current and future competitive elements facing the business. UoA-IC may require further information from the applicant, and may ask the applicant to revise the executive summary and/or presentation.

Result

After the declaration of the result the selected individuals/companies shall be admitted to the UoA-IC on payment of Programme fee and signing of an Incubation Agreement, as annexed in Annexure III

10. Intellectual Property

Following details will be considered during the assessment of Intellectual Property (Patents, Trademarks, Copyrights, Designs and any other form of IP) for incubation purpose:

- i) Details relating to IP ownership, joint IP development, IP transfer, IP licensing and cross licensing etc.
- ii) If the IP is developed at UoA, whether any UoA infrastructure (hardware, testing setup, instrumentation, computing resources, processes) has been used in developing the technology that will go into the product(s).

Applicants, who are current faculty or students of UoA, aspiring for incubation shall first approach UoA for transfer of / licensing of/ permission to use IP in favour of prospective incubatee companies. They will initiate a letter to Dean -Research & Development, UoA requesting the transfer of UoA IP in favour of a start-up company in the UoA-IC intended to be promoted/ supported by the inventor.

The Promoters should fill an IP declaration worksheet at the time of admission and declare the Intellectual Property developed and owned by the incubated company.

11. Exit

Virtual Pre-incubation gets terminated after a period of three months, while Physical Pre-Incubation gets terminated after a period of six months.

For Physical Incubation Programme, the Incubation Agreement gets terminated automatically after a period of twenty-four months. One further extension can be granted for a maximum period of twelve months at discretion of the BoD.

Virtual physical incubation gets terminated after a period of twelve months. One further extension can be granted for three months at sole discretion of the Incubation Centre.

Incubation Agreement may also terminate forthwith on or prior to the term of the Agreement as follows:

A. By the UoA-IC:

i. if any default in payment of Incubation service charges or any financial fraud is played by the Start-up, by giving an advance notice of seven calendar days.

ii. if violation of any statute, rules and regulations/policy of UoA/UoA-IC occurs, by giving an advance notice of one month, though the start-up will be provided sufficient opportunity to represent and discuss the matter/case with BoD.

iii. for any other reason for which UoA-IC may find it necessary for the start-up to leave, by giving an advance notice of one month.

B. By the Start-up

By giving an advance notice of one month to the UoA-IC in writing, and clearing all the dues as part of closing of agreement.

C. By Graduation

a. The completion of the specified duration of the Programme from the date of execution of the programme agreement, and when no extension is provided by BoD.

b. The completion of extension period, if the extension is provided by BoD.

c. Start-up team operating at Incubation Centre crosses headcount of 10 (including outsourced / contracted roles)

d. The Start-up company completes 10 years of its incorporation as a private limited company)/ limited liability partnership/registered partnership firm, registered as per the laws of India (as per the definition of Start-up given by Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade).

12. Performance Monitoring

A committee set up by BoD will evaluate the performance of incubatees every 3 months. The emphasis of evaluation will be on checking if the milestones specified in the business plan are met.

13. Information Submission

Start-up companies will submit information to UoA-IC about all material changes or developments taking place in their companies from time to time. Such information could be (but not limited to) change in name of the company, change in business or product profile, change in directors, promoters or shareholders, acquisition of a new office, additional equity or debt investments. UoA-IC may require start-up companies to submit other information as it deems fit. Prior concurrence of UoA-IC should be obtained for effecting such changes.

14. Mode of Payment of Fee

A startup incubated at UoA-IC have to pay full fee or a combination of fee and some percentage of equity, as decided by the BoD.

15. Tenure in UoA-IC

The tenure of pre-incubates and incubatees/Companies admitted to UoA-IC under different programmes will be as specified in the respective Programme details. UoA-IC has the discretion to extend the tenure of incubatees under physical incubation programme/acceleration program for a maximum period of another 12 months.

16. Policy Administration

BoD is the apex body for taking final decisions in any and all matters of incubation. The UoA-IC Coordinator, along with the members, shall create and recommend the Incubation Policy to the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor for approval. The approved Incubation Policy shall be administered by the BoD.

This version of Incubation Policy has been adopted by the BoD of NIEF in its Meeting on 30th November 2023, and hence will be considered in effect from this date. Centre Coordinator, UoA-IC, along with members, UoA-IC may recommend changes in this version of the Incubation Policy, which will require ratification by the majority of the Directors of the Board. Such changes will be adopted by BoD after the approval by Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, UoA.

17. Terms and Conditions

The Incubated Company shall compensate for any loss or damage to the Incubation Centre or UoA, which arises due to any act or omission by the Incubated Company, its promoters, directors, employees, etc., as decided by the BoD.

18. Disclaimer

The pre-incubatee/ incubatee company will understand and acknowledge that UoA-IC intends to provide supports and services to the Company in good faith to pursue its objective to promote entrepreneurship by converting innovative technologies developed in the Institute to commercialization by incubating and supporting new enterprises. It is understood that by agreeing to provide various supports and services, UoA-IC does not undertake responsibility for:

- Ensuring success of an incubatee company, its products/ process/ services or marketability,
- Ensuring quality of support and services provided by UoA-IC to the complete satisfaction of the incubatee companies or their promoters/ founders.
- Ensuring quality of services of the consultants engaged by the incubatee companies through UoA-IC/ UoA network.

The incubatee companies agree that UoA-IC / UoA or their employees shall not be held liable for any reason on account of the above.