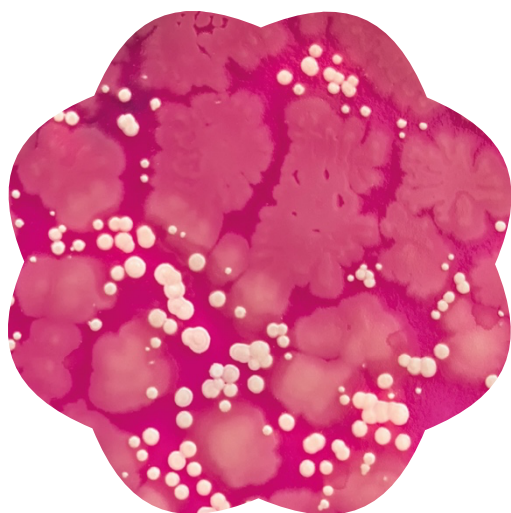
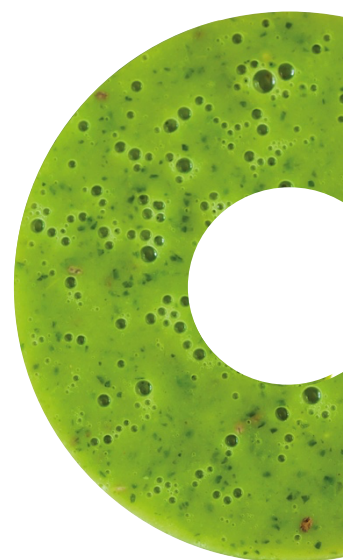


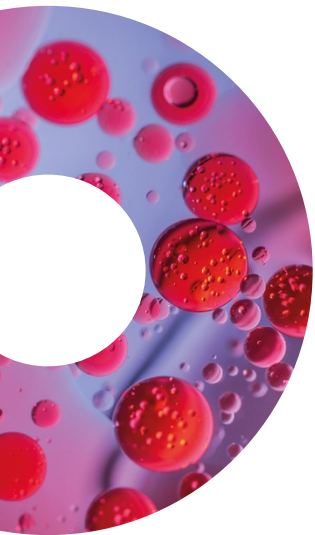
# FaBA Growth Hub 2025 Program

## Program Overview

This document contains a description of the FaBA Growth Hub 2025 Program including: an overview of the program including scheduling, structure, program benefit, program content and eligibility; and key selection criteria and application content.

Applications must be submitted through the [webform](#) and are **due June 23, 2025 at 9:00 AM AEST.**





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# About

## FaBA

Australia's Food and Beverage Accelerator (FaBA) is investing in industry-led food and beverage innovation. FaBA's multidisciplinary approach provides our participants with access to integrated research, innovation, and training. We are equipped to work with you from ideation to innovation, through ingredient development, and ultimately to achieving commercial success. The FaBA Growth Hub Program is delivered in partnership with The University of Queensland (UQ) Ventures, ensuring that participants benefit from a robust support system designed to foster growth and innovation in the food and beverage sector.

## UQ Ventures

UQ Ventures possesses the skills and resources necessary to effectively deliver this program. As one of Australia's leading research and teaching institutions, UQ is dedicated to enriching its entrepreneurial ecosystem and cultivating the leaders of the future. Through UQ Ventures, entrepreneurs receive comprehensive support at every stage of their journey, collaborating with staff and alumni while connecting with a diverse network of global experts. UQ's successful partnerships demonstrate that innovation thrives through teamwork, and that increased stakeholder involvement can drive exceptional outcomes that create meaningful change.

## The FaBA Growth Hub Program

The FaBA Growth Hub offers essential in-kind resources to support Australian food and beverage SMEs and startups in innovating products that align with shifting consumer preferences. This program creates practical pathways for commercial growth, that allows each fellow to dedicate one full day per week over a 12-week period to de-risk and advance their business, positioning them to secure the capital needed for expansion. Participants in the 12-week program will engage in five hours of online delivery each day, which includes:

- Two hours of 'Office Hour' sessions, where founders can work on their startups and receive personalized support from the Entrepreneur in Residence (EiR) and Ventures staff.
- Two workshops or founder talks, each lasting 1.5 hours, designed to enhance entrepreneurial skills and knowledge.
- Additionally, a dedicated EiR will be available to support program development and delivery, offering weekly one-on-one coaching.
- Participants will also benefit from periodic entrepreneurial and leadership programming provided by UQ, ensuring a comprehensive support system throughout their journey.

## Key Contacts

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# Key Dates

Date	Milestone
May 18, 9:00 am AEST	Stage 1 - Applications OPEN   <a href="#">Apply</a>
Ongoing	1:1 Application consultants with FaBA Growth Hub Program Team   <a href="#">Schedule</a>
June 5, 4:00 pm AEST	Information Session 1 (Online)   <a href="#">RSVP</a>
June 16, 12:00 pm AEST	Information Session 2 (Online)   <a href="#">RSVP</a>
June 23, 4:00 pm AEST	<b>Stage 1 - <a href="#">Application deadline</a>. No late applications will be accepted</b>
June 27, 12:00 pm AEST	Outcome Notifications issued to all Stage 1 Applicants
July 4	<b>Stage 2 - "Selection Panel 1 Interviews"</b>
July 7	Outcome Notifications issued to all Stage 2 Applicants
July 10	<b>Stage 3 - "Selection Panel 2 Interviews"</b>
July 11	Outcome Notifications issued to all Stage 3 Applicants
July 17, 4:00 pm AEST	<a href="#">UQ FaBA Growth Hub Program Agreement DUE</a>
July 22, 9:00 am AEST	Week 1: Welcome & Overview
July 29, 9:00 am AEST	Week 2: Business strategy, goal setting and first customer
Aug 5, 9:00 am AEST	Week 3: Understanding your unique value proposition
Aug 12, 9:00 am AEST	Week 4: Business models: Types of business models; Founder's story
Aug 19, 9:00 am AEST	Week 5: Business structure & finances
Aug 26, 9:00 am AEST	Week 6: Sales for startups: How to build a sales pipeline; Pirate Metrics
Sept 2, 9:00 am AEST	Week 7: Marketing: Developing a marketing plan
Sept 9, 9:00 am AEST	Week 8: Traction and investability
Sept 16, 9:00 am AEST	Week 9: Pitching and storytelling
Sept 23, 9:00 am AEST	Week 10: Session 1: Pitch Practice. Session 2: Going the distance:
Sept 30, 9:00 am AEST	Week 11: Pitch in front of VC's   Mental Health and Post Program Strategy

Oct 7, 9:00 am AEST      Week 12: TBC

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Early October      **Pitch Event - in person Brisbane City**

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Oct 15, 4:00 pm AEST      Post Program Evaluation Surveys DUE

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# FaBA Growth Hub Program Overview

Topic	Description
Program short description	<p>The FaBA Growth Hub Program, delivered by UQ Ventures, empowers Australian food and beverage SMEs and early-stage startups to accelerate growth and scale effectively. It's designed to strengthen not only founders and business owners but also the broader food and beverage startup community nationwide.</p> <p>This 12-week program is anchored by a focused syllabus, supported by dedicated mentors, Entrepreneurs-in-Residence, and the experienced UQ Ventures team.</p>
Scheduling, duration and structure	<p>FaBA Growth Hub Program will run for 12 weeks (Tuesday, July 21, 2025 to Tuesday October 8, 2025).</p> <p>Tuesdays are the weekly 3.5 hour contact day, delivered virtually scheduled with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sessions delivered by the Facilitator and Entrepreneur in Residence (EiR)</li> <li>• Founder stand-up updates</li> <li>• Content sessions and workshops</li> <li>• Individual mentoring sessions with the EiR and industry mentors</li> <li>• Occasional founders' lunches</li> <li>• Founder health and wellbeing</li> </ul> <p>A second contact session (approx. 1.5 hours) will be available during the week for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FaBA Growth Hub Program Manager check ins</li> <li>• additional mentoring with the EiRs</li> </ul> <p>The FaBA Growth Hub Pitch Event will take place in person in Brisbane City during the week beginning Monday, 6 October 2025 (exact date and venue to be confirmed).</p>
Participant Commitment	<p>Key founders and startup owners must commit fully to growing their businesses and preparing them to become investment-ready, including crafting a compelling pitch deck. Participants are expected to actively engage in at least 90% of scheduled workshops and accountability sessions, while also contributing to promotional activities that boost visibility for both their ventures and the program.</p> <p>This high level of commitment ensures participants gain maximum value from the program. Please note, lower participation levels may lead to termination from the program, as detailed in the termination guidelines below.</p>

## No Equity!

Participating in the FaBA Growth Hub Program does not require any equity from businesses who participate in and receive the program benefits.

### Program benefits and services (via UQ Ventures)

Key benefits of the program include:

**Experiential learning.** The major philosophy of the program is learning through action with the selected founders focussed on developing a viable and investable start-up understanding their business metrics, long term goals and getting their business investment ready. Along the way, the founders are challenged daily by the program, and through this, they will develop entrepreneurial skills of resilience, execution, communication, risk taking, decision making, and leadership.

**Desk space.** Teams successful in their application to FaBA Growth Hub Program have the option to utilize desks within the Ventures space at UQ Ventures Studios in Long Pocket, 80 Meiers Road, Indooroopilly. Access will be available during the program (22 July 2025 to 8 October 2025) and for the first three months upon completion (9 October 2025 to 9 January 2026). This is the space where the cohort gathers and shares, leverages the experience of each other, practices pitches, finds support from UQ staff, and participates in the FaBA Growth Hub program workshops.

**Accountability and agility.** The major learning in the program is through intense execution and mentor directed action. This is coupled with weekly accountability sessions with the FaBA Growth Hub Program delivery team. These sessions have historically been one of the key benefits to the founders as they infuse a business cadence of execution and review and deliver personal and continuous mentoring of the founding teams.

**Mentoring.** Further mentoring is provided by regular visits from FaBA Growth Hub's external mentors and other specialists to provide different insights and feedback to the founders from diverse backgrounds.

**Networks and introductions.** Participants will also enjoy access to the extensive networks of UQ's FaBA Growth Hub Program delivery team and the engaged mentors as applicable to their stage, technology and industry. Such introductions may fast track progress by early introduction to the right customers, lessons other founders may have learned and potential investment opportunities.

This may include introductions to staff at UQ who may be relevant to the company's business areas, be that through research, UQ as a potential trial site / first customer or possible use of UQ's facilities to assist progress including UQ Innovate and UQ's library. (Note: currently access to UQ's facilities is dependent on the status of the founders and may not be open to every participating company.)

**Educational workshops.** This experience is underpinned by a range of educational workshop sessions as outlined below. The exact selection of topics and their timing will be adjusted in response to the needs of the cohort and sometimes the availability of guest presenters described in the next section below.

**Ecosystem engagement.** Where possible, the FaBA Growth Hub Program delivery team may introduce participants to the venture ecosystem through visits to other organisations and other co-working spaces and may promote them within this ecosystem.

**Partner perks.** UQ's FaBA Growth Hub Program also has established partnerships with a range of vendors including Microsoft, AWS, Google, Hubspot, Stripe, Zendesk and Mathworks that may be able to provide free initial access to technology to assist Companies to find their product market

fit prior to spending too much on technology fees. (This list may vary as the vendors change their support policies).

#### Program benefits and services (via FaBA)

##### Supporting Services / Value Adds for applicants:

- Access to [FaBA Kickstarter scheme](#) -> \$10k cash contribution unlocks a \$50k voucher for a project with UQ
- Access to technical resources to advise on technical challenges with product
- Access to free Masterclasses (M) and Short Courses (SC)
  - Food Manufacturing Technology (SC)
  - Innovation Practice Skill Set (SC)
  - Advanced Food Safety (SC)
  - Workplace sustainability (SC)
  - Food Safety – Root cause Analysis & Preventative Actions (M)
  - Food Industry Leader's Toolkit (M)
  - Advanced Food Product Development: From Concept to Commercialisation (M)
  - Plain English Allergen Labelling Requirements (M)

#### FaBA Growth Hub Program workshop topics

The above experience is underpinned by a range of educational sessions. Delivery of all the educational sessions detailed below cannot be guaranteed because the exact selection of topics and their timing will be adjusted in response to the particular needs of the cohort and sometimes the availability of guest presenters.

##### **Week 1: Welcome & Overview**

- Program introduction
- Meet the Program Manager and Entrepreneurs-in-Residence (EiRs)
- Introduction to the cohort and initial networking

##### **Week 2: Business Strategy, Goal Setting & First Customer**

- Defining your startup's strategic goals
- Identifying and engaging your first customer
- Methods to set measurable and actionable business objectives

##### **Week 3: Customer & Value Proposition**

- Understanding your target customers and tools to segment effectively
- Clearly defining and evaluating your unique value proposition
- Identifying your organizational strengths and weaknesses

##### **Week 4: Founder's Story & Business Models**

- Exploring types of business models suited to F&B startups

- Crafting and refining your founder's story for maximum impact
- Learning from inspirational founder journeys (panels and fireside chats)

#### **Week 5: Business Structure & Financial Foundations**

- Legal essentials for structuring and establishing your F&B startup (session delivered by a startup lawyer)
- Financial basics including cash flow, profit and loss, balance sheets (session delivered by an accountant)
- Financial planning and modelling fundamentals

#### **Week 6: Sales Strategy for Startups**

- Building and managing an effective sales pipeline for B2C, B2B, and distribution channels
- Introduction to Pirate Metrics for tracking sales effectiveness and growth
- Strategies for customer relationship management and retention

#### **Week 7: Marketing & Brand Development**

- Developing targeted marketing plans for F&B startups
- Understanding and applying strategic brand management principles
- Effective marketing communication strategies and execution

#### **Week 8: Investment Readiness & Funding Pathways**

- Insights into how Venture Capital operates and determining its fit for your startup
- Exploring alternative funding sources: grants, R&D tax incentives, and non-equity financing
- Understanding core investment processes and documentation (Term Sheets, Shareholder Agreements, Vesting)

#### **Week 9: Pitching & Communication**

- Creating compelling and engaging startup pitches
- Essential storytelling techniques for effective investor communication
- Elevator pitch content and delivery

#### **Week 10: Pitch Practice & Overcoming Challenges**

- Session 1: Structured pitch practice with constructive feedback
- Session 2: Strategies for resilience, overcoming obstacles, and maintaining startup momentum
- Engaging mentors effectively and implementing actionable feedback

#### **Week 11 & 12: Pitch Day & Beyond**

- Live pitch presentations to investors and industry leaders
- Panel on mental health management and strategies for sustaining founder well-being

- Defining clear post-program strategies for ongoing startup growth and community engagement

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Expected skills and experience upon completion

Participants who actively engage in the program can significantly grow their own personal skills, including:

- Personal confidence
- Pitching skills
- How to scale a business fundamentals
- How to engage customers
- How to use basic tools and business processes
- How to understand and be able to communicate the business model
- How to network and engage mentors
- A deeper understanding of their market and its stakeholders
- Develop high functioning teamwork
- Develop resilience to setbacks and stresses
- Time management, priority setting and focus
- Understand what investors look for at this stage
- How to build a financial plan

# Selection Process and Criteria

Topic	Description
Selection process overview	<p><b>STAGE 1 (Step 1 – Applicants Submit)</b></p> <p>Applications will be open from 12:00 PM AEST on Monday 18 May 2025 and close at 12:00PM AEST on Monday 23 June 2025 (<b>Application Period</b>). Applications received outside of the Application Period will not be accepted. To enter, applicants must, during the Application Period, visit the <a href="#">UQ FaBA Growth Hub Program web page</a> and fully complete and submit the <a href="#">online application form</a> which consists of a mix of written and video responses. Once submitted, all applications become the property of UQ.</p> <p><b>STAGE 1 (Step 2 – Selection Committee shortlists)</b></p> <p>Online applications are assessed by a selection committee for shortlisting. Up to 25 businesses/projects will be invited to participate in the FaBA Growth Hub Program Selections. Shortlisting is undertaken by the experienced UQ FaBA Growth Hub Program delivery team and qualified mentors, based on the key selection criteria.</p> <p><b>STAGE 2</b></p> <p>The FaBA Growth Hub Program Selections' process includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First round interviews: 5-minute pitch followed by 5-minute Q&amp;A in front of a selection panel.</li> <li>• Following first round interviews, applicants will be shortlisted to a maximum of 15 teams.</li> </ul> <p><b>STAGE 3</b></p> <p>The selection committee will decide on the final cohort based on Stage 3. Candidates will be notified on Friday July 11, 2025. Successful teams will be required to sign the <a href="#">FaBA Growth Hub Program Agreement</a> (deadline Thursday July 17, 4:00 pm EST) prior to starting the program.</p> <p>A selection committee of experienced mentors and the UQ FaBA Growth Hub Program team will recommend a final cohort of up to 15 teams. Selections will prioritize inclusivity and diversity, with a clear focus on representing businesses from across Australia. Applicants will be assessed on their alignment with key selection criteria, commitment level, and due diligence. We'll also ensure a balanced ratio of Queensland and non-Queensland companies, reflecting the strategic goals of the program.</p> <p>UQ's decision in relation to any aspect of the application process is final and UQ will not enter into any correspondence regarding the result of applications.</p>
Team Eligibility	<p>To be eligible to apply the business must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. have a registered ABN/ACN;</li> </ul>

- b. have primary operations based in Australia;
- c. have a focusing on scaling innovative food and/or beverage (F&B) products aligned with evolving consumer demands;
- d. can demonstrate market traction and/or growth—whether through consistent sales, strong customer demand, or active distribution channels;
- e. has significant commercial growth potential;
- f. have a defendable competitive advantage; and
- g. are strongly considering raising capital to facilitate growth.

The individual program participants (owners or founders of the businesses applying) do not have to be a UQ student or affiliated with the University to apply for the program.

The program participants will be required to sign a [FaBA Growth Hub Program Agreement](#) to participate in the program. Please review the agreement document. Participating in the program is a significant commitment, incorporating 1 day a week for a structured program and 1 on 1 sessions for cadence. There are key deliverables and activities each week that are expected to take reasonable time, and commitment required outside that for events, pitch nights and presentations that are arranged. Without the need for assigning reasons and in its unfettered discretion, UQ may decline to accept any application from a business which, in its reasonable opinion, does not meet the above eligibility criteria.

## Key Selection Criteria Guidance

### Selection Criteria Overview

**The following criteria will be used to shortlist the applicants for the FaBA Growth Hub Program Delivery Team Selections:**

- Leadership Capacity.
- Team and collaboration.
- Traction and Growth Capacity.
- Program fit.
- Product / technology strength
- Operational plan

## Selection Criteria (detailed)

The following describes the key selection criteria in further detail.

### Leadership Capacity (20%)

The selection committee will consider whether the individuals have:

- unique skill sets and/or relevant domain expertise.
- a close affinity to the problem they are trying to solve.
- demonstrated the right skill sets (technical and business) to develop and grow the business.
- already dedicated significant time and effort into validating the idea and understanding the problem and solution prior to applying to the program; and
- the ability to commit to active involvement in the program for the duration of the program as described in the program overview.

A well balanced, collaborative, diverse and resilient team is an important element of successful participation in the FaBA Growth Hub Program.

Some questions the FaBA Growth Hub selection committee will be interested in are:

- Why are you the right team to be working on this problem?
- Why is solving this problem important to you?
- What is your personal attachment and familiarity with the problem?

While businesses with strong teams will naturally progress faster and gain more benefit from the program, single owner/founder businesses can also be successful.

If you are applying as a single applicant, then you will need to describe during the program how you will be able to successfully execute on the multiple dimensions of:

- customer, product/technology and business development;
- as part of business development, how you intend to successfully build and nurture a supportive team;
- how you will access or supplement expertise in areas outside your core strengths (e.g., via advisors, contractors, collaborators);
- your ability to manage time, maintain momentum, and avoid founder burnout as a solo operator;
- your approach to gathering feedback, validating ideas, and making decisions without an immediate co-founder sounding board;
- plans to attract co-founders, team members, or strategic partners if needed to scale; and
- your long-term vision and why now is the right time for you to lead this venture solo.

### Team and collaboration (15%)

Some questions the FaBA Growth Hub selection committee will consider are:

- Do the team know each other well? Are they likely to stick together? Do they have complementary skill sets?
- How long have they been working on this business as a team?
- What are their past experiences as a team that is relevant to this business?
- What experiences bind you together as a team to allow you to get through the tough times together?

UQ expects all members to be committed to participating in the program. Changes to the primary team participating throughout the program may impact your participation and is at the discretion of UQ's FaBA Growth Hub Program delivery team.

### Traction & Growth Capacity (25%)

Some questions and issues the FaBA Growth Hub selection committee will consider are:

- How do you know you are solving a real problem for real customers?
- How much validation has been done to demonstrate that the product or service are needed, including customer interviews, surveys, users, revenue, etc?
- Strong indicators that your proposition is valid in the real world with real customers. Applicants should demonstrate significant evidence of customer discovery and validation of the problem being real. This goes beyond market research and involves interactions with potential customers and users.
- Proof that you have validated this market with real customers. As an example, how many customer / user interviews have you done? Levels of validation may differ market to market.
- Validation is good – but quality traction is better if you have it. How many active users and how many paying customers do you have? What does your growth look like?
- Do you have other awards or third-party recognition that provide further credibility statements that you are solving a real problem?
- What is the market size?

To be pitching to investors at the concluding pitch event, teams will be expected to have real traction with either paying customers or customers trialling their product by the end of the program.

### Program Fit (10%)

The selection committee will assess whether your business is at the right stage to benefit from the program. The FaBA Growth Hub is designed for Australian food and beverage startups and SMEs with innovative products that respond to evolving consumer trends. It is not intended for larger corporations seeking to launch or scale new products or brands.

### Product Technology Strength (15%)

Some questions and issues the FaBA Growth Hub selection committee will consider are:

- How do you incorporate user feedback into your product development process?
- What is the current stage of your product development?
- What challenges have you faced during product development, and how have you addressed them?

By the end of the program, what specific milestones do you aim to achieve regarding your product? Teams will be expected to have real traction with either paying customers or customers trialing their product at the concluding pitch event.

### Operational Plan (15%)

Some questions and issues the FaBA Growth Hub selection committee will consider are:

- What strategies do you plan to implement to optimise resource allocation and streamline processes during product development?
- How will these strategies contribute to building an efficient organizational structure?
- Describe any existing processes you have in place for managing operations and resources.
- How do you plan to improve or streamline these processes during the program?

Insights from these responses will help the selection committee assess the readiness of the company to scale effectively and ensure they are well-prepared for investment opportunities.

# Other Key Terms and Conditions

Topic	Description
Intellectual Property	<p>The ownership of any Intellectual Property (IP) that underpins participating businesses must be clearly highlighted and understood by both the founders and the selection committee, including UQ. This is to enable assessment of the business's potential at the time of application and ensure the value of that IP is not inadvertently compromised, nor its ownership misrepresented to investors throughout the program. Where IP is owned or controlled by others, this needs to be clear and transparent at the time of application.</p> <p>Of particular note is UQ IP (for example IP from UQ research) where <a href="#">UQ's Intellectual Property policy</a> will apply and founders will need to commit to complying with that policy if relevant.</p>
Withdrawal of application	<p>You may withdraw your application at any time before notification of the successful cohort is made by notifying the FaBA Growth Hub Program delivery team by email to <a href="mailto:ventures@uq.edu.au">ventures@uq.edu.au</a>. If you withdraw your application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UQ will remove your application.</li> <li>2. UQ will not use your details or application for media or promotional purposes; and</li> <li>3. you will no longer be eligible to be selected for the program.</li> </ol>
Termination and pitch event	<p>Participants may be terminated from the program if they breach their agreement with UQ, or if UQ assesses that they should no longer continue in the program.</p> <p>Typically, termination will be obvious through lack of commitment by the founders (as evidenced by absence from the program, absence from workshops, non-participation with mentors and lack of progress against weekly objectives) or major changes to the founding team during the program, including changes which result in a failure to meet the Team Eligibility criteria outlined above.</p> <p>Breaches of UQ's policies or procedures may also cause a team's termination.</p> <p>Teams themselves can also choose to exit the program at any time for any reason.</p> <p>Teams need to reach a suitable level of progress by the program conclusion to present at the final pitch event. If this is not achieved, it can dilute the impact of the rest of the cohort and reflect negatively on the program. Consequently, team participation at the pitch event is by invitation rather than as a guarantee.</p> <p><i>It is noted that involuntary termination is generally not in the interests of UQ or the participants and UQ will work with participants to resolve issues prior to them becoming significant.</i></p>

#### Agreement

All selected participants will be required to enter a formal [Program Agreement](#) with The University of Queensland before they commence the program or receive any funding.

#### Miscellaneous

Applications which, in the opinion of UQ, are incomplete, incorrect or incomprehensible, contain defamatory or offensive content or infringe intellectual property rights are not eligible for selection and may be removed from the application process and the relevant applicant will be disqualified.

UQ may, in its absolute discretion, disqualify applicants if, in the opinion of UQ, the applicant breaches the Agreement, engages in dishonest or unethical conduct in relation to their application, manipulates, tampers or interferes with the conduct of the application process, does not comply with the application process, or conspires with others to gain an unfair advantage. UQ may audit applicants if it suspects they have engaged in such breach or conduct.

UQ may request information from applicants relevant to entry or participation in the program, such as proof of residency or age. may, in its absolute discretion, disqualify applicants if they provide insufficient information, false information or fail to provide information.

UQ is not responsible for any:

1. late, lost or misdirected applications; or
2. delays, problems or technical malfunction of any telephone network or lines, computer systems, computer equipment or software, technical problems or traffic congestion on the Internet or at any website, or any combination thereof, including injury or damage to applicants' or any other person's computer related to or resulting from making an application. If such problems arise, UQ may modify, cancel, terminate or suspend the application process.

All costs associated with submitting an application are the responsibility of applicants.

# Thank you

## For more information

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G. **CRICOS Provider Number 00025B**