PHOENICIA UNIVERSITY

Incubator Policy

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Incubator Policy

Overview

Phoenicia University (PU) is committed to developing an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem that is inclusive, accessible, and supportive for all students, faculty, staff, local community, and early-stage startups. The PU Incubator is an intellectual, business-driven initiative designed to develop and promote new approaches to innovation and entrepreneurship. The incubator provides an environment that transforms inventive ideas into promising realities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide structured support to members of the PU community and entrepreneurs from the wider public in developing innovative startup ideas through mentorship, capacity-building, and access to university resources.
- Establish clear and transparent procedures for the application, selection, membership, and participation of individuals and organizations within the PU Incubator.
- Promote accountability, fairness, and transparency in the management of incubator operations, including startup development, resource allocation, and intellectual property considerations.
- Foster innovation, entrepreneurship, strategic partnerships, knowledge exchange, and sustainable business practices in alignment with the University's mission and commitment to community engagement.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all applicants, participants, incubator staff, mentors, and university personnel involved in the PU Business Incubator. It is relevant to all interactions where startup support, mentorship, facilities, and resources are provided.

Admission and selection decisions are made solely on the merit of the applicant or venture, without regard to gender, nationality, disability, or any other protected characteristic, consistent with the University's Nondiscrimination Policy and its commitment to supporting women in entrepreneurship under the Women's Access and Participation Policy.

Accountability

Role	Office / Committee
Accountable Office	Dean of the College of Business
Responsible Offices	PU Incubator Advisory Board

Vision

PU seeks to be a primary driver of sustainable business and economic development on national, regional, and international levels. Through this initiative, PU blurs the boundaries between theory and practice, creating a hub for creative, original, and sustainable business ideas which serve the community and the society at large.

Mission

We help and support creative entrepreneurs to develop their own startups by nurturing an entrepreneurship culture. We offer creative entrepreneurs various services, including mentorship, training workshops, and market research guidance.

Governance – Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is responsible for guiding the Incubator in fulfilling its objectives. The Board oversees the development and implementation of the Incubator's strategy. Members offer strategic guidance and subject-matter expertise, without being involved in the direct evaluation of proposals. The Advisory Board is composed of the following members:

- The Chancellor
- Dean of College of Business
- Dean of College of Law and Political Science
- Dean of College of Engineering or Subject Matter Program Coordinator

The Advisory Board nominates the Selection Panel, which is responsible for the direct evaluation of applications and proposals submitted to the Incubator.

Conflict of Interest: Members of the Advisory Board and Selection Panel must disclose any personal, financial, or professional interest in an applicant or incubated venture. Any member with such an interest shall recuse themselves from discussion and decision-making on that application and shall not have access to related evaluation materials.

Operational Responsibilities

The PU Incubator shall be managed through a coordinated governance structure to ensure effective implementation, accountability, and compliance with this policy.

- Day-to-Day Management: The designated PU Incubator Coordinator is responsible for the daily administration and operation of the Incubator under the supervision of the Dean of the College of Business. The Coordinator manages applications, coordinates incubation activities, maintains participant records, organizes mentorship activities, and supports incubated ventures throughout their participation.
- Budget Management and Approval: The Center for Research and Advancement oversees the preparation, management, and monitoring of the Incubator budget.
- Mentor Oversight: The PU Incubator Coordinator oversees the recruitment, coordination, and performance monitoring of mentors, ensures appropriate matching between mentors and incubated ventures and evaluates the effectiveness of mentorship activities.
- Participant Complaints: Concerns or complaints related to Incubator activities are submitted to the PU Incubator Coordinator. Complaints are reviewed fairly and confidentially.
- Policy Compliance: The Dean of the College of Business, supported by the PU Incubator Advisory Board, monitors compliance with this policy and ensure that Incubator activities align with University regulations, ethical standards, and strategic objectives.

Admission and Eligibility

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants to the PU Incubator include:

- PU Faculty and Staff
- University Students (undergraduate and postgraduate)
- Alumni
- Community members
- External Applicants, subject to the venture being lawful, not already registered as an operating company for more than 1 year, and not in conflict with the University's mission or values.

All ventures must present a clearly defined business concept and founding team to be considered eligible for admission. A prototype or proof-of-concept is not required at application stage but will strengthen the venture's progression through later incubation phases

Application and Selection Process

1. Applications shall be submitted through the PU Incubator website using the designated online application form. The application shall include information on the founding team, business concept, market opportunity, technical feasibility, stage of development, and proposed funding or resource requirements.
2. A Selection Panel, appointed by the Advisory Board, shall evaluate applications against predefined criteria, including the strength of the team, level of innovation, market potential, technical feasibility, scalability, and alignment with the University's mission and strategic priorities.
3. Shortlisted applicants are invited to present or pitch their venture to the Selection Panel.

4. Final admission decisions shall be based on the overall evaluation, after which successful applicants shall enter into an Incubation Agreement outlining the rights, responsibilities, and terms of participation in the program.

Appeals Process

1. Applicants or incubator members may submit an appeal regarding decisions related to admission, membership termination, or other significant incubator decisions. Appeals shall be submitted in writing to the Dean of the College of Business within 15 working days of receiving the decision.
2. The appeal must include the grounds for reconsideration and any relevant supporting information. Appeals shall be reviewed by an Appeals Committee appointed by the Advisory Board, consisting of members who were not involved in the original decision-making process.
3. The Appeals Committee shall review the submitted information and issue a final decision within a reasonable timeframe. The outcome of the appeal shall be communicated in writing to the appellant, and the decision of the Appeals Committee shall be considered final.

Membership Obligations

All incubator members, including entrepreneurs, startups, mentors, and participants, shall comply with the terms of the Incubation Agreement and the requirements of this policy. Members are expected to:

- Act professionally and respectfully toward other members, mentors, staff, and University representatives.
- Participate actively in scheduled mentorship sessions, training activities, evaluations, and progress reviews.
- Provide accurate and timely information regarding venture development, progress, and resource needs.
- Protect confidential information shared through incubator activities.
- Comply with University policies, including policies related to ethics, intellectual property, confidentiality, non-discrimination, and responsible conduct.
- Use University facilities, equipment, and resources responsibly and only for approved incubator-related purposes.

Failure to meet membership obligations may result in corrective actions, suspension, or termination of incubator membership.

Incubation Phases

The Incubator delivers a standardized framework for end-to-end assistance to startups and innovation initiatives throughout their incubation journey, from ideation to graduation, typically spanning 12 to 36 months. The five incubation phases are summarized below.

Phase	Focus	Key Activities
Phase 1	Idea & Concept Validation	Assessment of technical feasibility, market potential, and degree of innovation; structured mentorship to refine the value proposition; evaluation against eligibility criteria for admission.
Phase 2	Business Planning & Development	Development of a comprehensive business plan, including financial projections and go-to-market strategy; mentorship in operations, marketing, and sales; initial legal, regulatory, and IP advisory support.
Phase 3	Prototype / Minimum Viable Product (MVP) Development	Access to technical support, laboratories, prototyping facilities, and co-working spaces; product design, development, testing, and iterative refinement; ongoing mentorship and resource allocation.
Phase 4	Market Testing & Validation	Pilot testing and early deployment of products or services; collection and analysis of user and market feedback; guidance on regulatory compliance, market entry, and early customer acquisition.
Phase 5	Scaling & Graduation	Support for fundraising, partnership development, and business scaling; performance review against graduation and readiness criteria; development of a structured transition plan.

Services, Infrastructure, and Resources

1. Physical Resources

- Workspace, including office/desk space, co-working areas, and meeting rooms
- Internet and computing services
- Access to university laboratories, workshops, and specialized equipment, as relevant and under agreed terms
- Equipment required for prototyping or research, subject to availability and safety rules

2. Technical, Research & Innovation Support

- Access to university researchers, faculty experts, and technical staff

- Support in experimentation, prototyping, lab testing, and product development
- Assistance with legal and intellectual property matters, including patenting, licensing, contract review, and equity/share structuring
- Research collaboration opportunities and embedded technical coaching

3. Mentorship & Advisory Services

- One-to-one or group mentoring by faculty, alumni entrepreneurs, and industry professionals
- Coaching support for business development, product strategy, team development, and operational planning
- Regular advisory clinics on finance, marketing, regulatory compliance, and commercial strategy

4. Training, Workshops & Capacity Building

- Workshops on business planning, financial modeling, marketing, regulatory requirements, and go-to-market strategy
- Training on intellectual property, commercialization, and legal essentials
- Capacity-building programs to strengthen entrepreneurial, managerial, and technical skills
- Structured startup development sessions, including bootcamps, masterclasses, and seminars

5. Market Access and Ecosystem Integration

- Access to investors, venture funds, and corporate partners
- Introductions to external agencies and government programs
- Engagement with alumni networks and industry stakeholders
- Facilitation of seed funding, grant applications, and investment opportunities

6. Access to Funding Resources

The Incubator supports incubatees' funding needs through a combination of in-kind contributions and facilitation of external funding opportunities, rather than through direct or seed funding from the University

In-Kind Financial Contributions

The Incubator provides financial assistance in the form of in-kind contributions These include:

- Waived co-working space or office rent for incubated start-ups (e.g., space valued at market rental rate provided free of charge)
- Free legal consultation for business registration, contracts, or intellectual property matters
- Free accounting or bookkeeping support during a start-up's first year of operation.
- Free workshops, training, and capacity-building programs for incubated start-ups, including business planning, financial modeling, marketing, regulatory requirements, go-to-market strategy, intellectual

property, commercialization, and legal essentials, delivered through bootcamps, masterclasses, and seminars
- Free access to specialized laboratory equipment or software licenses the business would otherwise need to purchase or license independently
- Competition or pitch awards offered through University-organized events, where applicable.
- The University may also provide in-kind advisory support through mentoring and consultation services, including legal guidance, intellectual property (IP) advice, financial planning, business development, and other forms of professional expertise to support participants' entrepreneurial and innovation activities.

7. **Access to External Funding**

Beyond in-kind support, the Incubator helps incubatees become funding-ready by connecting incubatees with external funding resources and networks, including grant opportunities coordinated through the University's Grants Office.

Conclusion

Through the PU Incubator, PU reaffirms its commitment to fostering innovation, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic development by providing aspiring entrepreneurs with access to mentorship, resources, and collaborative opportunities. By supporting the development of innovative ventures and strengthening connections between academia, industry, and the wider community, the University contributes to the creation of sustainable enterprises that generate social and economic impact.

Main Campus, District of Zahrani,

Saida-Tyre Highway, South Lebanon

+ 961 7 420 720