

ABOUT THE I-CORPS SITE PROGRAM

The UChicago i-Corps Site Program supports university scientists, technologists, and entrepreneurs working to commercialize research and technologies from the University of Chicago and its affiliated partners. The program, which is run by the Polsky Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, hosted at the Chicago Innovation Exchange, and supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF), offers educational and monetary resources to its participants, providing early-stage entrepreneurial training and micro-grants. The Polsky Center has developed the UChicago i-Corps Site Program as part of its ongoing efforts to foster a culture of world-class innovation and entrepreneurship at the University of Chicago.

PROGRAM GOALS

While many university scientists and technologists understand the academic value of their work, they may be unsure of its commercial potential. Oftentimes, they want to see their work translated into the public sphere, but they aren't sure where to begin. The UChicago i-Corps Site Program empowers its participants with the entrepreneurial skills necessary to explore the commercial potential of their work. Regardless of their background or level of experience in business, participants learn how to describe the value of their ideas, identify potential customers, and elicit important feedback through research and interviews, ultimately identifying whether an early-stage idea is worth pursuing. The experiential nature of the program teaches participants skills that can be repeated on future entrepreneurial endeavors.



BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATION

Participants in the UChicago i-Corps Site Program receive the following benefits:

- Entrepreneurial education delivered by world-class faculty members from Chicago Booth
- Access to resources and space at the Polsky Center and the Chicago Innovation Exchange, including mentorship from UChicago faculty and staff, successful entrepreneurs, and investors
- Collaboration and networking opportunities with other scientists, researchers, technologists, and entrepreneurs
- Micro-grant funding to support early-stage entrepreneurial activities
- Designation as an NSF-funded project, leading to further opportunities for training and funding through the national i-Corps program and SBIR/STTR programs

USE OF FUNDS

Micro-grants awarded through the program may be used to support various entrepreneurial activities, such as:

- Supporting customer research, including travel to meetings or attendance at industry conferences
- Purchasing educational materials or attending educational programs related to entrepreneurship and technology commercialization
- Creating a prototype by renting or purchasing materials and equipment

Funding may not be used to pay for business services (legal, accounting, etc.) The Polsky Center will work with participants to identify appropriate uses of program funding.

PROGRAM DETAILS AND DATES

The UChicago i-Corps Site Program runs for approximately seven weeks during each academic quarter. Participants are required to attend four mandatory classroom sessions and complete out-of-class readings and assignments. Due to the experiential nature of the program, participants are expected to conduct a significant amount of entrepreneurial fieldwork between classroom sessions and report on their progress. Classroom sessions take place from 1:30 - 4:30 p.m. at the Chicago Innovation Exchange in Hyde Park. 2014-2015 classroom session dates by cohort are as follows:

2015 Autumn Cohort

Oct 5 | Oct 19 | Nov 2 | Nov 16

2016 Winter Cohort

Jan 25 | Feb 8 | Feb 22 | Mar 7

2016 Spring Cohort

April 8 | April 22 | May 6 | May 20

WHO CAN APPLY?

The UChicago i-Corps Site Program is an interdisciplinary, application-based program for individuals or teams working on ideas in the science, technology, mathematics, and engineering (STEM) fields. A background in business or entrepreneurship is not required. Faculty, students, staff, and alumni from the University of Chicago, partner institutions, and regional universities may apply for the program. Applicants must provide information about their project or technology, the backgrounds and abilities of their team, and their interest in pursuing the program. Teams accepted into the program will be assigned to a cohort based on program availability.

TEAM COMPOSITION

Applicants typically apply as members of a team, though individuals may also apply to the program. It is strongly encouraged that teams consist of at least one scientific or technological expert, such as a principal investigator (PI), and at least one entrepreneurial leader, who may, for instance, be a university student or postdoctoral fellow interested in conducting entrepreneurial research and directing group efforts. The entrepreneurial

leader may or may not have prior business experience but must be committed to leading or organizing team activities during the program. While this team composition is not required, it will greatly enhance the opportunities for the success of the project. Additionally, each member of a team must be available to attend all program sessions.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND DEADLINES

To apply for the UChicago i-Corps Site Program, you must fill out an online application for the program, available at icorps.uchicago.edu/page/apply-online

There is no application fee for the program, and only one application is required per team. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis but must be received by the respective application deadline below:

2015 Autumn Cohort

Thursday, Aug 6 by 12 p.m. CST

2016 Winter Cohort

Thursday, Oct 29 by 12 p.m. CST

2016 Spring Cohort

Thursday, Feb 11 by 12 p.m. CST

QUESTIONS?

Please read the UChicago i-Corps Site Program website (icorps.uchicago.edu) before seeking an individual meeting. If your question is not addressed by the website, you may contact Meghan Fisher (meghan.fisher@chicagobooth.edu) or Starr Marcello (starr.marcello@chicagobooth.edu) in the Polsky Center to arrange a meeting.

ABOUT THE POLSKY CENTER

The Polsky Center advances the knowledge and practice of entrepreneurship and innovation through its cutting-edge curriculum, innovative hands-on learning experiences, conferences, mentorship, and community and global outreach programs. The Polsky Center is the foremost resource for University of Chicago students and alumni as they pursue entrepreneurial endeavors and private equity careers. Learn more about the Polsky Center at chicagobooth.edu/entrepreneurship.

