

Agility is now an approved Mitacs incubator

University of Lethbridge graduate students and post-doctoral fellows with an entrepreneurial bent can access funding to further develop their business ideas now that Agility has been approved as an incubator for Mitacs Accelerate Entrepreneur projects.

Accelerate Entrepreneur funds would-be entrepreneurs to further develop the research or technology at the core of their startup business when they are hosted by an incubator facility. Along with the funding, students receive support from Agility with the goal of commercializing their technology, product or service.

“As soon as Agility was approved to be the Lethbridge incubator, it was obvious this will benefit our U of L innovators,” says Brandie Lea, U of L partnerships and commercialization coordinator. “Applications are already in the works to request funding. It is exciting to see a culture of innovation and startup creation on campus and we are looking forward to the companies and product development that will receive support from a very reliable funding partner.”

“This is a great opportunity for our aspiring entrepreneurs,” says Brandy Old, Agility manager. “The student acts as an intern for their own business and Agility supervises and supports the entrepreneur throughout the internship.”

To be eligible, the entrepreneurs must own their startup and have responsibility for the management and/or operations of the company (which must be incorporated). Once housed at an approved incubator, the company invests a minimum of \$7,500 in funding for a research project. Mitacs matches the funds and the total amount of \$15,000 is administered through the entrepreneur’s professor as a grant. The minimum stipend paid to an intern is \$10,000 and they can also access to up to \$5,000 in flexible funding to pay for research costs such as laboratory materials or equipment.

The program gives entrepreneurs a funded internship so they have the opportunity to pilot and test a new product, service or technology or improve on an already existing one. Applications are accepted any time and evaluation is completed in six to eight weeks. Projects start at four months, but can be scaled up, depending on the startup’s needs.

A major benefit of the program is that it provides a safe space to test out an idea.

“The funding goes right back to the entrepreneur, so they are actually functioning as a working employee for their own startup at a very early stage,” she says. “The Mitacs program helps student entrepreneurs take the risk and dedicate some time towards doing early ideation and validation of a business idea. They’ll learn what it takes to be an entrepreneur and test out if their research project has commercial potential.”

Old plans to offer Accelerate Entrepreneur students Agility's Trailblazing program, an online incubator for early stage ideation and validation. The program focuses on identifying problems, doing customer discovery, making sales pitches, networking, organizing, managing time and getting involved in the community.

"This program is perfect for anyone who wants to be their own boss and is committed to learning how to do it fast," she says. "Students often discredit their readiness to turn their ideas into businesses and programs like Mitacs Accelerate Entrepreneur help reduce the risk of taking the leap."

Graduate students and post-doctoral fellows from any discipline are welcome to apply. For more information visit the Mitacs [Accelerate Entrepreneur website](#) or contact [Brandy Old](#) or [Brandie Lea](#).