



MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR STARTUPS AND ENTREPRENEURS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT

1. Introduction

The University of Port Harcourt (UniPort) seeks to establish a **Mentoring Programme for Startups and Entrepreneurs** to foster innovation, provide guidance to emerging businesses, and bridge the gap between academic knowledge and entrepreneurial practice. The programme aims to nurture entrepreneurs by equipping them with skills, resources, networks, and mentorship needed to grow sustainable enterprises.

This programme will leverage faculty expertise, experienced entrepreneurs, and business professionals to mentor startups within and outside the university community.

2. Vision and Mission

- **Vision:** To remain a premier entrepreneurial ecosystem that empowers startups to grow into sustainable businesses through mentorship, innovation, and practical guidance.
- **Mission:** To provide structured mentoring to startups and entrepreneurs, fostering a dynamic ecosystem of growth through shared experiences, networks, and access to critical resources.

3. Objectives

1. Support startups and entrepreneurs through knowledge-sharing, skills development, and business coaching.
2. Facilitate access to funding, networks, and business opportunities.
3. Promote innovation and commercialization of research outputs from the university.
4. Build sustainable businesses that contribute to economic development.
5. Foster entrepreneurship as a viable career path for students, alumni, and the local community.

4. Target Participants

- **Startups and Entrepreneurs:** Early-stage businesses requiring guidance and support.
- **Students and Alumni:** Young innovators exploring entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Faculty-driven Innovations:** Faculty members interested in commercializing research outputs.
- **Community Entrepreneurs:** Individuals from the local community with viable business ideas.

5. Programme Structure

The mentoring programme will consist of **four key tracks**, ensuring flexibility and targeted mentoring based on the needs of the participants.

Tracks of Mentoring Programme

1. **Startup Mentorship Track**
 - Focused on idea validation, product development, and early-stage business growth.
2. **Growth Mentorship Track**
 - Tailored for businesses beyond the startup phase, requiring help with scaling and sustainability.
3. **Innovation and Research Commercialization Track**
 - For faculty and student-led projects aiming to commercialize research outputs.
4. **Women Entrepreneurs Track**
 - Providing specific mentoring for female-led startups to address gender-based challenges in entrepreneurship.

6. Mentoring Approach

The mentoring programme will adopt a **hybrid model** that includes both **one-on-one mentoring** and **group-based mentoring** sessions.

Mentoring Components

1. **One-on-One Mentoring Sessions**
 - Personalized sessions with mentors focusing on business-specific challenges.
 - Frequency: **Twice a month** for each mentee.
2. **Group Mentoring and Peer Learning Circles**
 - Startups will meet in groups for shared learning, networking, and joint problem-solving.
 - Frequency: **Monthly group sessions.**
3. **Workshops and Masterclasses**
 - Sessions on entrepreneurship topics such as business planning, finance, marketing, and innovation.
 - Delivered by experts and industry leaders.
4. **Pitch Practice Sessions**
 - Mentors will guide mentees in preparing for investor pitches and competitions.
5. **Alumni Engagement**
 - Successful UniPort alumni entrepreneurs will provide inspirational talks and practical advice.

7. Mentor Profiles and Roles

Mentor Criteria

- Experienced entrepreneurs, business professionals, or faculty members with relevant expertise.
- Strong commitment to guiding and nurturing young businesses.
- Willing to contribute a minimum of **5-6 hours per month** to the mentoring programme.

Roles of Mentors

- Provide **strategic guidance** and technical support to mentees for the development of their business.
- Facilitate **connections to investors**, industry networks, and funding opportunities.
- Offer **constructive feedback** on business plans, pitch decks, and growth strategies.
- Act as **accountability partners** to track the progress of startups.

8. Programme Phases

Phase 1: Participant Onboarding and Matching (1 Month)

- Application process for interested mentees.
- Selection of startups based on potential and viability.
- Matching mentees with appropriate mentors based on industry focus, experience, and startup needs.

Phase 2: Mentoring and Development (6–9 Months)

- Structured mentoring sessions with clear milestones for each mentee.
- Mid-point reviews to evaluate progress and adjust goals.

Phase 3: Demo Day and Pitch Competition (Month 9)

- Participants will present their business ideas to investors, partners, and stakeholders in a **Demo Day** event.
- Top-performing startups may receive **seed funding, incubation support, or partnership opportunities**.

Phase 4: Post-Programme Follow-Up and Alumni Network (Ongoing)

- Continuous support through **networking events, alumni meetups, and online communities.**
- Tracking of mentees' performance for at least 12 months after programme completion.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

The programme will adopt a robust **M&E framework** to measure the impact and ensure continuous improvement.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

- Number of mentees successfully completing the programme.
- Growth metrics of participating startups (revenue, customer base, etc.).
- Number of partnerships and investments secured.
- Feedback from mentees and mentors on the mentoring experience.

10. Resource Requirements

Personnel

- **Programme Coordinator:** Oversees programme operations and ensures smooth delivery.
- **Mentor Liaison Officer:** Manages relationships with mentors and tracks sessions.
- **Administrative Assistant:** Provides logistical and clerical support.

Infrastructure and Tools

- Office space with meeting rooms for in-person sessions.
- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software** to manage mentor-mentee interactions.
- Online mentoring platform for virtual sessions.

Budget Estimate

Category	Cost (Naira)
Staff Allowances (Yearly)	1,000,000

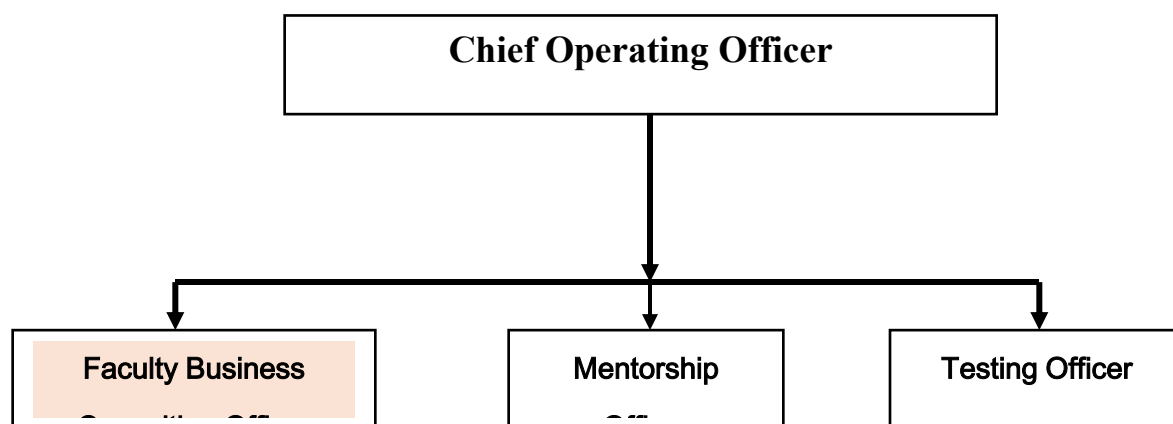
Category	Cost (Naira)
Workshops and Masterclasses	5,000,000
Demo Day and Pitch Events	2,000,000
Marketing and Promotion	500,000
Operational Costs	2,000,000
Total	10,500,000

11. Funding Sources

- **University Grants:** Initial setup and operational costs.
- **Corporate Sponsorships:** Support for Demo Day events and workshops.
- **External Grants:** Partnerships with development agencies for entrepreneurial support.
- **Programme Fees:** A nominal fee charged to participants (optional).

12. Organogram

Organogram of the Central Incubation Hub



13. Risk Management

1. **Low Mentor Engagement:** Develop a **mentor incentive programme** and recognize mentors with awards and certificates.
2. **Limited Funding:** Diversify funding sources through grants and partnerships.
3. **Participant Dropouts:** Set clear expectations and ensure commitment through signed agreements.

14. Sustainability Plan

1. **Revenue Generation:** Organize paid workshops and events.
2. **Alumni Network:** Establish a **strong alumni network** to foster long-term engagement and collaboration.
3. **Corporate Partnerships:** Develop long-term partnerships with industry players to support the programme financially and technically.

15. Conclusion

The University of Port Harcourt's Mentoring Programme for Startups and Entrepreneurs will foster a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem, empowering startups with the knowledge, networks, and resources needed for success. With the right mentors, partnerships, and support structures, this programme will position UniPort as a leader in entrepreneurship development and innovation.

15. Next Steps

1. Approval of the programme by the university's management.
2. Recruitment and onboarding of mentors.
3. Marketing and participant recruitment campaign launch.
4. Launch of the first mentoring cycle.