

## **SURGE Residency Program**

### **Program description and guidelines**

**2023-2024**

The SURGE Residency Program is designed to support promising, Dalhousie science-based startup teams as they coalesce to refine their business model, develop prototypes, validate hypotheses, and seek initial funding and traction.

Residency teams will be coached and supported in applying for next-stage opportunities and supports, such as [Collide](#), [Lab2Market](#), [ideaHUB](#), [COVE](#), [Invest Nova Scotia](#), [Creative Destruction Lab](#), [Volta](#), and [Propel](#).

The expected outcomes of teams going through the SURGE Residency Program are:

- An evidence-based Business Model Canvas supported by customer discovery research
- A prototype that is more advanced than what the team had at the start of the residency
- A go/no-go decision to carry the startup idea forward, on the basis of customer discovery and early-stage prototyping
- New connections with mentors and people in the target industry
- If a “go” decision is made, a polished 5 minute pitch suitable for applying for accelerator/incubator programs and/or early stage investment

The residency program provides the following supports:

- Access to sandbox space, including secure storage for prototypes and materials
- Mentorship from sandbox staff, Dal faculty, and mentors from the local business community
- Up to \$5,000 in reimbursement for eligible expenses
- Advice on additional funding opportunities such as NSBI, IRAP, ACOA, ISC, BCIP, and the [Mitacs](#) eAccelerate program for graduate students and postdocs

### **Program Structure and Benefits**

- Residency lasts for one academic year. Teams can be renewed for another year if they remain in good standing. Once a student graduates, they will have 1 year post graduation to wrap up their residency term.
- The residency program involves monthly meetings between teams and SURGE staff. Teams are required to provide a brief update of their progress at each meeting, and will receive coaching, feedback and advising from mentors.

- Teams are eligible for up to \$5,000 in financial support for business-related expenses (see “Use of Funds”, below).
- Teams may use the sandbox space (LSC 2660) between the hours of 9 AM – 5 PM weekdays, when it is not otherwise booked for sandbox activities. If after-hours access is required, please consult with the SURGE Manager. Please note that after-hours access may not always be possible.
- Teams may use up to one locker in the SURGE space for secure storage.
- Teams will receive mentorship from SURGE staff and, as possible, networking opportunities.

### Eligibility

Application to the Residency Program is open to startup teams comprising one or more people who are either currently-registered Dalhousie students, or were registered in the academic term immediately before the start of the residency. Students must be pursuing a degree and be in good academic standing. The Dalhousie student/recent student must be in a leadership position within the startup team. Teams may include additional members who are not Dalhousie students.

Teams should be pursuing a high growth potential or mission-driven business around an innovative, science-based solution to a validated problem. Teams will be best-positioned to apply if they have completed the SCIE 4701/4702 class, a startup weekend, or another program focused on methodologies such as Starting Lean, Lean Launchpad, and the Business Model Canvas.

If a team has incorporated, financial disclosure of other sources of funding and revenue is required.

Because the Residency Program is focused on preparing the earliest-stage startups to take their first steps, teams are generally not eligible for the Residency Program if they:

- have already received more than \$25,000 in funding,
- have made sales
- are currently, or have previously, been in another incubator or accelerator

### Application Process

1. Teams apply using [this form](#). Applications are accepted on a rolling basis, but typically only 1 new team is admitted per academic term (i.e. Sept-Dec, Jan – April, May-Aug)
2. Applications will be reviewed by a panel of SURGE staff, fellows, and mentors
3. Successful applicants will be invited to the residency program. Please note that deferrals are not possible, and if a team chooses not to accept their invitation and wishes to join the Residency Program at a later date, they must re-apply to a later competition and go through the evaluation process again.

Please note that all decisions by the admissions committee are final and there is no appeals process. If a team wishes feedback they may request this. Teams not accepted are free to apply to future cohorts, but should seek advice from SURGE staff prior to re-applying.

### Application Components

The following are required to be submitted as part of the application process:

- A description of your idea including problem, proposed solution, past work on idea and currently where it stands, including any customer discovery or market research you have done (1 page max)
- A summary of your team/business idea (250 words or less) for public release
- A list of the team members, including their roles on the team, and description of each team member's skills and background, including
  - CV
  - Bio (½ page max)
  - Current student status and degree program (if a student)
  - LinkedIn page
- Current business model canvas using this template: <https://www.strategyzer.com/canvas/business-model-canvas>
- A work plan for the residency term, including an outline of tasks to be undertaken and target goals for the end of the residency term.
- Declaration of previous funding awards (i.e. grants, investments, etc.)
- Declaration of other sandboxes, incubators or accelerator programs team has sought out or planning to seek support from
- A proposed budget explaining how the \$5,000 would be used (see eligible/ineligible expenses below)

### Expectations and Responsibilities of SURGE Residency Teams:

When awarded a residency spot within SURGE you are expected to:

- Commit to pursuing your startup idea, working hard, and taking responsibility and initiative
- Attend monthly meetings of residency teams to present progress report
- Meet with SURGE staff when requested
- Actively participate in SURGE activities (other than the Residency Program)
- Provide mentorship to other SURGE participants (e.g., students, fellows)
- Obtain written pre-approval for any expenditures that are expected to be reimbursed by SURGE
- Achieve your milestones on time

Teams that do not meet requirements will be informed in writing and a remediation plan will be requested. Teams that fail to address concerns expressed by SURGE management will be dismissed from the residency program.

### Use of Funds

**All expenses must be approved *in advance of spending the money, and in writing* by the SURGE Manager or Director**

The \$5,000 provided by SURGE is eligible for use in the following ways:

- Customer discovery and market research costs (i.e. travel to and from a key customer,) – subject to travel expense rules and regulations of Dalhousie University
- Goods and materials needed to build your prototype
- Software if not available for free
- Legal fees, patent fees and incorporation fees
- Office expenses
- Printing expenses
- Professional services (i.e. graphic design, accounting, consulting etc.)

Not eligible:

- Gifts
- Food
- Alcohol
- Items not directly related to the team project
- Team outings or activities
- Personal electronic devices, such as computers, phones/smartphones, headphones, etc.
- Tuition and education courses
- Living expenses
- Rent

### Intellectual Property

Neither SURGE nor Dalhousie University makes any claim on ownership of intellectual property generated by a residency team during their residency. Please note that in some cases (e.g., if a team member is also a Grant-Paid employee of the university), IP ownership may be more complicated. Teams are encouraged to consult with Dalhousie's Office of Commercialization and Industry Engagement with any questions concerning IP ownership.

### Giving Back

Teams that receive SURGE funding will be asked to sign a pledge to give back to the sandbox or Dalhousie University. This pledge is non-binding, and the expectation of fulfilment is only if and when a company becomes profitable. Funding is not contingent on signing a pledge.

### Questions?

Any questions, please email [surge@dal.ca](mailto:surge@dal.ca)