

Find out about

Business Start-Up

This guide will help you decide whether Business Start-Up is right for you. It gives you all the essential information you need about the course and studying with NEC. You can also speak to our friendly team (details at the end of this guide) who can advise you.

About this course

This course is ideal if you're considering setting up your own small business. You will be guided, step-by-step, through everything you will need to know to plan and establish your business.

Making the decision to become self-employed and to start your own small business is a huge step. You may be thinking about going down this route for one of any number of possible reasons and you may be wondering how best to go about it. This Business Start-Up course will help you through all the stages you need to think about in finding opportunities and getting a business started.

The DVD that comes with the course includes video clips of conversations with four different small-business owners.

Business Start-up consists of two shorter courses which can be taken together or separately:

■ **Course 1: Planning to start your own business:**

The first course will take you through the first steps of identifying if self-employment is right for you, what your business idea is and what are the basic things you need to do to get the business off the ground. By the end of this first course you will have a fully developed business plan.

■ **Course 2: Succeeding with your own business:**

The second course covers the range of activities required to keep your business running in the early stages, including sorting out the legal and financial issues and developing a solid customer base.

To help you understand how to turn your business idea into a reality, both courses include four examples of real-life case studies – a caterer, a fruit and veg supplier, a cleaner and a personal trainer. In addition, the courses also include two fictional case studies – a gardening business and a painting and decorating business – to provide further examples of the type of activities (with examples of documents) that a typical small business will need.

What's included with the course?

When you enrol you will receive the following:

- access to *learn@nec* website
- online access to course materials which you can download and print or study on screen
- tuition from your personal tutor for up to six months
- a free e-book version of any essential textbook(s) where possible
- supporting materials including a Time Planner to help you plan your study timetable and information which explains how to enter for exams
- NEC's guide to study skills: *How to Succeed as an Independent Learner* plus guidance on spelling, punctuation and grammar
- details of how to contact your personal tutor and an NEC course coordinator.

What's not included?

- exam fees where exam(s) or assessed coursework are necessary
- additional textbooks for some courses.

Your goals and this course

Before deciding to enrol on this course, think about what you want to achieve. For example, you may want to:

- decide whether self-employment is right for you
- develop your personal skills in being able to identify a good business opportunity
- find out if you have a business idea that offers a product or service that people want.

It's important to check that this course will help you to achieve your goals. This course aims to help you to weigh up the advantages and potential disadvantages of being self-employed. It is important to make an informed decision about a new venture so that you are as clear as you can be about the benefits and the risks.

If you're still unsure whether either course is right for you, you can contact the NEC course advice team (details at the end of this guide).

Learning with NEC

As a student with NEC you're in charge: you can enrol at any time and you choose where and when to study and set your own deadlines. This means that you can fit the time you spend studying around work and family commitments. Such independence can be attractive, but it can also be demanding. This is why NEC's courses support and guide you every step of the way.

NEC has been delivering home study or distance learning courses for over 50 years and, with an average of over 7000 students each year, is a leader in providing courses for GCSE, A level and vocational courses. Drawing on our experience and on research findings into the way adults learn, we develop enjoyable courses that include:

- carefully designed course materials
- individual support from an expert tutor
- access to our virtual learning environment, *learn@nec*
- thorough induction to the course systems.

learn@nec

The *learn@nec* website is our virtual learning environment and the gateway to your course and the NEC community. Its flexible design means you can study whenever you want and wherever you want. *learn@nec* is where you'll be able to discuss your course with your peers, your tutor and the team at NEC. It's also where you'll access your course materials.

You can also save and print our materials at home if you want to, so you can work offline.

'I would recommend the NEC course to anyone looking for a comprehensive guide to starting a Business. I liked the format, content and learning processes and found that the information and associated activities tied in well with the media and had continuity throughout. This course has helped me double check my own business idea and business plan. It is very comprehensive and I genuinely enjoyed completing it!'

Ben, Business Start Up review 2016

'I had a look at attending a local college, but this was the best option for me because of its flexibility.

If you know you can motivate yourself, and you don't have problems working on your own, I would absolutely recommend it. It allows me to choose when I do my assignments, so whilst my children might be busy doing something else I can do some study; or, if my husband's working late and they're in bed, I can sit down and attack a few questions. I didn't want it to encroach on family life, so I've been doing it in the odd hours I get to myself, which are not many when you've got three children!'

Sarah Yewman

'I feel very grateful for the chance to start this course as I believe it's going to progress me far in life.'

NEC Business Start-Up student

Course materials

All of our course materials are written and selected by subject matter experts, including experienced teachers, examiners and authors. So you can be confident that the course covers what you need to learn if you are thinking of self-employment or starting your own business.

The course materials are designed to provide a clear guide to your work through the course. The text is easy to follow, with examples, illustrations, activities, additional reading where appropriate, revision points and helpful suggestions that bring each subject to life. It is organised into topics and sections to give a clear path through the course. And it is structured to build your knowledge, skills and understanding step by step.

The complete course includes nine progress checks. Five in Course 1 and four in Course 2.

In addition to the written course materials, you will be directed to other resources such as useful videos, interactive quizzes and a free e-book of the essential course textbook, where applicable.

To check out the course materials you can download a sample from the course description page on the website.

Tutor support

As a student with NEC you'll have a personal tutor who will support you while you work through the course. NEC tutors are subject experts who understand distance learning.

The course is comprehensive, so you'll find that you don't need your tutor to be a 'teacher': your tutor is there to mark and comment on your written progress checks and to answer any queries you have about the subject to help you get the most from the course.

Your tutor will give you helpful and encouraging feedback, so that you know what you're doing well and where you can make improvements. Above all, your tutor is on your side and will want to see you succeed.

You can also contact NEC's student support team with any questions you have, if they are related to the subject you are studying, and they will liaise with your tutor on your behalf.

'It has now been over six months since I began my courses with you, and I am extremely impressed by the standard of tutoring and the resources available for students to succeed. Thank you!'

NEC Biology student

'I really like using the site as it is easy to navigate and is well structured. Furthermore, everything is nicely organised and so allows me to remain organised when studying.'

NEC History and English student

Tracey is a tutor for NEC's Psychology, and Sociology courses

She is a qualified teacher and social worker and has completed postgraduate training in Learning Disability Studies. The best thing about being a tutor for NEC, Tracey says, is:

'NEC students. They never fail to inspire and motivate me. Many of our students work in their own homes and have to be disciplined to study like this, so it is always great to have enthusiastic students who work hard to complete their courses.'

Course overview

Specification

There is no specification, but this course will introduce the key stages of business start-up.

Entry requirements

There are no formal entry requirements, but it is recommended that you have the ability to read and write English effectively.

Completion time

As a guideline, you should allow for around 30 hours' study time, plus additional time for completing progress checks. You will have tutor support for the following periods from the date of enrolment:

- Business Start-up (Course 1 + Course 2) – 6 months
- Course 1 – 3 months
- Course 2 – 3 months

Essential textbooks

This course is entirely self-contained and there are no essential textbooks.

Assessment

Five progress checks in Course 1 and four progress checks in Course 2, for a total of nine if the full course is completed. Successful completion of all progress checks will result in an NEC Certificate of Completion.

When to enrol?

You can enrol at any time.

What next?

We hope this guide has answered any questions you may have and helped you to decide whether this course is right for you. Remember you can download a sample of the course from the course information page on our website.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us using the details below.

If you are ready to enrol, you have different options:

- **enrol online** – for many courses you can enrol online through our website. Just choose your course, click ‘enrol now’ and then checkout
- **enrol by telephone** – just call our course advice team free on 0800 389 2839 and we can take your details over the telephone
- **pay in full** – you can pay in full with a credit or debit card
- **pay in instalments** – if spreading the cost would be useful, we can arrange that for you. Just call our course advice team to organise this.

Contact us

There are many ways to get in touch if you have any more questions.

Freephone: 0800 389 2839

Email us: info@nec.ac.uk

Website: www.nec.ac.uk

You can also find us [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#)