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# Plan B - Innovation Competition

***Seeing Opportunity, Being Enterprising and Freeing Potential***

**Do you have an idea? Would you like to get your idea out there?**

**If so, you could be in with a chance of winning up to £1,000!**

# Information

Do you have ideas about one of the following?

* **The Environment/ Technology** – initiatives that could make our lives more sustainable. New or improved solutions based on: IT, digital media, gaming or engineering?
* **Community and public improvement** – contributing to equality, health/well-being, wealth, education and happiness that transforms lives
* **Commercial businesses** – a money-making enterprise solving an unmet need that customers will want to pay for
* **Improving the campus experience** – what would make the University better for students, visitors, or staff?
* **Commercialising your research** - if you are a research student (PhD, MPhil, MRes), how could you apply your research to the ‘real world’?

What would it take to turn your idea into reality?

Plan B is the University’s annual ideas innovation competition open to all students and offers you the chance to:

* Win up to £1,000 cash
* Win £500 towards market researching your idea with Marketest.
* Get feedback on your ideas from Industry experts
* Receive expert training on communicating your ideas and presenting with impact.
* Interview experience

You don’t need to be an entrepreneur, and you don’t have to write a business plan! Simply answer the questions on the application form, to tell us about yourself and the idea, and what you think it would take to actually make it happen.

**Thank you to our lead supporters: Avonmore Developments and Santander and to our prize sponsors: Marketest, MTD Training, Hospitality and Accommodation Services, BizzInn and UnLtd.**

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# Further information

Prizes

* £1,000 total cash prize to the overall winner\*
* £250 cash prize for runner-up. (Additional to category prize, so £750 cash prize in total.)
* £500 cash prize for winner of each category
* £500 market research support from Marketest to the person who can best demonstrate the need for this
* Mentoring support for winners who want to take their idea to the next stage
* Fast-track to our social (Social Enterprise - Unltd) and business start-up (B-Seen) programmes if you think you’d like to give it a go!

Competition stages

* Pre-application. (optional) Attend one of our short workshops to find out more about the competition, and how to write a great application.
* Application. Complete the application form and submit by 5pm, Wednesday 20th November.
* Shortlisting. Up to ten entries will be chosen in each category and shortlisted candidates will be notified by Friday 29th November.
* Training. All short-listed applicants will be invited to attend a training session that will help you to tune up your ideas and present them well:
  + 5th December - Value Proposition and Pitching (Clive Booth)
* Competition day – Tuesday 10th December
  + Category presentations. You will have up to 10 minutes to present your idea and 10 minutes to answer questions to a panel of judges.
  + The winner of each category will be invited back on the afternoon of competition day to pitch again to determine the overall winner.
* Awards Ceremony. At the end of the competition day, all entrants to the competition are invited back to hear the competition results, meet the judges, enjoy some food and drink.
* All short-listed entries will receive a certificate.
* Follow-up. Those with strong and well research ideas could be eligible to join our business or social-enterprise start-up support programmes, with access to funding and support.
* We will use photos and short statements about each candidate for publicity purposes, and we will also contact your Head of Department or School to tell them of your success.
* Confidence. The cash prizes have no strings attached, but if you’ve made the effort to put together a great idea, do use the cash to put it into practice your plans and gain high level employability skills.

# Small print:

1. Eligibility

All applicants and team members must be registered as students of the University of Birmingham at the time of the closing deadline.

Applicants may submit a maximum of three applications, including where they are named as part of a team. If more entries are received, the first three opened/received will be considered for shortlisting and the remainder will be excluded.

Applicants who have taken part in previous Plan B (and predecessor) competitions must ensure that their entry is substantially different from any prior applications.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation reserves the right to withdraw applications that are offensive, defamatory, or illegal, or infringe copyright or other intellectual property.

1. Originality

The application and the ideas within it must represent original work, created by the applicant(s). Where the innovation builds upon existing work and intellectual property, this must be fully acknowledged.

1. Confidentiality

Applications will be handled confidentially. All external judges and reviewers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement or non-disclosure agreement (NDA).

Signing of this application confirms that you will respect other participants’ ideas and not disclose any other participant ideas to third parties internally or externally or try and replicate these unless this is pre-approved by said participant. (Collaborations are welcomed.)

Runners-up and winners will be required to take part in publicity for the competition and the wider work of the University. Such individuals agree to their names and photographs being used for this purpose. It may also be necessary to disclose the title and headline information about the innovation. However, commercially sensitive detail will not be published.

1. Feedback

Regrettably, it will not be possible to provide feedback on all entries. Written or verbal feedback will be provided to all those whose written entries are short-listed.

1. Judging

There are three rounds to the competition:

In each round of judging, the same selection criteria will be used.

**Round 1 – Short-listing of written submissions**

The entries will undergo a first-pass short-listing process, carried out by a minimum of three internal judges. The selection criteria will be the same as the competition criteria published with this application form. Both successful and unsuccessful applicants will be contacted at this point.

Successful candidates will be invited to the pitching competition, and will also be required to attend both a training session (how to pitch) and a briefing session (explanation of the rules and format of the event). These are expected to take place on the same day.

Up to ten applicants in each category will be put forward for the pitch.

**Round 2 – First pitching stage**

Provided there are sufficient entrants of a suitably high standard, the ‘live’ competition will open with a first pitch stage. Applicants will compete within categories. In the unlikely event that there are not sufficient entries to warrant a first pitching stage, short-listed entries will progress directly to the final round.

Each entrant or team will have 10 minutes to present their idea, followed by 10 minutes of questions from the panel, which will consist of up to five judges made up of internal and external guests. The questions will be used to determine the extent to which the candidate has addressed the main judging criteria.

A maximum of five team members are allowed to attend, but do not all have to present. However, all attendees must be prepared to answer questions from the panel.

A winner will be announced from each category and will go forward to the final pitching stage, to take place on the same day.

**Round 3 – Final pitching stage**

Each entrant or team will have 10 minutes to present their idea, followed by 10 minutes of questions from a new panel, which will consist of up to five judges made up of internal and external guests. In addition to the judging criteria, a final scaling factor based on the supplementary criterion will be applied.

6. Prizes

Prizes are subject to change and information regarding these will be posted on the competition web site.

Non-cash prizes cannot be substituted for a cash alternative.

\*Overall competition winner receives £500 and £500 for winning their category, totaling £1,000.

7. Complaints and appeals

Complaints and appeals should first be made in writing to the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Team Leader, and if not resolved satisfactorily within 10 working days should be referred to the Director of Student Employability at the University.

The decision of the judges is final and cannot be appealed.

8. Team applications

Applications may be received from teams, however there is to be one lead person for each entry and it is with this person that we will communicate in all matters relating to the competition.

In the event of a team entry winning a prize, the prize will be awarded to the lead person, who will have discretion in dividing up the prize (where applicable).

Non-cash prizes, including business mentoring and advice may only be offered to the lead person and may not be transferrable.

9. Fast-track entry to business or social enterprise support programmes

Fast-tracking will be subject to eligibility. Eligibility criteria, depending on the programme in question, can include visa status, nationality, business type and residence postcode. Unsuccessful applicants to the competition may still apply for these schemes without prejudice. Winners are not obliged to enter into any further programmes.

10. Fair play

Any winners and runners-up, being deemed to have entered into unfair play (having lied about their eligibility, the originality of the idea or in any other way misleading the judges) will renounce their title and repay any cash prizes, for a period of up to three years from receipt of their application.

11. Changes to the competition

The competition may be subject to changes at any time including (but not limited to) judging processes, dates and timings, prizes. Changes will be notified publicly via the Entrepreneurship and Innovation web site, and applicants who have already entered the competition will be notified directly by email.

# Judging criteria

The following criteria will be used at all judging stages.

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| **Impact (25%)** | How well does the idea meet the aims of the competition and the category into which it was entered? | |
| What changes will this bring about in how people live their lives now or in the future? | |
| Does the innovation demonstrate real usefulness or value? | |
| Do the benefits outweigh potential costs or risks? | |
| Social, ethical and environmental impact considered (applicable to all ideas, in every category) | |
| **Overall quality and level of detail (25%)** | Quality that reflects well on the University | |
| Sufficient detail that judges can understand what is innovative about the idea | |
| Well written (or spoken), concise and accurate descriptions | |
| Compelling case with all assertions evidenced | |
| Written (or spoken) for an audience of expert and lay readers | |
| **Viability and feasibility (25%)** | Financial projections, where used, show realism, even if based on estimates | |
| Timescales show realism, even if based on estimates | |
| Technical feasibility is evident (where relevant) | |
| Legal viability | * Is it legal? |
| * Does it infringe others' intellectual property? |
| Matching the right solution, product, service or process to the right people, in the right place and at the right time | |
| **Innovation and creativity (25%)** | Demonstrates an inventive step and original thinking | |
| Has novel and original components | If not completely new, adds real value to an existing idea |
| Has been well researched - the idea and its potential market | |
| Potential to generate interest and excitement | |

Supplementary Criterion (to be used in the final round of judging only)

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| **Innovativity (scaling factor applied to other criteria)** | To what extent is the individual an innovative and creative thinker? Is this a one-off idea or is the individual able to demonstrate a personal commitment to and aptitude for creative thinking, analysis and application. |

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**Plan B 2013/14**

**Application form**

**You should read the guidelines including the judging criteria before applying and must agree to the terms and conditions at the foot of this document.**

Once completed, please submit your application form by email to [ei@contacts.bham.ac.uk](mailto:ei@contacts.bham.ac.uk?subject=Plan-B%202011%20entry)  
Further instructions can be found on the website [www.ei.bham.ac.uk/planb](http://www.ei.bham.ac.uk/planb)

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| NAME |  | |
| EMAIL ADDRESS |  | |
| STUDENT ID |  | |
| COURSE & DEPARTMENT |  | |
| EXPECTED YEAR OF GRADUATION |  | |
| ENTRY CATEGORY (Mark ‘1’ next to the most appropriate category. You may optionally also mark ‘2’ in a secondary category. Please do not choose more than two categories. If left unmarked, the judges will decide on how to place the entry.) |  | **Environment/ Technology** |
|  | **Community and public improvement** |
|  | **Commercial businesses** |
|  | **Improving the campus experience** |
|  | **Commercialising your research** |

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| Give a short summary of your innovative idea (max 100 words) |
| **A 3-spouted teapot. Pouring tea takes far too long when one has guests. A 3 spouted tea pot would enable three mugs to be lined up side-by-side so that ‘broadband’ pouring can take place. Accessories would include bungs, connected via a short chain that can be used to block one or more of the spouts so that variously one, two or three mugs can be poured simultaneously without unwanted spillage.** |

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| Describe the beneficiaries or users of your idea, product, service or process (max 200 words) |
| **Anyone who makes tea – especially those who entertain many guests or have several tea drinkers in their household. Buyers would typically be friends and family who see this as an interesting novelty item, and are likely to purchase it for a birthday or Christmas present, especially where the recipient is hard to choose gifts for.** |

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| Describe the idea, product, service or process in more detail (max 200 words) |
| **The teapot would initially be made out of porcelain/clay as this is the easiest way in which to try out a variety of different shapes. Spouts would need to be long enough to reach into 3 cups lined up side-by-side, and there would need to be sufficient air-intake through a small hole in the lid, to allow for a high flow rate. Once optimum shape/design has been achieved, the pots could be manufactured in glass and steel, and other materials.** |

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| What influenced your idea? Where did your inspiration come from? (max 100 words) |
| **The standard teapot is the basis for this idea. Further inspiration has come from professional catering equipment than can produce multiple drinks simultaneously.** |

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| Explain the compelling reason for people to want this innovation? (max 150 words) |
| 1. **People are always looking for novel gifts to give one another, yet this is one of the greatest sources of stress. Research by the University of Poppleton shows that the stress caused by finding the right gift for a close relative can reduce a person’s quality of life by 3.8% \*** 2. **Pouring tea is a time-consuming process. It is estimated that the average British person spends 6.5 days pouring tea over their lifetime\*\***   **\*Source = Upmade, J. (2011) Quality of Life in the British Isles. Journal of Improbable Life Events. Silly Media , London.**  **\*\* Source = the compendium of made up statistics** |

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| What are the biggest challenges in bringing your innovative idea into reality? (max 150 words) |
| * **I am not a potter and will have to find someone to help me make the first trial versions.** * **Raising enough finance to get past the start-up phase to where I am making a profit.** * **The idea could be easily copied and it is unlikely I could get it patented or afford to do so.** |

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| Outline your financial and time estimations for making this happen (max 200 words). Where estimation is not possible, at least name the relevant factors that would need to be taken into account. |
| **Produce concept pots to test with friends and family: Under £100. 4 weeks (assumes I can find friendly potter/artist who will take a profit share).**  **Production of demo pots for retailers/exhibitions: £1,000. 8 weeks.**  **Produce marketing literature, packaging etc: £2,000 1 month**  **Demonstrate at exhibitions and visit retailers. Identify scale manufacturer: £3,000. 3 months.**  **First orders, initial production run. 1 month, £6,000.**  **Will need to borrow money once initial concepts produced.**  **Sales expectations – within 1 year to be selling 10000 pots per year at £12 to retailers (7000 of them) or £20 direct from web site (3000). Cost £4.80 each to manufacture, delivered.**   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | |  | Retail | Direct | | Income | 7000x12 = £84000 | 3000 x 20 = £60000 | | **Total income** | **£144,000** | | | Mfr costs | 7000 x £4.80 = £33600 | 3000 x £4.80 = £14400 | | Postage/shipping | 7000 x average £0.50 = £3500 | 3000 x average £1.20 = £3600 | | Overheads | £65000 | | | **Total costs** | **£120100** | | | **Profit** | **£23900** | | |

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| Outline the strengths you would bring to bear on this and what help you would need from others? (max 150 words) |
| **I am very good at organizing, scheduling and communicating with people. I am able to work with complex numerical data.**  **While I am creative in terms of ideas, I would need a potter/artist to help design and make the concept pots.**  **I am not confident at making sales calls yet and would need a mentor to help me with this.** |

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| Illustrate what ethical, social or environmental impact will it have (max 200 words) |
| **Once the concept has proven itself, I would like to move manufacturing to a company that employs disadvantaged people either in the UK or abroad. I would aim to source environmentally friendly materials wherever possible.**  **I am aware of the potential criticism that such novelty goods are a waste of natural resource and may not get used by the recipients. By making the pots in appealing designs and with the ability to stop up the extra spouts, they can be used as normal teapots, so will not lead to mass wastage.** |

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| Finally, have you been on or are you on any of our current programmes? If so, please state which one/s here. |
| * **B-Seen (previously/current)** * **Social Enterprise Awards (previously/current)** * **Plan B (previously)** |

**Declaration**

I have read and agree to the competition terms and conditions and confirm that the business plan adheres to these. (Please check box or place an ‘X’ next to it.)

I confirm that I am available to attend the training afternoon on Thursday 5th December and the Pitching Day on Tuesday 10th December. If for any reason I cannot attend the training I will watch these sessions online and/or discuss further with a contact from EI.

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| NAME |  |
| DATE |  |

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| --- |
| Contact Address |
|  |

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| --- | --- |
| Contact Number |  |

**Optional**

If you are interested in being fast-tracked onto either our other programmes please indicate your preference/s below.

I am interested in being fast-tracked onto **B-Seen** the 6 month business support programme.

I am interested in being fast-tracked onto **Social Enterprise Award Programme**

**Thank you to our lead supporters: Avonmore Developments and Santander and to our prize sponsors: Marketest, MTD Training, Hospitality and Accommodation Services, BizzInn and UnLtd.**

**Additional team members**

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| COURSE & DEPARTMENT |  |
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