Wayfinder Incubator Program Overview
Wayfinder is a program for UCI-affiliated startups that is designed to accelerate venture development by providing teams with space, strategic guidance, and other valuable support resources. The program is managed by UCI Applied Innovation and run out of The Cove, the organization’s physical space in UCI Research Park.

**Program Overview**

**VALUE OF PARTICIPATION**
Teams in Wayfinder have access to guidance and mentorship from UCI Applied Innovation’s Experts-in-Residence Network, learning experiences through workshops and office hours, work space and meeting rooms, networking and exposure opportunities, and funding resources, including the Cove Fund. As a central part of UCI Applied Innovation’s entrepreneurial ecosystem, Wayfinder teams may experience additional tangential benefits and enrichment opportunities that result from their enhanced engagement with the community. There is no cost to the startup associated with participation in the program.

**Program Cycle (occurs 4 times per year)**

1. **Pitch Event**
2. **Mid-Cycle Review**
3. **Showcase Event**
4. **Final Review**

**WORKSHOPS & ADVISING**

Workshops: exclusive workshops on various entrepreneurship subject areas

Advising: guidance, expertise, feedback, and connections through meetings and office hours with mentors

**PROGRAM COMPONENTS**
The scope of the program covers the following basic components. More details about the requirements and expectations surrounding participation in the program are distributed to the teams upon admission.

**PITCH & MATCH EVENT:** initial pitch event to expose new teams entering the program to mentors and the Applied Innovation community

**Showcase Event:** final showcase event for teams completing their cycle to present their startup’s development to mentors, the Applied Innovation community, potential investors, and other interested parties

**PROGRAM LENGTH**
Four Wayfinder cycles run per calendar year. Each team is admitted for one cycle approximately six months long with the possibility of cycle renewal. While cycles exist to create a shared experience among teams and allow for calendar alignment, each individual team’s experience and respective progress targets are customized.

**APPLICATION Process**

**ELIGIBILITY**
To apply for the Wayfinder program, a team must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- be using UCI-owned intellectual property as a core part of the startup’s business idea
- have at least one active team member (co-founder or member of the management team) who is a current UCI faculty, student, staff, or alumnus (degree program or minimum completion of 16 units)

In some unique cases, exceptions may be made for non-UCI students whose university’s existing entrepreneurial offerings are for some reason insufficient

**APPLICATION COMPONENTS**
The application process consists of an application link, an application deadline, a decision deadline, a decision notification date, and an application link.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Application process begins: February 1, 2023

**APPLICATION DATES & DEADLINES**

- **Application deadline:** February 1, 2023
- **Decision deadline:** February 28, 2023
- **Decision notification date:** March 1, 2023

**APPLYING FOR THE PROGRAM**

After the application deadline, submitted applications will be reviewed and select teams will be invited for an interview before a final admissions decision is made. Teams that are unsuccessful in the application process are still eligible to reapply to the program at a future date. Teams interested in applying to Wayfinder must submit an application online by the deadline corresponding to the program cycle to which they want to be admitted (see Program Dates & Application Deadlines).

**ADMISSIONS CRITERIA**
Successful applicants to Wayfinder will exhibit the following characteristics:

- The startup team has a basic understanding of its current business model and is able to effectively communicate it
- The startup addresses a real problem or customer need and will offer a product/service that is unique or hard to duplicate
- The startup team can demonstrate that it has initiated the process of customer discovery by testing customer reactions to its business model hypotheses

Prior to approaching UCI Applied Innovation and applying to Wayfinder, it is expected that the startup team has engaged extensively with other entrepreneurial support resources available through UCI schools, centers, and programs. Additionally, teams will be evaluated for fit based on their progress goals for their startup, expectations for the program, and mentoring needs.

**APPLY TO THE PROGRAM**

Apply to the program: innovation.uci.edu/wayfinder_application

**Application Link**

- **Application Process**
  - **Follow steps**
  - **Submit application**

**Eligibility**

- **UCI affiliation**

**Goals and needs**

- **UCI affiliation**

**Commitment to active participation in the program**

- **UCI affiliation**

**Eligibility**

- **UCI affiliation**

*Not required for admission
**Cycle Dates & Application Deadlines**

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<th>Cycle</th>
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Learn more about the Wayfinder Incubator program at: innovation.uci.edu/programs/wayfinder-incubator/

Have questions? Email us: wayfinder@uci.edu