Entrepreneurship and Commercialization Opportunities at McMaster University



McMaster University
MADE at MAC
Entrepreneurship

Made at Mac Presentation – November 3, 2026

Made at Mac Ecosystem

Building on our strengths: community-engaged, problem-based, interdisciplinary



From idea to scale, support is built in—every step of the entrepreneurship journey.

Entrepreneur Support

Startup Creation

Startup Growth

McMaster University | Industry Liaison Office | St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton | THE FORGE | Lab 2Market | DeGroote Heersink Hub | Innovation FACTORY | McMaster University | DeGroote School of Business | Hamilton Health Sciences | drive Dare. Research. Innovate. VentureE.

Foundational support for people

Entrepreneur Support

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Entrepreneur Support

McMaster University | DeGroote Heersink Hub

THE CLINIC

- **Innovation Inspo**
  Monthly speaker series
- **ACE Future Innovators Bootcamp**
  6 sessions Entrepreneurship 101
- **The Residency**
  6 months Venture Development

Contact heathinnovation@mcmaster.ca

MARNIX E. HEERSINK SCHOOL OF BIOMEDICAL INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- **Masterclass**
  Research commercialization readiness, Collaboration with HHS-Spark Drive
- **Heersink ACE[50]**
  $50,000 funding opportunity designed to advance high-potential innovations
- **Master of Biomedical Innovation**
  1 year graduate program

Entrepreneur Support

Want to determine if your research has commercial potential?

Lab2Market Discover

Lab2Market Validate

Lab2Market is a national network that helps brilliant minds in STEM graduate and postdoctoral programs reimagine their futures. Throughout our programs, they'll discover their passion for entrepreneurship, build an **entrepreneurial skill set**, and connect with the **network** they need to turn their ideas into successful businesses.

- **Compensation** in Validate program through Mitacs-BSI (**up to $10k**)
- **Time commitment** ranges from 3 days (Discover) to 12 weeks (Validate)

Contact Maria Plazas (plazasm@mcmaster.ca)

Learn more about L2M

Entrepreneur Support

Need resources and information?

McMaster University | Libraries

- Provides access to over $2M in licensed information resources and tools
- Offers support for selecting and using information resources to address questions entrepreneurs are expected to answer
  - **Industry, company, competitor, customer, and consumer research**
  - **Clinical, scientific, and technical research**
  - **Prior art research**
- Makerspace, graphic design software, and multimedia production
- Access to full-text collections from your browser (LibKey Nomad)
- Available to current students, staff, and faculty at no- or low-cost

Contact Jeff Mason (masonj27@mcmaster.ca)

Learn more here: McMaster University Libraries and Health Sciences Library

Entrepreneur Support

Need space to connect with other entrepreneurs?
Marinucci Entrepreneurial Bridge

The Bridge is hosted on the seventh floor of the new McLean Centre. The premiere destination for students to discover, learn and collaborate.



- McMaster's Hub for Entrepreneurship on Main Campus
- Hosts entrepreneurship events and programming including interdisciplinary Minor in Entrepreneurship
- Supports activities within the Entrepreneurship Living Learning Community
- Provides access to Entrepreneur-in-Residence

Learn more about MEB

Entrepreneur Support

Looking for student-led opportunities?
Join MVCC and Agora

McMaster Venture Capital Club

- Educational workshops
- Networking events
- Connections to startups for experiential learning opportunities

Agora

- Coworking meetups in person at MCCD
- Weekly drop-in sessions
- Work on your venture or a creative project



Contact Diya Shah (shahd86@mcmaster.ca)

Learn more about MVCC & Learn more about Agora

Foundational support for startups

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Startup Creation

THE FORGE

McMaster's campus-linked incubator

- **FREE resources for entrepreneurial students**
- **NO EQUITY**
- **Upcoming programs:**
  - Summer 2027: **Startup Survivor & Pitch Competition** (4months)
  - Fall 2027 to Winter 2028: **Incubator Lite** (8months)
  - Summer to Fall 2028: **Student Seed Fund** (8months)
  - Winter to Fall 2029: **Business Incubator** (12months)



Contact Mariya Leslie (mariya@theforge.mcmaster.ca)

Learn more about The Forge

Startup Creation

THE FORGE

$200K Startup Survivor Program

- **Eligibility**: Students and recent alumni with early-stage startups
- **Benefits**: $10K funding, mentorship, business advisory, workshops, pitch coaching
- **Duration**: May to August; part-time; hybrid

$30K Pitch Competition

- **Top 5 winners** of Startup Survivor pitch for cash prizes

Applications open in January 2027



Contact Mariya Leslie (mariya@theforge.mcmaster.ca)

Learn more about the Startup Survivor Program

Startup Survivor Alumni

Meet Evan Ferreira

Co-Founder & CEO of Local Reach (Acquired)



"After going through four different accelerators, I can confidently say The Forge was the best.

In just four months, I went from not even knowing what 'venture capital' meant to **pitching my business to investors** and **securing offers**.

The Forge's **top-tier mentorship** and **supportive community** didn't just teach me the skills I needed - it completely **transformed my perspective** on entrepreneurship.

Whether you're a first-time founder or a seasoned entrepreneur, joining The Forge is one of the best decisions you'll ever make."

Learn more about the Startup Survivor

Startup Support

Lab2Market Launch

- For research-based startups looking to develop their commercialization plan
- Connection with experts and entrepreneurs across Canada
- Compensation with Launch programs through Mitacs-BSI (up to $10k)
- Eligibility includes undergraduates, graduate students, postdocs, alumni up to 2 years, and faculty
- Time commitment: 4 months

Contact Maria Plazas (plazasm@mcmaster.ca)

Startup Creation

Building a team around your startup?

Experience Ventures

- Pairs undergraduate students with McMaster startups for **80-hour project**.
- Students receive $850 as an honourarium.

McMaster Startup Immersion Internships

- **Provides funding** to McMaster startups to hire McMaster undergraduate or graduate students as **full-time employees** for **one, 4-month term**. (May to August 2027).

John Whelen Family Innovation Fellowship

- **4 to 12-month internship** with a company to provide students with hands-on industry experience and build relationships between academia and industry.

Contact Kristine Braun (braunk5@mcmaster.ca)

Learn more about MSI & Learn more about the JWFI Fellowship

Accelerating growth of startups

Entrepreneur Support

Startup Creation

Startup Growth

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Startup Growth

McMaster Student Seed Fund

Eligibility:

- McMaster startups with evidence of product-market fit, founded by students or recent alumni who have completed some entrepreneurship training.

Benefits:

- $15,000 non-dilutive funding
- Bi-weekly mentorship from Entrepreneur-in-Residence.
- Networking events, showcase opportunity, access to service providers.

Duration:

- May - December 2027; part-time; hybrid.

Contact Mariya Leslie (mariya@theforge.mcmaster.ca)

Startup Growth

Meet Ali, Jase, and Eddy

Co-founders of LIVESENS and one of six **Student Seed Fund** awardees in 2025



LIVESENS

"McMaster's Student Seed Fund was a game changer for LIVESENS. The **funding** helped us push product development forward, and the **mentorship** gave us clear direction on go to market and execution. It's an awesome program that turns early momentum into real progress."

- Jase Jin, Co-Founder & COO of LIVESENS

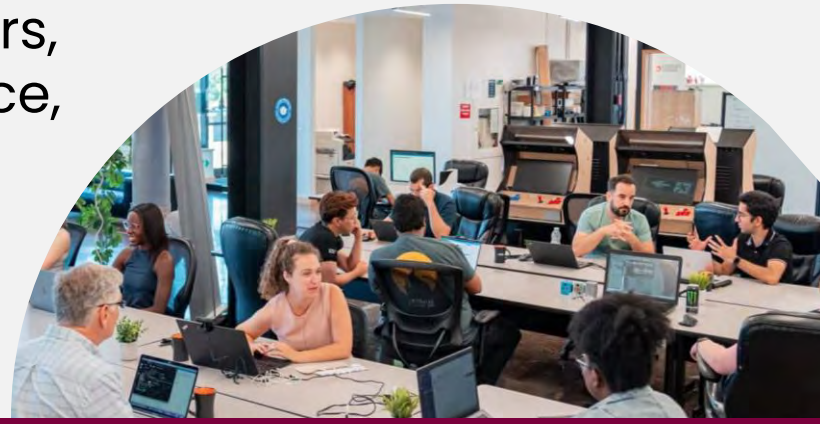
Learn more about LIVESENS here

Startup Growth

THE FORGE

FOR FULL-TIME ENTREPRENEURS – Business Incubator Program

- For startups with MVP, early market traction, and at least one full-time founder
- 12 months incubation at The Forge in MIP
- Small cohorts 2x per year
- Tailored resources to support individual needs of each startup
- **Benefits**: Mentorship, business advisory, service providers, reimbursement program, investor readiness, office space, makerspace, access to McMaster talent pipeline via undergraduate and graduate course projects



Contact Info@theforge.mcmaster.ca

Learn more about the Forge

Business Incubator Alumni

Meet Amanda Nguyen

Founder & CEO of Boardball (Acquired)



"We joined The Forge with the expectation to be a part of a **community** of other founders doing cool things. We got just that - and more. Not only were we surrounded by other inspiring entrepreneurs, we were paired up with excellent mentors who have helped our business in so many ways. They were always accessible, quick to respond, and provided ***hands on help when we needed it most***. This program has been pivotal to getting our business from **early stages to growth stage** and we're feeling poised for growth! We've had an awesome experience with The Forge thus far and we hope other founders get to experience the same."

Made at Mac Presentation

Learn more about the Business Incubator

UPCOMING EVENTS

November Research Fair

Where curiosity meets discovery.

DATE
Thursday, November 12th

TIME
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

LOCATION
4th Floor Loft, HUB

McMaster University | Centre for Career Growth & Experience



Connect with professors and graduate students from labs across multiple engineering departments. Learn about exciting ongoing projects, explore potential research opportunities, and gain insight into what it's like to work in a lab environment.

McMaster University
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Entrepreneurship

ENTREPRENEURSHIP WEEK

Save the date: November 16-20



Monday, November 16
MILO Innovation Showcase &
Postdoc Pitch Competition



Wednesday, November 18
The Forge Startup Survivor Pitch
Competition

entrepreneurship.mcmaster.ca/entrepreneurship-week

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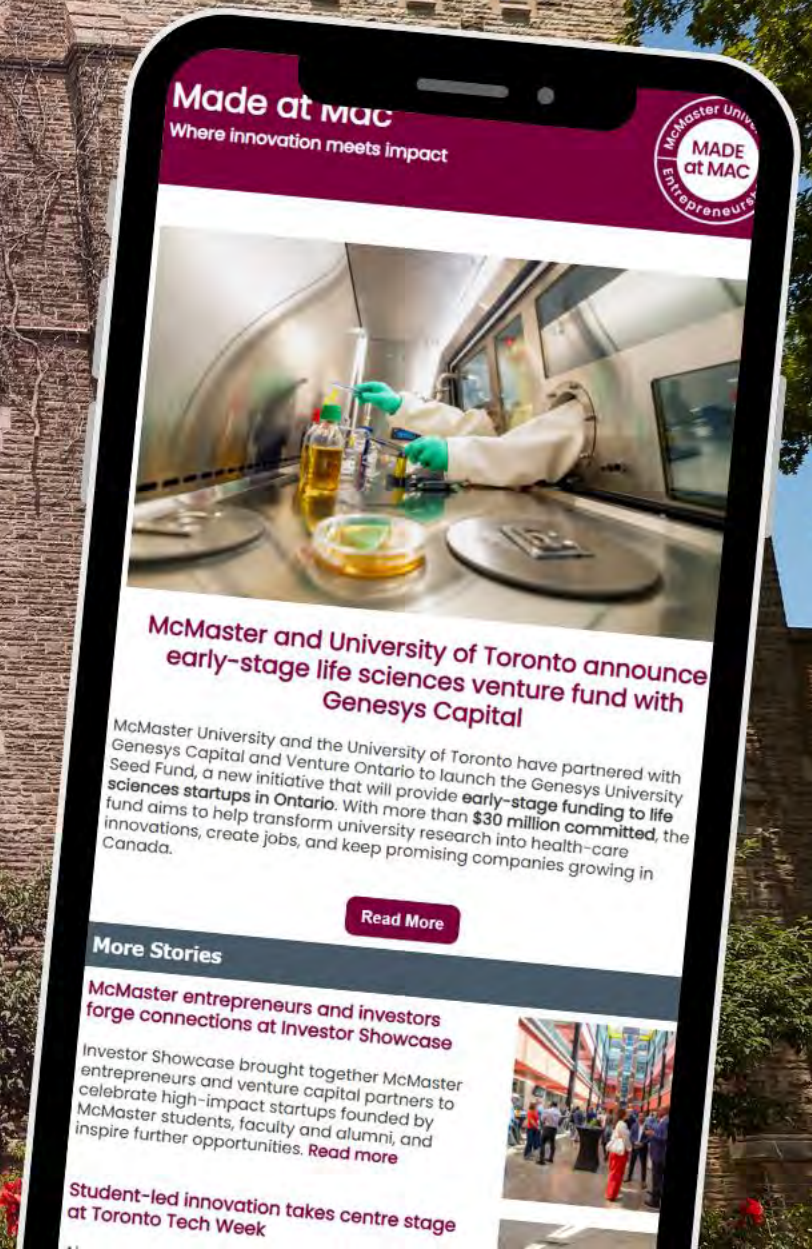

Thank you!

Contact Mariya at leslim3@mcmaster.ca

- Follow The Forge on Instagram, LinkedIn
- Follow DeGroote Heersink Hub
- Follow MILO on LinkedIn
- Follow McMaster Research on LinkedIn

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