



**至善館**  
SHIZENKAN

**Graduate School of Leadership and Innovation  
Shizenkan University**

**2025 Academic Year  
Non-Degree Program Application Guidelines**

**< Subject >  
Entrepreneurship and Business Start-up**



## Purpose

Shizenkan University's non-degree program enables professionals who are not enrolled in the Shizenkan MBA Program to participate in select MBA courses on an individual basis and earn academic credit. Each course maintains admission standards, with a limited number of applicants accepted through a screening process. Students who successfully complete their enrolled course will receive official academic credit.

These guidelines outline the application procedures for the "Entrepreneurship and Business Start-up" course, which is conducted entirely in English. For information regarding other courses available through the non-degree program, please refer to page 6.

## Outline of the Course

(Excerpt from Syllabus. For details, please refer to the subject syllabus at the end of this document.)

For the last two decades, startups have been attracting increasing attention worldwide with capital, talent, and government support culminating into creating hundreds of “unicorns” (i.e. private companies that are valued over US\$ 1 billion). At the center of these high-growth companies are the entrepreneurs that orchestrate the birth, growth, pivoting, and exiting of these organizations. Entrepreneurial thinking is developed through intentional exploration, experimentation, and reflection. While launching a business may not be the goal for all students, the course provides a structured opportunity to apply innovative thinking across various contexts.

Through the course, we expect students to experience the process of converting an opportunity into a profitable and sustainable new business idea, while considering the risks and opportunities in a systematic manner. At the same time, the course will provide students an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and challenges in developing themselves as an entrepreneur. For participants with substantial professional experience in established organizations, this course provides tools to translate that expertise into new venture or innovation contexts. By placing participants in the role of the entrepreneur, the course enables students to learn how to apply and feel comfortable with a range of entrepreneurial ways of thinking and acting. The sessions will provide learnings and frameworks that participants can use in venture projects and their future careers.

## **Class Schedule**

The dates and times of the classes are as follows (Japan Standard Time). Session 1, 3, 4 and 7 will be held in person at the Shizenkan campus. Session 5 will be held in person at the entrepreneur office in Tokyo. Session 2 and 6 will be held online using Zoom.

Session 1: Saturday, November 1, 2025, 8:45-12:15

Session 2: Saturday, November 8, 2025, 8:45-12:15

Session 3: Saturday, November 15, 2025, 8:45-12:15

Session 4: Saturday, November 22, 2025, 8:45-12:15

Session 5: Saturday, November 29, 2025, 8:45-12:15

Session 6: Saturday, December 6, 2025, 8:45-12:15

Session 7: Saturday, December 13, 2025, 8:45-12:15

## **Admission Process**

### **(1) Overview**

The admissions process is a two-stage process with document screening and an interview. In the interview, we will examine your motivation and readiness for taking the course, including what you indicate in the application documents. As this course is offered in English, the admissions process is conducted in English. It is not compulsory to submit your GMAT or GRE results to enroll in the program.

### **(2) Interview**

The interviews will be conducted online using the Zoom platform. At the time of application, please select the date and time of the interview from the list of options. Zoom link and other details will be provided at the time of the initial notification of selection results.

## **Applicant Eligibility**

As an applicant, you are required to have a minimum of three years full-time work experience and to fulfill one of the following conditions at the time of application:

- (1) Obtain a university or college degree
- (2) Obtain a bachelor's degree from the National Institution for Academic Degrees and Quality Enhancement of Higher Education of Japan
- (3) Complete 16 years of education in a foreign country
- (4) Being designated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan

- (5) Are considered to have qualifications in education, knowledge, skills and aspiration to be admitted in the program by the Shizenkan Admissions Committee

## **Application Process**

The application process consists of the following steps.

### **Step 1: Submitting the application form**

- Please submit your application via the application form below. Select your interview time/date as instructed in the form. Note that you are required to fill in the "Your personal statement" section of the application form in English.

<https://forms.gle/Dox6Rtfuwv3mj1DZ8>

### **Step 2: Document screening and confirming interview schedule**

- Based on the submitted documents, we will conduct the document screening. Those who pass the document screening will be invited for an interview. The interview schedule and Zoom URL will be sent to the e-mail address provided in the application form.

### **Step 3: Personal interview**

- The interview will be conducted online (via Zoom). It will take approximately 30 minutes.
- The interview will be in English.

### **Step 4: Admission**

- The Admissions Office will inform you of the admissions result after the document screening and interview.
- Successful applicants are required to pay the registration fee and tuition fees by bank transfer. Upon completion of the enrolment fee and tuition fee transfer, the student will be officially accepted as a non-degree student.

## **Application Deadline**

- Friday, October 10th, 2025 by 12:00pm

### **Interview Schedule (tentative)**

Based on the preferences entered in the application form, the applicant will be scheduled for 30 minutes on one of the following dates.

Wednesday, October 15th, 2025, 18:30-21:00

Thursday, October 16th, 2025, 18:30-21:00

**Notification of Admissions Result (tentative)**

Shizenkan will send the results to the e-mail address provided in the application form.

Friday, October 17th, 2025

**Enrollment and Registration Procedures**

Please follow the instructions provided with the notification of acceptance.

The deadline for completing the procedures is Friday, October 31st, 2025.

**Application Forms**

Please fill out the following information when submitting your application. Your application will be officially accepted when all items are completed. If all items are not submitted by the deadline, your application will not be accepted.

1. Full name
2. Gender
3. Nationality
4. Date of birth
5. Address
6. Telephone number
7. E-mail address
8. Current employer
9. Education history
10. Your personal statement: Interests and motivation towards the topic; commitment to coursework.  
(Please write in English)
11. Interview schedule preference
12. Copy of passport (for non-Japanese nationals)
13. Copy of residence card (for non-Japanese nationals)

**Application Fee**

No application fee is required for the academic year 2025.

## Academic Fees

The following table shows the academic fees required for enrollment in the program.

Non-Degree Program registration fee	JPY30,000
Tuition fee	JPY200,000
Total	JPY230,000

- (1) The tuition fees include costs for case materials used in the course; however, they do not include costs of textbooks and other optional academic materials.
- (2) If you have already paid the registration fee for a course taken in the current or previous academic year, you are exempted from paying the registration fee for subsequent courses.

## Protection of Personal Information

All personal information that Shizenkan obtains from the applicant will be used solely for the purpose of admissions screening and the student registration subsequent to admissions. For more information on our personal information policy, please kindly refer to our website. By applying, you are considered to have agreed to the policy.



## Notes

- (1) Credit will be awarded to those who meet the credit requirements for the courses taken, and a certificate of credit will be issued upon request.
- (2) Neither a commuter certificate (for commuter passes) nor a student discount certificate will be issued to non-degree course students.
- (3) Being a student in a non-degree program does not qualify you for student residency status.
- (4) Please note that if for any reason the course is not offered, permission to enroll may be revoked.
- (5) If a non-degree program student enrolls in a master's programme at Shizenkan within five years of earning credits, it is possible for up to four credits to be accepted as earned credit under certain conditions (subject to change without notice). In this case, the amount of tuition fee paid for the non-degree study to earn the credits will be deducted from the tuition fee for the master's program.

### Other Non-degree Courses Offerings

In addition to this course, Shizenkan plans to also accept non-degree course students for other courses. The following list indicates eligible courses for the period from September 2025 to March 2026. We will announce the start of the application as shown in the table. Please note that some courses are offered in two languages (English and Japanese).

Course Name	Language	Course Period	Announcement Timing
Entrepreneurship and Business Start-up アントレプレナーシップと事業創造	English	Nov.-Dec. 2025	Sept. 2025
	Japanese	Nov.-Dec.	Sept.
ソーシャル・インパクトの創出	Japanese	Nov.-Dec.	Sept.
Leadership and Negotiation リーダーシップと交渉学	English	Jan.-Mar.2026	Nov.
	Japanese	Jan.-Feb.	Nov.
Global Management: Strategy, Organization and Leadership	English	Jan.-Mar.	Nov.



Course Title:	Entrepreneurship and Business Start-up
Course Code:	B303EE-25EN
Year / Semester:	2nd year / 1st semester
Credit:	2 credits (Elective course)
Duration:	November 1st, 2025 - December 13th, 2025
Faculty:	Associate Prof. Shunsuke Nagao
Class Format:	On campus (in person) and online

## OBJECTIVE:

For the last two decades, startups have been attracting increasing attention worldwide with capital, talent, and government support culminating into creating hundreds of “unicorns” (i.e. private companies that are valued over US\$ 1 billion). At the center of these high-growth companies are the entrepreneurs that orchestrate the birth, growth, pivoting, and exiting of these organizations. Entrepreneurial thinking is developed through intentional exploration, experimentation, and reflection. While launching a business may not be the goal for all students, the course provides a structured opportunity to apply innovative thinking across various contexts.

Through the course, we expect students to experience the process of converting an opportunity into a profitable and sustainable new business idea, while considering the risks and opportunities in a systematic manner. At the same time, the course will provide students an opportunity to reflect on their strengths and challenges in developing themselves as an entrepreneur. For participants with substantial professional experience in established organizations, this course provides tools to translate that expertise into new venture or innovation contexts. By placing participants in the role of the entrepreneur, the course enables students to learn how to apply and feel comfortable with a range of entrepreneurial ways of thinking and acting. The sessions will provide learnings and frameworks that participants can use in venture projects and their future careers.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Learn the mindset that successful entrepreneurs share

Understand the critical concepts, such as identifying a market, considering and deciding on methods of financing, determining what performance metrics to use, and how to prepare for the unexpected

Practice the process of generating and testing business ideas, developing initial value propositions, and communicating them clearly to stakeholders including potential customers, internal sponsors, or investors

## COURSE POSITIONING:

This course is offered as a part of “Entrepreneurship and Tech Innovation” Track in the 2nd year program. This course is intended for students who seek to understand the challenges of being an entrepreneur, or students who already have their own business ideas although those



might yet be vague. Students with or without a concrete business idea are welcome. Those without a specific venture concept may take an active role in another student's project or frame their learning through an internal innovation challenge within their company or industry.

Students will create their own business model, test their ideas out of the classroom, iterate their model, and practice pitching their business model to the class as well as to guest lecturers. Although it is a simulated experience, it is designed so that students can experience the actual entrepreneurial and business creation process as much as possible.

In the process, it is required from students to integrate the knowledge and skills they obtained in their 1st year through the NUMBERS, FINANCE, MARKETING, ENVISION, DESIGN, STRATEGY courses, as well as the BUSINESS PLAN course in the 2nd year.

This course aims at accelerating the realization of individual business concepts partially by being held simultaneously with the 2nd year individual research projects (seminars).

#### LEARNING APPROACH:

This course's primary objective is not to create a beautiful business plan on paper, but to have students go through the process of identifying a viable business idea and transforming that into an organizational entity through which people can channel their resources, energy and creativity to create economic value. Instead of taking the position of a critic, each student is required to think and act as an entrepreneur or as a founding team member of a startup. In particular, students are required to demonstrate not only logic but also passion and drive necessary to inspire and encourage people. In addition, during the classes, students will receive feedback on their business plans for concrete actions that will lead to commercialization, so that students can further brush them up beyond this course should they choose to do so.

#### WHO SHOULD TAKE THIS COURSE:

This course is for:

Students exploring future startup leadership

Professionals interested in venture creation, internal innovation, or entrepreneurial problem-solving

Individuals seeking frameworks for launching new ideas within established organizations

Consultants, investors, or professionals evaluating or supporting entrepreneurial ventures. For careers such as these, it is useful to understand the venture creation process from the viewpoint of the entrepreneur

#### TEXTBOOK:

"A Strategy to meet the challenges of entrepreneurship", Donald Sull, Financial Times, 2002 - -- to be distributed via SOS before the first class

"Before the Startup", Paul Graham Lecture at the Y-Combinator Startup Class, 2014.

Lecture transcript online [here](#)

<https://genius.com/Paul-graham-lecture-3-counterintuitive-parts-of-startups-and-how-to-have-ideas-annotated>

Lecture recording online here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ii1jcLg-eIQ>

“Do Things That Don’t Scale”, Paul Graham, 2014.

Blog online here

<http://paulgraham.com/ds.html>

#### RECOMMENDED READING:

“The Lean Startup: How Today's Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses”, Eric Ries, 2011

“Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future”, Peter Thiel, 2014

#### EVALUATION:

Grading for this course will be as follows.

In addition to the attendance requirement (at least 5 sessions or more), “submission of 3 post-session assignments” and “final pitch deck and delivery” are mandatory requirements to receive credit. Failure to do so will result in the loss of credit.

- Submission of 3 post-session assignments	30%
- Class participation and contribution	20%
- Final pitch deck and delivery	50%

#### Class Contribution:

The criterion used to evaluate class contribution is determined as questions/comments from a student which enhances the awareness and learning of their fellow classmates. The number of questions/comments is not the primary focus. Instead, it is the quality of the questions/comments that in turn enhances awareness and learning of the class as a whole that will only count towards class contributions.

#### CODE OF CONDUCT:

The general policies outlined in the Code of Conduct apply.

In addition to these general policies, we are adding the following extra policies to this course:

First session participation is mandatory (whether the course would be conducted online or offline).

Students have the option to withdraw from the course within 72 hours after the conclusion of the first session.

During the first session, each student will share her/his business idea to the class. Students that decide not to work on their own business idea for this course, either before or after the first session, may still take this course by joining another classmate's idea as a value-adding team member. The student that wants to join a fellow classmate's business idea should clearly state and communicate to that classmate how (s)he will contribute (e.g. financial modeling, potential user interview, app development, recruiting, etc)

Students that receive an offer from a fellow student to join their business idea should assess the fit of that student with their business idea, and either accept or reject the offer. The maximum number of offers a student can accept is capped at two.

Within 72 hours after the conclusion of the first session, students pursuing their business idea are asked to submit by email a brushed-up business idea using the "Business Model Canvas" framework, and b) the name of the student that is joining with the pledged contribution. Similarly, students who have been accepted to join another student's business, will turn in a) the name of the student they are joining, and b) the contribution to that business they have pledged.

After 72 hours of the conclusion of the first session, we will drop any student who do not turn in either one of the above from the course.

Please note students are allowed/encouraged to invite their outside collaborators to join and contribute to their business ideas and participate in the course sessions as a team.

#### SESSION OVERVIEW:

Session 1 : Introduction to the Entrepreneur Course and the Entrepreneurial Journey [3 hours 30 min.]

Session 2 : Fostering an Entrepreneurial Mindset and Core Skills [3 hours 30 min.]

Session 3 : Your first 90 Days and How to Prepare for it [3 hours 30 min.]

Session 4 : Fund Raising, KPIs, Unit Economics and Brushing Your Business Model [3 hours 30 min.]

Session 5 : Dialogue with Entrepreneur off Campus [3 hours 30 min.]

Session 6 : Brushing your Venture Pitch Through a Dry Run [3 hours 30 min.]

Session 7 : Final Venture Pitch [3 hours 30 min.]

## Contact us



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