



## Course Catalog 2026

**Oakland, California:**

2781 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 227-7027

**Boston, Massachusetts:**

769 Centre Street, Boston, MA 02130  
(617) 420-6270

**Chicago, Illinois:**

2119 S. State Street, Chicago, IL 60616  
(773) 873-6857

**Website:**

<https://uptimacoop.com>

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## Contents

Welcome .....	5
1. Overview .....	6
1.1 About the Institution .....	6
1.2 Mission & Objectives .....	6
1.3 Ownership & Governance .....	7
1.4 Information Regarding Approvals & Accreditation .....	7
1.5 Disclosures .....	7
1.6 Facilities .....	8
1.7 Administrators & Instructors .....	9
1.8 Program Schedule .....	11
1.9 Holidays .....	11
1.10 Hours of Operation .....	12
2. Programs .....	12
2.1 Launch Academy .....	12
3. Admissions & Enrollment Overview .....	16
3.1 Admissions Requirements .....	16
3.2 Admissions Process .....	18
3.3 Admissions Decisions .....	19
3.4 Notification of Decisions .....	20
3.5 Re-applying for Admission .....	20
3.6 Enrollment Agreement .....	20
3.7 Registration Fees .....	20
4. Attendance Policies .....	20
4.1 Time Management & Preparation .....	20
4.2 Workshop Attendance .....	21
4.3 Mentoring Appointments .....	21
4.4 Cancellation of Enrollment .....	21
4.5 Withdrawal from a Program .....	21
4.6 Deferral of Enrollment (Leave-of-Absence) .....	22
4.7 Termination of Enrollment .....	22

5.	Standards of Progress .....	23
5.1	Program Deliverables .....	23
5.2	Progress Reporting.....	23
5.3	Course Completion & Continuation Requirements .....	23
5.4	Graduation Requirements .....	24
5.5	Transfer of Credit to Other Institutions .....	24
6.	Appeals Policy .....	24
7.	Program Fees & Payment Policies .....	25
7.1	Program Fees.....	25
7.2	Payment Cycle .....	25
7.3	Payment Methods.....	25
7.4	Early Payments .....	25
7.5	Late Payments.....	25
7.6	Financial Aid & Student Loans .....	26
7.7	Scholarships .....	26
7.8	Student Tuition Recovery Fund .....	26
7.9	Refunds .....	27
8.	Entrepreneur Services .....	28
8.1	New Entrepreneur Orientation.....	28
8.2	Online Learning Resources .....	29
8.3	Career & Job Placement .....	29
8.4	Standard Occupational Classification Code .....	29
8.5	Access to Capital.....	29
8.6	Business Partnership Network .....	30
8.7	Entrepreneur Community .....	30
8.8	Cooperative Membership .....	30
8.9	Disability Services .....	30
8.10	Housing .....	31
8.11	Maintenance of Student Records .....	31
9.	Standards of Conduct .....	31
9.1	Engagement .....	31
9.2	Confidentiality .....	32
9.3	Intellectual Property.....	32

9.4	Online Standards of Conduct .....	33
9.5	Recording & Photography .....	33
10.	Institutional Policies .....	34
10.1	Entrepreneur Information Policy .....	34
10.2	Non-Discriminatory Policy .....	34
10.3	Harassment & Complaint Procedure .....	34
10.4	Alcohol & Drug Policy .....	36
10.5	Disciplinary Actions .....	36
10.6	Complaint / Grievance Policy .....	39



## Welcome

Dear Entrepreneur,

Welcome! We are proud to have you join Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative, the only cooperative community for and by entrepreneurs. You are joining an innovative cooperative dedicated to co-creating a thriving business community that is economically, socially, and environmentally just.

You are here because you want to create a thriving business that serves your community. You seek the skills, knowledge and courage that will allow you to own your future. At Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative, we are here to support you fully throughout your entrepreneurial journey.

You are joining an innovative community of entrepreneurs. It includes other entrepreneurs, our workers, and our partners, each of whom is dedicated to co-creating a business community that is resilient and just. This community is an exceptional resource and is here for you to engage and explore.

Please take time to review this handbook to understand the policies, procedures and guidelines designed to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment. We welcome your questions and feedback at any time. Please do not hesitate to contact us via e-mail at [community@uptimacoop.com](mailto:community@uptimacoop.com).

We hope that your experience in this community will be inspiring, challenging, enjoyable, and rewarding.

Sincerely,

Rani Langer-Croager  
Founder & President

# 1. Overview

## 1.1 About the Institution

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative provides holistic and culturally relevant education, advising, and community to support diverse entrepreneurs in creating thriving businesses in service to their communities.

Our programs support creative and social entrepreneurs throughout their journey of starting, planning, growing, funding, leading, and keeping their businesses in their communities. The institution's BPPE-approved educational program currently offered is the Launch Academy. Launch Academy is an eight-month entrepreneurship certificate program focused on foundational entrepreneurship concepts and applied coursework for creative and social entrepreneurs at the idea stage.

Our cooperative structure makes us different from other entrepreneurship education and support organizations. As a cooperative, entrepreneurs, workers, and investors in Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative have the opportunity to become member-owners of the organization. This means that participating entrepreneurs are part of a community that invests in each other, shares in the organization's profits, and has a say in how the organization is run.

## 1.2 Mission & Objectives

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative provides holistic and culturally relevant education, advising, and community to support diverse entrepreneurs in creating thriving businesses in service to their communities.

To accomplish this mission, Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative aims to:

- Deliver rigorous, culturally relevant educational programs to support diverse entrepreneurs in gaining the technical skills and emotional capacities to build resilient, thriving businesses that are aligned with their values.
- Provide wrap-around one-on-one business advising that is personalized to each entrepreneur's specific growth plans and challenges.
- Through our partnership with small business funders, support entrepreneurs in accessing friendly, restorative capital and continued business support to grow their businesses.
- Cultivate a community that provides a safe, supportive environment for diverse entrepreneurs to have open discussions with peers about their challenges, receive encouragement and feedback, connect with resources to help achieve their goals, and open up new market opportunities.



- As a cooperative by and for entrepreneurs, inspire diverse entrepreneurs to stay in integrity to their social enterprise missions, tap into the collective spirit of our cultures, and build power through shared ownership and governance.

### 1.3 Ownership & Governance

We are a multi-stakeholder cooperative. Multi-stakeholder cooperatives are cooperatives that are owned and controlled by more than one type of membership class such as consumers, producers, workers, volunteers, or community supporters. Stakeholders can be individuals or organizations such as non-profits, businesses, government agencies, or even other cooperatives.

Our stakeholders are:

- *Entrepreneur Members:* These are entrepreneurs we have worked with in our programs who have met all the membership requirements.
- *Worker Members:* These are our instructors and mentors, who support entrepreneurs in building a thriving business, as well as our support staff, who run the day-to-day operations of our programs.
- *Investor Members:* These are the investors who provide the capital for our cooperative to grow and expand our programs.

Our cooperative is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the entrepreneur and worker stakeholder groups above.

The requirements and process for becoming a member are detailed in our bylaws and membership agreements.

### 1.4 Information Regarding Approvals & Accreditation

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is a private institution approved to operate by the California Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (BPPE). Approval to operate means the institution is compliant with the minimum standards contained in the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 (as amended) and Division 7.5 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is not accredited by an accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education.

### 1.5 Disclosures

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative provides this catalog to all prospective enrollments electronically via email, and it is also available to the general public as a free download from our website at <https://uptimacoop.com>.



Prospective and enrolled students may consult this catalog for factual information regarding Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative. Changes to our policies, curriculum, and other items in our catalog may be changed during any given year. These will be published in an addendum to the catalog, which will also be available on the website for download.

As a prospective student, you are encouraged to review this catalog prior to signing an enrollment agreement. You are also encouraged to review the School Performance Fact Sheet, which must be provided to you prior to signing an enrollment agreement.

The Office of Student Assistance and Relief is available to support prospective students, current students, or past students of private postsecondary educational institutions in making informed decisions, understanding their rights, and navigating available services and relief options. The office may be reached by calling (888) 370-7589 or by visiting <https://www.osar.bppe.ca.gov/>.

Any questions a student may have regarding this catalog that have not been satisfactorily answered by the institution may be directed to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education at 1747 N. Market Blvd, Suite 225, Sacramento, CA 95834, <https://www.bppe.ca.gov>, toll-free telephone number (888) 370-7589 or by fax (916) 263-1897.

A student or any member of the public may file a complaint about this institution with the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education by calling (888) 370-7589 or completing a complaint form, which can be obtained on the bureau's website at <https://www.bppe.ca.gov>.

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative has not had a pending petition in bankruptcy, is not operating as a debtor in possession and has not filed a bankruptcy petition within the preceding five years nor has had a petition in bankruptcy filed against it within the preceding five years that resulted in reorganization under Chapter 11 of the United States Bankruptcy Code (11 U.S.C. Sec 101 et seq.).

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative reserves the right to make changes in courses and materials, schedules, faculty, program fees, and all services contained herein. Program fees will not be modified once the enrollment agreement is signed.

## **1.6 Facilities**

The institution's primary administrative office is located at 2781 Telegraph Avenue, Oakland, CA 94612. The institution also maintains administrative offices in Boston, MA and Chicago, IL. All instruction for BPPE-approved programs is delivered exclusively online.

Our educational programs are delivered exclusively online. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not offer on-site instruction.

## 1.7 Administrators & Instructors

### Corporate Officers

- *Rani Langer-Croager – Co-Chief Executive Officer; Chief Financial Officer; Chief Academic Officer; Board Chairperson (she/her)*: Rani draws on 25+ years of experience advising organizations on strategic and financial planning, capital raising, and mergers and acquisitions, as well as experience in the higher education sector. Rani founded Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative to address the challenges of traditional entrepreneurship programs and business accelerators in providing accessible education and mentorship to a diverse group of entrepreneurs.
- *Sherina McKinley – Co-Chief Executive Officer; Chief Operating Officer (she/her)*: Sherina previously served as Entrepreneurship Manager at Commonwealth Kitchen, Boston's food business incubator. Prior to supporting entrepreneurs, Sherina spent 15+ years in operations and finance for entrepreneur support organizations as Operations & Finance Manager at Commonwealth Kitchen and Interise.
- *Nancy Larson – Business Manager; Board Secretary (she/her)*: Nancy is a business professional with a background in technology. She has extensive experience in office, project, and personnel management in a variety of business environments, including financial, legal, engineering, and education.

### Business Consultants & Instructors

- *Latasha Bell (she/her)*: Latasha is an avid learner, optimist, and advocate for the entrepreneurs she works with. She is also a freelance project management consultant working with small businesses. Through this work, she takes pride in how her clients trust and value her advice. Prior to her freelance business, Latasha was a teacher and has worked as a housing counselor.
- *Sherri Lowe (she/her)*: Sherri is a small business owner. Her business Lowe 360 Consulting provides human resources and strategic planning consulting for small minority-owned businesses. Before starting a business, she had extensive experience building and developing teams in both retail and corporate environments.
- *Wendy Martinez Marroquin (she/her)*: Wendy is a racial education trainer and visual artist with 5+ years of experience facilitating empathetic learning spaces that enable courageous self-inquiry and holistic growth. She is Co-Founder of AllThrive Education, an organization that collaborates with organizations and leaders to develop inclusive spaces and healing experiences to take racial equity deeper and further.
- *Marlena Ortiz (she/her)*: Marlena is a financial advocate for diverse small businesses. She brings experience supporting small businesses in accessing capital through her work at a nonprofit microlender, Allies for Community Business, and the Minority Business Development Agency.

- *Fyodor Ovchinnikov (he/him)*: Fyodor is a two-time business owner. Most recently, Fyodor co-founded Evolutionary Futures Lab, an organization that enables learning and collective action for systems transformation through educational programs, multi-stakeholder dialogue, strategic initiatives, and community weaving.
- *Eryn White (she/her)*: Eryn comes from an entrepreneurial family and started working in the family business at age 7. She brings 15+ years of small business finance and operations experience, with civic engagement centered on cultivating ecosystems for small business development.
- *Lahesha Williams (she/her)*: Lahesha is an intentional, inspiring, and approachable educator and advisor. She has 20+ years as an educator, teaching GED and technology courses for adults. She is also a social entrepreneur who has started and operated a non-profit organization for youth.

#### Board of Directors

- *Rani Langer-Croager – Board Chairperson (she/her)*: Rani draws 20+ years of experience advising organizations on strategic and financial planning, capital raising, and mergers and acquisitions, as well as experience in the higher education sector. Rani founded Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative to address the challenges of traditional entrepreneurship programs and business accelerators in providing accessible education and mentorship to a diverse group of entrepreneurs.
- *Nancy Larson – Board Secretary (she/her)*: Nancy is a business professional with a background in technology. She has extensive experience in office, project, and personnel management in a variety of business environments, including financial, legal, engineering, and education.
- *Sherina McKinley (she/her)*: Sherina previously served as Entrepreneurship Manager at CommonWealth Kitchen, Boston's food business incubator. (she/her): Sherina previously served as Entrepreneurship Manager at CommonWealth Kitchen, Boston's food business incubator. Prior to supporting entrepreneurs, Sherina spent 8+ years in operations and finance for entrepreneur support organizations as Operations & Finance Manager at CommonWealth Kitchen and Interise.
- *Fyodor Ovchinnikov (he/him)*: Fyodor is a two-time business owner. Most recently, Fyodor co-founded Evolutionary Futures Lab, an organization that enables learning and collective action for systems transformation through educational programs, multi-stakeholder dialogue, strategic initiatives, and community weaving.
- *Sherri Lowe (she/her)*: Sherri is a small business owner. Her business Lowe 360 Consulting provides human resources and strategic planning consulting for small minority-owned businesses. Before starting a business, she had extensive experience building and developing teams in both retail and corporate environments.

## 1.8 Program Schedule

The following is the schedule of program dates for the 2026 calendar year.

### Spring / Summer 2026:

	12-week Courses	6-week Courses (Term 1)	6-week Courses (Term 2)
First Day of Classes	May 4, 2026	May 4, 2026	June 15, 2026
Last Day of Classes	July 24, 2026	June 12, 2026	July 24, 2026

### Fall 2026:

	12-week Courses	6-week Courses (Term 1)	6-week Courses (Term 2)
First Day of Classes	September 21, 2026	September 21, 2026	November 2, 2026
Last Day of Classes	December 18, 2026	October 30, 2026	December 18, 2026

## 1.9 Holidays

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative observes the following holidays.

New Year's Day	January 1, 2026
Day After New Year's Day	January 2, 2026
Martin Luther King Jr. Day	January 19, 2026
Memorial Day	May 25, 2026
Juneteenth Day	June 19, 2026
Independence Day	July 3, 2026
Labor Day	September 7, 2026
Thanksgiving Day	November 26, 2026
Day After Thanksgiving Day	November 27, 2026
Day Before Christmas	December 24, 2026
Christmas Day	December 25, 2026
New Year's Eve	December 31, 2026

In addition, Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative offices are closed during the following breaks:

- Fall Break: November 23, 2026 – November 27, 2026
- Winter Break: December 21, 2026 – January 1, 2027

## 1.10 Hours of Operation

Administrative Office Hours:

- Oakland Office: Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm Pacific Time, GMT-8
- Chicago Office: Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm Central Time, GMT-6
- Boston Office: Monday-Friday, 8:00am – 5:00pm Eastern Time, GMT-5

Class Hours:

- Oakland Office: Monday-Thursday, 1:00pm – 9:00pm Pacific Time, GMT-8
- Chicago Office: Monday-Thursday, 1:00pm – 9:00pm Central Time, GMT-6
- Boston Office: Monday-Thursday, 1:00pm – 9:00pm Eastern Time, GMT-5

## 2. Programs

Our entrepreneurship education programs support creative and social entrepreneurs throughout their journey of starting, planning, growing, funding, and leading, their businesses in our communities.

### 2.1 Launch Academy

Our Launch Academy is an 8-month entrepreneurship certificate program that supports creative and social entrepreneurs at the idea stage in starting your business and laying the foundation for your business to thrive.

Our Launch Academy consists of 180 clock hours (one clock hour is defined as 50 minutes of instruction or direct interaction with an instructor through one-on-one and facilitated peer mentoring sessions).

#### 2.1.1 What You Will Learn

Through the Launch Academy, you will gain the education, tools, and resources to:

- Develop practices to manage time, projects, and communications in your business;
- Clarify your business idea and market, test and get feedback on your business concept, develop a go-to-market plan, and learn how to create a good impression with potential customers;
- Define your business model, social impact, and initial growth strategy;
- Learn how to track and analyze business finances and create a basic budget for your startup business; and
- Establish practices for managing your finances as they launch and grow your business.

Below are the courses included in the Launch Academy.

	QUARTER 1	QUARTER 2
STAGE	Start Your Business	Lay the Foundation for Growth
12-WEEK COURSES	Explore Your Idea Course	Design Your Strategy Course
6-WEEK COURSES	Getting Organized Course   Communicating Effectively Course	Entrepreneurial Math Course   Financial Management Course

### Quarter 1: Start Your Business

*Explore Your Idea Course (12-Week Course):* Clarify your business idea and potential customer, test your concept and get feedback, and begin building awareness and making sales in your business.

*Getting Organized Course (6-Week Course):* Take a deeper look at your personal goals and whether starting a business can help you achieve them. You will also set up the systems and practices to help you start your business while balancing your other life responsibilities.

*Communicating Effectively Course (6-Week Course):* Get a clear understanding of appropriate language, tone, timing, and social impact of your business communications. You will also develop standard guidelines, templates, and practices to help your business communicate effectively across all platforms.

### Quarter 2: Lay the Foundation for Growth

*Design Your Strategy Course:* Further define your product / service offering, sales process, business model, and basic strategy for growing your business and its social impact.

*Entrepreneurial Math (6-Week Course):* Learn how to apply basic mathematical concepts and spreadsheets to analyze your business finances and use that analysis to make business decisions.

*Financial Management (6-Week Course):* Establish the practices for sound financial management of your business and begin to understand how to budget and finance your business' needs.

## 2.1.2 Commit to Building Your Business

Average time commitment for our Launch Academy course work is 15-20 hours / week dedicated to building your business.

Unit	Weekly Activity	Weekly Commitment		
		12-week Courses	6-week Courses	Total
<b>Background Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Series of required background readings and videos on each unit to be completed online prior to the weekly workshop sessions</li> <li>Describes concepts and their applications in developing a business</li> </ul>	1-2 hours / week	1-2 hours / week	2-4 hours / week
<b>Workshops</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly virtual workshop sessions led by an expert instructor</li> <li>Lecture and discussion on background materials, group activities, and reflection</li> </ul>	3 hours / week	2 hours / week	5 hours / week
<b>Business Development Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly activities focused on your business development</li> <li>Apply concepts learned in background materials and workshops</li> </ul>	3-4 hours / week	3-4 hours / week	6-8 hours / week
<b>Peer Mentoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly video conference meeting with small peer group of other entrepreneurs in your cohort</li> <li>Present weekly business development activities and receive constructive feedback from peers</li> </ul>	1 hour / week	1 hour / week	2 hours / week
<b>One-on-One Mentoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly video conference meeting with your mentor</li> <li>Discuss business progress, review weekly business development activity, and connect with resources to meet business needs</li> </ul>	30 minutes / week	N/A	30 minutes / week

### **2.1.3 Entrepreneur Assessment**

Building a business is a process of continuous improvement. As a business owner, you will receive feedback from customers, employees, and partners on regular basis through informal conversations and more formal surveys and other tools. And, you will use that feedback to refine our services and business strategy.

Through the Launch Academy, we also provide you with regular feedback to start and grow your business. You will receive informal feedback from your instructor and peers on your weekly business development activities. In addition, you will receive more formal feedback through progress reports designed to provide you with documented feedback on your business and personal development and next steps for your business at regular intervals throughout each course.

### **2.1.4 Graduation Requirements**

In order to graduate from the Launch Academy and receive a Certificate of Completion, you must meet the following requirements:

- Comply with the attendance policy;
- Submit all required activities for completion of each course in the program; and
- Meet all financial obligations to Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative.

A Certificate of Completion will be issued to each entrepreneur who has successfully completed the program within thirty (30) days of the end of the program.

### **2.1.5 Who Is Eligible**

We select up to 8 businesses to participate in our Launch Academy in each enrollment period.

#### **Selection Criteria**

- Have an idea for a creative or social enterprise
- Have knowledge of the field in which you are starting a business
- Have a willingness to commit to a process to understand the customer need for your business concept, testing your solution, and using feedback to develop a basic growth strategy
- At least 18 years or older as of the application deadline or if under 18, have legal guardian consent
- At least intermediate level English language skills
- Able to commit up to 20 hours per week to building your business

## **Admissions Process**

To be considered for the Launch Academy, you must apply online. After each application deadline, our Enrollment Circle will review all applications for the Launch Academy and select the top applicants for business consultations.

Based on business consultations, our Enrollment Circle will select up to 8 individuals per enrollment period to participate in the Launch Academy. We will notify all applicants of our selection decisions at least one week prior to the start date of each enrollment period.

### **2.1.6 How Much It Costs**

The cost of the Launch Academy is \$3,700 which consists of a one-time \$100 non-refundable registration fee and program fees of \$3,600. Program fees are payable in equal installments on a monthly basis over the 8-month enrollment period.

In addition, as a business owner, you will need to invest in the basic costs of starting and growing your business. You should be prepared to pay these basic costs of doing business on your own. These costs are estimated at: (1) \$250-\$500 one-time setup costs for purchasing your website domain and business licenses and (2) \$100-\$200 per month for subscriptions to maintain your website, file management system, office technology, and phone / video conferencing. And, depending on your business, you may have additional costs for marketing systems, project management systems, travel, materials, and equipment to operate your business. These expenses are not included in your program fees.

## **3. Admissions & Enrollment Overview**

Our admissions policy is in alignment with our mission of providing holistic and culturally relevant education, advising, and community to support diverse entrepreneurs in creating thriving businesses in service to their communities.

### **3.1 Admissions Requirements**

Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements, including any prerequisites, for the program in which they seek to enroll. We look for entrepreneurs who demonstrate a commitment to creating a thriving business with social impact, growth mindset in their business development, accountability to their actions, and alignment with our cooperative community, as well as the capacity to attend all workshop sessions and complete all required activities of the program in which they are seeking to enroll.

#### **3.1.1 Selection Criteria: Launch Academy**

For our Launch Academy, we look for entrepreneurs who:

- Have an idea for a creative or social enterprise
- Have knowledge of the field in which you are starting a business
- Have a willingness to commit to a process to understand the customer need for your business concept, testing your solution, and using feedback to develop a basic growth strategy
- At least 18 years or older as of the application deadline or if under 18, have legal guardian consent
- At least intermediate level English language skills
- Able to commit up to 20 hours per week to building your business

### **3.1.3 Transfers of Credit**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative courses are not credit-bearing. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not accept hours or credit from other institutions through transfer of credit, challenge examinations, achievement tests, or experiential learning. Courses taken at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative are unlikely to count as transfer credit at another institution. Uptima does not give or evaluate experiential learning credit.

### **3.1.4 International Entrepreneurs and Language Services**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not provide any visa services nor vouches for entrepreneur status.

Intermediate English language skills are required. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not provide any language instruction. All instruction takes place in English.

TOEFL and other language related documentation is not needed in the admissions processes. English language proficiency for the purposes of attending Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is determined through the admissions process. The admissions process and business consultations with the Enrollment Circle or selection team is designed to reflect the level of communication required to succeed in our programs. Applicants who succeed in the application process possess sufficient English language capacity to succeed at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative.

### **3.1.5 Required Technology**

All programs utilize Zoom for workshop and mentoring sessions and have background materials, workshop group activities and notes, business development activities, and recommended supplemental materials that are contained in Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's online learning environment. In order to optimize experience in our courses, we require that entrepreneurs have a laptop with the following minimum specifications:

*PC Configuration:*

- Hardware: 1.5 GHz processor, 1 GB RAM, 500 GB hard drive, color monitor, sound card and headphones or speakers, webcam, DSL or cable modem for broadband access
- Operating System: Windows XP, Vista or 7
- Web Browser: Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome
- Software: Office Suite such as Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) or Google Suite (Docs, Sheets, Slides), Adobe Acrobat Reader, Adobe Flash Player, QuickTime Player, anti-virus software
- Broadband internet access

*Mac Configuration:*

- Hardware: 1.5 GHz processor, 1 GB RAM, 500 GB hard drive, color monitor, sound card and headphones or speakers, webcam, DSL or cable modem for broadband access
- Operating System: Macintosh OSX
- Web Browser: Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, or Apple Safari
- Software: Office Suite such as Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Apple Suite (Pages, Keynote, Numbers) or Google Suite (Docs, Sheets, Slides), Adobe Flash Player, QuickTime Player, anti-virus software
- Broadband internet access

In addition, we require entrepreneurs to have basic experience using online video conferencing platforms such as Zoom and standard office suite products such as Microsoft Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Apple Suite (Pages, Keynote, Numbers), or Google Suite (Docs, Sheets, Slides). While we have a preference for entrepreneurs who have experience using online learning platforms, we have training on our online learning environment (Moodle) in our new entrepreneur orientation. We assess entrepreneurs' level of experience with these technology platforms during the admissions process and business consultation with the Enrollment Circle.

## **3.2 Admissions Process**

### **3.2.1 Application Timelines**

We start our programs two times a year. We encourage applicants to submit applications as early as possible. For current application deadlines, please see our website.

### **3.2.2 Application**

To be considered for our programs, you must submit an application online via our website. In our applications, candidates are asked to provide their personal information; describe their

business, motivations, vision, current business stage, and their challenges; and discuss their interest in being part of an entrepreneurial community.

### **3.2.3 Business Consultation**

We require an online consultation prior to being provided with the opportunity to join our programs. For the Launch Academy, our selection team will review all applications after each deadline and select the top applicants for business consultations.

The business consultation is a conversation about the applicant's background, story behind the business, vision for the business, significant business challenges, alignment with our holistic approach, and commitment to creating a thriving business, as well as an opportunity for the applicant to ask questions about the program, admissions process, and cooperative membership. These business consultations take approximately one hour.

### **3.2.4 Non-Discriminatory Policy**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is committed to educational opportunities and does not discriminate against applicants based on age, gender, sexual orientation or identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, religion, veteran's status, disability, or previous convictions.

## **3.3 Admissions Decisions**

There is no appeal process for admissions decisions. All Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative admissions decisions are final.

### **3.3.1 Accept**

Applicants accepted to Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative must confirm their enrollment by completing and electronically signing their enrollment form, submitting their non-refundable registration fee, and other required documentation within five (5) days of receiving their acceptance notice.

### **3.3.2 Waitlist**

Applicants for admission may be waitlisted and will be reviewed if there is available space after confirmations are received from accepted applicants. If there is no space available for that start date, waitlisted applicants will be referred to re-apply for the next available start date.

### **3.3.3 Denial**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative receives many more applications than there are spaces in each start. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's policy prohibits the release of information with

regard to an applicant's denial. Candidates who are not accepted are welcome to re-apply. Please refer to our policies and procedures on re-applying below.

### **3.4 Notification of Decisions**

Candidates will be notified via email no later than one week prior to the program's start date. Waitlisted applicants will receive a final admissions decision via email one week prior to the program start date.

### **3.5 Re-applying for Admission**

Applicants who are denied admission are able to re-apply to our programs for subsequent starts. Such applicants, at minimum, will need to submit a new application.

### **3.6 Enrollment Agreement**

All entrepreneurs are required to review and sign an enrollment agreement in order to enroll in a program. The enrollment agreement is designed with the intent of setting expectations regarding participation our programs. Enrollment agreements are due five (5) days after acceptance into a program.

### **3.7 Registration Fees**

We require a non-refundable registration fee to reserve space in one of our programs. Registration fees are due five (5) days after acceptance into a program. Registration fees are payable through your enrollment agreement.

## **4. Attendance Policies**

Attendance and completion of required program activities are important in the development of your business and in building our cooperative community. As a result, we expect entrepreneurs to fulfill their weekly commitment to reviewing background materials, attending workshop sessions, completing business development activities and participating in one-on-one and peer mentoring sessions.

### **4.1 Time Management & Preparation**

Developing a resilient, thriving business requires time management and preparation. We expect entrepreneurs to be on time and prepared for all orientation, workshop, one-on-one mentoring, and peer mentoring sessions. Excessive tardiness or unpreparedness may result in dismissal from a program.

## **4.2 Workshop Attendance**

Entrepreneurs are required to attend the workshop sessions of the course(s) in the program they are enrolled in. Up to two (2) excused absences may be permitted per 12-week course and up to one (1) excused absence may be permitted per 6-week course. An absence is considered excused if the instructor is given notice at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the workshop session. Unexcused absences and excess tardiness for workshop sessions may result in dismissal from a program.

## **4.3 Mentoring Appointments**

Our mentors are here for you. Your one-on-one mentoring sessions are your time to get feedback on your business development activities and connect with resources for your business. Please be on time and stay present. Every minute you are late or not present, you lose a minute of opportunity for assistance on your business. If you need to reschedule a one-on-one mentoring session, contact your mentor at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance. Mentors will make every effort to reschedule with you. If you request to reschedule at the last minute, mentors are not required to reschedule with you. Remember our mentors have their own businesses, too.

Peer mentoring sessions will not be rescheduled unless the entire peer group agrees to a change in schedule. Remember your peers have their own businesses and scheduling needs as well.

Unexcused absences and excessive tardiness for one-on-one and peer mentoring appointments may result in dismissal from a program.

## **4.4 Cancellation of Enrollment**

Entrepreneurs have the right to cancel their enrollment agreement, without any penalty or obligation, through attendance at the first workshop session or seven (7) days after enrollment whichever comes later. Cancellation is effective when the entrepreneur provides a written notice of cancellation to the Enrollment Circle by electronic mail or postal mail within seven (7) calendar days of the quarter. The written notice of cancellation need not take any particular form and however expressed, it is effective if it shows that the entrepreneur no longer wishes to be bound by the enrollment agreement. If the Enrollment Agreement is cancelled, Uptima will refund the entrepreneur any money paid, less the \$100 non-refundable registration fee, within forty-five (45) days after the notice of cancellation is received.

## **4.5 Withdrawal from a Program**

Entrepreneurs withdrawing from a program prior to completion must inform the Enrollment Circle via email, participate in an exit interview with the Enrollment Circle, and return a signed

withdrawal form. Except as otherwise stated, entrepreneurs withdrawing from a program early will be charged for the portion of the program they have attended.

## **4.6 Deferral of Enrollment (Leave-of-Absence)**

Entrepreneurs who wish to request a deferral of their enrollment (leave-of-absence) must inform the Enrollment Circle via email, participate in an interview with the Enrollment Circle, and return a signed deferral form. Deferrals (leaves-of-absence) will only be granted under the following circumstances:

- Financial hardship only as a result of job loss or loss of house;
- Death or severe illness of an immediate family member; or
- Serious personal injury or extenuating medical situation.

Deferred enrollment (leave-of-absence) will not be granted to entrepreneurs under the following circumstances:

- Looking to take a quarter off to focus on sales or implement learnings in their business;
- Whose schedules have changed because of their job or business; or
- Who are not in good standing with Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative.

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative also reserves the right to defer any entrepreneur based on insufficient progress in your courses. Any entrepreneur who has been referred for deferral due to insufficient progress in their courses has the right to file an appeal of the decision and have a hearing with our Enrollment Circle. All decisions made by the Enrollment Circle regarding the appeal are final.

Deferrals are only granted for up to one quarter. After that quarter, entrepreneurs may be subject to re-application a program. Entrepreneurs receiving a deferral will be granted re-entry into their current course(s) with the next cohort.

## **4.7 Termination of Enrollment**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative reserves the right to dismiss any entrepreneur who does not comply with Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's rules, regulations, or policies. Any entrepreneur who has been referred for termination of enrollment has the right to file an appeal of the decision and have a hearing with our Enrollment Circle. All decisions made by the Enrollment Circle regarding the appeal are final.

## **5. Standards of Progress**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative assesses entrepreneurs on a “Pass / No Pass” basis. Entrepreneurs must achieve a “pass” rating from their instructors in their final progress reports for each course in the quarter.

Instructors measure entrepreneur progress carefully through weekly attendance, participation, and business development activities and final deliverables in each course. Assessments are reviewed on a completion basis. To complete a course, entrepreneurs must attend the course regularly and submit all required business development activities.

### **5.1 Program Deliverables**

Entrepreneurs are expected to complete weekly business development activities in each of their courses. In addition, each course has certain business development activities that are required for completion of that course and progression to the next course in the sequence. These weekly and required deliverables are to be submitted through the online learning environment by their deadline. Failure to complete and submit required deliverables may result in deferral or dismissal from a program.

### **5.2 Progress Reporting**

Building a business is a process of continuous improvement. As business owners, we receive feedback from customers, employees, and partners on regular basis through informal conversations and more formal surveys and other tools. And, we use that feedback to refine our programs and business strategy. The courses in our programs provide you with regular feedback to refine your business strategy.

You will receive informal feedback from instructors, mentors, and peers on your weekly business development activities. In addition, you will receive more formal feedback through progress reports from your instructors that are designed to provide you with documented feedback on your business and personal development and next steps for your business at regular intervals throughout each course.

These documented progress reports are used in determining your readiness to progress from course to the next in the program sequence. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative also reserves the right to defer enrollment in the next course in the sequence based on insufficient progress in your courses.

### **5.3 Course Completion & Continuation Requirements**

Each course within our programs has certain completion requirements outlined in the course syllabus, discussed in the first workshop session, and shared in the online learning

environment. Entrepreneurs are required to complete and submit these business development activities through the online learning environment and receive a “pass” rating from their instructors in their final progress report to continue from one quarter to the next quarter in our programs.

## **5.4 Graduation Requirements**

In order to graduate from a program and receive a Certificate of Completion, you must meet the following requirements:

- Comply with the attendance policy;
- Submit all required activities for completion of each course in the program; and
- Meet all financial obligations to Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative.

A Certificate of Completion will be issued to each entrepreneur who has successfully completed the program within thirty (30) days of the end of the program.

## **5.5 Transfer of Credit to Other Institutions**

**NOTICE CONCERNING TRANSFERABILITY OF CREDITS AND CREDENTIALS EARNED AT OUR INSTITUTION:** The transferability of credits you earn at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is at the complete discretion of an institution to which you may seek to transfer. Acceptance of the certificate you earn in our Launch Academy is at the complete discretion of the institution to which you may seek to transfer. If the credits or certificate that you earn at this institution are not accepted at the institution to which you seek to transfer, you may be required to repeat some or all of your coursework at that institution. For this reason, you should make certain that your attendance at this institution will meet your educational goals. This may include contacting an institution to which you may seek to transfer after attending Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative to determine if your credits or certificate will transfer.

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative has not entered into any transfer or articulation agreements with another institution.

## **6. Appeals Policy**

Entrepreneurs who have been administratively deferred or withdrawn from a program may appeal the decision. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative must receive the appeal in writing with any supporting documentation via our appeals form within twenty-four (24) hours of being notified of their administrative deferral or withdrawal. Appeals received within this timeframe will be reviewed by the Enrollment Circle and invited to a hearing at their next regularly scheduled meeting. All decisions made by the Enrollment Circle are final.

## **7. Program Fees & Payment Policies**

As a small business, we rely on timely payments from our entrepreneurs to pay our workers and vendors. When payments are late that puts our programs and community at risk. As such, please be mindful of the payment cycle for your program fees and submit your payments on time. Your program fees are outlined in your acceptance letter. If your program has an associated fee, below are the payment policies.

### **7.1 Program Fees**

#### **7.1.1 Program Fees: Launch Academy**

The cost of the Launch Academy is \$3,700 which consists of a one-time \$100 non-refundable registration fee and program fees of \$3,600. Program fees are payable in equal installments on a monthly basis over the 8-month enrollment period.

### **7.2 Payment Cycle**

Program fees are payable in equal installments on a monthly basis over the enrollment period. Monthly payments are due by the fifteenth (15th) of the month.

### **7.3 Payment Methods**

We require that all entrepreneurs submit a Card Authorization Form for us to automatically charge your credit or debit card for the monthly program fees.

### **7.4 Early Payments**

Entrepreneurs may pay for a full program fee in advance. There is no discount for early payments. Please contact [payments@uptimacoop.com](mailto:payments@uptimacoop.com) to make arrangements for early payments.

### **7.5 Late Payments**

If program fees are not paid in full by the payment due date, an interest charge will be assessed at the rate of 1.0% per month on the unpaid balance at the end of that and every month the balance remains outstanding. Repeated late payments may result in termination of enrollment from a program. No entrepreneur may continue to another course in a program sequence or be awarded a Certificate of Completion until all outstanding program fees are paid in full or a payment plan has been arranged.



## 7.6 Financial Aid & Student Loans

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not participate in either State or Federal financial aid programs.

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not offer in-house financing or personal student loans to entrepreneurs.

If an entrepreneur obtains a loan to pay for a program at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative, the entrepreneur bears the responsibility to repay the full amount of the loan plus interest, less the amount of any refund disbursed directly to the lender in the event of cancellation, withdrawal, or dismissal.

## 7.7 Scholarships

During these challenging economic times, Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is offering scholarships to all entrepreneurs to subsidize a majority of the program fees. The amount of the scholarship is based on the entrepreneur's household income.

## 7.8 Student Tuition Recovery Fund

The State of California established the Student Tuition Recovery Fund (STRF) to relieve or mitigate economic loss suffered by a student in an educational program at a qualifying institution, who is or was a California resident while enrolled, or was enrolled in a residency program, if the student enrolled in the institution, prepaid tuition, and suffered an economic loss. Unless relieved of the obligation to do so, you must pay the state-imposed assessment for the STRF, or it must be paid on your behalf, if you are a student in an educational program, who is a California resident, or are enrolled in a residency program, and prepay all or part of your tuition.

You are not eligible for protection from the STRF and you are not required to pay the STRF assessment, if you are not a California resident, or are not enrolled in a residency program.

It is important that you keep copies of your enrollment agreement, financial aid documents, receipts, or any other information that documents the amount paid to the school. Questions regarding the STRF may be directed to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education, 1747 N. Market Blvd Ste 225, Sacramento, CA 95834, (916) 574-8900 or (888) 370-7589.

To be eligible for STRF, you must be a California resident or are enrolled in a residency program, prepaid tuition, paid or deemed to have paid the STRF assessment, and suffered an economic loss as a result of any of the following:

1. The institution, a location of the institution, or an educational program offered by the institution was closed or discontinued, and you did not choose to participate in a teach-

out plan approved by the Bureau or did not complete a chosen teach-out plan approved by the Bureau.

2. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution within the 120 day period before the closure of the institution or location of the institution, or were enrolled in an educational program within the 120 day period before the program was discontinued.
3. You were enrolled at an institution or a location of the institution more than 120 days before the closure of the institution or location of the institution, in an educational program offered by the institution as to which the Bureau determined there was a significant decline in the quality or value of the program more than 120 days before closure.
4. The institution has been ordered to pay a refund by the Bureau but has failed to do so.
5. The institution has failed to pay or reimburse loan proceeds under a federal student loan program as required by law, or has failed to pay or reimburse proceeds received by the institution in excess of tuition and other costs.
6. You have been awarded restitution, a refund, or other monetary award by an arbitrator or court, based on a violation of this chapter by an institution or representative of an institution, but have been unable to collect the award from the institution.
7. You sought legal counsel that resulted in the cancellation of one or more of your student loans and have an invoice for services rendered and evidence of the cancellation of the student loan or loans.

To qualify for STRF reimbursement, the application must be received within four (4) years from the date of the action or event that made the student eligible for recovery from STRF.

A student whose loan is revived by a loan holder or debt collector after a period of non-collection may, at any time, file a written application for recovery from STRF for the debt that would have otherwise been eligible for recovery. If it has been more than four (4) years since the action or event that made the student eligible, the student must have filed a written application for recovery within the original four (4) year period, unless the period has been extended by another act of law.

However, no claim can be paid to any student without a social security number or a taxpayer identification number.

## **7.9 Refunds**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative has established refund policies that are in accordance with current state and federal regulations. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative uniformly applies these refund policies to all entrepreneurs and reserves the right to modify these policies in order to remain in compliance with any changes in applicable laws and regulations.

### **7.9.1 Refunds Based on Cancellation**

Should you cancel your enrollment agreement, you are eligible for a full refund, minus the \$100 registration fee, through attendance through the first day of classes, or the 7<sup>th</sup> day after you sign your agreement, whichever is later. The cancellation request must be submitted to the Enrollment Circle in writing and approved. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is required to issue the refund within forty-five (45) days of the request being accepted.

### **7.9.2 Refunds Based on Withdrawal or Dismissal**

If you are requesting to withdraw from a program after it has started, or a withdrawal is involuntary due to factors including, but not limited to inappropriate conduct, lack of attendance, or failure to maintain satisfactory progress, you will be returned any unearned charges by receiving a pro-rated refund based on a calculated cost per day of your program, minus the \$100 non-refundable registration fee, provided this withdrawal happens no later than 60% into your program (week 7 of the quarter). After 60% of the program is complete, program fees are considered “earned” and no refund is allowed.

### **7.9.3 Refunds Related to Course Cancellations or Rescheduling**

We reserve the right to cancel or reschedule any course for reasons which include, but are not limited to, low enrollment, scheduling conflicts, and instructor availability, upon which time all entrepreneurs who are affected will be notified and offered options within a reasonable amount of time. In this case, if a refund is requested, you must provide notice of cancellation in writing to the Enrollment Circle and signed acknowledgment of the refund must be returned to you for any refund to be validated.

## **8. Entrepreneur Services**

Your entrepreneurial learning and development in our programs are further reinforced by our community network effect. This means your participation in our programs is strengthened by the support of our entrepreneur community, a broader business partnership network, and our cooperative structure – all of which are integral to the Uptima experience.

### **8.1 New Entrepreneur Orientation**

Entrepreneurs are required to attend a program orientation session outlined in their acceptance letter. In this orientation you will meet other entrepreneurs and program staff, review program expectations and the online learning environment, and gain tools and practices to support you in the program. Failure to attend the required orientation may result in dismissal from the program.

## 8.2 Online Learning Resources

Entrepreneurs enrolled in our programs receive access to our online learning environment at <https://learn.uptimacoop.com>. Our online learning environment contains all background materials and recommended supplemental materials in the form of links to articles and pdfs, workshop slides and notes in the form of pdfs, and group activities and business development activities in the form of slides, documents, and spreadsheets. In order to access the online learning environment and its materials, entrepreneurs are required to have the basic technology described in Section 3.1.5 of this course catalog.

Access to the online learning environment is provided to entrepreneurs prior to your new entrepreneur orientation. Full access to the lessons and business development activities in each course is provided at least five (5) days in advance of the start of the course. On a weekly basis, we release access to workshop slides and notes the weekend before each workshop session. Throughout the program and after graduation, we will continue to provide you with access to the online learning environment and all the courses you have completed, unless access has been suspended due to misconduct.

## 8.3 Career & Job Placement

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative focuses on supporting individuals in self-employment through freelancing and small business ownership and therefore does not offer career services or job placement services.

## 8.4 Standard Occupational Classification Code

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative prepares its graduates to meet the qualifications for the following job classification(s) according to the United States Department of Labor's Standard Occupational Classification Codes:

11-1021 General and Operations Managers

Plan, direct, or coordinate the operations of public or private sector organizations, overseeing multiple departments or locations. Duties and responsibilities include formulating policies, managing daily operations, and planning the use of materials and human resources, but are too diverse and general in nature to be classified in any one functional area of management or administration, such as personnel, purchasing, or administrative services.

## 8.5 Access to Capital

Through our own small business loan fund, we support entrepreneurs with access to friendly, restorative capital and ongoing business support. Entrepreneurs who have completed our programs, meet our small business loan application requirements, and have a recommendation



from a Business Consultant & Instructor are eligible to apply for funding through our small business loan fund.

## **8.6 Business Partnership Network**

As an entrepreneur in our programs, you will gain access to our business partnership network. This network of trusted partners provides you with valuable opportunities for growing your network and resources to support the growth of your business. Our partners include co-working, branding / marketing, legal, tax / accounting, and human resources services.

## **8.7 Entrepreneur Community**

As an entrepreneur in our programs, you have the opportunity to join our online social network. You can tap into a community of extraordinary people, skills, and resources. Our online social network makes it easy for you to discover the abundant skills and resources in our community, so that you can connect with the people you need to build your business. In addition, we convene regular advanced skills workshops and community mixers that bring together entrepreneurs across all our programs to learn from each other and form new connections.

## **8.8 Cooperative Membership**

Our cooperative model makes us very different from other entrepreneurship programs. As a cooperative, we are owned by our members. Members of the cooperative get to share in our profits and governance. As an entrepreneur in our program, you can become a member of the cooperative after completing a certain level of our programs and meeting our membership requirements. The requirements and process for becoming a member are detailed in our bylaws and membership agreements.

## **8.9 Disability Services**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative provides entrepreneurs with disabilities with reasonable accommodations and services to assist them in accessing the curriculum and learning environment. Entrepreneurs with either permanent or temporary disabilities may be eligible for a variety of support services in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Rehabilitation Act, Section 504.

Decisions regarding the exact accommodations to be provided are made on an individual basis. Accommodations are determined based on documentation, collaboration with the entrepreneur and essential functions of the curriculum. Entrepreneurs requesting accommodations must provide verification of disability at least three (3) weeks before the accommodation is needed.

## 8.10 Housing

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative neither offers any dormitory housing nor entrepreneur housing assistance. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not assume responsibility for entrepreneur housing. According to apartments.com, the average rent in Oakland, CA is \$2,087 per month.

## 8.11 Maintenance of Student Records

Records of current entrepreneurs, graduates and inactive files are maintained digitally in a secure, encrypted network drive as well as secure cloud backup. All records are organized and managed by the Chief Operations Officer. Student records are maintained for five (5) years from the last date of attendance. Transcripts containing the date the diploma was awarded, the courses and units on which the diploma was based, and the grades earned by the entrepreneur in each of those courses are maintained permanently.

# 9. Standards of Conduct

## 9.1 Engagement

Entrepreneurs are expected to act in accordance with the following shared agreements:

*We move with purpose.* We remember why we are here. We recognize Ubuntu - "I am because we are, and we are because I am." We take action to fulfill our shared commitment to learning and co-creating a community of thriving businesses that are economically, socially, and environmentally just.

*We accept that multiple truths exist and need to be mindful of intent and impact.* We take responsibility for situations of misalignment, disagreement, and dissatisfaction, and view them as opportunities for leadership where we act to explore the missing conversations, have people's concerns listened to with empathy, and produce resolution. We commit to address situations in which there is disconnection from commitment as a community.

*We are accountable for our own learning and growth.* We mind and honor our learning edges. We honor our commitments. We take ourselves and others seriously. We organize our own time and value other people's time. We recognize the difference between making promises and having expectations. When expectations are unfulfilled, we move to make requests, offers and proposals that produce shared promises.

*We strive to achieve alignment.* We take a holistic approach to our business and personal development. We strive to create "businesses that we don't hate" – businesses that are in alignment with our values and support our own wellbeing as well as the wellbeing of our families and community at large. We take care of ourselves and have fun.

*We value authenticity.* We are encouraged to be our own selves and allow others to do the same. We tap into our vulnerability as the source of our own authenticity and a way to cultivate authentic connections with each other.

*We approach situations with a beginner's mindset.* Building a business with positive community impact requires us to navigate new ways of thinking. It is a process that requires us to unlearn and relearn. It's important for us to be curious and ask questions, and to recognize that all questions hold value.

*We embody the cooperative model.* We share resources, ideas, strategies, and support within and the organization to follow and support our passions and create thriving businesses in service to the world.

## **9.2 Confidentiality**

Entrepreneurs are expected to maintain the confidentiality of other entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs should not share details of each other's businesses without asking for consent first. Entrepreneurs should feel safe in talking about what they are learning about themselves and their businesses with other entrepreneurs, instructors, mentors, and operational staff.

## **9.3 Intellectual Property**

### **9.3.1 Use of Course Materials**

Use of course materials is strictly for the use in developing your business. Course materials should not be shared with anyone outside of the course, except with employees of your business.

### **9.3.2 Intellectual Property of Entrepreneurs**

Each entrepreneur will own all rights to Intellectual Property to the extent created by the entrepreneur for their own business during the program. Each entrepreneur is responsible for taking such steps as are necessary to protect their rights in Intellectual Property (e.g., by registering a copyright, etc.). Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is not responsible for safeguarding the Intellectual Property of any entrepreneur.

### **9.3.3 Use of Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative Name**

In connection with activities that are conducted outside Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's premises, instructors, mentors, operational staff and entrepreneurs may use the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative name to identify themselves to third parties (e.g., "Jane Doe, Mentor, Uptima" or "John Doe, Uptima entrepreneur"). In so doing, instructors, mentors, operational staff

and entrepreneurs agree that they: (i) will state that Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not endorse or bear responsibility for the particular activity and will not imply otherwise; and (ii) will conduct themselves in a manner that does not reflect adversely on Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative. Instructors, mentors, operational staff, and entrepreneurs may not otherwise use Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's trademarks to identify any activity or publication that is not related to Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative without Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's prior written approval. Instructors, mentors, operational staff, and entrepreneurs may not use the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative logo for any purpose without Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's prior written approval.

## **9.4 Online Standards of Conduct**

### **9.4.1 Electronic Communication**

When communicating with others both inside and outside Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative via email, text, social media and/or in our online learning environment, entrepreneurs should use good judgment and consider how their actions reflect on themselves. Entrepreneurs are expected to demonstrate a high level of professionalism in online interactions and treat all stakeholders with respect.

### **9.4.2 Terms and Use of Online Learning Environment**

Entrepreneurs will be able to maintain access to our online learning environment during their program and after completion of their program. Entrepreneurs who withdraw from a program will lose access to our online learning environment within fourteen (14) days of the withdrawal date and immediately upon dismissal.

Users must not distribute obscene, abusing, threatening, harassing, or unnecessarily repetitive messages. Entrepreneurs should not post or promote any materials that could harm or disrupt another user's computer or intentionally distribute computer viruses or worms.

Copyrighted materials may not be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means unless permission of the copyright owner has been obtained.

These statements govern the use of network resources. It is not intended to be exhaustive. All existing laws, both federal and state, and all relevant Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative regulations and policies will also apply.

## **9.5 Recording & Photography**

Audio and video recording of workshop sessions is strictly prohibited. Photography of workshop sessions is permitted with advance approval of all instructors, mentors, and entrepreneurs in the course. Photography may only be viewed by entrepreneurs in the course for which the photography is made. Photography of any kind with the intent to distribute content to anyone

else is prohibited, including posting on external blogs, websites, and forums, except with permission of the instructors, mentors, and entrepreneurs in the course.

## **10. Institutional Policies**

### **10.1 Entrepreneur Information Policy**

#### **10.1.1 Updating Entrepreneur Information**

If an entrepreneur's contact or business information changes, they are required to notify their instructors and mentors and submit a completed Change of Information Form to the Business Management Office. In addition, entrepreneurs are responsible for updating personal contact information in our online learning environment.

#### **10.1.2 Disclosure & Release of Entrepreneur Information**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative shares information about entrepreneurs and their businesses on our website and with select media outlets. You may be asked to provide your biography, responses to questions about your experience in our programs, and images for use on our website and with select media outlets. Entrepreneurs are required to sign a media release as part of the enrollment process.

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative does not disclose entrepreneur educational information as a manner of practice unless it is absolutely required to deliver the program.

### **10.2 Non-Discriminatory Policy**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is non-discriminatory in its hiring and its admissions, accepting of applicants regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation or identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, religion, veteran's status, disability or previous convictions.

### **10.3 Harassment & Complaint Procedure**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative is committed to providing a professional learning environment. We want the learning environment to be free from physical, psychological, or verbal harassment based on any legally protected characteristic, including, but not limited to, an individual's age, gender, sexual orientation or identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, religion, veteran's status, disability, or previous convictions. This policy applies to the conduct of entrepreneurs, employees, independent contractors, vendors, partners, and visitors and how they interact.

### **10.3.1 Definitions of Harassment**

Sexual harassment and abusive behavior may involve individuals of the same or different gender. Prohibited sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors;
- Unwelcome verbal, physical, or visual conduct of a sexual nature;
- Making submission to (or rejection of) such conduct a factor in decisions;
- Permitting such conduct to interfere with another's performance or to create a hostile, intimidating, or offensive environment.

A range of other subtle and not so subtle behaviors including but not limited to commenting about an individual's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies; sexual jokes and innuendo; leering or catcalls; physical touching; insulting or obscene comments or gestures; display or circulation in the workplace of sexually suggestive objects or pictures (including through e-mail); and other physical, verbal or visual conduct of a sexual nature.

Like sexual harassment, harassment on the basis of any other protected characteristic is also strictly prohibited. Under this policy, harassment is verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or an individual's relatives, friends, or associates because of age, gender, sexual orientation or identity, marital status, race, color, national origin, religion, veteran's status, disability, or previous convictions, or other characteristic protected by law and that: 1) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment; 2) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's performance; or 3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's learning opportunities. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the learning environment of written and graphic material.

### **10.3.2 Anti-Harassment Policy**

Harassment will not be tolerated. Individuals found to have been involved in harassment of others will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. This policy applies to all entrepreneurs and personnel at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative regardless of their position, seniority, or their status as a member of the cooperative.

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative also prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or who participates in an investigation of such reports. Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy and, like harassment or discrimination itself, an individual engaging in retaliatory conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If you believe that you have been the subject of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, or you have witnessed such conduct or otherwise have knowledge of possible violations of this policy,

report the matter immediately to the Enrollment Circle. Any reports of harassment, discrimination or retaliation will be promptly investigated, and confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible consistent with adequate investigation and appropriate disciplinary and/or other corrective action. There will be no retaliation against anyone who, in good faith, makes a report regarding harassment or against any person who assists in an investigation.

## **10.4 Alcohol & Drug Policy**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative strictly prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, use, sale, purchase, transfer, consumption or being under the influence of a controlled substance on Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative property or as part of any Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative sponsored activity. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative also prohibits the abuse of prescription drugs as well as the illegal use, purchase, sale, or attempted sale of prescription drugs. The use of alcoholic beverages during scheduled workshops, one-on-one mentoring or peer mentoring time, including meals and breaks, is absolutely prohibited. Alcohol consumption may be permitted when authorized by the Enrollment Circle for approved Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative functions. However, being under the influence of alcohol at any Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative function is prohibited. Using or being under the influence of unauthorized drugs while attending Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative approved functions is also prohibited. Violation of this policy will constitute grounds for disciplinary actions up to and including termination.

## **10.5 Disciplinary Actions**

### **10.5.1 Conduct Jurisdiction**

Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative reserves the right to take necessary action to protect the safety and wellbeing of its community and to protect its programs. All entrepreneurs are members of the community with the same basic rights and responsibilities. All entrepreneurs are subject to the Standards of Conduct. Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative may address violations of all unprofessional conduct whether they occur on or off site.

In addition, entrepreneurs are expected to abide by all applicable laws including state laws and laws of the United States of America. Entrepreneurs who violate the law may incur penalties prescribed by civil authorities. In such cases when the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's interests are involved, the authority of Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative may be asserted. The Enrollment Circle will determine if the interests of Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative are involved and if legal and/or disciplinary action is necessary.

Violation of an Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative regulation, which is a violation of civil law or criminal law, which affects Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative, shall be procedurally handled as an Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative disciplinary situation regardless of whether there is a prosecution under law. Disciplinary action at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative will not be

subject to challenge on the grounds that criminal charges involving the same incident have been dismissed or reduced. Finally, the implementation of Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative disciplinary authority does not protect the entrepreneur from, nor does Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative necessarily consider it to be a substitution for civil process or criminal prosecution.

### **10.5.2 Conduct Regulations**

An entrepreneur who is found in violation of any of the following regulations is subject to the sanctions authorized in this handbook. The implications of some violations are so serious that a single incident would require a sanction at or near the maximum penalty up to and including cancellation of enrollment in a program. Other violations become significant through repetition or if they are committed intentionally or recklessly.

A violation will be regarded as more serious if it is done because of race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation of another individual or group of individuals.

### **10.5.3 Disciplinary Procedures**

Distinct disciplinary procedures have been designated to ensure a fair hearing. Complaints involving discrimination will follow the procedures outlined in the sections titled Anti-Harassment & Sexual Misconduct Policy and Complaint / Grievance Policy. Other incidents will be processed according to the following disciplinary procedures.

### **10.5.4 Disciplinary Charges**

- Any member of the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative community may bring charges against any other entrepreneur. Such charges must be in writing and filed with the Enrollment Circle.
- A complaint filed in writing must be received within ninety (90) calendar days of the infraction. This time for filing can be extended up to one calendar year by the Enrollment Circle based upon unforeseen information or circumstances.
- The Enrollment Circle will direct the charges to the appropriate hearing officer.

### **10.5.5 Disciplinary Process**

- The accused entrepreneur(s) will be provided written notification of the time, place, and date of the hearing. Sufficient notice is defined as at least five (5) calendar days. The notice will include the charges that will be reviewed and other pertinent information about the hearing. An extension may be requested within two (2) days of receipt of the notice.
- The entrepreneur(s) has/have the right to have a member of the of the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative community present. Attorneys may not be present.
- The hearing will be closed to the public, except for the immediate members of an entrepreneur's family and for their advisor or witnesses. Uptima Entrepreneur

Cooperative reserves the right to refuse individuals participating in hearing procedures based upon the involvement with the incident.

- Oral or written testimony by the accused entrepreneur(s) or witnesses involved may be presented.
- Accused entrepreneur(s) will be afforded an opportunity to hear all testimony against them and question witnesses testifying against them.
- Entrepreneur witnesses may be subject to charges of dishonesty within Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative's disciplinary system if their testimony is deemed to be intentionally inaccurate.
- Prospective witnesses, other than the accuser and accused entrepreneur(s), may, at the discretion of the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative hearing officer, be excluded from the hearing during the testimony of other witnesses.
- Any person, including the accused entrepreneur(s), who disrupts a hearing, may be excluded from the proceedings.
- The hearing will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner, although strict rules of evidence do not apply.

### 10.5.6 Disciplinary Sanctions

The following disciplinary sanctions comprise a range of official action, which may be imposed for violation of regulations. One or more sanctions may be imposed. When an entrepreneur has been suspended or dismissed from Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative for disciplinary reasons, tuition refunds are not available. Additionally, entrepreneurs who violate federal, state, or local laws also may be referred to the criminal justice system for prosecution. For entrepreneurs found to be using drugs or be in violation of the alcohol use policy, a condition of continuance at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative may include the completion of an appropriate education or rehabilitation program.

- *Warning.* This written action is taken when the individual's conduct or involvement merits an official admonition. The entrepreneur is warned that further misconduct may result in more severe disciplinary action.
- *Suspension.* This sanction is one of involuntary separation of the entrepreneur from Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative for a designated period of time. After this period of time, the entrepreneur is eligible to return but may be required to restart the course they were enrolled in. The Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative hearing officer may establish additional requirements, which must be fulfilled to their satisfaction, prior to reinstatement. Permanent notation of suspension will appear on the entrepreneur's history.
- *Dismissal.* This sanction is one of involuntary and permanent separation from the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative. Notice of permanent dismissal will appear on the entrepreneur's history. The entrepreneur will also be barred from Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative activities and premises.

## **10.6 Complaint / Grievance Policy**

While at Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative, entrepreneurs may encounter situations that adversely affect relationships with others within the Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative community. General complaints or concerns should be directed to the Enrollment Circle who will advise entrepreneurs about the appropriate procedures to follow in resolving a general complaint or concern. An informal process of resolution will be sought unless the incidence is severe enough to warrant a formal hearing.

This policy shall also apply to all discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment reports and complaints that may arise in matters involving rights protected under legislation relating to equal opportunity in employment and education or any policy of Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative relating to sexual harassment.

General grievances may also be made anonymously by sending a letter to the Enrollment Circle of Uptima Entrepreneur Cooperative.

### **10.6.1 Informal Procedure**

Entrepreneurs are encouraged to discuss and resolve conflicts, including complaints of harassment, and/or discrimination, with the individual involved before filing a formal complaint. The suggested time frame to discuss and resolve informal complaints is ten (10) days from the date of the incident. If the entrepreneur is not satisfied with the outcome, a formal complaint may be filed with the Enrollment Circle.

### **10.6.2 Formal Procedure**

The complaint must be in writing and should describe: the specific action(s) necessitating the complaint, a statement of facts supporting the complaint, actions sought in an informal resolution, and information about why the action did not lead to a satisfactory resolution prior to filing a formal complaint if an informal process was utilized. The complainant must be willing to be identified as the accuser.

The complaint must be signed and dated by the complainant and filed with the Enrollment Circle within fourteen (14) days of the occurrence. A completed Complaint/Grievance Form should be included with the letter. The form can be found in the online learning environment. All complaints will be investigated by a committee appointed by the Enrollment Circle and handled in a confidential manner.

Investigations will usually be completed within fifteen (15) business days from the receipt of the complaint. At the conclusion of the investigation, a report shall be provided to the individuals in the situation stating the findings and recommendations. The report will typically be provided within seven (7) business days from the conclusion of the investigation. In unforeseen circumstances, or due to the complexity of the investigation, time limits may need to be



modified. If the outcome was not satisfactory, the complainant may appeal the decision of the committee to the Enrollment Circle.

The written appeal request must be received by the Enrollment Circle within five (5) business days of the report. The Enrollment Circle shall provide a written final decision to the complainant within fifteen (15) business days from the receipt of the request. The decision of the Enrollment Circle will be final.