SHARPE BUSINESS ACADEMY

SBA NextGEN

6-Month Business, Digital & Enterprise Programme

for School Leavers

***Don't Just Take a Gap Year.
Build Your Future.***

BUSINESS | DIGITAL & AI | ENTERPRISE | EXPERIENCE

PROGRAMME PROPOSAL

SBA NextGEN

6-Month Business, Digital & Enterprise Programme for School Leavers

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SBA proposes the introduction of SBA NextGEN, a six-month practical Business, Digital & Enterprise Programme targeted at school leavers aged approximately 16–23 who are taking a gap year, awaiting tertiary education, exploring career options, interested in entrepreneurship, or temporarily unable to proceed to university or college due to financial constraints.

The programme is designed to address the gap between completing secondary education and entering the next stage of education, employment or entrepreneurship. Rather than allowing a gap year to become a period of inactivity, NextGEN provides participants with structured exposure to business, entrepreneurship, digital technology, artificial intelligence, finance, sales, marketing and business operations.

The programme will be deliberately practical, combining approximately 70% practical application with 30% classroom-based learning. Participants will complete practical assignments, business projects, industry exposure activities and, where available, supervised workplace immersion.

A key differentiator of NextGEN is that participants will build a portfolio of practical work and demonstrated competencies, rather than simply receiving a certificate for attendance.

The programme will also create a potential talent pipeline for the wider SBA ecosystem. High-performing participants may, subject to available opportunities and the requirements of participating organisations, be considered for internships, apprenticeships, employment or other professional opportunities.

The first cohort is proposed at 20 participants, allowing SBA to pilot the model, maintain close supervision, establish industry partnerships and evaluate outcomes before scaling.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Every year, a significant number of school leavers face a difficult transition after completing secondary education.

Some are financially unable to immediately enter university or college. Others are unsure what they want to study or what career path to pursue. Many have limited exposure to the workplace and limited understanding of how businesses operate.

This creates an opportunity for SBA to position itself as a bridge between school, business and the next stage of a young person's development.

NEXTGEN can turn the traditional gap year into a structured period of:

Learning → Practical Experience → Business Exposure → Portfolio Building → Future Opportunity.

THE SBA SOLUTION

SBA NEXTGEN will provide participants with practical capability across four core areas:

1. BUSINESS

Understanding how businesses operate, generate revenue, manage costs, serve customers and create value.

2. DIGITAL & AI

Developing practical digital workplace skills and learning how AI can be responsibly applied to productivity, research, marketing, administration and business.

3. ENTERPRISE

Developing entrepreneurial thinking, sales, marketing, opportunity identification and the ability to develop and test business ideas.

4. EXPERIENCE

Providing exposure to real businesses, business functions, industry professionals and practical workplace environments, subject to availability.

STRATEGIC VALUE TO SBA

SBA NextGEN provides value beyond programme tuition revenue.

Youth Market Development

The programme creates a structured offering specifically for the school-leaver market and introduces potential students to SBA at an early stage of their educational journey.

Future Student Pipeline

Participants who later choose tertiary education may progress into SBA's NC, ND, entrepreneurship or other programmes where appropriate.

Entrepreneurship Pipeline

Participants with viable business ideas can be connected to SBA's broader entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Industry Relationships

The programme provides a platform for SBA to deepen relationships with businesses through guest sessions, workplace exposure, sponsorships, mentorship and practical projects.

Talent Identification

Where opportunities exist, participating organisations can identify promising young people based on demonstrated performance rather than relying solely on academic qualifications or CVs.

Social Impact

The programme provides structured development opportunities to young people who may otherwise spend a gap year without meaningful skills development or exposure.

PROPOSED BUSINESS MODEL

The pilot cohort will consist of 20 participants.

Programme Fee:

US$600 per participant

Payment:

US$100 per month × 6 months

Potential Gross Tuition Revenue:

20 participants × US$600 = US$12,000

This represents gross tuition revenue before programme expenses, scholarships, discounts, payment defaults or other deductions.

SBA can further increase the programme's financial sustainability through:

- Corporate sponsorship
- Sponsored scholarships
- Industry partnerships
- Entrepreneurship challenge sponsorship
- Digital access sponsorship
- Business project sponsorship

A proposed US$600 sponsorship package could enable a corporate or individual sponsor to fund one participant for the full six-month programme.

PILOT RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that SBA launches NextGEN initially as a 20-participant pilot cohort.

The pilot will enable SBA to test:

- Market demand
- Pricing
- Curriculum effectiveness
- Delivery model
- Participant engagement
- Industry participation
- Workplace exposure model
- Entrepreneurship outcomes
- Future education progression
- Potential employment and apprenticeship pathways

Following the pilot, SBA can evaluate the programme and determine whether to expand future cohorts to 30, 40 or more participants.

SUCCESS MEASURES

The pilot should be evaluated against measurable outcomes including:

- 20 participants enrolled
- At least 85% programme completion
- At least 80% assignment completion
- 100% of completing participants developing a NEXTGEN portfolio
- Practical exposure provided to participants where opportunities are available
- Business/entrepreneurial projects completed
- Participants progressing into further education, entrepreneurship, employment or other professional opportunities
- Identification of high-performing participants for potential opportunities where available
- Positive participant and stakeholder feedback

RECOMMENDATION TO THE TRUSTEE

It is recommended that the SBA Trustee approve the development and launch of SBA NextGEN as a pilot six-month programme, commencing with a maximum cohort of 20 school leavers.

The programme offers SBA an opportunity to:
Create a new revenue stream + serve an underserved youth market + strengthen industry engagement + develop entrepreneurial talent + create a future student and professional pipeline.

Most importantly, NextGEN positions SBA as an institution that does not simply prepare young people to study business, but helps them understand, experience and participate in the world of business.

SBA NEXTGEN

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