

OX1 Incubator

OX1 Incubator, Oxford's first start-up incubator programme run by students for students, is looking for sponsorship and donations from Christ Church alumni to match Christ Church's recent donation of £2,500. The incubator was started in 2018 to fill a gap in the Oxford entrepreneurial ecosystem, and holds workshops, keynote speeches, and mentorship programmes throughout the year. Each year, OX1 hosts a Demo Day, where winning teams are awarded sizeable grants as equity-free investment.

The current committee running OX1 has four members from Christ Church: Jack Chong (2nd year, studying PPE), Ollie Branston (2nd year, studying psychology), Phoebe Hennell (3rd year, studying philosophy and modern Greek), and Ethan Andrews (2nd year, studying English Language and Literature). These students are all keen for Christ Church to play a bigger role in the incubator, and so have already worked to secure £2,500 from the college in funding for prize grants. They are now looking for Christ Church alumni to match this donation.

Fundraising is needed so that the incubator can continue to offer significant grants each year at its Demo Day, which totalled £20,000 last year. The other running costs of the incubator are incredibly low for the high-impact work it delivers, because of the students who volunteer a considerable amount of time to run OX1. Last year's expenses came to just under £1,000. The incubator is funded entirely through the generous philanthropy of its supporters and corporate partners, with the vast majority of financial support going towards prize money.

Prize grants have gone to impressive start-ups in the past. Jack Chong, this year's president of the incubator, won over £11,250 in grants at last year's Demo Day for his winning team's start-up LevelUp, an adaptive MMORPG for K-12 education. Today, LevelUp employs 33 people and has secured non-equity funding from Singapore, Indonesia, and the UK. The second prize at the 2020 Demo Day was awarded to Legalme, an online platform to help manage and win their tenancy disputes, who took home £5,000 in equity-free investment from OX1, and continue to grow and scale today. As these two examples show, OX1 produces highly promising start-ups that go on to have real impact. The incubator has created over 40 jobs, supported 13 ventures, and enabled over 40 student founders. 75% of start-ups have continued past OX1, and the past cohorts have had an impressive 40:60 undergraduate-postgraduate level of engagement.