

Student Innovation Programme – IndiSetu 2026

Date – Friday 18th September 2026

Venue – BMA house, London

Proposed session length – 1 hour 45 minutes

Programme proposition – Student session for pitching tangible healthcare innovations before a multidisciplinary panel, with a development award and structured mentorship for the winner.

1) Overview and objectives

The student innovation programme is designed to align with IndiSetu’s wider ambition to connect healthcare, academia, industry and innovation, promoting collaboration and giving students a platform to present solutions for real world healthcare applications.

The key programme objectives are:

- Showcase promising student-led health innovation from across UK universities
- Encourage collaboration between students in medicine, engineering, business and other related disciplines
- Connect emerging innovators with experts in medicine, engineering, product leaders, founders and investors
- Provide the winning team with practical development support through a cash award and structured mentorship

2) Theme and submission categories

The overarching theme will be “Student-led solutions for meaningful problems in health and healthcare.” The competition will remain deliberately broad to maximise participation. Categories will be used to organise submissions rather than create separate prize tracks.

- Medical devices, surgical technology and robotics
- Digital health, clinical software and artificial intelligence
- Diagnostics, monitoring and data-enabled care
- Healthcare delivery, patient experience and operational innovation
- Medical education and workforce development
- Public health, accessibility and health inequalities
- Consumer health, social enterprises and other healthcare innovations

Eligible entries must identify a defined healthcare problem, propose a tangible solution and explain a credible pathway towards implementation. Pure research abstracts without a proposed product, service or implementation pathway will not be eligible.

3) Eligibility criteria

- Open to undergraduate and postgraduate students, foundation doctors and recent graduates from UK medical schools and universities.
- Entries may be submitted by individuals or existing teams at the expression-of-interest and full-application stages.
- If selected for the live competition, an applicant must form a team with at least two members attending the event.
- Teams may contain more than three members, but no more than three representatives may participate in the on-stage pitch.
- Projects may range from well-developed ideas and validated concepts to prototypes, minimum viable products, pilots and existing early-stage startups.
- Applicants do not need to have incorporated a company, raised funding or completed a finished product.
- Commercial ventures, social enterprises and other sustainable implementation models are eligible.
- Established companies or ventures that have completed a Series A financing round will not normally be eligible; organiser discretion will apply.
- The work must be student-led. Entrants must disclose relevant university, supervisor, company or third-party involvement.

4) Competition pathway timeline and submission process

- Stage 1 – expression of interest. A two-minute form captures contact details, institution, team status, innovation stage, category and likely availability. Everyone registering interest receives the full application. This stage is ongoing, and will continue until 10th August.
- Stage 2 – full application. Applicants submit a concise description of the problem, solution, target users, development stage, evidence/validation, implementation pathway, team and support required, together with a short pitch deck. This stage will begin on 10th August and continue until 1st September.
- Stage 3 – shortlisting. Applications will be scored against internal criteria, and ten of the highest quality teams will be invited to the live competition for the rapid fire pitch round and following long form pitch round (if selected during the competition). Shortlisted applicants will be informed on 10th September. Finalists

will be asked to confirm a minimum of two attending team members, submit a final deck and receive a brief from our side regarding participation schedule.

- Stage 4 – live competition. Ten teams deliver four-minute pitches. The top three progress to an extended final presentation and panel questions. The judging panel selects the overall winner.

5) Full application requirements

The full application should remain proportionate and request:

- Innovation/startup name and a one-sentence proposition
- Healthcare problem and intended users
- Proposed solution and why it is distinct
- Current development stage and evidence appropriate to that stage
- Clinical, technical and commercial or implementation feasibility
- Potential impact and route to real-world adoption
- Team members, roles and relevant experience
- Funding, awards, pilots or external support already received
- Principal development needs and intended use of the £500 award
- A pitch deck of no more than six content slides, excluding a title slide

6) Live competition format (TBC)

- Opening/keynote – 15 minutes, short talk on student entrepreneurship, AI and medical education, or building healthcare startups. May be removed if the competition requires the full session.
- Opening and instructions – 4 minutes, welcome, format, judging criteria and voting instructions
- Initial pitches – 40 minutes, 10 teams x four minutes. No panel questions in the first round
- Voting and transition – 5 minutes, audience vote by QR code
- Final round – 30 minutes, top three teams: seven-minute presentation plus three minutes of panel questions each
- Judging – 10 minutes, panel deliberation and extra time.

Awards will be announced towards the closing of IndiSetu 26.

7) Judging panel (TBC)

The proposed panel will contain three complementary perspectives:

- Clinical innovation: a clinician experienced in identifying unmet needs, implementation and patient benefit.
- Technical/product development: an engineer, designer or medtech academic experienced in feasibility, prototyping and translation.
- Commercial translation: a healthcare founder, early-stage investor, accelerator leader or venture-capital professional experienced in business models, adoption and fundraising.

Prospective individuals should be approached with a defined commitment covering the live judging session and a light-touch mentorship role.

8) Evaluation process and judging criteria (TBC)

Submissions will be assessed according to evidence appropriate to their stage. An idea-stage team should not be penalised solely for lacking a finished prototype; equally, a more mature startup should be expected to demonstrate stronger validation and traction.

Progression to the final round will be determined by a combined first-round score comprising 30% judging-panel assessment and 70% audience voting.

The following is proposed as the judging criteria for both rounds:

- Problem and unmet need – 20 points
- Solution and distinctiveness – 20 points
- Evidence and validation – 20 points
- Feasibility and implementation – 15 points
- Potential healthcare impact – 15 points
- Team and communication – 10 points

9) Awards, prize and mentorship

9.1) Award package

- £500 innovation development award for the overall winner
- Six months of structured, light-touch mentorship
- Relevant professional introductions where appropriate and at mentors' discretion
- Winner and finalist certificates
- Optional non-monetary commendations, such as Audience Choice or Best Emerging Idea

9.2) Use of the monetary component

The award should be framed as an innovation development award rather than an investment. The winning team will submit a short spending plan. Eligible uses may include prototyping, software, user research, testing, regulatory or IP advice, incorporation costs and other agreed development expenses. Personal expenditure and unrelated travel or entertainment will not be eligible.

Recommended payment mechanism: £250 following approval of the spending plan and £250 following evidence of appropriate use and a short progress update.

9.3) Mentorship framework (TBC)

The final mentorship framework will be decided after conversations with our judging panel. The following is proposed as a reasonable package for the winning team:

- Month 1: one 60-minute introductory panel meeting to identify priorities and agree a six-month roadmap.
- Months 2–3: one 45–60-minute progress meeting with the most relevant mentor or mentors.
- Months 4–5: one 45-minute specialist session focused on a priority such as product development, clinical validation, regulation, commercial strategy or fundraising.
- Month 6: one 45-minute concluding panel meeting to review progress and define next steps.

Before each meeting, the winning team will submit a short progress update, current challenges and specific questions. Introductions are discretionary and cannot be guaranteed. Continued engagement beyond six months will be arranged independently according to mutual interest and availability.

