

# The SHAPE Catalyst

## - Application Workshop



Economic and Social Research Council

Arts and Humanities Research Council



Aspect | project

A black and white photograph showing several hands stacked on top of each other in a pyramid shape, symbolizing teamwork and support. The background is slightly blurred, showing a person's face in the lower part of the frame.

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# Quick Recap

# The SHAPE Commercialisation Catalyst

## – What will it do?

- Equip social science, humanities and arts researchers to explore how they can sustain impact from their research by bringing a product, process, service or experience to market
- Develop research-based ideas
- Build ventures from these ideas
- Deliver impact at scale



# What does **SHAPE** mean?

## **SHAPE**

SHAPE stands for:

**S**ocial sciences,

**H**umanities and

**A**rts for

**P**eople and the

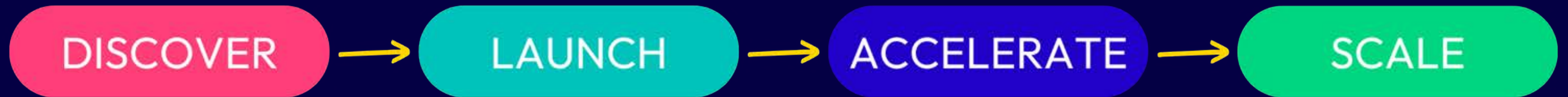
**E**conomy

## **SHAPE Ventures**

A SHAPE venture is one where the product or service is primarily built on SHAPE research.

SHAPE ventures are extremely diverse addressing a wide range of challenges

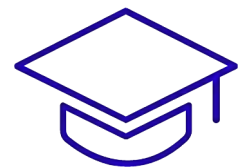
# The ARC Pathway



- Between 2023–2026, ARC is delivering the ESRC/AHRC SHAPE Catalyst through our 4-stage programme, the ARC Pathway
- Designed to guide SHAPE researchers on their commercialisation journey
- The four stages build on each other, but you can join at any stage
- **Recommendation:** start with ARC Discover and move along the ARC Pathway to be best placed to apply to the different stages

# ARC Discover

## ARC Pathway Stage 1



### Outcomes

- Understand the different opportunities for impact
- Identify new audiences for your research
- Be well-prepared to apply to ARC Launch



### Details

- Two workshops – Discover 1 & 2
  - Discover 1: Discovering Research Impact (90min)
  - Discover 2: Discovering Your Audience (120min)

# ARC Launch

## ARC Pathway Stage 2



### Outcomes

- Test your idea and identify your next steps
- Explore different routes to generating financially sustainable impact at scale
- Be well-prepared to apply to ARC Accelerate



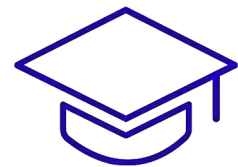
### Details

- Five interactive training sessions (15h in total):
  - 4x virtual workshops (1.5–2.5h each),
  - 1x presentation session,
  - around 3h of self-study



# ARC Accelerate

## ARC Pathway Stage 3



### Outcomes

- Validate your venture idea and develop a business model
- Gain entrepreneurial and sector-specific skills
- Benefit from specific mentors and coaches tailored to your needs
- Be ready to pitch for funding or investment



### Details

- 6 months with time buyout (min. 3 days per week)
- £62,500 at 80% fEC/£50,000 from UKRI
- 40h+ training sessions, additional 1:1 support and homework
- Cohorts run from February to September

# ARC Scale

## ARC Pathway Stage 4

### Still in design – opening in 2024

- Intended to bridge the gap between market validation and incorporation
- Focus on deal flow, team building and, where appropriate, fundraising

**Formal details TBA**





# Eligibility & Application Process

# Who is eligible to apply?

- Applicants must have a PhD or similar research or innovation experience
- Applicants must be based at an eligible UK research organisation
- For more information, visit the [ESRC research funding guide](#) and check if you are eligible for [research and innovation funding](#)



# ARC Discover - Application Process

- No formal application process
- Sign up for ARC Discover workshops on Eventbrite or on [arcaccelerator.io/arc-discover](https://arcaccelerator.io/arc-discover)
- New dates released on an ongoing basis



# ARC Launch

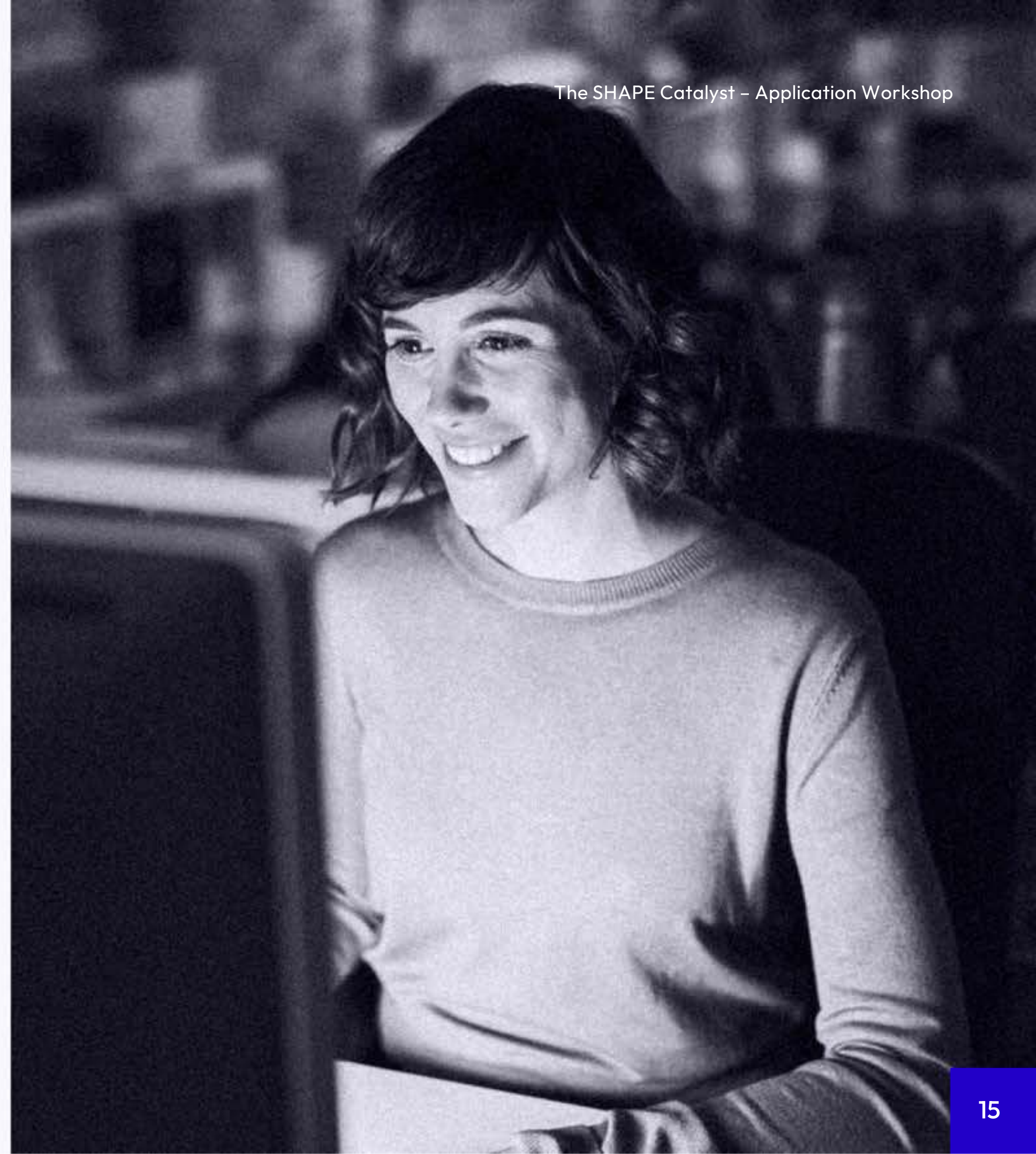
## - Application Process

- Short application form focusing on your idea and the project's potential stakeholders
- Application content is covered in detail during ARC Discover workshops
- Apply via [arcaccelerator.io/arc-launch](https://arcaccelerator.io/arc-launch)
- Applications for next three cohorts are already open; new cohorts are released every 3 months



# Key Questions – ARC Launch

1. What is your project or research about?
2. Who are the various stakeholders of your project? Please outline the potential beneficiaries, users and customers
3. What is your idea for increasing the scale or sustainability of its impact?
4. What are you looking to gain from the programme?



# Beneficiaries, Users, Customers

## - ARC's Definitions

### 01 Beneficiaries

Anyone whose quality of life is improved by your product or service, whether or not they are aware they are benefitting

### 02 Users

Anyone who actively 'uses' your product or service to achieve some benefit to themselves or another

### 03 Customers

Anyone who transacts or exchanges value with you to obtain your product or service

**These three groups might overlap.**



# ARC Accelerate - Application Process

## Expression of Interest

(Cohort 1: open 03/07–31/08)

- 1-page application form focusing on venture idea and research background
- Letter of support from Technology Transfer Office
- Shortlisted applicants will be invited to full application stage
- You will be able to apply from 3 July via [arcaccelerator.io/arc-accelerate](https://arcaccelerator.io/arc-accelerate)

## Full application and interview

(Cohort 1: open 18/09–15/10)

- 3-page application form and pitch template\*
- Letter of support from line manager and HoD
- A shortlist of those who have submitted full applications will be invited to interview
- Interview consists of 5min pitch and 15min Q&A

\*Same template used in last ARC Launch session, where participants present their ideas and receive detailed feedback

# Key Questions – ARC Accelerate

1. What is your idea? Describe it in 180 characters or less.
2. What is the problem you are trying to solve and for whom?
3. How do you know people need what you are offering?
4. Why is your product, process, service or experience the best solution to that problem?

# ARC Pitch Template

## - Key Themes

### **The Problem**

What is the problem you are trying to solve and for whom?

### **The Solution**

What is your solution to the problem you have identified? How does your idea differ from existing solutions?

### **Market Validation**

How do you know people need what you are offering? Have you spoken to anyone about it so far? If yes, what have you learned from these conversations?

# What is Market Validation?

- Validating your idea with potential customers, partners and other stakeholders
- It's about finding the information you need to launch your venture
  - *Does my venture solve a problem? For whom is that a problem?*
  - *Is it a big enough problem that they would pay for it?*
  - *What would it need to do and look like in order for them to pay? How much would they pay?*
- During ARC Accelerate, we spend a lot of time on market validation
- We **don't** expect you to fully validate your idea before you apply, but you should aim to have a few market validation conversations

# What are we looking for?

- Ambitious ideas from arts, humanities and social science disciplines that can sustain economic or non-economic impact through the commercialisation of research
  - Individuals or teams with research insights that can be developed into scalable products, processes, services or experience innovations
- This is **not** research funding

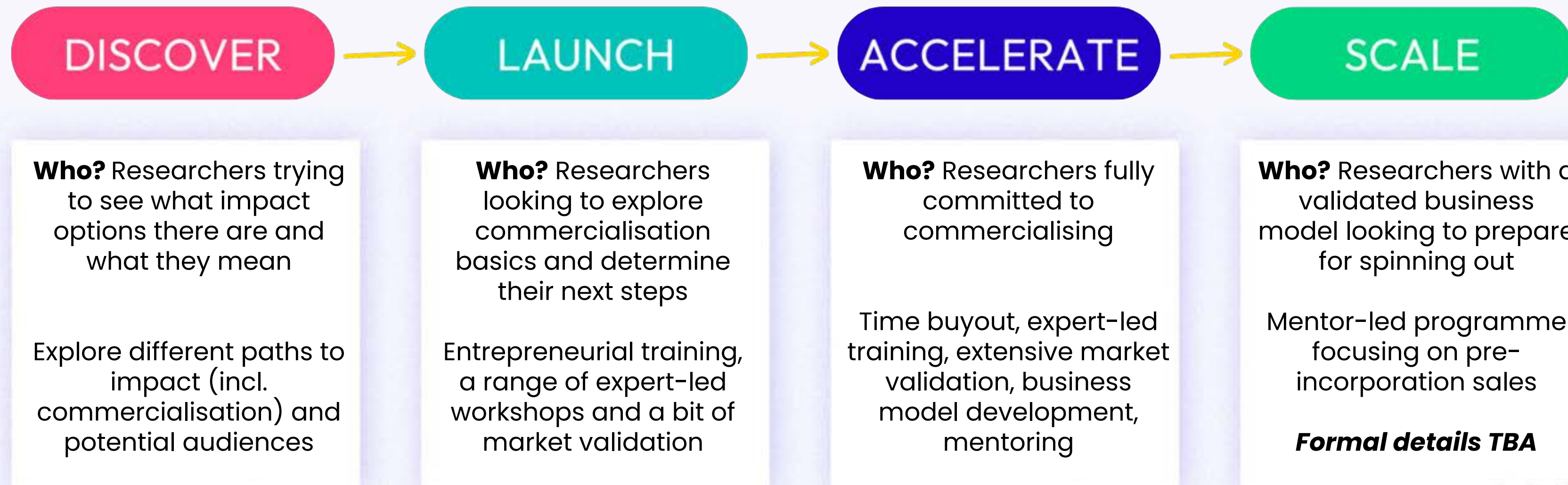
# What are we looking for?

## – Application Forms

- We are **not** looking for specific answers to the questions or specific types of ideas
- You don't need to know all the details yet
  - the programme is designed to help you figure those out
- It's likely that your idea and your plan on how to progress it to the next stage will change during the programme



# The ARC Pathway



# Timeline

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February
	Discover 1 Workshop  Discover 2 Workshop		Discover 1 Workshop  Discover 2 Workshop	Discover 1 Workshop  Discover 2 Workshop	Discover 1 Workshop  Discover 2 Workshop			
			Cohort 3 Start Date  Cohort 4 Start Date	Cohort 3 End Date	Cohort 4 End Date			Cohort 5 Start Date
	Expressions of Interest open	Expressions of Interest close	Full applications open	Full applications close  Interviews take place	Applicants informed of outcomes			Cohort 1 Start Date

➤ **ARC Discover:** open for signups on Eventbrite or ARC website

➤ **ARC Launch:** open for applications on ARC website





# Questions?

Contact us:  
*[hello@arcaccelerator.io](mailto:hello@arcaccelerator.io)*

# Thank you!



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