

SIMMONS

Certificate in Entrepreneurship FAQ's

I don't have a new venture idea; can I still pursue the Entrepreneurship

Certificate? Absolutely. During the program you can develop your own idea or find another entrepreneur to work with. Or, you may decide to dedicate yourself to working in a high growth start-up rather than founding your own business on program completion. In any case the Certificate will be valuable in helping you understand how the entrepreneurial process works, how to access resources, and how to create value in your own way.

Is the Entrepreneurship Certificate only for those launching for-profit

businesses? No, not at all. The women of Simmons are launching businesses to make money, create employment, innovate, and/or deliver a life style that works for them. Our women dedicate themselves to social entrepreneurship, for-profit businesses and a new class of organization, the mission driven, for-profit venture. To the greatest extent possible we work to customize our program so that you realize your dreams.

What makes the four courses essential for the entrepreneur? The four course sequence runs January through November and is carefully designed to lead you from idea generation and evaluation (course 1) to business plan (course 2), then launch management (course 3) integrated with an intensive field experience working with an entrepreneur CEO (course 4). If you're ready, and you're qualified, you can apply to launch your own organization in lieu of the practicum.

How do I secure the practicum? Being an entrepreneur takes initiative, a clear vision, and concerted effort. Simmons will be behind you, and working with you, as you identify the industry, company, person that will make your practicum fulfilling – in the practice itself and afterwards when you apply what you have experienced to move that much closer to your own business launch. We also have a bank of companies we have worked with who welcome inquiries from our students. You can also count on our faculty and Mentor Network to assist you in finding the right opportunity.

Can I do the 225 hour practicum if I am working full time? Yes. The courses and events are offered in the evenings and on weekends, or in 3-4 day intensive formats that are “work friendly.” While most students arrange to have 6 weeks full time for their practicum, this is not required. Some students have arranged a sabbatical or leave of absence from their workplace, others have defined their practicum to be of service to their current employers. Some students working full time have arranged to work nights and weekends for their practicum CEO and they have received special permission to extend their practicum for additional months to satisfy the project requirements. Employers recognize that entrepreneurial training is valuable inside the firm as well as in start-ups.

What type of businesses have EC Alums Launched? Web based social network companies, software firms, apparel manufacturing and distribution and consulting businesses, among others. Some students don't launch their businesses while they are in the program because its not the right time, or they want to wait to accumulate resources or more job experience of a particular kind before they "take the plunge." If you have the passion of an entrepreneur and you know that you are intent on launching a new venture, the training, network and education provided will help you develop a clearer vision of when, and how.

What type of women join the program? All kinds! There are clear trends in female entrepreneurship at early, mid and late career stages. Some women come with a family business background and they want to develop their own ventures. Others want to form nonprofits or for-profits with a mission around issues such as global women's health or environmental protection. Women of color are well represented following the national trend that women of color are nine times more likely to be launching a business than the average adult nationally (more generally, women are twice as likely). Students are from the U.S. and abroad.