

**University of Liverpool Enterprise**

***Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneurship) Application Form***

*The University of Liverpool is looking to identify and support international Graduate Entrepreneurs, who can demonstrate that they have world class ideas and /or exceptional entrepreneurial skills.*

*This is a new UKBA route designed for graduates who plan to launch a new business in the UK. In order to apply for a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa, you have to be endorsed by the University of Liverpool.  
  
If successful, you will be granted leave for one year in order to develop your business plan with tailored support from the university.*

*At the end of the first year, provided you are making good progress, you will be able to extend your visa for one further year. The intention is that after a maximum of two years on a Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa, you would be able to switch into the main Tier 1 - Entrepreneur Visa.*

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| **Personal Details**  Title ...Miss... First Name ..Liling.................. Surname ........Chen.....................  D.O.B ......22/01/1992...... Nationality ........China............  University Email .........pslchen@liverpool.ac.uk...............................................  Personal Email.....pslchen@outlook.com......................................................................  Tel Number ....07775853508..........  University ID Number ...200789667..... Passport Number .....G55368843....  Qualification Level (e.g. MSc)……MSc …………  Course Title ......... Operations and Supply Chain Management..............................  Course End Date .......30/09/2016...........  Do you have any dependants with you in the UK OR do you intend to bring any dependants to the UK? If yes, how many? |

**Visa Details**

Type of Visa...........Tier 4 General........................... Expiry Date.......30/01/2017..............

Have you ever held a Tier 1 post study Work Visa? Yes/No (Please circle as appropriate)

If yes, you will not be eligible for a TIER 1 Graduate Visa

**Business Details**

**Please describe your business idea (250 words max)**

My business idea is to provide different types of student accommodation on short term and long term; and provide a social communication hub primarily for Chinese students who are going to study or are studying in Liverpool. It would be expanded to the UK eventually.

For student accommodation long term rent, the website will provide flatmate finding and group booking. Student accommodation will include University student accommodation.

For private house long term rent, the website will provide house & landlord service rating, English and Chinese housemate finding and house living survival guide specialised for Chinese students.

This website will provide more availability for short-term lets, and different types of short term let such as homestay for Chinese students.

Social communication hub allows Chinese students to find friends who will study at the same university before they come to the UK. It will be a communication hub for them help each other to better settle down in this country.

There will be rating and comments system based on safety, convenience etc. for student accommodation. For a new student accommodation such as the one that university is currently building, the system will be a powerful tool to attract Chinese student moving in.

The website will also help Chinese tourists finding accommodation. This is another target market, which will require more time to do research. Thus, it will not be discussed in this business plan.

**What is different about your idea that will make it a success? (250 words max)**

For student accommodation long term let

Chinese students would feel better if they can live with at least 1 or 2 friends they get on well with before moving into a flat. The current system only allows them to book individually. Students feel isolated and the fear of unknown. There is no existing website allows students to find the right person to book in a group.

For private house long term let

Some Chinese students prefer a private house. They feel difficult to find a suitable place. There is no system tells about the how well the house is or the landlord service. They have to book bearing the risks. English students also have difficulties in finding roommates. They have to find and meet potential housemates, which is very time-consuming. On the other side, landlords do not have a way to promote their good house and their service as there is no rating system. This website is going to provide an effective tool for private landlords to promote their service and facilitate students to have a smoother process in booking a private house.

For short term let

Demand for short term let among Chinese students is high. Student accommodation short term is always limited. Substitutions like homestay, private house and student accommodation subletting are available but not always. Chinese students have to search every day to find a suitable short term, which is very time-consuming. Master students have to find short-term lets to finish their master studies. No student accommodation can offer short term during this time. There is almost no landlord will offer one-month rent. Students have to live in hotels and pay £1500 monthly rent. There should be someone to help Chinese students find suitable short term lets in a reasonable price.

Social communication hub

Chinese students want to find people who have studied experience in the UK. The existing systems do not provide this service.

**How do you propose to develop this into a commercial proposition (250 words max)**

For student accommodation long term let

Group booking reduces the administration cost and advertising cost on student accommodations. The website will charge commission fee per tenant on student accommodation.

For private house long term let

Landlords and Chinese students need to sign contracts through the website. This will protect Chinese students legally when they book private house. They will receive Chinese translated documents with fully explained terms and conditions. The website will change legal contract drafting fee and administration fee.

For short term let

There is peak demand for some period during the year. The website will hold some places in advance with average price and rent them to students with above the average price during the peak period.

Other services

Some landlords are too busy to find tenants. Some tenants are too busy to find housemates or they want to rent for a better price. The website will be able to help them and charge service fees.

**What stage are you at with this idea at the moment? (250 words max)**

I am doing short term let from September to October. I use wechat to advertise rooms. I have 15 customers waiting for me to find places for them. I have successfully provided two accommodations to clients. I have earned £100 on average from each deal. The number of customers is increasing and it is estimated I can earn over £1000 by the end of September.

The business idea has been recognised by some organisation. It has been selected as the representative business idea at the University of Liverpool in HSBC 2016 grow your future competition. The head of Spark Up shown interests in this idea would like to support this idea if it is approved by University.

There are two IT technicians who would like to work alongside with me in this business. One is Eric Masaba, who has many years’ business experiences and just won Global Top 100 Red Herring 2015. The other is Lan, who has business in both Liverpool and China. He shows interests in this idea and would like to introduce a technician to be a partnership with me.

**Have you run your own business before?** Yes/No   
If yes give details here.

I run a T-shirt business with other students during studying at University. I am good at selling T-shirt using personal networking. We used to sell T-shirts in a trade fair at university. Over 60% number of T-shirts were sold by me during that day.

I used to work as a personal assistant for CEO in a start-up firm named China Glory Horticulture Ltd based in Liverpool. I participated in business planning, sourcing materials, supplier selecting, dealing with the government about the land buying and business funding. I have experience of starting up a real business in the UK.

I used to be a marketing consultant for Saffron & Lewis, a luxury baby furniture retailer start-up, based in Liverpool. I analysed the business marketing strategy and conducted a good marketing plan for them.

**What legal structure is your business going to be and why? E.g. sole trader, Ltd, social enterprise**

At the beginning, the business is going to be in a form of the sole trader. It is easier to set up as a small firm and I will have more control over the business. Sole trader will allow me to make decisions quickly and change service to meet the needs of the clients quickly. The business will consider being limited as I developed.

**Business Idea – The process**

**Where do you want the business to be in a years time? (250 words max)**

By the end of 2016, the business will help 25 students to find short term.

In 2017, the business will have 28 student accommodations in Liverpool available for Chinese and English students group booking online. It will have 10 private houses available for Chinese and English students to book. There will be a list of student accommodation and 10 homestays and private houses available for short term from June to September. The business will also help 50 students to find short term from September to October.

In 2018, Student accommodation group booking service will expand to Manchester or other cities. Private house landlords have gained reviews and will attract more English and Chinese student booking through the website. The number of property will increase to 50. The number of homestays and private houses as a supplement to student accommodation for short term from June to September will increase depends upon the demand. For short term from September to October, over 100 students will be helped to find a suitable one month let.

In 2019 onwards, the website will maintain the number of students and have more students registered on the website. More student accommodation and landlords will join the website from other cities.

There is a possibility that the website will provide accommodation for Chinese tourists in the future.

**What resources do you need to get you started? (250 words max)**

I will need to make group booking agreement with student accommodations. I will need a list of reliable landlords. I will need legal support in terms of tenancy agreement. I will need IT supporters to build a suitable website. I will need business insurance and business bank account. The business will use word of mouth at the beginning to generate a number of students registering on the website. It might then use wechat (Chinese facebook) to promote the website and attract more students registering on the website.

**What are your key targets and milestones? (250 words max)**

**September 2016 – generate cash £1000 from doing short-term business.**

**September 2017** – There are over 1000 Chinese students studying at the university of Liverpool. The first year aims to attract 200 Chinese students and 50 English students in Liverpool. Turnover target for 2017 is £10,100. This will be broken down into 4 sections below:

For student accommodation:

Have 100 English and Chinese students group booking through the website. Turnover will be 100\*£20=£2000

For private house:

Have 30 students to use the website to book private house. Legal contract fee for tenants is £100\*30 = £3000. Legal contract fee for landlords is £100\*6=£600. Target turnover is £3600.

For short term from September to October

The number of Chinese students study master is roughly over 300.

Help 100 students find short term. If there are 3 people share a room, there will be 33 rooms being introduced. The target turnover is 33\* £100=£3300

For short term from June to September

Have 10 students book homestay. Legal contract fee is 10\*£100=£1000

Have 10 students book student accommodation. Commission fee is 10\*£20=£200

**September 2018** – The number of students using the website will increase as the website having more landlords and be aware by more students. Target turnover in 2018 in Liverpool is £13,000.

**September 2019** – short-term and long term service will cover Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and London. Turnover target for 2019 is £13,000\*4=£52,000.

\*The turnover target is the minimum. It doesn’t include other service fees and the potential opportunity by providing accommodation to Chinese tourists.

**Market Research**

**Please detail any market research you have completed to date (250 words max)**

For student accommodation

I networked with my Chinese friends and acquaintances. Nearly 90% of them think to find flatmates getting on well before booking would increase the happiness of living in the accommodation. They like the idea of finding friendly English flatmates as it is a good way to practise English.

For private house

Landlords are very happy to offer the places as some find difficult to let student live in. They are happy with the landlords’ reviews as there is no such service in existing English website. Chinese friends or acquaintances are happy to have a more effective way to choose suitable private houses and people they like to live with. My English friends like the idea of being able to have a more effective way to find housemates.

For short term let from September to October

By just using personal contacts, I have had more than 15 students waiting me to find short term lets. The number is increasing.

For short term let from June to September

Chinese students come to study English during this time. Some Chinese students prefer to live in places where they can have more opportunities to learn English and English culture. 90% students I have spoken to would like this service.

Social communication hub

Nearly all Chinese students I have spoken to would like to use the platform to find friends or finding a better way to settle down in this country.

**Who are your direct and indirect competitors? (250 words max)**

For student accommodation

Direct competitors are 6apt.com and stuliving.com which provide student accommodation in the UK and the world for Chinese students. None of them are based in the UK. Their after-service isn’t good. Students complain their response is quite slow if they need some changes about their accommodation when they arrive UK. At the same time, they do not offer student flatmate finding nor group booking service.

For private house

There is currently one company named uhouzz.com based in China offering UK private house. They provide a list of private houses however they don’t have full control on the landlords. They won’t be able to ensure the safety issues or any after sale service as they are not based in the UK.

For short term from September to October

The is no business service in this market. Indirect competitors are Airbnb, Rightmove and Spareroom. Airbnb is mainly for one-day holiday rent. For one month rent, they charge over £110 service fee, which is not an ideal website for searching one month rent. Also, not all landlords in Airbnb willing to offer a month rent. You need to message and ask many landlords; it is very time-consuming. Very few places offer one-month rent in Rightmove and Spareroom. The information in Rightmove and Spareroom is not very clear and trustable. It is not a safe place for Chinese students to rent.

For short term from June to September

Direct competitors are 6apt.com and stuliving.com which offer short-term student accommodation. However, they offer limited short term lets. As they base in China, their information updated by the student accommodation is slow. Students find their response is very slow when they enquire short term.

**Define your target market and why? What is the scale of the audience, is it impulse purchase, luxury etc? (250 words max)**

The target market will be Chinese student coming to study in the UK and English students who has interests in Chinese culture and won’t mind living with Chinese. They are my target market because I have been a student in the UK and understand the need of them.

At the beginning, the scale of the audience would be over 1000 Chinese students in Liverpool. Ideally, the audience would be all students studying in the UK which are over 80,000.

It is a standard product. Students like to have a budget for student accommodation.

**How are you going to price your product or service? And why? (250 words max)**

For student accommodation long term

I haven’t got the exact price but I will ask £20 per room as a commission fee for one-year rent. I will need to confirm the price with several student accommodations.

For private house long term

This website will charge legal contract fee £100 per tenants and £100 on landlords. This will be the same as local estate agents.

For short term lets from September to October

The money will be made from the difference between the normal monthly rental price and the peak monthly rental price. Price will be £100-£200 per person per month during that time. The price setting will be lower than the hotel price, however, will higher than the student accommodation monthly price. This is due to high demand and short supply.

For short term lets from June to September

For student subletting, service fees will be charged as the website will help student subletting to quickly find tenants and give students fair price based upon the market than they sell by themselves. The price will be lower than the student accommodation short term price. It will fluctuate around £70-£90 per week per person based on the demand.

**Personal Statement**

Please use this section to convince us of your suitability for the scheme **(250 words max)**

I have a good understanding of the need of Chinese students in renting. I understand the renting market in the UK as I have personal experience in this. Also, I have a good source of landlord supply. I have social connections that allow me to find good sources of private house suppliers.

I have good commercial awareness and business knowledge as I studied International Business for my bachelor degree at the University of Liverpool. I also have practical business experience in the UK.

I am active, and I am good at social networking. I networked with many people having years of business experience in Liverpool. I am able to get support and find opportunities before other people. I know my business advisor Yan at women’s organisation from a social networking. She is impressed when I found her as few students know her at this early stage.

I have entrepreneur spirits. I have always worked for myself. I like to find business opportunities and set up own business. I would like to take on staffs and create jobs and business for local people.

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| *\* Please note that successful applicants will also need to meet the requirement of the UKBA application process , which can be found at:* [*http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/tier1/graduate-entrepreneur*](http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/visas-immigration/working/tier1/graduate-entrepreneur) |

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| By signing this form I give consent to The University of Liverpool to provide UKBA with my personal details if I am successful in my application for endorsement of the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur visa. If the visa is granted, I undertake to spend the majority of my working time on the development of the business venture. I also consent to this information being kept on file for audit purposes and I agree to the terms and conditions of sponsorship under the Tier 1 Graduate Entrepreneur Scheme\*.  **Signature** ........Liling Chen.............................................. **Date** .......07/07/2016.............................  *\*All business information provided will be treated as confidential and will not appear in the public domain.* |

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| **University Use Only** | Yes/No |
| Has email been received from IST team to confirm applicant’s eligibility? |  |
| Has a Business Support Package been agreed by the applicants school |  |
| If “no” to above business support package has applicant confirmed they will fund. |  |