



HARVARD | BUSINESS | SCHOOL

Rock Center for Entrepreneurship

Rock Loan Forgiveness

Valid: January 1, 2020 – June 20, 2021

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Key Points

The applicant:

- Graduates in May 2021
- Exhibits need as determined by HBS Financial Aid.
- Is (co)founding a product or service-based venture (see specific details below).
- Exhibits prior participation in the entrepreneurship ecosystem (e.g., Harvard Innovation Labs, Rock Center, external accelerators, etc.).

Awards range from USD \$1,000-20,000 at the discretion of the reviewers and is adjusted by the total number of applicants that match our criteria.

Application Guidelines

REVIEW ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Self-assessment Tip: If you did not receive any HBS Fellowships, scholarships, or other forms of financial assistance while enrolled, it is unlikely that you have need-based loans eligible for this offer.

You may be eligible if you:

- Are a second-year MBA student graduating in May 2021.
- Have significant financial need as determined by MBA Financial Aid during the standard two-year financial aid application process. You may not start a retroactive application now for financial aid to participate in this program.
- Have a total income after graduation of \$100,000 or less.
- Will not receive a private or social enterprise forgiveness award in the same year that you are eligible for Rock Loan Forgiveness
- Will not be sponsored/reimbursed for any MBA-related expenses now or in the future.

All applicants must be pursuing, on a full-time basis, an entrepreneurial venture with total compensation substantially below the MBA average. You must be a (co)founder and senior executive (e.g., CEO, President).

When considering an application for loan forgiveness, please keep in mind it is not intended for individuals who are still seeking employment, are in a volunteer positions (or receiving only a nominal salary) or are engaged in post-MBA studies of any kind.

SELECTION AND AWARD ALLOCATION PROCESS

The program is competitive. If we have more applicants than available award funding, the award is made on the basis of:

1. viability of the venture (as determined by a review of your venture)
2. commitment to entrepreneurship as informed by your self-reported involvement
3. executive brief
4. your financial need

Financial need is determined by:

- Your financial aid application data already on file.
- Analysis of projected monthly income.
- Your monthly student loan obligations.

Award amounts are subject to the following restrictions:

- Loans borrowed to fund your personal contribution will not be considered.
- Debt from other degree programs, including joint and concurrent degree programs, will not be considered. Consumer debt will not be considered.

You may not increase your student loan debt after receipt of an award.

VENTURE TYPE

Eligible Ventures

The Rock Loan Forgiveness program is for (co)founders that are creating a product-based venture, both digital or physical, or venture capital fund. The product may be software, hardware, consumer goods, commercialized technology, etc.

Ineligible Ventures

- The program excludes professional services (ex., consulting, advisory practices, personal coaching, etc.).
- The program excludes funds other than venture capital.

NOTE: Search Fund candidates may seek financial assistance through the [Search Fund Fellowship and apply for loan forgiveness through the same application](#).

ELIGIBLE LOANS

To be considered for the Rock Loan Forgiveness, Social Enterprise Loan Repayment Assistance Program (SELRAP), and Career & Professional Development (CPD) at-graduation loan forgiveness programs, your loans must meet all of the following requirements:

Must have been either approved by HBS or fully disclosed to HBS at the time loan was made.

- The student applicant must be the borrower.
- In no case will an amount larger than the cost of attendance less other aid be considered or awarded.
- Independent third-party verification of the loan must be available to HBS.

Eligible Loan Types

Loans that may typically be forgiven include the following:

- US federal student aid (e.g., Perkins, GradPLUS, Stafford)
- US state programs (e.g., MEFA, VSAC, etc.)

Foreign national, state, and provincial educational loan schemes

- Educational loans from a bank or credit union (e.g., Citi Assist, Discover, HUECU, etc.)

Applicants must not be delinquent or in default on their loans at the time of application. If in doubt, please ask HBS MBA Financial Aid before committing to a loan.

Debts Not Covered

The program does not cover and will not consider:

- Debt used to replace student contributions as calculated by MBA Financial Aid Services, or borrowing for living expenses above the financial aid budget
- Debt incurred for non-HBS work in a joint degree program
- Debt from other degree programs
- Consumer debt

Ineligible loan types include the following:

- Loans from past, present, or future employers, especially those that may be forgiven upon resumption of employment
- Personal loans from family or friends
- Bank loans not certified or verified by MBA Financial Aid
- Home equity loans or lines of credit

Ultimate discretion for eligibility lies entirely with HBS. Funds are distributed on an as-available basis. All determinations made by the School are final. HBS reserves the right to restructure or discontinue loan forgiveness at any time.

If you receive a Rock Loan Forgiveness, you understand and commit yourself to an annual survey updating us on your venture for 3 years and if your business does not prevail beyond 12 months of graduation (or you accept another job), you agree to return the funding by making a check out to the school.

If you do not meet the requirements for the Rock Center Loan Reduction for Entrepreneurs, please note there are additional loan forgiveness programs available through the [HBS Nonprofit/Public Sector Loan Repayment Assistance Program](#) and the [HBS Loan Forgiveness for Private Sector Employees](#) (login required).

Submit Your Application

There are three parts to the application that are all due by the application deadline. You apply and submit all materials through the application form, which you should preview as we request income and ownership information. As a reminder, awards range from \$1,000-20,00 based on need as determined by HBS Financial Aid, the total number of applicants, and involvement in the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

[CLICK HERE TO APPLY](#)

Document Upload

1. Executive Summary (guidelines on next page)
 - a. In addition to the Executive Summary, you may attach any additional information that may be relevant to your application (e.g., a recent pitch deck).
 - b. Applicants that do not submit an Executive Summary will not be reviewed.
2. Fundraising Plan & Intentions Statement
 - a. State the current fundraising plans for the company and any funding to date. We should be able to understand how you intend to fund the company over the next six months for investors and any related critical milestones. For example, sources may include angels, venture capital, accelerators, friends/family, etc., or other forms of venture debt. If you are choosing not to take external funding at this time, outline your plans to generate revenue from customers within the next 6 months.
3. Resume
 - a. Submit a one-page resume along with the executive brief to complete your application.

Please be aware that award recipients must complete a mandatory annual survey for 2 years to update Rock Center on the status of the new venture, so please make sure we always have your current email address.

Executive Summary & Fundraising Plan Guidelines

The Executive Brief

Summarize your venture and plans in fewer than three pages as a single-space, 1" margins, 12-point font document. It is succinct and details your planning for the immediate future with a key focus on identifying critical milestones and decision-points in your venture.

Mission/Vision

Describe what your business does or its principal mission or objective. Include current or anticipated geographic location

Management Team

Provide team information.

- CEO - HBS affiliation/ relevant work experience/skills
- All other team members - title/education/relevant work experience/skills

Business Product or Service

- Describe your primary product/service and its core value proposition
- Describe your business model
- Describe its stage of development (e.g., concept, prototype, beta, growth, etc.)

Market

- Define your first adopter persona.
- What is your realistic, obtainable target market goal for year one and two?

Key Milestones

- State the "North Star" metric and associated milestone(s) that will define success and failure for your venture.
- Define immediate, critical milestones and associated metrics going forward for the following timeframes: 3-month, 6-month

Risk & Opportunity

- Describe the greatest risks associated with your business today and why/how you will overcome them (examples might include competitive, regulatory, or political risks)
-

Fundraising Plan

You may use a spreadsheet or word document; however, you should address the following areas with respect to the next 6-months after graduation. There is no upper/lower limit on length for this document. The goal is to understand how you intend to fund the venture.

- Outline the current fundraising plans for the company and any funding committed to date, including personal contributions. An estimate is acceptable for personal contributions of

the venture. We should be able to understand how you intend to fund the company over the next six months for investors and any related critical milestones.

- State primary uses for those funds.
- Target Sources: If you have specific firms or people, that is welcome information, but not required. However, briefly outline the funding source(s) and why you are pursuing it. For example, sources may include angels, venture capital, accelerators, friends/family, etc., or other forms of venture debt.
- **If you are choosing not to take external** funding currently, outline your plans to generate revenue from customers within the next 6 months.