



**The Circle**  
ACADEMY

# Contents page



What is The Circle Academy?

Breakdown of course

CEO and Manager

Candidate persona

How to apply

Individual payment plans

Thank you

# What is The Circle Academy?



## About The Circle Academy

The Circle Academy is a practical education and training programme for people who are interested in starting up organisations with a More Than Profit approach.

The programme will provide tools and building blocks to start, launch and grow a business and a resource bank of quality information and mentorship to provide our candidates with ongoing support and guidance as their proposals are formulated and refined.

## Our Experience

We have over seven years of experience working on a consultancy basis with hundreds of people who are interested in starting up More Than Profit businesses.

Our experience has helped us to determine that although many people have great ideas that have great potential, many lack the necessary business skills required to grow these types of organisations.

They often become dependent on single income streams such as grants and when the funding runs out, the only solution is to re-apply for more funding.

This becomes self-perpetuating with grants becoming the main objective, until the source runs out.

## How will The Circle Academy operate?

Candidates will use the skills they acquire to income generate through several tasks and profits from this will go towards the final investment.

The programme will be delivered by a team of leading local, national and global entrepreneurs from business, social and the creative industries covering topics including growth mindset, sustainability, finance, More Than Profit and governance.

## Why The Circle Academy?

We want to develop people who go on to create More Than Profit organisations.

Local, national and global speakers will share their experiences and expertise to each cohort of candidates.

As a result of learning the right skills and gaining knowledge, these people will have a better chance of growth and success by creating clear and realistic operating and financial plans.

Candidates will be enabled to develop multiple income streams through a variety of sources and move away from reliance on single income streams and/or grant dependency.

# Breakdown of course



## Mindset

- Global mindset
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- Money mindset

## Marketing

- Story
- Brand guidelines
- Market your vision

## Social impact

- More Than Profit
- Impact measurement
- B-Corp accreditation

## Governance

- What is governance?
- Implementing governance
- Roles and responsibilities

## Business planning

- Service design
- USP
- Customer profiles
- Market research



**These topics will be covered alongside six income generating tasks and simulated board meetings.**

# Breakdown of course



## Legal

- What structure works for you
- Contracts - staff, clients
- Insurance

## People

- Operations
- Building your team
- Workplace culture

## Finance

- Grants/loans
- Diversity of income
- Cash flow and working capital
- Salary

## Sales and selling

- Upselling
- Pitching
- Existing support

## Pitch week

All candidates will have the opportunity to access the income generated through six tasks. There will also be an opportunity to pitch to investors and funders.



**These topics will be covered alongside six income generating tasks and simulated board meetings.**

# CEO and Academy Manager



## Founder and CEO

Kirsty Thomson is the Founder and CEO of ACK CIC and Circle Scotland CIC (The Circle Dundee). She was one of 18 people from across Scotland who took part in Entrepreneurial Scotland's Saltire Fellowship over the last six months which involved time in Babson College in Boston and Silicon Valley.

Kirsty embarked on a career in research through the University of Dundee and Newcastle University which involved working across psychology, health, community development and the voluntary sector in the UK. She has worked with and for charities, social enterprises and community groups for the past 20 years.

In her career, she has raised over £13million for the organisations she has worked with and for. She is determined and focused to make a difference to communities across Scotland and beyond and focus on a business model that is More Than Profit.



## Academy Manager

Kara is our Academy Manager. She joined the The Circle in April and will be developing The Circle Academy. She has a background in business having opened her first business at 19 whilst still at university, which her and her business partner went on to sell.

They then opened Dundee Strength Unit, which they also sold recently, leaving her in an exciting position to go out and develop her own skill base.

Kara will be bringing her incredible skills and experience in business to enhance our More Than Profit model.

# Candidate persona



## Candidate persona - Example 1

*Sarah* is 32 years old and has founded a poverty charity. This charity provides clothes to children who often go without. Unfortunately, *Sarah* has no prior experience of running a charity or any organisation. She has been given a large grant but no support on how to spend the money. The funders believe that there is a real need for her charity so they are happy to fund it.

Through time, *Sarah's* lack of knowledge and skills begin to show. Her workload gets too much and her mental health start to decline. Thankfully, she knew she should put a board in place when she founded the charity, however the board is made up of her friends. Her friends are great at looking after her kids, but not that great at helping her run the charity.

*Sarah* has now spent a lot of the money on overheads and is still yet to pay herself a salary. This is 18 months in. With all her savings gone, *Sarah* is now a candidate for receiving clothes from her charity for her kids. She has run a charity for nearly two years with no salary and has no plans in place to help her get a salary.

What would happen if the funders helped to put her through The Circle Academy so she could gain the knowledge and skills she really needs?



## Candidate persona - Example 2

*Michelle* is 47 and recently moved into the CEO role of a national 3rd sector organisation. Within her role, she is responsible for the growth and future of the organisation.

With her previous experience within the public sector, she has good knowledge of budgets but little understanding of governance and legal structures.

However, *Michelle* has no previous experience of running a SCIO and is really struggling with the challenges that brings. Charities and public sector organisation are very different worlds.

Her SCIO is largely funded by Scottish Government however, as with every organisation, it is facing even more budget cuts. *Michelle* has no idea how to be enterprising or what the limits are of being a SCIO. The Circle Academy would develop her knowledge of a new sector, with a focus on being More Than Profit.

# Candidate persona



## Candidate persona - Example 3



*John* is 25 and has just finished university. He is in the very early stages of running a community food larder that is trying to tackle food poverty, in particular for children in his local area. The larder is focused on providing very affordable food, based in the heart of communities with the aims of eradicating food poverty.

The larder is already in operation and is working alongside other like-minded organisations across the city. *John* has already proven that his idea works but in order to be sustainable and ultimately grow, he needs support in areas such as governance, finances and law. Having tried to access this knowledge and support from existing training providers, he is still no further forward.

Despite having a well researched plan and proven track record of delivering a service, *John* has been rejected several times by potential funders and supporters due to not having the correct structures in place. He feels that without some form of guidance and support in these areas, he isn't going to get anywhere. *John* knows his idea works, he knows that his project is needed and he knows that he needs help to make it happen. He wants to grow a team of employees and volunteers as well as have a board in place.

The Circle Academy can help him with all of these issues so he can get his business off the ground and make it a success.

## Candidate persona - Example 4



*Daniel* is 33 and founded a CIC three years ago. His CIC provides a safe and welcoming place for adults with additional needs and learning difficulties. *Daniel* currently does income generate by putting a nominal cost on all the classes that are run. He has a great money mindset but just no idea of how to put it into practice and is therefore facing problems with growth.

*Daniel* desperately wants to employ staff as well as have support from volunteers however he needs to get more funding into the business.

He applied for grants but without sufficient evidence of governance, good financial conduct or a grant history, no funder will back him. The Academy will support *Daniel* to put the right governance in place and guide him to the right support when building a team. The experts teaching on The Circle Academy will help him build robust finances that demonstrate future growth and in turn, help him get funding.

# How to apply



## How to apply to The Circle Academy

You can apply through our online application form which will include details of your initial business plan. You should also include how and why the More Than Profit approach matters to you. If successful you will be invited to an interview.

The interview will cover information about you as a person and your drive to start a More Than Profit organisation as well as on what you're looking to gain from The Circle Academy.



# Individual payment plans



## How much does it cost?

Each place on The Circle Academy costs £4,000.

This includes:

- A 12 week training programme
- 36 led workshops led by experts
- Access to co-working space for 12 months
- Office overheads included
- Nine monthly follow-on workshops
- Mentorship with leading experts
- Funding and grant application support
- Monthly support sessions with Academy staff
- Pitching competition for guaranteed investment
- Publicity and press coverage
- Unrestricted investment

### Costings and payment plans for self-funding

£4000 - pay it upfront or over a year at £333.33 per month

£4400 - pay it over 2 years at 183.33 per month

£4800 - pay it over 3 years at 133.33 per month



If you have any questions, please contact Kara Swankie at [kara@thecircledundee.org.uk](mailto:kara@thecircledundee.org.uk)

# Thank you



## Thank you to The Circle Dundee's amazing team:

### Our staff

Kirsty Thomson, CEO  
Paul Hastie, Manager  
Kara Swankie, Academy Manager  
Ruth Finnan, Financial Controller  
Stephen McLennan, Café Manager  
Caitlin Collins, Café Supervisor  
Christina Thomson, Facilities Supervisor  
Michael Ratcliffe, Facilities Assistant  
Nicola Donnelly, Business Development Officer  
Jenny McCarthy, Associate Consultant  
Jennifer Gall, Bookings and Training Administrator  
Sekai Machache, Marketing & Communications Officer

### Our board

Donald McPherson - Chair  
Alasdair McGill  
Pete Baillie  
Rod Mountain  
Louise Valentine  
Ann Gillies

### Our volunteers

Alex Thomson  
Eddie Baines  
Mary Moran  
Chris Hills  
Margaret Grieves  
Phillipa Handling

## A massive thank you to all of our sponsors and partners



And a special thank you to all speakers and supporters of  
The Circle Academy.

