

## U of T Mississauga announces Blue Ticket competition to propel life science entrepreneurship.

Mississauga, ON – 7 September 2023

We are delighted to welcome the international biopharmaceutical leader, Merck, known as MSD outside the United States and Canada, as the inaugural industry supporter of U of T Mississauga's Blue Ticket program at [SpinUp](#), U of T's first wet-lab incubator for life science innovation.

Merck's support will provide mentorship and financial support for one early-stage life science venture, jumpstarting the Blue Ticket program toward its long-term vision: to power the next generation of global health innovators and innovation from Mississauga.

The program invites applications starting on 14 September; SpinUp will open its first general call for membership at the same time, encouraging early-stage life science entrepreneurs to apply for both opportunities simultaneously.

### Driving Life Science Innovation

The Blue Ticket program bets on the insight of lab-based entrepreneurs. The first Blue Ticket, generously supported by Merck, will provide one early-stage life science company with:

- Free one-year membership at SpinUp;
- An unrestricted \$5,000 cash prize; and
- Mentorship opportunities with Merck scientists and business leaders.

"This support will enable start-ups to learn alongside industry experts and focus their capital where it matters most," said Raquel De Souza, founder of the Blue Ticket program at U of T Mississauga. "That means advancing innovative research that will have a meaningful impact on human health and wellbeing."

Meanwhile, Blue Ticket industry supporters gain

- Early insight into emerging innovations aligned with their vision and priority areas;
- Tailored engagement with U of T's leading science trainees and researchers; and
- Opportunities to show support for the Canadian life sciences community and to advocate for entrepreneurship and health innovation.

The result is a partnership that makes a real difference. Blue Tickets will build close, reciprocal relationships, bringing startups and industry supporters together around a belief in the power of scientific innovation. "We have an amazing opportunity to share this power at scale," explained Alexandra Gillespie, U of T Mississauga's vice-president and principal, "because we're starting from such a strong place – with Merck."



“We’re thrilled to support the launch of U of T Mississauga’s Blue Ticket program as the inaugural industry supporter,” said Marwan Akar, president and managing director, Merck Canada. “We’re eager to work with innovators who share the same commitment to cutting-edge science, regardless of therapeutic area or modality, and are looking to make a meaningful impact on people’s lives.”

## Apply for the First Blue Ticket Competition

14 September – 31 October 2023

- U of T Mississauga and Merck invite early-stage life science entrepreneurs to apply for the first Blue Ticket competition starting on 14 September. The detailed invitation will be posted on the [SpinUp website](#), along with SpinUp’s first-ever call for membership applications, on the same day.
- Entrepreneurs can apply for a SpinUp membership and for the Blue Ticket through the same [website](#), simultaneously, until 31 October 2023. The Blue Ticket winner will be announced in January 2024, shortly after SpinUp’s first cohort of entrepreneurs has been selected.
- Entrepreneurs and Eligible Industry Supporters – to learn more about how the Blue Ticket program can advance your goals, please email [spinup@utoronto.ca](mailto:spinup@utoronto.ca).

## About SpinUp and U of T Entrepreneurship

- [SpinUp](#) is the first wet lab venture incubator at the [University of Toronto](#), Canada’s leading centre for learning and discovery and one of the world’s top-two universities for [health science productivity](#).
  - [SpinUp](#) is purpose built to drive life science innovation. It offers early-stage life science start-ups access to outstanding wet lab space, equipment, and expertise in the new science building at [U of T Mississauga](#) – at a fraction of the cost of comparable facilities. The new science building will open in fall 2023 as one of the greenest and most comprehensive wet lab facilities in North America.
  - SpinUp is proudly part of [U of T entrepreneurship](#), a network of 12+ innovation accelerators across three campuses. Over the past ten years, this network has supported more than 650 capital-backed companies, which have created 9,000 jobs and raised \$2.5 billion in external investment. U of T now launches more research-based start-ups than any university in North America outside of MIT.
- Learn more about [SpinUp](#) and [U of T Entrepreneurship here](#).