

# Launch Lab

## COACH GUIDE

*What you're signing up for — and why it matters.*

Program Year [Year] | A program of the Winchester-Clark County, KY Entrepreneurial Academy |  
Winchester, Kentucky

<p><b>Every</b> Every Session</p>	<p><b>No Outside</b> No Outside Contact</p>	<p><b>2.5 hrs</b> Soft Launch Event (incl. setup)</p>	<p><b>1</b> Written Feedback</p>
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## Section 1: What You Are Signing Up For

*You are not a teacher, a boss, or a funder. You are the first business person who took these students seriously.*

Launch Lab coaches are Clark County business professionals — owners, operators, practitioners — who attend every Launch Lab session to help a small group of teens go from a business idea to their first real sale. Coaches are expected to attend every Launch Lab session including Session 9 Pitch Night. This is not optional — the Two-Adult Rule requires a second background-checked adult present at every session, and coaches fulfill that requirement. There is no contact between coaches and students outside of sessions.

The coach role in Launch Lab is deliberately lighter than the full-year mentor role in the Academy. You are not a weekly advisor. You are not responsible for their business outcomes. You are the first real business professional in their life who treated their idea seriously, showed up at their public event, and told them honestly what you saw.

Your Role	What That Means
<p><b>Soft Launch Event attendance</b></p>	<p>You attend the Session 7 Soft Launch Event. You watch your assigned students sell. You do not sell for them or stand at their table. After the market, you debrief with them — one specific observation about what you saw.</p>
<p><b>Session co-facilitation</b></p>	<p>All coach interaction with students occurs at supervised Launch Lab sessions only. There is no contact between coaches and students outside of sessions.</p>

<b>Written feedback author (and Pitch Night attendance)</b>	After the Soft Launch Event, you write one page of feedback for each of your assigned students. Specific, honest, constructive. Returned to students via the Program Director within one week of the event.
<b>Academy pathway introducer</b>	If a student shows exceptional potential and strong interest in the full Academy program, you may (with PD coordination) offer a word of encouragement or a brief conversation about what the Academy looks like. This is optional.

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**WHAT YOU ARE NOT:** *You are not responsible for your students' business results. You are not a co-founder, an investor, or an ongoing advisor. You are expected at every session. That is the commitment.*

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## Section 2: Your Assigned Students

Each coach is assigned 3–5 students. The Program Director makes the match based on business type, industry experience, and student goals. You will receive an introduction from the Program Director before Session 1 that includes:

- Each student's name and business concept
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- A brief note on what the Program Director observed about each student's strengths and challenges
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### Meeting Your Students for the First Time

The Program Director will send a warm introduction connecting you to your students. Your first interaction with students is at Session 1. 'Hi [name], I'm [your name] — I'm your Launch Lab coach. I run [brief description of your business]. All interaction is at supervised sessions. Short is fine. The point is that interaction with students is at supervised sessions only.

*Students are 13–18. Be present and engaged at every session. All interaction with students occurs at supervised sessions only.*

### Working with students at sessions

The most useful things you can do during sessions:

What to ask	Why it matters
'What are you building for the Soft Launch Event?'	Helps you understand where they are and whether they're on track. If they say 'I'm still figuring it out' in Week 6, the Program Director needs to know.

'What's the hardest part right now?'	Opens the real conversation. Most students have a specific obstacle they haven't voiced. This question surfaces it.
'What does your pricing look like?'	The most common problem is underpricing. Asking this question gives you an opening to share one concrete piece of business wisdom.
'What is one thing you learned from a customer interaction this session?'	Builds reflection on real market experience and customer insight. A short answer is fine.

## Section 3: The Soft Launch Event — Session 7

*Show up. Watch them sell. Tell them one true thing about what you saw.*

The Session 7 Soft Launch Event is the moment the whole program builds toward. Your presence there — as a real business professional who came specifically to see them — matters more than any advice you could give. Most of these students have never had a professional take their idea seriously enough to show up.

### Before the event

- **Confirm the date, time, and location with the Program Director** at least one week in advance
- Plan to arrive at the market opening — not 20 minutes late
- **Come as a customer and a coach.** Browse. Buy something if something interests you. Let students see you engaging with the market.

### During the event

DO	DON'T
Visit each of your assigned students' tables during the market	Stand at their table the whole time — it undermines their independence
Watch how they interact with customers from a respectful distance	Jump in when a customer interaction gets awkward — let them handle it
Buy something from one of your students if you're genuinely interested	Buy from every student just to make them feel better — it's not honest data
Take brief notes on specific things you observe — you'll use them in your feedback	Try to give feedback during the market — debrief is after
Stay for the full 90-minute market if you can	Leave as soon as you've seen each student for 5 minutes

In the post-event debrief circle, share one honest observation when the group is invited to speak

Dominate the debrief or redirect it toward your own business experience

### The post-event debrief (last 30 minutes)

After the market closes and students are tearing down, the group gathers for a debrief circle. The Program Director leads it. You may be invited to share a brief observation as a coach. When you speak:

- **Say one specific thing you observed.** Not 'great job everyone.' Something like: 'I watched [student] handle a customer who tried to negotiate the price down. They held their price. That was impressive.'
- Do not compare students to each other or rank them.
- **Do not give business advice in the debrief circle.** That is what your written feedback is for. The debrief is for reflection, not instruction.

## Section 4: Written Feedback — After the Event

Your written feedback is the most lasting thing you give these students. Many of them will keep it. Write it like it matters — because it does.

Complete one feedback page per assigned student. Submit to the Program Director within one week of the Soft Launch Event. The Program Director distributes it to students.

### What good feedback looks like

*'Great job' is not feedback. 'The moment you quoted your price with no hesitation and the customer bought without asking for a discount — that is the single most important skill in sales and you already have it' is feedback.*

Strong feedback is:	Weak feedback is:
Specific — names a moment, a decision, or a behavior	General — 'you did great' or 'I'm proud of you'
Honest — says what actually needs work, not just what went well	Only positive — omits the things that would genuinely help them
Grounded in what you observed at the event	Based on what you imagine or hope — not what you saw
Written to the student directly, in your voice	Corporate, formal, or generic — could apply to any student
Forward-looking — what they should do next	Only backward-looking — what they did or didn't do

### Written feedback form — one per student

Complete this for each assigned student and return to the Program Director within one week of the Soft Launch Event.

LAUNCH LAB COACH FEEDBACK — FOR STUDENT		
Student name	Business name	Coach name & date
_____	_____	_____
<b>The specific moment at the Soft Launch Event I want you to remember:</b>	_____	
<b>What you did that showed real entrepreneurial instinct:</b>	_____	
<b>The one thing I would change — about your product, your pricing, or how you sold:</b>	_____	
<b>What your customer interactions told me about your ability to sell:</b>	_____	
<b>If you continue this business — the first thing I'd recommend you do:</b>	_____	
<b>My honest assessment: is this business viable? Here's why:</b>	_____	
<b>If you apply to the full Academy program — what you'd bring that most students don't:</b>	_____	

## Section 5: Child Safety & Professional Boundaries

**REQUIRED READING:** *Every Launch Lab coach must read this section before their first contact with students. Signing the Coach Agreement confirms you have read and understood these requirements.*

Launch Lab coaches work with students ages 13–18. The following professional standards are non-negotiable. All coach-student interaction occurs at supervised Launch Lab sessions only. There is no contact outside of sessions.

Standard	What It Means
<b>Communication through Program Director</b>	All initial contact is made through the Program Director. All contact with students goes through the Program Director. Coaches do not contact students directly by phone, text, email, or any other method. Ever.
<b>No 1:1 in-person meetings</b>	There are no 1:1 meetings of any kind anywhere. All interaction with students occurs at supervised Launch Lab sessions only. No phone, no video, no exceptions.
<b>No social media connections</b>	Do not connect with students on personal social media accounts. Do not follow, friend, or DM students on any platform during the program year.
<b>No financial transactions with students</b>	Do not lend, give, or invest money directly to a student or their business outside of the Soft Launch Event (where buying their product is acceptable). This is an absolute rule under the Boundary Policy's prohibition on financial interest in student businesses — not a process to navigate. If you have genuine interest in supporting a student's business, raise it with the Program Director rather than acting on it directly.
<b>Mandatory reporting</b>	If a student discloses abuse, neglect, mental health crisis, or any safety concern to you, your obligation is to notify the Program Director immediately. Do not attempt to handle it yourself.
<b>Appropriate language</b>	All communications with students are professional. No profanity, personal disclosures, or topics unrelated to Launch Lab and entrepreneurship.

## Section 6: Launch Lab Coach Agreement

By signing below, I confirm that I have read this Coach Guide in full and agree to the following:

- I will attend every session including Session 7 Soft Launch Event and Session 9 Pitch Night. All sessions are required.
- I will interact with students only at supervised Launch Lab sessions. I will not contact students directly by phone, text, email, social media, or any other method.
- I will complete written feedback for each assigned student within one week of the Soft Launch Event.
- I have read Section 5 (Child Safety & Professional Boundaries) and will follow all requirements.
- I understand that my role is coach — not mentor, investor, co-founder, or ongoing advisor.
- I will contact the Program Director immediately if a student discloses a safety concern.

I will honor the commitment I am making — and if something changes, I will notify the Program Director immediately so a replacement can be arranged.

Coach full name (print) _____	Organization / Business _____	Industry / Role _____
Coach signature _____	Date _____	Best phone / email for PD to reach you _____

Program Director signature (confirms coach onboarding complete) _____	Date _____
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**BACKGROUND CHECK:** *Launch Lab coaches who will have any direct contact with students at sessions and the Soft Launch Event must complete a background check through Sterling Volunteers at sterlingvolunteers.com before their first student contact. The Program Director will send each coach a digital invitation to complete the process online. Coaches who have completed a background check for another organization in the past 12 months may provide documentation in lieu of a new check, at the Program Director's discretion.*

## Section 7: Quick Reference — Your 9 Sessions at a Glance

Timing	Activity	What You Do	Time
<b>Before Session 1</b>	<b>Background check &amp; Coach Agreement</b>	Complete background check (if not already on file). Read this guide. Sign Coach Agreement. Return to Program Director.	~1 hr (one-time)
<b>Before Session 1</b>	<b>Introduction and Coach Agreement</b>	Receive introduction from PD. Review student names and business concepts. Background check complete. Agreement signed.	15 min
<b>Sessions 1–9</b>	<b>All sessions</b>	Be present at every session. Co-facilitate with the Program Director. No outside contact.	~2 hrs per session
<b>Session 7 — Soft Launch Event</b>	<b>Soft Launch Event</b>	Arrive at market open. Observe your students selling. Do not sell for them. Take brief notes. Participate in post-event debrief circle.	~2.5 hrs
<b>After Session 7</b>	<b>Written feedback</b>	Complete one written feedback page per assigned student. Return to the Program Director, who distributes it to students.	Within 1 week of the event

<b>Session 9 — Pitch Night</b>	<b>Pitch Night</b>	Attend Pitch Night. Support students through their pitch preparation during Session 8. Be present for all pitches at Session 9.	~30 min per student
<b>After Session 9</b>	<b>Academy pathway conversation</b>	If a student expresses strong interest in the Academy and you are willing, a brief word of encouragement or conversation (coordinated through PD).	Optional

### 15 questions that actually help

If you're not sure what to say to a student — here are 15 questions that open real conversations:

About their business concept	About the Soft Launch Event
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who specifically is going to buy this, and where do I find them?</li> <li>• What's your price, and what does it cost you to make one?</li> <li>• What's your best competition, and why would someone choose you over them?</li> <li>• What's the one thing about your idea you're least sure about?</li> <li>• If the Soft Launch Event went perfectly — what would that look like?</li> <li>• What does one happy customer say about your product?</li> <li>• What would make you change your price before the event?</li> <li>• What's your backup plan if your main product doesn't sell?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are you most nervous about on event day?</li> <li>• What will you say when a customer first approaches your table?</li> <li>• What do you do if someone tries to talk you down on your price?</li> <li>• What's the first thing you'll do differently if you run this event again?</li> <li>• If you sell out — what's your plan?</li> <li>• If you sell nothing — what will you learn from it?</li> <li>• After the event, what's the one thing you want to walk away having done?</li> </ul>

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*Coach Guide | Program Year [Year] | Questions? Contact the Program Director.*