

University of St Andrews

Enterprise & Creativity - Learning by Doing

Stage in the typical student journey

The module gives students an opportunity to develop their enterprise awareness as they consider the subject from a number of different perspectives, including experiences of entrepreneurs, enterprising academics and academic texts. During the enterprising group project, students develop their entrepreneurial mindset and entrepreneurial capability as they come up with an idea and see it through to implementation during the semester.

Context

The University of St Andrews (the University) is a small, research-intensive institution of approximately 7,500 undergraduate students. Enterprise & Creativity runs within the School of Management, but is open to all students, attracting 60-70 students each year. In 2012-13, 62 per cent of students taking the module came from outside management and were a mix of those studying arts and science subjects. The cohort of students is representative of the nationalities of students studying at the University and includes several year or semester-aboard students.

Description

Enterprise and Creativity is a 20 credit, interdisciplinary module run within the School of Management. The module was developed in partnership between the School of Management and the Careers Centre, in response to an identified need for students to develop their enterprise skills, as part of their wider employability. The module is organised and run by the Enterprise Adviser from the Careers Centre.

Enterprise & Creativity aims to give second-year, undergraduate students from across the University the opportunity to learn how to develop an enterprising project by doing it. Enhancing their own creativity and enterprise skills, students work in a team to design and deliver an enterprising project, demonstrating their success in an exhibition (project fair). The success of the module relies on the students taking a proactive role in managing their learning. The delivery of the module incorporates lectures by entrepreneurs and academic staff from different schools who are involved in enterprising ventures. The group project is worked on during tutorials, which are facilitated by student coaches from honours years. In tutorial groups students are expected to generate their own results using the materials provided. The module is demanding but gives students a life changing experience.

At the end of the module, students should be able to:

- critically assess the context of developing a business venture or any entrepreneurial venture in general
- review and evaluate the effectiveness of project implementation and take corrective action
- demonstrate the ability to draw in the resources required to deliver a successful project
- develop skills in assessing and designing ideas that can become a venture.

Student coaches for the tutorial groups are paid and receive training and support, including a Guide for Coaches, giving them a number of activities and resources to draw on.

Summary of impact

Student feedback on the module shows they learn a great deal from the differing perspectives presented. The group project, in particular, clearly enables students to develop their entrepreneurial capability. At least one of the project ideas each year continues past the module and into the following academic year, usually with only one or two of the original project team members running it. Over the time the module has been running, a number of students who took the module have gone on to run their own business. Many use their experience with the group project as part of their skills and experience for employment, which has been remarked on positively by employers.

For student coaches, this work experience forms an important part of their CV and the module coordinator is asked to provide references for employers.

The module was evaluated in 2008 as part of the SFC funded Aiming University Learning @ Work project. A case study of the findings is available from the project website www.gla.ac.uk/services/aulw/research/projectpublications.

Strengths

The overall structure of the module, incorporating guest entrepreneurs and academics, works well. Implementing an enterprising project during the semester, which is assessed, is an effective method for teaching students what getting a venture going requires. The project is the element of the course most valued by students.

Using student coaches to facilitate groups working on the project adds to the developmental aspects of the module.

The collaborative development of the module was important in the early stages, ensuring the module incorporates elements from the knowledge and experience of the School of Management and Careers Centre.

Improvements

Historically, assessment comprised of:

- a summative examination (40%)
- formative assessments of the enterprising group project (30%: 15% for presentation at the fair plus 15% for a group project report)
- weekly critical summaries of applied enterprise theory (30%).

For academic session 2013-14, the assessment regime is moving to 100% coursework to more effectively assess the breadth, depth and synthesis characteristics of the learning content.

The new regime will:

- replace the examination with a case study analysis of a local entrepreneurial organisation (30%)
- the one page weekly critical summaries will become four reflective summary reports (30%)
- increase the weighting of the existing group project to 40% (consisting of two elements a project fair and individual report).

Due to the number of assessed pieces of work, careful consideration needs to be given to the workload for staff in marking assignments and providing robust feedback.

The reflective reports will enable students to recognise and articulate the enterprising behaviours, attributes and skills they are developing through the process of developing the group project.

Organising guest speakers is time consuming and requires more administrative support than other modules. It is also important to have a back-up plan if one of them is ill or unable to attend at short notice.

Partners

A number of the lectures are given by entrepreneurs, ideally students or recent graduates and academics from other departments who are involved in an enterprising venture within their discipline.

The tutorial groups are facilitated by honours-year students, who have taken the module previously.

Funding

The staff time, payment for student coaches, travel expenses for guest speakers and any resources used are part of the normal running of the Careers Centre and School of Management. No external funding has been needed.

Website link

N/A

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