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Case Study

Enterprise Academy

University of Strathclyde

Background

The University of Strathclyde is striving to become an embedded 'Enterprising University' and offers a selection of enterprise programmes at various levels. These include undergraduate, postgraduate taught, postgraduate researchers and research staff. The Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, located in the award winning business school, delivers many of these programmes, several of which are produced in collaboration with the Researcher Development Programme (RDP).

The provision includes a series of programmes in social entrepreneurship, technology road mapping, special events, internship programmes, enterprise workshops and seminars.

The Researcher Development Programme (RDP) focusses on transferable skills training and offers approximately 50 programmes throughout the year in different modes and formats, which include half day sessions, one day events, three day events, online courses, workshops, face to face learning and Epigeum online modules in Enterprise, Creativity and Entrepreneurship. Strathclyde has over 900 Postgraduate Researchers with many being active users of online as well as face-to-face provision.

In partnership with a number of leading academics, the RDP team created the 'Pathways to Research Enterprise' series which has four main areas of delivery: a residential training academy, an internship programme, coaching and mentoring initiatives. In October 2011, the first element of the series titled 'Enterprise Academy' was delivered as a pilot programme and has become the flagship Enterprise programme for the researcher base.

Ms Claire Jackson (Researcher Development Officer) and Mr James Gilliland (Enterprise Project Co-ordinator) were responsible for the Enterprise Academy programme which has been developed using dedicated EPSRC funding for the development of transferable enterprise training skills.

"Enterprise Academy started as a pilot in October 2011 and consisted of thirty-eight researchers who joined a team of leading academics and entrepreneurs to work in an interdisciplinary group to develop a business idea, business plan and business pitch. Alongside with mastering the theory behind business planning, participants had the opportunity to explore, develop and practice career enhancing skills in entrepreneurship."

As part of the training programme the groups had the opportunity to enter the InterPrize challenge, which formed part of Strathclyde's 2011 Enterprise Challenge, where groups pitched their ideas to Strathclyde's Entrepreneurial Alumni."

The training programme entails both theoretical and practitioner led aspects ranging from entrepreneurial marketing, finance, business planning and business models to highlight just a few key elements. The University has also hosted a networking dinner during the programme with key internal contacts and guests from business/industry.

During the programme and the subsequent competition, participants were divided into groups of four/five members and each group was required to create an interdisciplinary business idea. The participants were supported by an MBA Advisory Panel who critiqued all of the group pitches and shortlisted the best teams to progress to the final pitch to the Strathclyde's Entrepreneurial Alumni. Each of the groups received coaching from the MBA Panel prior to the final pitch. In partnership with the Strathclyde Entrepreneurial Network (SEN) the project team hosted a

Strathclyde 100 event with Entrepreneurial Alumni where approximately 60 guests attended to decide the winning team of the InterPrize challenge.

The winning and runner up teams were invited to the highly prestigious bi-annual 'Strathclyde Enterprise Awards Dinner' hosted by Sally Magnusson; highlights of the programme were broadcast to a range of key guests including high profile entrepreneurs.

Additionally, Enterprise Academy is accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) at a Level 2 Award in Preparing for Business Enterprise and participants had the opportunity to complete accreditation post training which entailed the submission of their business plan and a short reflective log detailing their suitability for enterprise. Over 80% of participants from the 2011 programme have progressed to complete the accreditation further adding to their professional development.

Organisational Demands

"*Strathclyde is entrepreneurial in spirit and ethos. Enterprise and entrepreneurship is at the heart of our University; within our strategies and at the forefront of strategic planning. It is our aim to instil entrepreneurial confidence and behaviours within our research community and beyond.*" Ms Claire Jackson (Researcher Development Officer, University of Strathclyde).

The University of Strathclyde is promoting entrepreneurship as part of its Strategic Plan (2011-15) to further enterprise and entrepreneurial behaviour to drive innovative, creative research and to stimulate enterprising projects. Strathclyde's aim is to 'realising the commercial value of our research' and 'creating networks to bring researchers together with contacts in industry, business and the public sector.' (University of Strathclyde Strategic Plan 2011-15).

The Researcher Development Programme in its entirety is mapped to the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) and to the specific attributes in the multiple domains concerning enterprise and entrepreneurship. The defined attributes of the RDF are also considered and mapped alongside the vision and values of

University of Strathclyde which has influenced the design, features and development of the Enterprise Academy.

Ms Jackson stated;

"*The University of Strathclyde is one of the most enterprising Universities in Scotland, with a strong reputation of exploring the commercial potential of its research activities. In terms of our enterprise education programmes, Enterprise Academy provides a valuable opportunity to introduce enterprise and entrepreneurship in a broader context, and an additional way to support business development from the research base. The programme reflects the outcomes of the learning content within the Researcher Development Framework under the enterprise header as well as all the other relevant sections such as creativity and innovation*".

Terminology

The appropriate use of the terminology 'enterprise' and 'entrepreneurship' has been critical, especially at the design stage, because misunderstandings could potentially "put the community off" and therefore, the RDP team did not want students to have any preconceptions of the term 'enterprise'.

However, the team decided to use the term 'Enterprise' providing the inclusion of explicitly defined aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the project. The team also demonstrated creativity and innovation within its processes by creating a series of a promotional 'Roadshow' for Enterprise Academy which was attended by approximately twenty-five postgraduate researchers from all faculties to discuss the importance of terminology and other key issues concerning the inclusion of this activity.

Ms Jackson stated *"We visited each faculty to articulate what the programme would aim to do - which was to instil entrepreneurial behaviour. We expressed important skills such as team working, leadership, and having an opportunity to learn about everything from financial planning to marketing techniques. It was not just a narrow focus on research aspects but rather the transferable skills to be gained. We also discussed behaviour and career prospects rather than just the business side of things. We were conscious of the terminology throughout the development and*

delivery of the programme but we didn't need to call it something abstract because that can also turn our research community off from the programme."

Programme Design

The team conducted a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) prior to developing the content. The team found a potential gap and a need to include the Enterprise Academy as this would increasingly stimulate a more entrepreneurial embedded community among its cohorts. From an administration and leadership perspective, that team recognised a need to innovate by developing a model which would not only be cost effective, but also create discussion within the research community whilst also fulfilling the researchers needs through an appealing programme content. The programme was also mapped accordingly to the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) to equip researchers with the relevant entrepreneurial attributes. The project leaders benchmarked the programme with leading institutions with similar provisions such as University of Cambridge, University of Manchester, University of Durham, University of York, and the University of Edinburgh.

Ms Jackson appreciated the need to make a clear distinction at various platforms and levels of delivery. *"There are different strands. The programme was created to be generic in nature, for it to be accessible by all postgraduate researchers and research staff. At Strathclyde we tend to separate the delivery of provision for postgraduate researchers, postgraduate taught students and undergraduates accordingly, primarily due to the academic level and suitability of content. With our postgraduate researchers and research staff we wanted to take it to the next level, but also ensure applicability to those with limited knowledge of enterprise and entrepreneurship as well as those nearer to commercialising their research."*

The results from the Training Needs Analysis included the target market (i.e. postgraduate researchers/research active staff) but also academics. Ms Claire Jackson stated "*We wanted an overview of what provision we have in this area holistically. So we took into account what we already do, existing formats, and we proposed a new suite of activities, one of which led to the design and development of the Enterprise Academy."*

Creating Awareness and the 'Road Show'

The RDP team promoted the programme through a variety of internal resources including newsletters, websites, internal publications, posters, engagement with the Students' Union and the Careers Service. The promotional activities have been vital in *"selling the programme to our researcher base"* as well as engagement from key internal contacts to promote attending the programme.

The profile was also raised through 'Entrepreneurial Graduates' which primarily comprises of Scottish alumni's and SMEs.

The promotional 'roadshows' have also been effective and useful in the promotion and marketing of the programme, as this enabled potential members of the research community to communicate their concerns in relation to the programme with the project team. The team also considered the challenges of requesting researchers commitment towards a three day programme and therefore, the Road Show was useful in laying out the foundations which not only assisted in understanding the researcher attitudes but also alternative methods for the provision of this new programme.

Ms Jackson stated "*It was a case of explaining the benefits of entrepreneurship skills and how important this can be for their research and future career both within and outside of academia. Even if you are an academic, you should still be able to creative and innovative in the way you manage your career. The roadshow was so far reaching that once the programme had been explained in detail many signed up to the programme.*"

Mr Gilliland stated *"In the Road Show, we discussed entrepreneurship as a behaviour and how this may be relevant to them. Some of our researchers are unsure of the commercial environment so it was important to convey the benefits of being enterprising throughout their career."*

Staff Resources

Enterprise Academy is intensive and draws on a wide range of internal and external resources to the training and competitive elements. This includes colleagues from

Research and Knowledge Exchange Services (RKES), the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship, colleagues from the Business and Science Faculties as well as MBA coaches and external facilitators.

According to University policy, all lecturers are required to undertake a Postgraduate Certification in Advanced Academic Studies (Academic Practice) and therefore, the programme did not require any specific training provisions. The Project team consists of specialists in various fields, but there was also a need to gain an academic insight.

As a consequence, the team hired a recent graduate in the field of entrepreneurship, Mr James Gilliland, who has been an asset in providing insights to the development, co-ordination, and management of the programme.

Ms Jackson stated *"Although this can be quite heavy on resources, it is certainly worth the investment of time, effort and funding as the output is so much greater which is beyond the commercial potential. The development of individuals and their insights and feedback is very important at all stages of the process, as it is measuring future impact."*

Ms Jackson believes that it is important to possess generic skills in management, leadership and project management for managing and coordinating the programme, and to also liaise with academics is imperative as their input towards the content and the delivery can increase the effectiveness in the design and delivery of the programme.

Students

The University provides a number of courses for postgraduate research students, which include Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Engineering, Doctoral of Educational Psychology, Doctor of Education, and Doctor of Business Administration. At the University of Strathclyde the division of students is 71% Home students and 29% Overseas.

According to the participant's experience, Ms Jackson stated "*The feedback was positive from both supervisors and postgraduate researchers. Initially, supervisors*

seemed to be somewhat hesitant about the programme because researchers would be taking out 3 days but following the programme, they have seemed to reap the benefits from their students and staff by participating".

The project team have received positive feedback comments by participants such as *"...this was life changing"* and *"You have planted a seed for me to consider the valuable connections that have been made."* Ms Jackson stated, *"Participants have taken different things from it depending on their stage in their career and research but from our perspective all participants have gained additional skills or changes in perspective by attending the training."*

The programme has incorporated ideas from its participants in distinctive ways as Ms Jackson described *"Although students were asked to leave their research at the door, the inspiration of creating an interdisciplinary idea was in essence some form a variation of their research. It was more about the development of entrepreneurial behaviour, with a bi-product being the potential for developing or commercialising their own research."*

Mr Gilliland highlighted the inclusion of external speakers such as PhD alumni to be important as they tend to inspire and appeal to the research community. By providing an opportunities for researchers to attend a dinner with high profile entrepreneurs added status, value and recognition to the programme whilst also motivating the research community. By allowing the winning team to attend an event with high profile speakers has enabled them to access a wealth of practical knowledge and experiences.

Outcomes

The Rugby Team Impact Framework has been applied throughout various stages of the design, development and implementation, and post activity analysis of the programme. The team has recently completed a level 2 evaluation to identify differences in participant behaviour following the activity. However, Ms Jackson stated *"Although it's still a bit early, responses have indicated a 90% satisfaction rating of meeting expectations. Participants were initially sceptical about taking time away from the lab or desk – but they now agree it was more than worth it."*

As a result of the Enterprise Academy, participants are in the process of gaining advice and support from the Strathclyde Entrepreneurial Network (SEN) in relation to their ideas.

It is imperative to support the students through the staff and entrepreneurial networks following the completion of this programme as it bridges internal sources of support and advice. Some of the ideas for the 2011 cohort included software to support dyslexia through the reformatting of websites and another idea focused on turning food waste into useful energy.

Raising awareness of various channels and opportunities that the University provides could essentially assist researchers to commercialise their research and to raise greater awareness of the potential external opportunities available in the region. Opportunities are available to network with internal and external members at different points of the programme. The University has strong entrepreneurial foundations set by the Hunter Centre for Entrepreneurship and the Strathclyde Entrepreneurial Network (SEN) and support services include mentoring from enterprise partners and presenting to a wide range of entrepreneurial alumni. *"A couple of projects have raised the interest of alumni's to invest and to help take ideas forward which is a fantastic end result."*

Learning Points

- The Project Team must allow a greater lead-in time.
- Budgets must not be underestimated.
- Consider different models to residential and non residential settings.
- Consider flexible knowledge exchange (i.e. splitting the programme over a period of time).
- Trial and error.
- Hire specialist academics in the teaching and administrative aspects of Entrepreneurship
- Undertake regular assessments (Level 2 and Level 3 evaluation) post training as this demonstrates results.

Further Comments

"The impact is already evident! Not just for our participants but with colleagues across the University. The Enterprise Academy programme will be our flagship Enterprise Programme for the future and we hope to get all of our programmes up to such excellent standards. We understand the tough financial climate ahead but will continue this programme next year in a format which meets the needs of our researchers."