



Student Enterprise Annual Report

October 2023 - August 2024

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The team

Our team, comprised of five dedicated members working at a collective capacity of 3.5 full-time equivalents (FTE), is committed to fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem for students. Our mission is to create a supportive environment where students can confidently pursue their business or freelancing aspirations.

We aim to provide a welcoming and inclusive space for all students to explore the fundamentals of entrepreneurship. Our focus is on helping students develop essential skills that are invaluable whether they are starting their own business or enhancing their employability. Through our efforts, we strive to empower students with the knowledge and confidence to succeed in their entrepreneurial endeavours.

The Enterprise team operates within the larger team of Student Futures, and as part of the broader initiative we have 6 Graduate Attributes which were designed in partnership with employers. The importance of entrepreneurial skills is recognised within these attributes, with the following attribute:

<p>Innovative, enterprising and commercially aware</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate original ideas and apply creative, imaginative and innovative thinking in response to identified needs and problems • Take the initiative to act on own ideas and the ideas of others, balancing risk and returns and making things happen • Be confident in pursuing entrepreneurship as a viable and rewarding career path • Understand organisations, their stakeholders and their impact on the economy
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We support all Cardiff University students as well as graduates of up to 3 years.

Our work includes:

- Online Pathways
- Networking Events
- 1-1 Mentoring
- Provision of free hot-desking space in spark|sbarc
- Start-Up Awards
- Workshops
- Events
- Bootcamps
- 100 Big Ideas
- Accelerator programme
- The Inspire Programme

Our impact

We're responsible for delivering the Welsh Government's Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy within Cardiff University. It is our duty to raise awareness and aspirations around entrepreneurship, provide opportunities for skills development, and support students and graduates with business start-up.

“ The real stories from successful entrepreneurs really inspired me to go forward with my studies and career with confidence. ”

Engage

Engaging young people in awareness of entrepreneurship in awareness raising activity through lecture shout-outs, careers fairs and drop-ins

➔ **9,384**

Empower

Empowering young people to explore entrepreneurial skills, knowledge and aspirations through workshops and skill sessions both curricular and extra-curricular activities

➔ **1,355**

Equip

Equipping students to take clear action to working towards their business idea through online pathways and 121 guidance and support

➔ **Nurture 104**

➔ **Start-up 51**

Enable

Enabling others in the university and in the private sector to support and deliver entrepreneurial activity

➔ **100**

We have been achieving and exceeding the targets for all our reporting period and finding that students are engaging well in activities that they are attending and providing positive feedback.



Start-Up, Incubation and Networking

Stream 1 of our 3 streams of activity as part of Student Futures Enterprise Approach is Start-Up, Incubation and Networking. This makes up the core business, supporting students who want to develop a business idea.

Our support is centred around online pathways that provide resources for students to work through in their own time. Through these online pathways, students can also unlock the opportunity to access 1-1 advice from one of our 2 part-time business mentors.

We have provided 3 pathways for students. The first pathway is the Start-Up and Freelance Pathway which takes students from idea to

concept, introducing them to the initial areas they would need to consider when starting their own business. In this pathway they follow the journeys of 4 Cardiff alumni who have already started their own businesses. On completion of this pathway, students can choose which additional pathway they want to unlock, either the “Building Your Start-Up Business” pathway or the “Becoming a Freelancer” pathway. Each of these are tailored to start-ups or freelancers to help them move from concept to launch.

“ I started out with an idea, but the pathway helped me to develop an actual plan, address problems with my business plan, and understand my clients to get my business up and running! ”

Pathway instances

➔ **297**

The 1-1 support we offer has always proved to be one of the most popular things we offer students, who find these extremely useful in developing their business ideas.

“Being put in contact with a business mentor - our meeting was fruitful, and I feel this relationship will be really valuable going forwards.”

1-1 meetings

➔ **53**

We also run various bootcamps and networking sessions to help students grow their ideas and meet like-minded individuals. This year we also piloted a funded summer accelerator programme in partnership with Welsh ICE. This was a success with 23 students and graduates taking part, and 9 of these pitching their ideas at the end of the programme.

“I have found that the accelerator programme has massively improved my confidence around my business idea and what the next steps I need to take are, I would definitely recommend!”

On top of this. Students have the opportunity to access hot-desking space in the fantastic facility of sbarc|spark where they can work alongside a range of successful start-ups for up to 12 months for free.

100 Big Ideas

In Autumn 2023 we launched the “100 Big Ideas” competition which was inspired by a similar initiative which was successfully run by Southampton University for the past 5 years. This comes under stream 1 of our activity and it aligns with the themes of Engage and Empower with the aim of encouraging more students to progress with their ideas which has an impact on the Equip target as well.

100 Big Ideas is an initiative designed to encourage students to think big and act on their ideas, whether these ideas are casually discussed with friends or more seriously considered. It encourages students to take that first step in validating a business idea and giving them the confidence to pursue it further.

Here are some key outcomes to highlight from our pilot:

- **Applications: 110**
- **Individuals: 88**
- **Grants awarded: 94**
- **Went on to compete in the start-up awards: 19**
- **Attended events run by the enterprise team: 44**





The grand prize winner, Hannah Cox, with her Digital Health card idea has since had multiple 1-1 meetings, conducted market research with over 50 survey responses, and entered her idea into the Spring Start-Up Awards.

“ I am absolutely elated to say that I was one of the 100 Big Ideas competition winners! And not only that, I was also one of the Top10 ideas too! And to think maybe I wouldn't have submitted my idea as I thought it was 'too silly' or 'not good enough' and yet the judging panel deemed it as a fantastic idea. It was lovely to meet new people and hear what ideas they had put forward in this competition. I noticed that many of the winning ideas had an element of sustainability within them which was very inspiring. ”

Overall, the first year of 100 Big Ideas has been a success, fostering entrepreneurial spirit and providing substantial support to budding student entrepreneurs and we look forward to growing the competition and its reputation in the coming years.



Start-up awards

Every year we run start-up and freelance awards to give students a chance to pitch for funding to help them grow their business idea. This competition is open to all Cardiff University students and graduates of up to 3 years, they must first join our Start-Up and Freelance pathway to be able to enter. These awards fall under stream 1 of our activity as well as aligning with all 4 of the themes we report to the Welsh Government, with the focus being on Equip.

These awards are sponsored by Santander Universities (£15,000) and Engineers in Business Fellowship (£3,000).

The application process for the 3 awards sponsored by Santander Universities consisted of a first stage written application, followed by a second stage video application and then thirdly, the shortlisted finalists pitched to a panel of external judges.

The awards were celebrated at our biggest event of the year, The Start-Up and Freelance Gala where we celebrated not just the winners of the pitching, but activities from students throughout the academic year.

Outstanding Founder

Winner: Elliot Allen with MoveMe

Runner-Up: Yaqoob Ahmad and Josh Gill with Templog Ltd

Audience Winner: Faheem Islam with Guli Shots Ltd



Innovative Development

Winner: Calvin Band with Taff Cola Limited

Runner-Up: Jenn Goodge with Paw Dogs

Audience Winner: Jenn Goodge with Paw Dogs

Inspiring Idea

Winner: AbdulAlim U-K with Horizon

Runner-Up: Mengxing Zhou with Global Mindset Training

Audience Winner: AdbsulAlim U-K with Horizon

Inspired Engineer (EIBC)

1st place: Hajira Irfan and Harry Parkinson with
The Algae Photobioreactor

2nd place: Matas Jarutis with KansoSense

3rd place: Jack Willepote with Homeowners
Construction Help

“The Cardiff University Start-up awards program was an invaluable experience, helping everyone involved gain real world experience, whilst making useful contacts, and the funding I received from the award was transformational for my business.”

Quote from £5,000 Outstanding Founder winner Elliot Allen





Entrepreneurial Skills and Mindset

Stream 2 of our Student Futures Enterprise Approach is Entrepreneurial Skills and Mindset. This involves developing activities and content that can be used by schools on a curricular or extra-curricular basis, or centrally in the Centre for Student Life to provide an entrepreneurship offering to students.

We have developed a selection of workshops that we can deliver in schools as 1-hour workshops to help the students grow their entrepreneurial skills and mindset. The four workshops we offered were:

- Freelancing and Digital Profiles
- Entrepreneurial Skills, Mindset and Creative Thinking
- How to start a Business – Business Model Canvas
- Pitch Me

We delivered 13 workshops and did 7 introductions to enterprise, across 11 schools.

We also delivered extra-curricular workshops as part of the central programme in the Centre for Student Life. We delivered a total of 15 workshops across the two terms which received positive feedback, with an average satisfaction score of 8 or above out of 10.

“It was very inspirational and I now have a strong grasp about entrepreneurship. Meeting other students who already have side hustles, small businesses, or are thinking about it made me feel seen as before I thought that I wouldn't be able to achieve such things while being a student.”

Inspire Programme

We successfully launched the pilot of the Inspire Programme in February and March 2024 in collaboration with Welsh ICE. The Inspire Programme is the third stream of our Student Futures Enterprise Approach. It is an introduction to entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship which consists of students coming up with solutions to ‘wicked problems’ by working together in groups to come up with business ideas. For the pilot, Student Future’s Assistant voted on the topic of “homelessness” which we posed as the challenge for the pilot.

The programme consisted of a 1-day hackathon, followed by 6 workshops that formed a bootcamp that guided students through coming up with an idea in teams to pitching a viable business concept at the end.

The programme successfully guided students to achieve each of the desired outcomes:

- **Business Creation:** One team, Huddle, has continued to develop their idea, reached the final of the Inspiring Idea category in the annual Start-Up Awards and are now participating in the summer accelerator.
- **Entrepreneurial Confidence:** Two students are working on their own business ideas and are both participating in the summer accelerator. One of these students also won the Inspiring Idea category of the annual Start-Up Awards.
- **Enhanced Employability:** After completing the programme, one participant said they discovered a passion for marketing and is now pursuing work experience in that field.

We will continue to run the Inspire Programme twice a year, having students vote on a new topic each time.

“ Overall, it has been...like a transformational learning experience for me because I was always interested in getting started as an entrepreneur and now I’ve gained those skills. So I’m looking forward to putting in many other ideas and attending more boot camps and learning ahead. ”
