



Supporting the entrepreneurial potential of higher education

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Case Brief: University of Hertfordshire



The University of Hertfordshire (UH) is one of UK's leading *business-facing* universities. It is the largest employer in the region, with more than 25,000 students in ten different faculties. UH aims to shift the traditional university and student focus of employability toward a more entrepreneurial outlook by integrating entrepreneurial education (EE) at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels through various curricular and extra-curricular initiatives.

EE is not simply aimed at creating student entrepreneurs but also "*entrepreneurial students*" – students who develop entrepreneurial mindsets, which significantly and positively affect their attitude, behaviour and skill-set regardless of their work environment. UH has successfully introduced compulsory enterprise and entrepreneurship modules in 36 disciplines. The goal of these courses is to familiarise students with the nature and importance of enterprise, to learn to identify business opportunities and to experience the process of planning a business.

Compulsory curricular EE is complemented by a range of extra-curricular activities, such as the "Business Start-up Programme", an initiative that provides students and recent graduates with practical support to develop, market and launch their business ideas within one year. Participants benefit from three intensive weeks of workshops, are assigned a business mentor and given support throughout the year. Another such initiative is the "Flare Business Ideas Challenge", which is a business plan competition that supports and gives cash prizes to students with innovative start-up ideas. A revolutionary achievement for UH has been the design and creation of a profiling and matchmaking software, "Team-Match", which allows inputted student data to form teams and analyse them across different behavioural classes, easing the process of creating teams from a large body of students and ultimately formulating advice for teams on how to work better together. Team-Match is also available to other universities who intend to simulate and learn from valuable team experiences.

As a result of these efforts, UH was awarded the Times Higher Education Entrepreneurial University of the Year Award 2010, as well as the National Enterprise Educator Award 2012 for Team-Match. At the institutional level, UH has incorporated the "Careers and Enterprise Service", which has created "School Engagement Teams" for each department that provide discipline-specific support for both graduate and self-employment. UH's efforts have increased the level of Student Engagement in Enterprise (SER) to 70%, against the UK engagement level of 16% and 24% across Europe.

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