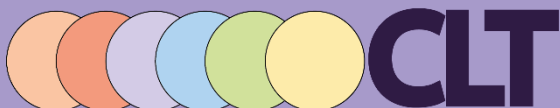LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

EMBEDDING ENTERPRISE AS A GRADUATE ATTRIBUTE AT LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY

Our University takes a broad definition of enterprise. It is not solely about developing entrepreneurial skills for business, but about developing 'enterprising' skills which will enhance students' learning experience.

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Embedding enterprise as a graduate attribute at Leeds Beckett University

Key points:

- Our University takes a broad definition of enterprise. It is not solely about developing entrepreneurial skills for business, but about developing 'enterprising' skills which will enhance students' learning experience and support them in whatever career and life path they may choose (HEA, 2015).

- All our graduate attributes should be embedded into every course by including them in course, level and module learning outcomes. Not *all* modules need to include *all* the graduate attributes as learning outcomes. They should be mapped holistically across the whole refocused course.

- This guidance contains ideas for embedding enterprise in curricular design and content. The use of "live" projects, activities that enhance creative, discursive and innovative thinking, links with external organisations, team working activities and approaches to enhance problem solving and investigatory skills will and facilitate optimise this.

Introduction

This document sets out to provide guidance to course teams on the integration of enterprise within the curriculum.

The presence of enterprise as a graduate attribute means that far from sidelining good work across the University it underpins a continued strengthening of the subject across all levels in all Faculties and allows further embedding of existing excellent work.

This document includes specific guidance on the framing of module learning outcomes which synthesise and embed an enterprising perspective *within* a discipline and the specific course.

1 Enterprise as a graduate attribute

A graduate attribute is an amalgamation of skills, knowledge and attitudes, built up through a student's time at university, which they are capable of articulating and demonstrating to the wider world, for example when seeking employment and when working.

All our undergraduate students will develop distinctive attributes. Students will be:

- enterprising,
- digitally literate and
- have a global outlook.

These attributes have been chosen in order to enhance students' employability prospects and provide skills for graduates to cope in the wider world in the future, as well as to enhance each student's learning experience.

These attributes must be embedded across the course, level and module learning outcomes of all courses and students will be able to demonstrate their achievement through module assessments at all levels. They replace the more familiar 'key skills' that were previously used during the course design and approval process.

You will be able to map the inclusion and achievement of the graduate attributes to your courses.

1.1 Linking our University's graduate attributes

Our University's graduate attributes can all be linked specifically in terms of enhancing the employability of our students.
For example, to be effective in looking for a new outlook on the world and its emergent issues requires skills that are inherently enterprising: for example, curiosity and networking

skills. In reality, encouraging the development of more digitally literate students requires the development of effective analytical and investigatory skills which can also be regarded as enterprising skills.

To be enterprising in a rapidly globalising world requires a truly global outlook on the plans and ideas one is developing, on intended 'products', on dealing with one's customers, audience, competitors, or partners – wherever they are from, however they live, whatever they hold true or valuable. Effective digital literacy in a globalising world also requires, for example, a global outlook on the availability, application, and global attitudes towards information technologies and their applications. In addition, being enterprising in the wider world involves the consideration of education for sustainability and the consideration of how enterprising ideas must be underpinned by ethical and future facing solutions which minimize the impact on the environment (QAA, 2018).

An influential) report from Advance HE (2019) made a strong case for training in entrepreneurship as a key means of increasing employability in graduates of any subject. BIS (2014) and the CBI (2017) have also advocated this approach.

*Approaches to teaching and learning, by their very nature, often encompass entrepreneurial learning. Regardless of whether these are labelled as enterprise and entrepreneurship education, the enhancement of appropriate skills, knowledge, attributes and behaviours necessary for transforming creative ideas into actions are of ever-increasing importance (*Advance HE, 2019, p.2).

Studying and experiencing an entrepreneurial/enterprising curriculum was seen to be beneficial for the individual student, whether students were contemplating starting their own business or entering paid employment. The crux of the reasoning, however, focused on the view that even students who did not intend to start their own business or become self-employed could benefit from improving their employability through enhancing their range of enterprise skills in the broadest sense.

Curricular 'enterprise' can catalyse a relationship between research and practice, leading to intelligent, challenging projects and development opportunities for our community of students, academic staff and external partners.

Recently from employers' perspectives, the findings of the CBI/NUS survey (CBI/NUS, 2011) follow the publication of the 2011 CBI/EDI Education & Skills Survey which shows that employability skills are the single most important consideration for 82% of businesses when recruiting graduates.
70% of employers said that university students need to do more to prepare themselves to be effective in the workplace.

A range of research (Wilson, 2012,Moncada-Paternò-Castello et al (2017)) illustrates the value to graduates' employability skills of good quality learning from work placements, embedding quality skills teaching in courses, and a whole host of other methods, such as participating in societies, organising projects, working with local community projects, working with employers linked to the university and volunteering. These can be regarded as enterprising activities.

1.2   Defining enterprise at Leeds Beckett

Enterprising individuals tend to exhibit particular sets of behaviours, attributes and skills that have value beyond the traditional narrow view of business entrepreneurship (Gibb, 2005).

At our University, 'enterprise' encompasses a broad range of skills and is holistically defined as a behaviour expressed by starting your own business, operating as an intrapreneur within an organisation setting up or working on projects and community ventures, seizing an opportunity and developing it and creative problem solving.

Even if students don't become entrepreneurs or start their own business, they will be equipped with creative and problem-solving skills which will mean they can take an enterprising and resourceful approach to their future careers and learning.

As part of a survey undertaken by the Institute for Enterprise Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning at our University, students have defined enterprise as:

"Enterprise is being willing to take a risk"

"Allowing your imagination to flow and not being afraid of making a mistake"

"Enterprise is not about right or wrong answers, but being willing to work hard to find a solution to a problem"

"Enterprise is about seizing opportunities and grabbing and using chances and experiences when they come your way. It is about seeking those opportunities too"

At our University, enterprise education is recognised as:

"an inclusive concept which provides both the context in which subject disciplines can be explored as well as an approach to learning which can be taken to the exploration and discovery of a discipline. In this respect, it can provide a challenging environment within which to explore a variety of teaching areas (such as a small business context) as well as providing a new and stimulating dimension to learning – that of 'being enterprising'."

It is clearly a much broader and more applied definition than that of an *entrepreneur,* defined as:

> *"the owner or manager of a business enterprise who, by risk and initiative, attempts to make profits."*

Our students, in a recent survey, identified the top skills they believed they needed to be enterprising. They listed:

- motivation
- creativity
- networking skills
- leadership
- strategic thinking
- team working.

These skills can be learnt, and consequently by improving students' enterprise skills, increase their potential for creating and identifying opportunities in their future lives. Very often these skills are learnt implicitly, i.e. students learn them without being aware of consciously doing so or regarding them as explicit skills that contribute to their becoming more enterprising (Sarmiento et al, 2007).

If staff can evidence that these skills are being fostered in courses and modules then you will as a course team be encouraging your students to be enterprising.

It is also important to note that these skills cannot be fostered by a didactic teaching approach which fails to maximise student interaction and participation, but rather by using methods and pedagogies that encourage problem-solving and creative thinking (Kill & O'Rourke, 2011; Sarmiento et al, 2007)

Problem- or enquiry-based learning approaches and experiential approaches have been widely used at our University to encourage the development of enterprise skills. Learning this way helps to foster a more discursive, considered deep approach to issues which is particularly useful when discussing the wider ethical and environmental issues which underpin enterprising work.

1.3   Embedding enterprise across the curriculum

To *embed* enterprise across the refocused undergraduate curriculum means not viewing it as an 'add-on'. It is not peripheral to a student's experience but integral to it and should be embedded at the earliest potential opportunity. Our University has recognised this by making it one of its graduate attributes.

At our University, we have a broader defining approach to enterprise education which is not solely focused on business start-ups but more on the development of a range of enterprising skills which help all students cope in the wider world.

These skills are not just entrepreneurial in focus but should reflect the demonstration of creative and innovative thinking, investigatory skills, confidence building and resourcefulness and initiative.

Developing a more enterprising approach to life in students is not necessarily about adding and introducing extra content into your courses; it is about how you locate, view, present, teach and assess the skills that may already be in existence in the content of your courses. Course development teams need to look at your learning activities and delivery and see if they are generating this kind of thinking and action.

For example, teaching enterprise skills does not just imply teaching third-year students how to write the components of a business plan but might also involve them in critically evaluating a local business project, social enterprise or charity via contacts in the community.

They could also, for example, interview and film fellow students about potential business ideas. Activities such as the co-ordination of running live events, collaborative projects and contextual authentic tasks related to the real world can all enhance the development of enterprise skills. These can then be summatively assessed and valued as part of module activity.

It may be that some modules do not, on first sight, readily lend themselves to including an entrepreneurial or enterprising dimension, but most modules should be able to include some element of enterprise if its broader definition focusing on the development of more holistic enterprising skills is adopted.

To embed enterprise in module and course outcomes requires some careful work. The requirement for us all to ensure our graduates achieve the attributes *promised to them* by our University should ensure that enterprise and the development of a student's 'enterprising skills' find expression in course/programme aims and objectives, which are then given concrete form as appropriate in module aims, objectives, learning outcomes, content, delivery and assessments.

As course teams start to work on the refocusing of their courses they should refer to the Course Development Principles. This document includes suggestions about how to integrate all graduate attributes seamlessly into courses.

For example, as course teams discuss their course assessment strategy, they could ask if the assessment types they are using are preparing their students for the reality of the workplace and society. Or, they can consider, as they work on the clear identity of their course, how the

uniqueness and distinctiveness of their course and the opportunities they offer can be influenced by developing enterprising skills within their refocused content to deliver a consistent message which will appeal to the students.

1.4 Examples of learning outcomes which enhance the development of enterprising skills

This section is focused around learning outcomes because these are seen to be the drivers of the content, delivery and assessments within any module design. A few examples follow, to illustrate how more subject-specific learning outcomes, drawn from existing courses where enterprise is effectively embedded, might be modified to incorporate some enterprise dimensions.

1.4.1 Examples of Generic Learning Outcomes

A few examples of generic outcomes are given below for illustration only. It is *not* being suggested that these should all be adopted but they can offer useful pointers for phrases or concepts to use.

They will not all be suitable for particular disciplines, but you might find some of them could be adapted to be useable.

Students will be able to [make subject-specific substitutions to the bracketed sections]:

- identify opportunities for improvements in different situations and fully develop the realistic potential of such opportunities;
- identify resource (or skill) requirements and potential sources for support to obtain necessary resources to a time scale;
- develop realistic plans for […], set appropriate objectives and monitor them to achieve successful outcomes for future facing and sustainable enterprising solutions;
- generate and critically analyse novel ideas in […], develop and effectively articulate the proposition;
- demonstrate the ability to build relationships […], networks and trust with potential and actual co-workers and stakeholders.

On reviewing some course documentation of existing enterprise focused modules, these are some examples of modules which could be adapted to any area (the specialist subject area again could be inserted).

1.4.2 Module outcome examples

- Present an analysis of [the subject] appropriate for an audience of local stakeholders [in your area/discipline]

- Make a significant positive contribution to a community teamwork project with fellow students
- Generate and critically analyse a novel idea through a reasoned decision- making process
- Effectively conduct primary research to evaluate a potential market for an opportunity and articulate the proposition
- Synthesise and define an idea from multiple information sources
- Present a critical analysis of the benefits and risks of developing an idea or a project
- Critique the themes presented in [this area] from two alternative perspectives considering the ethical and environmental issues
- Advance creative solutions for [this problem].

There are some examples of how existing module outcomes have been modified to enhance the visibility of enterprise as a graduate attribute to make enterprise more transparent and explicit for the students in your module content.

Original learning outcome	Modified learning outcome(s)
By the end of the module students will be able to critically evaluate a business plan (a Level 6 module)	By the end of the module students will be able to identify and critically evaluate business and/or social enterprise opportunities
By the end of the module students will be able to critically evaluate their work experience placement (a Level 6 module)	By the end of the module students will be able to critically evaluate and reflect upon their personal development during the work experience and future learning needs to support their career aspirations *or* By the end of the module students will be able to critically evaluate and reflect upon the practical application of their academic studies to the workplace
By the end of the module students will be able to produce a project plan to enable the implementation of a product (a Level 5 module)	By the end of the module students will be able to produce and justify a plan to enable the implementation of a product, service or community linked project

1.5   Thinking about enterprise at the different academic levels

These are just some examples of possible level outcomes you might want to modify for your own course.

At Level 4, students will be able to identify and discuss:
- their individual enterprising skills and practice and how they impact on others;
- their own role in their own course and subject discipline, how it might relate to being enterprising in the wider world and what it means to them, and their current and future learning and experience
- the impact the entrepreneurial business context and changing society and economy have on their discipline.

At Level 5. students will be able to evaluate and demonstrate:
- their individual attitudes, values and skill set for being enterprising on their course, in the workplace and in the wider world
- the impact of diverse contexts where they have shown enterprising skills and how this has influenced the outcome of specific practice of their discipline and their career aspirations.

At Level 6, students will be able to apply a critically reflective approach to:

- how their subject, work-based and generic life skills have been influenced by developing specific enterprising skills
- their own enterprising skills and how they can help to shape and influence their future career and contribute to global and sustainable futures for all
- the skills they can bring as a graduate to the workplace.

1.6   Students' experience of enterprise

What might a student be entitled to expect in terms of an enterprise experience? All students should be able to have an enterprising 'experience' during their time at university by engaging in activities to develop their broad enterprise skills (QAA, 2018) such as project work, events, showcasing activities with external organisations or experiencing assessed or formative enterprise education within their own course modules.

Phil Race in the special enterprise edition of the Leeds Beckett ALT Journal has commented "that developing enterprise skills and entrepreneurial qualities is not likely to be achieved in a 'conformist' environment … and that we need to allow students the time and space to learn these skills by trial and error, with plenty of feedback, and (above all) by a great deal of interpersonal interaction between students, with tutors, and (more important perhaps) with real-life entrepreneurs from outside the relatively conservative confines of higher education."

It is clear that 'enterprising' experiences on a programme can be manifested to students in diverse ways.

Here are a few suggestions:

1. To have an enterprise experience as an integral part of your course.

   On the ground, dependent on the student's choice of course, examples may include:
   - Learning activities;
   - Online or face to face projects with local businesses;
   - Multi-cultural group work;
   - Authentic case studies focusing on real problems which need innovative solutions;
   - Case studies located in diverse cultural/national contexts;
   - Project work involving student teams or located in culturally diverse local organisations;
   - Research project and dissertations which involve investigatory, planning and interview skills;
   - Master classes from local business people online or face to face;

- Situated learning experiences;
- Embedded work-related placements (see Employability);
- Live projects with local organisations and businesses;
- Volunteering, joining a network or taking part in the Leeds Beckett Enactus network, national and local competitions (e.g. IBM Challenge).

2. To have your enterprise learning recognised and accredited within your course.

   On the ground, dependent on the student's choice of course, examples may include:

   - Assessment tasks which encourage students to draw upon their own reflections on their [learning experience](#);
   - Assessment tasks which help to build confidence and planning and organisational skills, e.g. presentations, a student-run conference or planning for an event.

3. To have a learning environment which values students' existing and emergent enterprise skills

   On the ground, regardless of the student's choice of course, examples include:

   - Tutors using inspirational role models, examples from practice, and business mentors, and offering creative problem-solving opportunities to help frame the specific course discipline and approach;
   - Offering students a pedagogic approach to their learning that enhances reasoning, discussion and problem solving, e.g. enquiry-based learning rather than traditional methods
   - Drawing upon diverse examples of enterprise in business and within large organisations to frame your subject knowledge
   - Offering signposting to appropriate services to help students, e.g. [University Business Centres support](#).

2 References

References and further reading can be found in the [Enterprise](#) section of the [Graduate Attributes reading list](#) on Talis Aspire.

3 Contributors

Sue Smith, David Killick, Jackie Campbell, Jackie Mulligan, Cath Sanderson, Alex Kenyon, Laura Dean.

https://teachlearn.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/teaching-and-learning/course-design/design-a-new-course/graduate-attributes/