



EBC INQUIRY INTO YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP – REQUEST FOR EVIDENCE

- **To what extent is entrepreneurship embedded within your institution and what is the range of activities conducted by your institution to support youth entrepreneurship?**

1.1 The University of South Wales provides a wide range of activities which support entrepreneurship. These include workshops, seminars and 1-2-1 mentoring sessions. In addition the University runs competitions to aid in entrepreneurial skills development and provides funding both in terms of scholarships to new entrepreneurs and seed corn funding to facilitate the development of innovative ideas. Competitions range from simple idea 'pitching' to 4 day skills development including a business challenge where groups are expected to turn a profit.

1.2 Entrepreneurship skills training delivery is both in-curriculum and co-curricular. A recent analysis of delivery via the HEFCW funded Enterprise Support Programme (ESP), revealed that, in the academic year 2012-13, over 65% of students received entrepreneurship skills training as an in-curriculum activity. The University also works closely with Business in Focus and Centre for Business to provide publicly funded graduate entrepreneurship and business support. Student Enterprise Societies exist on both the Trefforest and Newport campuses.

1.3 The University provides incubation facilities for its new graduate businesses in space shared with new external businesses. This promotes the development of networks and encourages a cross pollination of new ideas. The refurbishment of premises to create the Business Loft in the heart of Newport city centre is complete utilising a grant of £100k received from Newport Unlimited, Newport's regeneration company. The suite of offices will be used to support the development of student and graduate start-up companies with the aim of improving local graduate retention rates and supporting economic growth. There is also hotdesking pre-incubation available at the Trefforest Campus with progression to more formal incubation at Abercynon delivered in partnership with Venture Wales.

1.4 Details of specific activities can be found in Appendix A.

- **Are there particular examples of good practice that can be identified either at your institution or within the sector in Wales?**

2.1 The Enterprise Support Programme is a pan-Wales activity which is led by the University of South Wales. This Programme seeks to identify innovative and effective practice across the whole of the HE sector and then to disseminate these activities to all HEIs in Wales. Every HEI in Wales participates in this Programme which develops and encourages fledgling entrepreneurs from across the student body in Wales to realise their potential for creating new and innovative businesses and feed into the support available from Welsh Government's Start-up Service. The Programme is on course to achieve its first year's targets to deliver entrepreneurial effectiveness training and one-to-one sessions to students and graduates.

2.2 In addition the University is leading on Welsh Government's Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy CPD Hub for Wales over the next three years to provide a pan Wales approach to the development of entrepreneurial teaching and learning, seeking to embed a culture of entrepreneurship in Welsh institutions by developing staff and in turn:

- Increase the number of small firms in Wales,
- Increase alternative forms of enterprise and
- Increase skill levels to develop Wales' potential for growth.

2.3 As part of the new University, Merthyr Tydfil FE College is leading the South Wales FE Hub, consisting of 7 FE colleges, with a reach of 33,000 students. Enterprise Week offers many events and a link to the Merthyr Tydfil Business Club. The Big Pitch is an annual challenge engaging teams of students to pitch their solution to a real problem highlighted by the event sponsor. TV personality Nick Hower is Patron of the event. The Welsh Baccalaureate has an element of enterprise embedding 30 hours of enterprise. In the new Merthyr Tertiary College nearly all students will be studying the Welsh Baccalaureate. Merthyr Tydfil FE College is also involved with the Future Entrepreneur Award, submitting candidates for the FE category.

2.4 The University is also an active partner in the South East Wales Regional Hub for HE which is funded by Welsh Government and which seeks to bring together all interested students to benefit from shared experiences and a general raising of aspirations.

2.5 Details of specific examples can be found in Appendix A.

- **What impact have these activities had for the young entrepreneurs involved and what contribution does this make e.g. to tackling youth unemployment, or to increasing the number of people starting business?**

3.1 These activities have directly contributed to an increase in engagement with potential young entrepreneurs. The number of graduate businesses recorded by this institution has more than doubled between academic year 2010-11 and 2011-12, from 16 to 35. Some of our success stories are highlighted in Appendix A.

- **What experience have you had of the Welsh Government’s policy/support for Youth Entrepreneurship? How far has it supported activities at your institution either directly or indirectly (e.g. via HEFCW)?**

4.1 The Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy formed the basis for the development of the Welsh Government funded Regional Hub and CPD Hub activities as well as the HEFCW funded Enterprise Support Programme. These programmes underpin the framework which the University has established to deliver support in entrepreneurship.

4.2 The University is funded through the Regional Hub activities to direct students and graduates to the Welsh Government “Big Ideas” site however feedback from our students and graduate start-up companies indicates that this website is not user friendly and that it does not add value to their development.

- **From an HE perspective, what steps could we recommend to improve or strengthen future support for potential young entrepreneurs in Wales?**

5.1 The most effective contribution to strengthening future support would be to recommend the consolidation of existing good practice and ensure that funding streams to support young entrepreneurs are maintained and delivered in partnership with HEIs and FEIs.

For further information please contact:

Karen Turnbull, Deputy Director, Commercial Services
07778 648 354 or Karen.turnbull@southwales.ac.uk

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

1.1 The Future Entrepreneur Awards is in its 5th year, and has raised the profile of student enterprise development, principally in the Faculty of Creative and Cultural Industries, based in the Atrium, Cardiff, but open to students from across the University, as well as to Further Education. This event focuses on developing entrepreneurial intent and business start-ups. A “warm-up event” for one of the categories will be showcased at the ISBE conference in Cardiff later this year and previous winners have been linked to Sony, Bridgend for the purpose of business development and support.

1.2 The ‘Pi in the Sky’ competition will promote innovation, enterprise, and commercialisation. Students will be invited to submit ideas centred on the use of the new Raspberry Pi computer. The twelve best ideas will receive a Raspberry Pi, and the twelve teams will go through commercialisation related processes, culminating in a competition winner. Again, the ISBE conference will be used to help showcase and publicise the competition.

1.3 The ‘GradEdge’ (formerly GlamEdge) Programme supports entrepreneurship as well as the employability agenda. It encourages students to take part in activities and reflect on their skills, thinking about enterprise as well as employment.

1.4 The Ignite event is a well-established part of the University’s enterprise education calendar, as is the IBM Challenge. Regular events give all students an enterprise challenge, such as ‘Make an Impact’ week, creating businesses from scratch with the intent of raising money for charity.

1.5 The University is developing links with the Welsh ICE Centre in Caerphilly, planning ‘A Challenge for Students’ as a lock-in event for students, in May.

1.6 At the Tyn Y Wern campus (Sports Faculty) in Trefforest, there is an initiative which involves the creation of a student led enterprise, ACE, to promote greater involvement in sport for residents of Rhondda Cynon Taff. The local authority provides management support for this venture, which provides a new group of students each year with an opportunity to run a social enterprise.

1.7 A small number of international graduates have been awarded a Tier 1 Visa by the UKBA, in order to develop innovative and credible businesses. More are anticipated. These graduates are supported by Business in Focus and the Enterprise Support Manager.

1.8 VentureFest Cardiff is at the planning stage, bringing entrepreneurial students and graduates together with potential future investors and high growth entrepreneurs. A new event has been created to promote enterprise in the student population. ‘NED Snodgrad’ is a version of Dragon’s DEN, and leads to enterprise ideas generation and evaluation, as well as a network promoting an ecosystem of high growth businesses.

1.9 The Start-Up Britain bus is scheduled to visit Newport City Centre, adjacent to the University’s campus raising the profile of enterprise and business start-up.

1.10 An example of what can be achieved by co-working is the development of the Ideas Factory on the Trefforest campus. The Students Union at the Atrium in Cardiff has been

designated the 'Thinking Room'. Student Enterprise Interns operate from these premises and disseminate the message of enterprise and available support. This is an example of collaboration between academics, students, the Students Union and enterprise support/advisors.

1.11 The provision of pre and early stage business incubation has been successful in supporting entrepreneurial intent. Since 2001 the Graduate Teleworking initiative offered support for students and graduates wishing to 'try out' a business idea. Over 200 jobs and more than 50 businesses have been created in that time from University led provision. Currently there is a small hotdesking facility in Trefforest, with larger incubator provision in Newport. Private sector businesses are new collaborators, and we have good relationships with Venture Wales, Indycube and ICE, to provide move-on facilities for growing student/graduate led businesses, as well as partnering for networks and events.

1.12 The final development stages of the all Wales E-venture platform (funded by Welsh Government) are ongoing with completion target of September 2013 for academic year 2013/14 and available to HE, FE institutions in Wales. The website engages students with projects from external organisations, thus embedding enterprise education within the curriculum. Projects take the form of 12-week modules covering particular aspects of business awareness, tailored to subject areas in undergraduate and post-graduate programmes.

1.13 Further examples can be found in the Bright Ideas booklet. This activity will be continued through the University of South Wales.