
University of the Arts London

Contact Details

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Model

Find, Fund and Support

Background

University of the Arts London (UAL) joined the UnLtd/HEFCE programme with a highly developed culture and practice of social innovation already in place. UAL has used the programme to open up additional funding and support opportunities for students from across each of its six distinct colleges. These students have certainly not had to turn far for support, with the delivery team leveraging UAL's Design for Social Innovation and Sustainability (DESIS) network to provide Award Winners with advice and mentoring.

Delivery

The programme's delivery team is situated within a strong institutional framework that is dedicated to a social innovation agenda. Student Enterprise and Employability (SEE) service lead the programme working in partnership with the DESIS Lab - housed in UAL's Socially Responsive Design and Innovation (SRvDI) hub. The DESIS Lab is comprised of experts drawn from a wide range of design disciplines, each possessing the knowledge and passion needed to deploy their talents and expertise for social good. Try It Award Winners are guaranteed at least one advice session with a member of the DESIS network (or where appropriate an alternative UAL academic/expert), while Do It Award Winners are assigned an ongoing mentor from either the DESIS network or a wider pool of UAL mentors comprising of UAL staff, external experts and industry professionals.

Value and Impact

The DESIS network has allowed the delivery team to tap into an in-house network of expertise when connecting Award Winners with relevant support. Members of this network are typically very aware of and engaged with the concept of social enterprise, something which can be a distinct advantage if the Award Winner is new to social enterprise. The partnership between DESIS and SEE also encourages students to consider their Award in the context of their future employability and career decisions. The result is a programme that dovetails



successfully with UnLtd's mission of supporting each Award Winner as an individual on a socially entrepreneurial journey.

Going Forward

The academic calendar presents inevitable scheduling pressures and challenges for the Award Winners and DESIS network members involved in the programme. One of the key challenges identified by the delivery team is to ensure sufficient resource capacity (specifically staff time and budget, such as for attending conferences and events) within the DESIS Network, particularly for the availability for judging, mentoring and advising applications and Award Winners throughout the year. The team is responding to this challenge by working to expand the network of support available to Award Winners, developing one of the largest design-orientated social enterprise networks in. Overall, UAL's culture of social innovation makes the institution an ideal environment for budding social entrepreneurs - a culture that will no doubt be enhanced by the achievements of Award Winners and their social ventures.