
Oxford Brookes University

Contact Details

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Model

Find, Fund and Support

Starting Point

Oxford Brookes is relatively new to Social Enterprise with pockets of activity for both social and mainstream enterprise.

Delivery Structure

Their main focus is on social outcomes and developing a community of social entrepreneurs at the University from a grassroots level. Once this is established they intend to grow a wider network involving local community groups in the Oxfordshire community. There will also be an increasing focus on field trips. They are in initial discussions with the University of Oxford to explore opportunities for further collaboration, in particular with regard to future training programmes. The eventual aim will be to make the Programme sustainable with input from the Alumni network. They also intend to work increasingly on a regional basis.

The Programme delivery structure is based around the Research and Business Development office and the project managed from there. Administration and marketing is focussed here and steered by a small, highly motivated project management team. Faculty champions (one per Faculty) support the 'Find' activity. A senior academic leads the project and will develop and enhance the Team. In addition there is a partnership with Student Hubs who engage with the wider student body. They have focussed on sustaining the Programme long-term within the Team and have specific expertise around marketing and promotion.

Delivery Approach

Oxford Brookes has outsourced its masterclasses, pre and post award, to student-led and external organisations. The strapline for the Programme is 'Passion to Action'. Changing the world is at its heart; so business skills aren't essential but are developed as part of the Programme. Training, community and mentoring are all central to this simplified process. The initial plan was to engage students through Try It Awards. These awards were determined by the internal Management

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Team and applications were made both in writing and by presentations. Short pitches were used to keep things simple. Do it and Build It awards were assessed by an initial application and then short listed. These went before a panel of external judges in a Dragons Den exercise that recommended which projects were funded.

Did it go according to plan?

Their initial estimates were of 60 people signing up, 12 Try It Awards, 2 Do It and 1 Build It Award. However the programme seems to have exceeded their expectations.

Milestones

Whilst there are not specifically numbers to quantify their success, they are building a community.

Partnerships

Links have been established with external agencies and Student Hubs to develop Masterclass events. Work with local FE Colleges and Associate College partners have also been developed. This existing Programme has now been established as an accredited elective module for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students.

Challenges

Getting full attendance at Masterclasses and Training Sessions was difficult. They were also struggling for time as a result of engaging with Do It and Build It Award applicants later on in the process.

Achievements/Successes

Their greatest achievement has been to develop a clear picture of social enterprise activity and a vision for the next two years. The Programme is very focussed on its mission, with staff engagement across the Programme very positive.

Results (to March 2013)

- 2 Build It awards
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- 40 Applicants
 - 25 Awards
 - Total Award Value of £31,835

Outcomes and Impacts

External impact and collaborations are developing. Social enterprise is now a focus of the Institution.

Lessons Learned

The importance of support from senior leaders was under-estimated. However, this has increasingly developed – alongside an enthusiastic grassroots movement.

The Future

A University-wide module for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students will be established. Wider community engagement with social entrepreneurs locally is intended. Training activity in collaboration with the University of Oxford will also be developed. A place-based focus will become more and more important in order to scale up this work. An incubation space for entrepreneurs will be sought moving forwards.

