
Sheffield Hallam University

Contact Details

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Model: Find, Fund and Support

Starting Point

Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) has an established teaching programme for social enterprise (SE) and they are also in the process of developing their support offer for social entrepreneurs. From Sheffield Hallam Union's (HU) point of view, they already had students approaching them with ideas, but couldn't offer any structured support until now. With the guidance of SHU, they have now established this support - this HE Support Programme came just at the right time.

Delivery Structure

SHU knew that for the Programme to work, it had to have very broad support from across the faculties and the Students' Union. They took an inclusive approach from the start, gaining both financial and in-kind support for the Programme from two of the four faculties and raising the profile of the opportunity across the University with potential champions. There was a clear fit between the Programme and the existing enterprise support provided by the Hatchery team in the Research and Innovation Office and this became part of the offer from the outset. Enterprise support had just been included in the University-wide employability campaign for the first time, and the Programme benefited from becoming an integral part of this and a clear way of impacting on the student experience. The Programme was also publicised as widely as possible to maximise engagement.

Delivery Approach

There was strong backing for marketing, for example screen savers on all IT equipment were utilised and 7,500 flyers per round were produced, along with staff e-mails (e-view newsletter).

A 'Long List' panel was established, followed by a one day workshop to support those going through to the 'Short List' panel. Panels included SHU, HU staff and external representatives who are well-respected in the SE field. This strengthened the process due to the range of expertise in; commercial awareness, knowledge, sustainability and business planning.

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Support has been very structured and included mentors from academia, along with MSc students within the programme. Mentors completed a Mentoring Module to become involved and biographies were sent to Award Winners who could choose the most appropriate match according to their needs. Award Winners received monthly one-to-one meetings and some were linked to UnLtd. Healthy relationships have been developed and a member of the delivery team became a dedicated Awards Manager. Having this support as a dedicated Awards Manager has proved invaluable to Award Winners.

The Steering Group have been very pro-active and diligent. They are all committed to the Programme and pleased with the level of success.

It was made very clear to Award Winners that funding was contingent with them meeting specific milestones. This was particularly the case for 'Do It' Award Winners who had to agree to set milestones and dates to ensure success.

Partnerships

The formal partnership arrangement with HU has been a great success. Everybody knows who the Student Union is. It had credibility from the start. They are also known for supporting the co-curricular experience. The combined approach of having HU support and drawing upon the support of the SHU Hatchery Team in the Research and Innovation Office has given the Programme substance - Award Winners can learn and 'do' at the same time.

During the planning stage, the Hatchery Team approached HU at the outset. HU could be more immediately responsive to new initiatives in general, especially in terms of producing independent marketing material. They felt very fortunate that HU had taken the decision to support SE and that they were all heading in the same direction, with the same agenda. Internal partnerships

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have been strengthened as a result, as well as a deeper understanding of their individual roles and additional opportunities to work together on other projects identified.

Award Winners benefited from having an established teaching programme and support from the Health & Well Being partnership. Having the Principal Lecturer involved made a significant difference as it brought in the academic experience in facilitating their learning and development.

Challenges

There has been a lot of dialogue around assessment. A good understanding of mutuality going forward with a review of the processes in relation to gaining mutual help between staff and academics is required.

SHU had to transfer the Awards Pot to HU to manage on behalf of the Programme. A complication had arisen in making Awards to SHU staff and the requirements of HMRC. This took a few months to resolve as SHU's Finance Department had very strict processes in place. Once HU took over the allocation of Awards, because they were not the employer of the staff receiving Awards, and were independent of the University's finance structures, the problem was resolved and the payments made immediately.

Achievements and Successes

This initiative is now recognised as a success. SE has made it on to the University's Employability Action Plan over the next 3 years and there is now strategic recognition of its importance. The level of cross-institutional collaboration as is the level of consensus achieved around the way this provision should be made. They've had some really good applications and the level of interest has been excellent.

The Delivery Team feel that the mainstreaming of support for SE has been a great achievement. They've moved from being a 'guest' in the enterprise support provision within the University. It's much more widely recognised and has become part of the landscape.

There is a general consensus that SHU couldn't have delivered this Programme as successfully without HU and the dedicated Awards Manager. His skills in managing publicity and marketing; engaging with people and being on the end of a phone for Award Winners has been invaluable - he's

personified and embodied it. Having a full time member of staff was essential in terms of timing, events, contribution to the on-line platform and the learning network.

The partnership with HEFCE/UnLtd has given the Programme kudos. It's generated a great deal of interest and they've been able to maintain this throughout the Programme. The timing was crucial to engagement, and the strength of the branding meant the marketing didn't need to be changed at all as a result.

Outcomes and Impacts

An unexpected outcome has been tying together the coaching and mentoring support into the Programme. This has now been formally integrated into the offer as part of the Development Day.

Award Winners have been Awarded bursaries to attend SHU's Co-operative and Social Enterprise Summer School. Others are invited to an Open Space Day and networking events. They have also started to link Award Winners into the local Sheffield-based Network, Educational and Alumni groups.

By having a key social entrepreneur, well known within the sector, involved in the panel decisions demonstrates to the wider community, SHU's involvement in SE and how much this is valued. The delivery team are now invited to external events and activities that they hadn't previously had connections with.