

# Re-evaluating Entrepreneurship Education Through a Team-Based Approach: Activities and Archetypes Within a Scottish University



Robert Crammond, Ibiyemi Omeihe, and Alan Murray

**Abstract** A university's overall enterprising strategy, which includes identifying key stakeholders and teaching teams, promotes Entrepreneurship Education (EE) and encourages desired behaviours such as creativity, problem-solving, and both market and risk awareness. Specifically within the classroom environment, EE is strengthened by a variety of formative or summative methods, exercises, and positive cultures. However, there is a lack of a clear conceptualisation of the team-based approach comprising EE academics.

Therefore, this chapter examines the enterprising activities and typical archetypal individuals and standards through an exploratory mixed-method study involving four selected undergraduate courses within a Scottish University. These activities and archetypes include prescriptive courses offered, surrounding enterprising opportunities for students, and influential individuals and processes. Qualitative student feedback is reviewed from across these four courses, and utilising a quantitative survey method, 136 students and staff responded from a sample of over 250 concerning themes of the embedding of enterprise in university, teaching methods, and networking with external partners.

Findings indicate a remarkable, positive reaction to course structure and delivery, the support given from the new team-based approach, and voiced a need for EE to be universal across programmes involving experienced educators and entrepreneurs. However, results display an uncertainty concerning available networking opportunities during the entrepreneurial journey.

This results in the chapter's *Team-Based Re-Evaluation Model* for EE. The model encourages systematic change towards a university's pedagogical and experiential-based EE offering, originating from enterprising academic teams. Additionally, it heightens the significance of educator personality and experience and embedding progressive, industry-relevant practices within the university context.

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73

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## 1 Introduction

An institution's entrepreneurial strategy includes the identification and socialisation of key stakeholders, teaching teams, and resultant entrepreneurial ecosystems, advancing enterprising or Entrepreneurship Education (EE) (Backs et al., 2019; Crammond, 2020; D'Hont et al., 2016; Murray & Crammond, 2020). This is further evidenced through the adoption of longstanding enterprising tools or measures including practical activities for courses, digital platforms that support and augment programmes (Murray et al., 2018), encouraging group-based scenarios for staff and students, and adopting industry-relevant methods of assessment (Bliemel & Monicolini, 2020; Gianiodis & Meek, 2020). Nevertheless, this shift or sustained entrepreneurial action is dependent on resources, funding, networks (Klofsten et al., 2019), and trust (Ilonen, 2021).

Viewing through institutional and pedagogical perspectives, this chapter evaluates the progress of a recently-formed enterprise team of academics, and its unified approach, towards revising and enhancing EE through four, selected undergraduate courses within a Scottish university. This team consists of stakeholders or archetypal individuals who promote EE programmes: course leaders, researchers, and educators. This chapter reviews existing approaches to content design and delivery and both the socialisation and integration of a team-based approach to EE from both students and staff. This chapter addresses two questions concerning a team-based approach:

### **How Do Students Perceive a Team-Based Approach Concerning EE?**

The first question is fundamentally important as it aims to provide further insight into confirming the requisite resources and adopted approaches towards productive EE within universities. Significantly, it addresses the impact of a team-based approach and how it emboldens the EE journey. This question is addressed through the empirical study of this chapter, and results shall highlight levels of enterprising engagement, from a Scottish university context, towards informing the resultant conceptualisation for wider use within the taught discipline.

### **What Are the Types of Institutional Activities and Range of Digital Platforms Needed for Quality Enterprise Pedagogy, Going Forward?**

The second question considers what is now deemed as practically required from academics and EE-relevant stakeholders, within or out of the university, in responding to market needs and equipping students for entrepreneurialism. Reflection of course experiences seeks to respond to this question in both ascertaining the way forward for EE and the practical use of this chapter's unique offering towards resource maximisation, university strategy, and external engagement initiatives.

Within this chapter, a section concerning the *entrepreneurial university and team-based EE* highlights topics of design and delivery, the impact of a team-based approach, and the pursuit towards achieving meaningful impact in the classroom.

In addition, the *context* of this chapter and methodology is discussed, involving over 250 students and staff invited to participate in the study. *Findings* are then discussed, in advance of this chapter's *re-evaluation model*, advancing a team-based approach for EE. *Implications* and *recommendations*, namely concerning practice and research surrounding teams for EE, conclude the chapter.

## 2 The Entrepreneurial University: A Team-Based Approach

An entrepreneurial university is described as an institution involved in four key areas: facilitation of technology transfer, economic development, new venture creation, and licensing or patenting (Guerrero et al., 2020; Ilonen, 2021). Entrepreneurial universities are not just desirable but have become vital to contemporary society's relevance and long-term survival (Crammond, 2020; Kuckertz, 2021).

To describe a university as entrepreneurial, the ecosystem's leadership, strategy, and management should promote economic growth, greater clarity of the pedagogical offering towards enterprise, involve key stakeholders with enterprising identified, and evidence practical value across the institution (Murray & Crammond, 2020; Murray et al., 2018).

There is a tremendous opportunity for the growth of EE through sustainable academic teams within HEIs. Although it already exists in differing degrees across higher education, connecting the enterprising competencies of students, quality of new venture creation start-ups, and social outlooks to entrepreneurship are varied. Now society faces unique challenges and opportunities that have amplified the benefits of EE.

Concerns about embedding EE have become the enduring topics of discussion amongst scholars, emphasising development of the enterprising skills and attitudes of student entrepreneurs (Murray & Crammond, 2020; Murray et al., 2018; Omeihe & Omeihe, 2021). Similarly, there have been challenges with embedding EE within HEIs, such as a lack of follow-up support for new ventures, a lack of relevant infrastructure, funding deficits, a lack of industrial experience, and most impactful, the unwillingness of students to venture into business creation (Crammond, 2020; Steira & Steinmo, 2021).

Therefore, a teams' approach, whether it is by teaching teams or by encouraging student groups in course or assessment settings, offers a distinct style to EE within an academic context (Crammond, 2020; Jin et al., 2017; Karlsson & Nowell, 2021). Progressing numerous studies concerning the perspectives of the individual educator, programmes, or institutions (Bliemel & Monicolini, 2020; Crammond, 2020;

Kuckertz, 2021; Walter & Block, 2016), implementing this approach can increase the rate of new venture success as entrepreneurial competencies of the team complement each other and re-evaluate the educational and entrepreneurial offering. Scholarship on entrepreneurial teams with HEIs has shown varied outcomes (Backs et al., 2019; D'Hont et al., 2016); hence further research is necessary to uncover the true nature across contexts and concerning both student groups and academic partnerships. Essentially, the ongoing progression of EE through a team-based approach requires the pedagogical, social, and strategic factors discussed here.

Pertinent themes emerge from the literature. These include the importance of key enterprising offerings either through taught or training/developmental opportunities, stakeholder engagement, and identity, and ensuring that resources and activities add significant value.

The context investigated and survey questions are discussed next in this chapter, addressing these themes and the chapter's core questions. Table 1, within the next section, lists the various questions, as categorised against each core question and relevant theme identified.

**Table 1** Survey questions

Statement	Core question (1 or 2) and associated theme
1 <i>Entrepreneurship Education courses should be delivered within all degree courses at the Higher Education level.</i>	2—The Offering
2 <i>Courses delivering Enterprise Education in Higher Education must involve real-world experience of entrepreneurship.</i>	1—Archetypes
3 <i>In your opinion, there is a shortage of academic staff in Higher Education with experience of entrepreneurship and small business.</i>	1—Experience
4 <i>Networking with current entrepreneurs during a degree course would significantly increase entrepreneurial intentions and activity.</i>	1—Ecosystem
5 <i>From your experience of further and/or higher education, they adopt contemporary technologies, which positively add to the learning experience.</i>	2—Learning Tools
6 <i>Courses can offer such enterprising teaching methods; however, a lack of exposure to enterprise limits the experience.</i>	2—Relevancy
7 <i>Courses or educators without introducing or possessing relevant small business and entrepreneurial experience can still effectively deliver EE-relevant courses.</i>	1—Real-world Experience
8 <i>There are cross-discipline courses, relevant to entrepreneurship education, currently being delivered within the university.</i>	2—Interdisciplinary
9 <i>The university offers current students many opportunities to network with industry and organisations related to new venture creation.</i>	2—Networking
10 <i>You believe that small business owners and entrepreneurs should network with the university more regularly.</i>	1—Engagement

### 3 Context

Witnessing significant change of late and a renewed emphasis on enterprising activity, this chapter focusses on the recently formed Enterprise Team of academics within the University of the West of Scotland (UWS). A modern and international institution known for its commitment to industry-relevant education and preparing students for the world of work, UWS consists of five campuses in Ayr, Dumfries, Lanarkshire, London, and Paisley.

The enterprise team primarily involves senior lecturers and lecturers of enterprise, but also business advisors working closely with central university departments and current entrepreneurs who are involved with teaching responsibility. The team, with the aim of delivering enterprise courses and encouraging entrepreneurial activity during and after graduation, has introduced a number of initiatives: the ‘ring-fencing’ of enterprise courses across all levels; the creation of a research group; a student society focussing on business and entrepreneurship; a discussion series of presentations; and, the annual enterprise competition open to students, staff, and alumni.

The following four courses, all delivered by the enterprise team, are the focus of this study. These have also been selected as they represent the newly-formed suite of successive modules from first year to honours year (fourth year) of the current undergraduate, enterprise-specific, or related business offering within UWS.

*Leadership and Management Skills* (First Year) is an optional course, offered to students across the business, human resource management, finance, and events management programmes. The purpose of this course is to introduce concepts of leadership and management, as well as enable students to undertake practical exercises to develop skills for the workplace. *Entrepreneurial Opportunity* (First Year) is also an optional course. The purpose of the course is to provide students with an introduction to enterprise. It offers students the chance to identify business opportunities using environmental scanning tools. *Business Acceleration* (Second Year) is a 6-week course focussing on the development of a business idea through the use of market tools and enterprise resources. This included adopting the Business Model Canvas and Market Test tool within groups. A reflection of relevant skills and appreciating market factors towards a business idea form the assessment strategy of this course (Walter and Block, 2016; Kuckertz, 2021). Finally, the *Enterprise Creation* (Third Year) course is the largest enterprise course within the university. The assessment involves the creation of a group business plan, along with organising and preparing towards the defence of a business idea using digital marketing tools and platforms. This pitch occurs at the end of the course, with student groups presenting before an expert panel of academics and external stakeholders.

The methodology adopted follows an exploratory mixed-method design, involving these four undergraduate courses, with students enrolled in these courses being invited to participate.

Exploratory and sequential in nature, the study first reflects on qualitative findings from students enrolled in the four courses, followed by a Likert-scale survey

distributed to staff and students. This provides a breadth and richness of data, involving a number of participants from both sides of the ‘*learner-educator contract*’ and across academic levels. The qualitative findings are collected via course experiences and provide an opportunity to reflect on what students encountered within their respective courses. Subsequently, the Likert-scale survey includes strongly disagree to strongly agree response options, coded from 1 to 5, respectively, to ten questions (Table 1) concerning an entrepreneurial university’s approach to EE, including delivery, design, and use of technology to name a few, which rely on a team-based response. These are linked to the core questions, as per relevant theme encountered in the review of relevant literature in this chapter.

A sample of over 250 enrolled students from across the four courses were invited to participate in the survey, along with the academic staff. In total, 136 (54%) participants responded. All students who responded were enrolled in one or more of the courses listed. Qualitative findings through module feedback, found in the following section, highlighted a number of perspectives from students, which further respond to the core questions of this chapter.

## 4 Findings and Discussion

As a result of recent module reviews and the establishment of an enterprise stream by the academic team, all four courses facilitate the development of crucial entrepreneurial competencies such as idea generation, team-building skills, leadership and management traits, and increased engagement with their local business network (Gianiodis & Meek, 2020; Ilonen, 2021). The courses adopt renewed pedagogical approaches, which contribute to a re-evaluation of the taught field related to EE, combining the abilities of academic staff, digital and practical resources and materials, which aim to empower students and enable an interactive, student-centric educational experience (D’Hont et al., 2016).

Tables 2 and 3 display the survey results for the ten questions posed.

Concerning the first question of this chapter, ‘*How do students perceive a team-based approach concerning enterprise education?*’, feedback from students enrolled onto the courses noted that the weekly sessions ‘*kept everything fun*’, with the student team or group-based nature of the courses formative and summative

**Table 2** Survey respondent details

Age (%)		Occupation	
18–24	50% (68)	Student	64.1% (87)
25–30	10.9% (15)	Staff	16.3% (22)
31–40	20.7% (28)	Business Support	2.2% (3)
41–50	10.9% (15)	Entrepreneur	4.4% (6)
51–60	5.4% (7)	Alumni	13% (18)
61+	2.2% (3)		
Total	100% (136)	Total	100% (136)

**Table 3** Survey results (*n* = 136)

Statement		Mean	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	N/A/ cannot say (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
		<i>m</i>	%	%	%	%	%
1	<i>Entrepreneurship Education courses should be delivered within all degree courses at the Higher Education level.</i>	4.04	3.3	4.3	19.6	30.4	<b>42.4</b>
2	<i>Courses delivering Enterprise Education in Higher Education must involve real-world experience of entrepreneurship.</i>	4.37	2.2	1.1	9.8	31.5	<b>55.4</b>
3	<i>In your opinion, there is a shortage of academic staff in Higher Education with experience of entrepreneurship and small business.</i>	3.58	1.1	12	<b>37</b>	28.3	21.7
4	<i>Networking with current entrepreneurs during a degree course would significantly increase entrepreneurial intentions and activity.</i>	4.41	1.1	3.3	13	18.5	<b>64.1</b>
5	<i>From your experience of further and/or higher education, they adopt contemporary technologies, which positively add to the learning experience.</i>	3.87	1.1	5.4	23.9	<b>44.6</b>	25
6	<i>Courses can offer such enterprising teaching methods; however, a lack of exposure to enterprise limits the experience.</i>	3.89	4.3	5.4	20.7	<b>35.9</b>	33.7
7	<i>Courses or educators without introducing or possessing relevant small business and entrepreneurial experience can still effectively deliver EE-relevant courses.</i>	3.63	1.1	9.8	32.6	<b>38</b>	18.5
8	<i>There are cross-discipline courses, relevant to entrepreneurship education, currently being delivered within the university.</i>	3.43	3.3	7.6	<b>46.7</b>	27.2	15.2

(continued)

**Table 3** (continued)

Statement	Mean	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	N/A/ cannot say (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
	<i>m</i>	%	%	%	%	%
9 <i>The university offers current students many opportunities to network with industry and organisations related to new venture creation.</i>	3.08	8.7	26.1	<b>29.3</b>	20.7	15.2
10 <i>You believe that small business owners and entrepreneurs should network with the university more regularly.</i>	4.5	0	2.2	10.9	21.7	<b>65.2</b>

assessments and activities allowed for ‘*everyone [to get] involved*’. The majority of survey respondents agreed that EE should be offered within all degree courses at the HEI level ( $m = 4.04$ ) and must involve real-world experience (4.37).

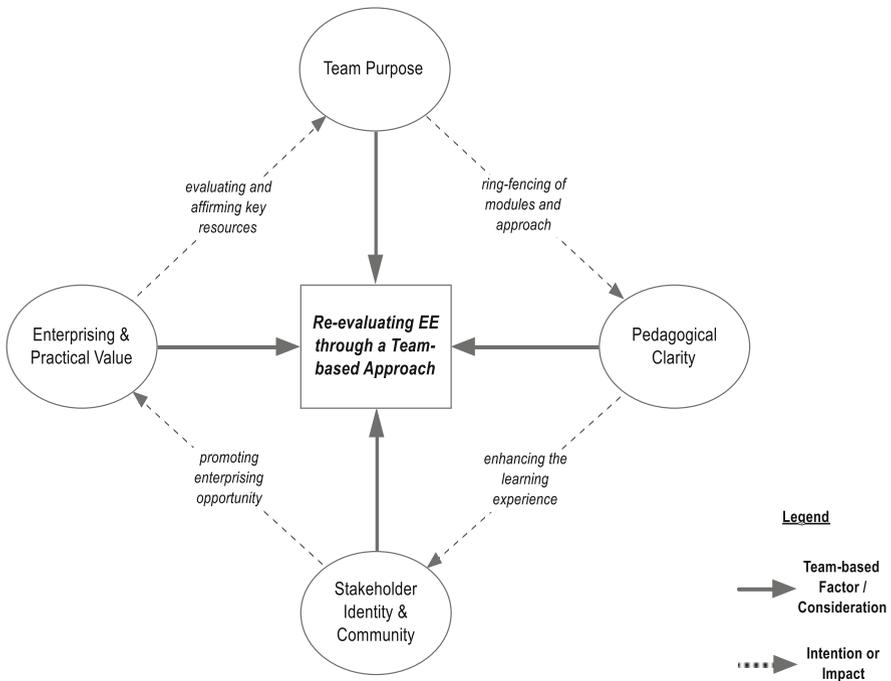
Comments also included that encouraging students to engage, in teams, with enterprise amongst other more traditional forms of business education enabled them to get ‘*out of [their] comfort zone*’ and resulted in them ‘*communicating with others*’. Additionally, the survey showed that they are cognisant of the importance of networking (4.41) and the building of enterprising legacies and entrepreneurial ecosystems through engagement with the Enterprise Team and local and national industry (4.5). Although courses were online based in workshop and drop-in scenarios, with students finding this difficult at times, students stated that the business process outlined by the Enterprise Team was very ‘*detailed and informative*’, which was ‘*engaging*’.

With regard to the second question, ‘*What are the types of institutional activities and range of digital platforms needed for quality enterprise pedagogy, going forward?*’, core educational content is hosted through versatile virtual learning platforms (Aula, Moodle, and Google) that allows the Enterprise Team to customise and communicate learning cognisant to their field, industry, and students’ expectations. These provided theoretical content that was ‘*related to real life examples*’. Notably, students expressed how the teaching teams within these courses brought about a ‘*wealth of experience and knowledge*’. Also noted was that respondents regard a lack of exposure to enterprise, with a simply didactic approach being adopted, for example, limiting the experience (3.89). The courses are regarded as diverse and include themes of creativity and business planning. These have been embedded through many activities within the curriculum. However, there was some uncertainty concerning the surrounding opportunities available (3.08). This may further vindicate the importance of this new academic team approach towards enterprise within the university, evidencing both skills and experience.

The findings of this study indicate, in summary, that students reacted positively to the courses offered and developed key entrepreneurial skills across the varied forms of assessment. However, it is possible that many have been unaware of how these skills can be evidenced further within the university community and beyond.

Acknowledging the findings of this chapter aids in a greater understanding of the successes, or further areas to consider, of the team-based approach. The academic team, similar to many who facilitate EE, realised a strengthened approach to the teaching and support of enterprise (Crammond, 2020). This allows a conceptualisation of this team-based perspective, through the prism of institutional change, and academic leadership, in aiming to build a legacy for entrepreneurial outcomes (Murray & Crammond, 2020; Walter & Block, 2016; Winkler et al., 2018).

Therefore, the chapter’s *Team-Based Re-Evaluation Model for EE* (Fig. 1) is presented towards prescribing a revised approach that is considerate of critical pedagogical, practical, and personnel factors. It extends to a greater understanding of previous understandings of the university delivery and thematically emphasises how a team-based approach in delivering EE, through archetypal EE-relevant individuals, can be established and maintained, shaping activities.



**Fig. 1** Team-based re-evaluation model for EE

### ***4.1 Team Purpose***

The feedback and survey both indicate that students reacted positively to the team-based nature of courses and the team-based support. However, students are unclear on the wider university community (Questions 3 and 9) as greater involvement of those across academic and industry also adds to the enterprising environment. The presence of such enterprising teams for EE, as the empirical evidence suggests, increases visibility of the university's enterprise message and strengthens the link between educators, students, and engaging industry partners.

### ***4.2 Pedagogical Clarity***

Students agree that enterprise should be embedded within programmes across the offering (Questions 1 and 2). The grouping of relevant courses, under the control of the team, is fundamental in clarifying the nature of the course delivered and how it assists in a student's entrepreneurial journey. Drawing on practical and experiential pedagogies in EE, such as group and reflective tasks, increases its applicability to diverse contexts through varied subject areas.

### ***4.3 Stakeholder Identity and Community***

A third factor of this model is the enhancement of the course delivery through stakeholder engagement, embracing an existing or emerging enterprise culture within the university, and building a productive community. As this chapter's results indicate, these factors encourage enterprising behaviour and raise entrepreneurial intentions. Additionally, wider stakeholder involvement encourages legacy building and reinforces the enterprise message.

### ***4.4 Enterprising and Practical Value***

The final factor alludes to how EE must be team-led, with a focus on consistently possessing both enterprising and practice value. Forms of EE are inclusive and extend beyond the boundaries of new venture creation to include required competency development and ways in which students, nascent entrepreneurs, and alumni can contribute to an economy (Questions 5–7). This specific case within this chapter documents the many additional initiatives such as a student society, competition, and discussion series group, which provide additional opportunities surrounding formal, higher education.

The model itself outlines key factors and considerations that impact university resources and its vision (Crammond, 2020; Walter & Block, 2016). A re-evaluation of team-based approaches to EE, as the model displays, results in an awareness of the strengths of the university offering and aims to bring together various elements of the university experience for staff and students: knowledge acquisition, collaboration, external engagement, and societal impact. This model and the chapter result in several implications and recommendations for EE practice and the institution.

## 5 Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter has considered, through a contextual example of a recently-formed team for EE within a Scottish University, a number of pedagogical and sociological perspectives.

### **How Do Students Perceive a Team-Based Approach Concerning EE?**

Students enrolled in the courses enjoyed the enterprising experiences and benefitted from the wider enterprise team and new offerings. They were alerted to the wider community, the importance of the industry or entrepreneurial stakeholder, and surrounding opportunities outwith the classroom.

The findings from this chapter bring into focus the critical importance of entrepreneurially minded individuals who provide a well-rounded experience of enterprise.

### **What Are the Types of Institutional Activities and Range of Digital Platforms Needed for Quality Enterprise Pedagogy, Going Forward?**

The activities mentioned, such as the practical assessment, student society work, and competitions, and externally-supported events all emphasise the enterprise experience and have seen an increase in entrepreneurial intention amongst the students of UWS. Academics with experience in educational tools and methods, which have included business scenarios and simulation, strategic planning, and digital marketing training, impacts course experiences. The courses evidence the progression of conceptual understandings of enterprise, leadership, and management to more enterprise-specific and practice-based activities.

The re-evaluation model consolidates the deduced themes from the literature and the empirical findings of this chapter, presenting several implications for related EE practice and policy from *pedagogical*, *philosophical*, and *sociological* perspectives.

*Pedagogically*, this model should alert educators and teams delivering EE on how they can enhance the institutional offering. What content is relevant, and which approaches should be adopted throughout a programme structure, as students progress year on year? Does the suite of courses develop leadership and entrepreneurial competencies and alert students to EE-relevant societal issues such as business growth and sustainability?

Philosophically, the re-evaluation model also acknowledges the forces within and out of the university, such as institutional culture and external stakeholders, which impact the nature of EE offered. Who is required within this team-based approach?

Would this immerse and promote key enterprising ideals such as autonomy, liberation, and creativity?

Finally, *sociologically*, this chapter underlines that a strong and unified message for enterprise, representative of a team, encourages and maintains an enterprising community. Evidence here indicates that a universal outlook to enterprise, which engages with all corners of the university, widens the reach for enterprise and aids in the building of an entrepreneurial legacy. Therefore, what initiatives would add value? Where do these initiatives align or complement the university's broader strategy?

In response to evident institutional change concerning EE, or global factors such as the pandemic, a unified approach such as the practical model prescribed here is of valuable use in reviewing EE-related resources, capabilities, and strategies existing within today's advancing, entrepreneurial universities.

## 6 Limitations

The researched context within this study focusses on four selected cases within a single university. There is an opportunity for further investigation of the team-based approach for EE, through the adoption of similar methodologies, or alternatively through longitudinal case studies, action research (Winkler et al., 2018), or additional statistical analysis. Furthermore, there is an opportunity, unlike this chapter's approach, to undertake a comparative study across universities to witness and understand institutional changes and impacts in action.

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