Edge Hill University

Enterprise Strategy

Edge Hill University is an enterprising and dynamic higher education institution committed to providing an excellent student experience, producing high quality research and engaging with entrepreneurial activity with collaborators in industry, business and professional practice. Our strategy is to encourage and support a range of outward-facing activities which enrich the core mission of teaching and research. Enterprise activities are diverse but united by their capacity to facilitate the exchange of knowledge between University, business and society.

The Vision

Our vision is that enterprise will enhance our reputation for excellence and innovation, and enable us to contribute to the nation's economic recovery and cultural prosperity. In fulfilling this vision, we will become recognised as a significant contributor to the regional, national and international knowledge economy.

Strategic Aims

Four key themes underpin the Enterprise Strategy.

1. Enriching the Student Experience

The Enterprise Strategy aims to enhance the student experience. We seek to enrich student life by encouraging and facilitating interaction between students and a range of organisations in business, the third sector and the community. By exposing students to a culture of enterprise, entrepreneurship and innovation through the curriculum, we prepare them to contribute fully to society. We aim to help our students to develop the skills necessary to maximise their employability and we will actively engage with their prospective employers to be better able to meet their needs. At the same time, we will ensure that students are provided with a range of opportunities to promote their skills and talents to employers.

2. Supporting Research Excellence

Research excellence is central to enterprise. The University aims to support and strengthen our research by promoting durable relationships with industry and business, the public sector, and the third sector, in order to foster the exchange of knowledge and to promote innovation. The activities upon which these relationships are based are varied, and include collaborative research and knowledge exchange, consultancy, knowledge transfer partnerships (KTPs), the exploitation of intellectual property, sponsorship of posts within the University, the formation of spin-out companies, and continuing professional development provision.

3. Delivering High Quality Services

We aim to offer a portfolio of high quality services on a commercial basis to our customers. These services will utilise our expertise and our infrastructure in order to benefit industry and society, and to provide a sustainable income stream to support our core mission of research and teaching. The portfolio is wide ranging, and includes analytical services and equipment, business support and physical space. We aspire to be well known as a professional and customer-oriented supplier with a reputation for quality.

4. Promoting Public Service

We recognise the significance of activities which directly strengthen and support society at large as an important role for a University. Our strategy is to encourage a culture which utilises our knowledge and expertise in the service of the common good. In fulfilling this strategic aim, our institutional reputation will be further enhanced.

The Four Goals

We have set ourselves the following ambitious goals:

- Significantly improved graduate employment opportunities for our undergraduate and postgraduate population
- Cultivation of high-impact case studies for future Research Excellence Framework exercises
- Enhancement of our reputation especially in terms of business and community interaction
- Commitment to the productivity of the region by provision of practical CPD opportunities for those in professional areas, putting the University at the heart of the region by means of pro-active engagement with Local Enterprise Partnerships and other influencers.

Improving Employment Opportunities for our Students

Central to improving student employability is the University's direct engagement with employers. To improve opportunities for Edge Hill graduates, the University is committed to:

- Collaborating with local, regional and national employers to inform curriculum development at both undergraduate and taught masters levels
- Working with local and regional employers to develop student short-term placements that offer real opportunities for personal development for students while providing a real benefit for employers
- Work with employers to develop greater opportunities for degree programmes with a year spent in industry or business ('sandwich' courses), ensuring that employers are supported in providing appropriate mentoring for students during the placement
- Establishing an employers' forum where businesses can meet with staff and students from across the institution to enhance communication and exchange, and to initiate partnership projects
- Working with students to explore how their part-time work experience contributes to their holistic Edge Hill University graduate status

- Working with voluntary organisations that engage students to ensure that proper acknowledgement of the skills developed is recorded in a way that is useful to future employers
- Supporting students to engage with extra-curricular activities which enable them to understand how they and their skills fit into the wider world and gain accreditation where appropriate
- Generating an alumni network to provide mentoring and support to students as they prepare for the workplace
- Providing opportunities for PGR students to enhance their employability skills both with HEIs and other organisations in business, industry, public and third sectors
- Creating a student enterprise network designed to support students when developing their own enterprise initiatives
- Creating 'student entrepreneur bursaries' through a competitive process to help students access additional training and support in business start-up

Research and Enterprise

The University supports quality research wherever, and however, it occurs and has particular strengths in practice-based research in the health, social care and education sectors, as well as within the creative industries. The University encourages research that has a direct, positive impact on society and its needs, whether through changing practice, stimulating public debate and discourse, enhancing quality of life and public understanding, or improving efficiency of business and industry. To support this, the University will:

- Invite people from business, industry, the public sector, and the third sector to engage with research teams in their project designs. Create a regular enterprise forum bringing together researchers and people from the public, private and thirds sectors to enhance mutual understanding of aims and objectives
- Develop a series of public lectures featuring people from business, industry, professional practice and the third sector alongside academic speakers to encourage debate and exchange
- Invite people from business, industry, professional practice and the third sector to take up Visiting Professorships at Edge Hill to explore and promote synergies between research and business needs
- Encourage staff to work with business and to engage with secondments where advantageous to the business and University
- Set aside resources to support outreach activities that give rise to high quality impact and require internal applications for research funding to consider the impact agenda from the outset
- Support staff in seeking external funding to engage in collaborations with business and industry
- Support staff in developing knowledge transfer partnerships with external partners
- Encourage all staff to make research available to the widest audience in an accessible format while maintaining their research output in quality academic outlets
- Have representation from business, industry, public and third sector on the management board of the two University Research Institutes: the Institute for Creative Industries and the Institute for Public Policy and Professional Practice

Providing High Quality Services

Edge Hill University's engagement with enterprise will reflect the services, skills and expertise of the whole institution. The University is committed to being a supplier of quality services, at the market rate, through:

- Providing a service to our partners that is responsive and flexible based on mutually beneficial exchange
- Providing high quality training and CPD for organisations either from a varied portfolio of modules and accredited programmes and activities to tailor-made provision to suit the needs and budget of the client. We can work with external organisations to explore accreditation of courses to provide high quality CPD which is of significant benefit to the organisation and its employees
- Specifically providing training in leadership, particularly in the education, health and social care sectors
- Providing analytical and evaluation services for individuals and organisations, using staff expertise from across the institution
- Providing contract research services to supply businesses, industries, public and third sector organisations with knowledge, information and understanding to address the needs and concerns of the client and help them to make better-informed decisions
- Providing external partners with commentary and analysis of recent developments in government policy distributed via social media
- Providing excellent conference and workshop facilities, and meeting spaces for local organisations
- Providing facilities for local organisations to support their activities including Sporting Edge and the Arts Centre
- Making available specialist equipment and facilities to local businesses, industry and third sector organisations and providing technical advice to optimise its use
- Providing *pro bono* services, recognising the value of supporting partners and collaborators and that benefit maybe not be financial

Infrastructure and Support

To ensure that enterprise activities at Edge Hill are of the highest quality, an appropriate infrastructure is required. To ensure the quality of enterprise, the University will:

- Offer staff training to develop their entrepreneurial and enterprise skills, delivered by internal and external providers
- Promote knowledge exchange and enterprise activities via faculty research committees with each faculty having a network of 'enterprise champions' to ensure that all opportunities are optimised and that best practice is shared across the institution
- Ensure a robust governance and quality assurance process, including risk assessment, assistance with the pricing of contracts and the protection of IP, that is supported and monitored centrally by the Research and Enterprise Support Office

- Develop a web portal to provide high quality information about our enterprise initiatives to staff, students and external partners and collaborators
- Provide support for non-commercial enterprise activities through the provision or exchange of in-kind resources

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