

QMUL Student Enterprise



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Introduction



Turning your idea into a business can be hard but rewarding. In this booklet you can find the stories of Queen Mary students who took the plunge and created new and exciting ventures.

From pre-university MOOCs to music agencies, whether a social enterprise or a start-up, they all share the conviction that your time at university should go beyond the usual ‘is it in the exam?’. Here at QMUL we have fantastic students with fantastic ideas, and we want to help you to turn those ideas into reality.

In these pages you will be able to read about the various schemes we run to train, support, mentor and even fund your business ideas.

So the next time you’re sitting on a bus and you think: ‘the world would be a better place if only we had...’, why not try to make it happen? We are here to help you, and who knows where your entrepreneurial journey could end?

Peter McOwan

Vice-Principal for Public Engagement and Student Enterprise

Enterprise Support at Queen Mary University of London

Queen Mary Careers & Enterprise provides students and recent graduates with a range of support for their entrepreneurial ideas:

Seed funding – Queen Mary, together with the generous support of Santander and UnLtd, provides entrepreneurs with up to £5000 funding through our ‘Try It’ and ‘Grow It’ awards, with opportunities to apply each semester. The UnLtd awards are made available to QMUL staff as well as students.

1-to-1 enterprise appointments – book in an appointment via the Careers & Enterprise Centre in the Queens’ Building to get advice about developing your business idea. Whatever stage your idea is at we can meet with you and help you to develop it.

Mentors – we’ll try to match you with a mentor from a local start-up to support you through the early stages of setting up your business.

Networking events – keep your eye out for our events designed to get you talking to other students and local entrepreneurs. ‘Start Up, Stand Up’ is our most popular event which features people already running businesses giving short talks about the successes and failures of their business and giving students the chance to network with each other.

Workshops – need a hand with writing a business plan, developing a website, or even just generating an idea? Come along to one of our practical workshops, advertised on the QMUL Careers & Enterprise events calendar.

Workspace – students can work on their businesses in the Qube, an on-site bookable space in the Francis Bancroft building.

Competitions – look out for competitions run throughout the year that provide sponsorship to attend external enterprise events. In 2014 we have funded two students to attend the European Innovation Academy, a three week enterprise summer accelerator programme based in Nice, and one student to attend Engineering YES, a business plan competition for engineering researchers.

Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) - international students with a credible business idea and relevant entrepreneurial skills can apply for endorsement from Queen Mary to stay in the UK under a Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) Immigration Permission.

For more details visit www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/students/enterprise



Unfortunately, international students who have Tier 4 (General) Student immigration permission are not currently eligible to apply for a ‘Try It’ or ‘Grow It’ Award due to self-employment restrictions.

Enterprise Awards, funded by Queen Mary, Santander and UnLtd

QMUL Careers & Enterprise Centre, with the generous support of Santander and UnLtd, provides funding to students and recent graduates to help to kick-start new business ideas and grow existing ones. Queen Mary staff are also eligible to apply for funding to support a social enterprise.

QMUL's partnership with UnLtd, the leading provider of support to social entrepreneurs in the UK, began in 2012 and has been flourishing ever since. Peter Ptashko, Partnership and Support Manager at UnLtd says,



"The UnLtd relationship with Queen Mary University has been a productive and impressive one over several academic years. They have blossomed from a new, enthusiastic but inexperienced partner, to one with deep connections into their local

social enterprise community – through a broad range of active entrepreneurs, clear structures for support and a wide-reaching staff team that spans the Institution. They are a leading light on our SEE Change programme and we hope they will remain so into the future."

Santander provide funding to more traditional for-profit QMUL student enterprises and have been working with QMUL since 2011. Simon Bray, Director, Santander Universities UK says,



"Despite a record number of new businesses registered last year in the UK, at Santander Universities we think there is a lot to be done for entrepreneurs. That's why we support these awards – so that university students with good ideas can dare to

take the plunge and launch their products into the market, with a chance of becoming the successful business men and women of the future."

'Try It' Prizes

Funds of up to £500 are available to help entrepreneurs to 'try' an idea out, either by doing market research, developing a prototype, or just getting started to see if there's a market out there. To win a 'Try It' prize, students don't need to have a business plan, just a problem they want to solve and some idea of how they might do it. Applications take the form of a short pitch, and shortlisted applicants are invited to a panel interview.

'Grow It' Prizes

Funds of up to £5000 are available to help existing business or social enterprises to 'grow'. To win a 'Grow It' prize, the enterprise doesn't have to be profitable yet, but it needs to have evidence of a product and/or customer base, and be able to show a clear pathway to profitability. Applicants must complete a written application detailing exactly what the money will be used to fund, and shortlisted applicants are invited to a panel interview.



"Since starting the Enterprise Programme in 2012 we've awarded funding to over 40 student entrepreneurs, and helped hundreds more to kick-start their businesses via advice, training and networking events.

Students have pitched a variety of ideas to us, ranging from social enterprises aimed at increasing diversity in the medical profession, to ideas for new social apps with ambitions to rival Instagram and Facebook. We're starting to see students using our services from a wide range of subject disciplines, and we're delighted to be experiencing a year-on-year growth in the numbers of students engaging with our enterprise support.

The following case studies highlight just some of the entrepreneurs we've supported. We hope they inspire more students to get involved in enterprise either whilst studying at Queen Mary, or after they graduate.

We encourage any students who have ideas, no matter how early stage, to come and speak to the Careers & Enterprise Team to let us help them take that first step."

Rachel Brown, Enterprise Programme Coordinator, Careers & Enterprise

Case Studies

Enterprise Awards

Emily Yates



Business:

Accessible Guide to the Commonwealth Games

Subject Studied:

English Literature

Award Won:

Grow It

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

Make friends as well as business contacts!

Emily won the 2014 Young Social Entrepreneur of the Year UnLtd 'Lived It' Award, with over 400 public votes for her enterprise.

She is currently working with Rough Guides to create accessible travel guides. The aim is to encourage those with disabilities to realise their capabilities and embrace the idea of travelling with the help and support of resources that will advertise the best places to go for their specific needs. Due to the huge success of the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics, her next two guides focus on the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow and the 2016 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Rio. Hopefully the guides will therefore have two effects; encouraging both the travel bug and a love of disability sport!

How has the business progressed since you won the award?

My 'Grow It' award was generously given to me to support my Glasgow venture. Since receiving the award I have spent two months in Glasgow reviewing hotels, restaurants, bars, clubs, tourist attractions, and transport for accessibility. I am in talks with Glasgow 2014 and Visit Scotland about the possibility of licensing the content and I am currently in the process of writing up the content ready for it to go live in a digital format in a few months' time.

Similarly, with the generous help of Santander I am now in Rio de Janeiro for three months working as an accessibility consultant for the transport network MetroRio. I am also currently working with Rough Guides to find sponsorship for a paper copy of the guide that can be distributed free of charge.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Had I not received my 'Grow It' funding I would not have been able to visit Glasgow for the period of time needed and my work as an accessible travel writer would not have started with such ease and encouragement. In effect, this funding not only helped me financially but also gave me the confidence to start realising my own capabilities sooner.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

Negotiating, especially in terms of finance, has always been something that I have felt uncomfortable with. Working with such reputable names has helped me to learn how to do business properly and professionally. Another highlight is that I am now able to work flexibly, working hours that suit me. Of course, all the travelling has been an added bonus!

Working in the business world has also taught me how important it is to also make friends as well as business contacts. Many people are motivated by different factors and I am driven by the dream to create a world where disability is not a disadvantage, as societal obstacles do not exist. To make connections and build relationships with people who are driven by a similar aim has been an absolute pleasure, and has led me in so many different directions that I never knew existed.

"It has been great to use my Queen Mary English degree so much within my work. I am often writing proposals, delivering presentations or speaking in front of a few hundred people. It's a skill I would like to keep developing for years to come."



Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

The art of keeping focused, especially if trips get cancelled and funding falls through is a skill that is often underestimated! It can be difficult working in an environment where risk is often involved, but totally worth it when positive results can be seen.

It has been great to use my Queen Mary English degree so much within my work. I am often writing proposals, delivering presentations or speaking in front of a few hundred people. It's a skill I would like to keep developing for years to come.

I have also learnt that age does not have to be a barrier, and it is experience that helps one to move forward. I am only 22, and doing things that I thought would never be possible at my age. But age will never limit somebody who is able to put themselves out there and break certain boundaries.

What are your future plans for the business?

In an ideal world, I would love to set up a partnership with a business so that I was able to write an accessible travel guide to every major sporting event in the future and distribute it free of charge to the disabled community. I'd love to be in Tokyo for the 2020 Games!

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

Of course I would. It opens doors that were previously closed, or even invisible, and gives confidence and encouragement to those who just need that extra helping hand to make their ideas flourish in the real world.



James Johnson



Business:
Paradise Cycles

Subject Studied:
Mechanical Engineering

Award won:
Try It and Grow It.

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

There are very few shortcuts to help achieve the initial targets when setting up a new business.

James was shortlisted in both the 'public choice' and 'judges' choice' categories for the 2014 UnLtd 'Lived It' Enterprise Award.

Paradise Cycles is a bicycle repair and custom building business that offers bicycle repairs and a custom building service, as well as repair tutorials, safety checks & maintenance advice for the citizen cyclists of east London and Queen Mary University of London.

Since conception the business has run a few dozen pop-up workshop sessions on campus, as well as continuing to restore and service bicycles for students and staff alike. During this period they have been developing their marketing strategies and online presence in an effort to extend their customer base and general impact.

How has the business progressed since you won the 'Try It' award?

The business has been able to run a few dozen pop-up workshop sessions on campus, as well as continuing to restore and service bicycles for students and staff alike. During this period, we have managed to develop our marketing strategies and online presence, in an

"The 'Try It' award is a great way to put an idea into action, even if it is on a very small scale. For me it provided not only the right amount of funding at the right time, but also the possibility to test the waters of self-employment while still studying, which has been an invaluable experience."

effort to extend our customer base and general impact.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the award?

Yes, without the funding we would not have been able to co-ordinate the pop-up workshop service at the start of the academic year, although it was thanks to the interest among the staff and relevant supporting bodies (mostly in Careers & Enterprise) that we were able to operate on campus and reach the target market as successfully as we did.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

The experience has taught me that setting up a business is rewarding work, but that it requires complete commitment throughout and a lot of due diligence to get to a position where the business model is strong enough to support further enterprise funding or private investments. There are very few shortcuts to help achieve the initial targets when setting up a new business.



Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

Yes, this experience has required learning about every aspect of running a small social enterprise: basic

accountancy and database skills, operations and marketing management, web developing and hosting, graphic design of marketing materials and social impact assessment skills.

What are your future plans for the business?

I am currently refining the marketing tools we have in place (website, social media, flyers and stickers etc.), and consolidating all finances and assets in order to restructure our business model and write a business plan for implementation over the next few months. Taking into account both the rate of growth and social impact that the business has had, and can expect to achieve with continued operations, the plan will include renting a premises and taking on more overhead costs. Consequently, I plan to apply for multiple social enterprise and entrepreneurship awards or grants, as well as private investments, to enable the business to grow.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

The 'Try It' award is a great way to put an idea into action, even if it is on a very small scale. For me it provided not only the right amount of funding at the right time, but also the possibility to test the waters of self-employment while still studying, which has been an invaluable experience.



www.paradisecycles.co.uk

Ovando Carter



Business:

London Parkour Project

Subject Studied:

Physics (with Medical Engineering)

Award Won:

Try It and Grow It

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

For me my focus was not on making money. A business for me is about making a difference in someone's life. If you care about people, in time people will care about what you're doing and support you. If you're just out for money, then your focus may deviate from helping your customers.

London Parkour Project is a social enterprise. The importance of profit to them is the magnitude of the social impact on the community it can help them to create.

The aim of the project is to nurture and develop camaraderie and altruistic behaviour through the practice of parkour. They hope that after people learn that they can achieve success through parkour, it will translate into other parts of their life, and that eventually the community will benefit from having more of an altruistic focus. They also aim to create jobs for members of the community through the growth of the enterprise.

How has the business progressed since you won the 'Try It' award?

Since the 'Try It' award we have set up both indoor and outdoor classes. We have set up a website, which has helped in achieving a professional company image. We have registered

our company, contacted governing bodies and gained insurance for the practice and teaching of parkour. We have connected with Islington Council to promote parkour lessons to young people, as well as gaining potential funding connections for payment of their lessons.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

The progress would have been slower if I had not received funding. The way in which the 'Try It' was set up was convenient and gave me the freedom I needed.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

I have learnt that most people don't listen to words, but respond to actions. In a moment people can forget all the things you have done, so having a website and videos helps to broadcast a snapshot of the hard work you have put in and the achievements it has yielded.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

I've learned how to set up a company legally with all its requirements, and how to lead a team of people.

I have developed the ability to attract and build a loyal student base, using a range of methods such as professional

itches at freshers' fairs and schools, posters, and videos that demonstrate what to expect from the class, and what can be achieved from it. Maintaining a loyal student base came from continuously providing a quality product, which meant building my character, honouring my word and preparing well for each lesson.

What are your future plans for the business?

Currently I'm aiming to stabilise my position within local schools and universities. After we have achieved this, we would like to expand to other countries.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

When most people offer you money, they generally want you to jump through a bunch of hoops that direct you away from your own personal goals. But the 'Try It' and 'Grow It' awards help you to achieve your goals in a shorter time, giving you the freedom to try new things without using your own money that you need to spend on your living costs.

"I have learnt that most people don't listen to words, but respond to actions."



Enterprise Awards

Shaheed Walji,
Thuvarahan Amuthalingam,
Ulvan Ozad



Business:
MeDCAS

Subject Studied:
Medicine

Award Won:
Grow It

Top tip for other students setting up a business:
With purpose and perseverance all things are achievable.

MeDCAS is an initiative pioneered by current medical students. Our courses and workshops, taught at many institutions internationally, are tailored to provide the essentials for a prospective medical student. As future doctors we have a duty to support the next generation of doctors. We provide practical workshops with skills that can be mentioned in their applications and interviews, giving them a certificate to detail all skills learnt. Held at the students' school premises, our course is accessible to all and provides a practical insight into a career in medicine and dentistry like no other. We continue to follow our students who are inspired by our crash course, "Every Step Of The Way" throughout their application process, ensuring they secure their admission. Our success rate is currently 100%, with all students who train with us for their interviews gaining offers.

How has the business progressed since you won the award?
The 'Grow It' award has allowed us to upscale the capacity of our courses, as well as our customer base through marketing. Having procured state of the art equipment, our courses are now of a higher standard as we are able to teach additional clinical skills that will not only benefit students in their university applications, but also throughout their medical career. We have also been able to expand the capacity of our courses allowing us to grow as a business.

All of our tutors are also now enrolled and studying for their Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector, which qualifies them as teachers and allows them to plan, deliver, assess and certify the course and its attendees. Investing in growth, we have also been able to procure marketing materials such as a pull-up banner, leaflets and workbooks which we have utilised in growing our customer base at events such as the 'Next Steps' evening for all Harris academies.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Our growth has been accelerated by the 'Grow It' fund. Without the award we would not have been able to invest in raising the profile of our courses, hence our business, via adding credibility through qualifications and improving content. We would have relied upon profit made or a loan to procure equipment and necessary qualifications. The experienced panel at Queen Mary have also guided us in making our marketing strategy appeal to a wider audience.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

Our biggest lesson from this venture was understanding that with purpose and perseverance all things are attainable. In the competitive field that medicine is, starting from scratch, without a portfolio or doctoral status, we faced many obstacles. Our beginnings involved weeks on end of being constantly turned down or ignored, but we learned from every mistake. We have learned how much of a quality indicator price can be. Flexibility and readiness to troubleshoot as problems arise are key factors that determine how successful our events and businesses are.

Have you learnt any new skills from the experience?

Accurate and timely record keeping is paramount in any business or profession. Setting up, watching the business grow and operating the business on a daily basis allowed us to see this first hand. Having had some experience in marketing events aimed directly at university students, we were able to transfer these skills to B2B marketing, pitching to schools. However, we learnt that it requires a different approach altogether when approaching an institution as opposed to an individual. The whole experience has taught us to try out ideas without fear of failure as only then will we succeed.

What are your future plans for the business?

There is an ever increasing demand for doctors in Britain and for more specialised medical professionals. What we hope to achieve is to increase the standard of medical school applicants and hence the number of proficient doctors. Our main goal is to bring the possibility of a career

“Our main goal is to bring the possibility of a career in medicine to the talented students that do not have opportunities readily available to them.”

in medicine to the talented students that do not have opportunities readily available to them. By liaising with Local Education Authorities we hope to be able to deliver our course centrally in boroughs and invite gifted and talented students to attend.

Would you recommend the ‘Try It/ Grow It’ programme to other students, and why?

The awards are a great way to launch your idea into a fully-fledged business whether to try an idea out or to upscale your business. The available guidance and expertise is unparalleled, and will enhance your business’s chances of success greatly. The sum provided will boost your capital and allow you to grow rapidly in a very short space of time.

We are ever so grateful to UnLtd, the sponsors of the ‘Grow It’ award that funded our project, and to all members of staff at QMUL Careers & Enterprise for their help on our path to success.



www.medcas.co.uk



Enterprise Awards

James Larbi



Business:
Pre-ued

Subject Studied:
Aerospace Engineering

Award Won:
Try It

Pre-ued is a technology startup that partners with leading secondary schools, colleges & universities to publish free open online courses. You may be like Michael, who wants to study top secondary school courses from renowned institutions, or like Ling, who wants to study abroad but needs the right language skills to pass his English language test. Or perhaps you're like Sandra, who is changing fields and needs the right pre-requisites to study at university, or Adesh who has been out of studying for a while and wants the right courses to get him prepared for university. No matter your situation, there is a free course at Pre-ued.

How has your business progressed since you won the 'Try It' award?

So far we've published our first course, with people from over 26 different countries taking it. Progress has had its cycles of fast-paced growth and slow growth. I have been able to enjoy the journey through the busy times and the quieter times. Since each course is free, we also piloted offering paid features such as live one-to-one tutorials. This went really well, with about a third of people who took the course actually booking a live one-to-one tutoring session. We didn't have the capacity to handle all those requests though! But it did teach us that we have a good idea, with a sustainable way of creating revenue.

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

Don't pay for ads too early. Advertising is the tax you pay for not doing due diligence. It's good to first have a story, tell it, grow organically & then amplify your growth through ads.... but more simply if you've got a great idea.... just do it!

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Oh it really would have been far slower! I don't think I would have been that motivated to see results unless I had shared the idea. Even more importantly was the thought that someone else believed in the idea, and were backing up their beliefs by helping fund Pre-ued. The award is also helping us to reach out to more students and build a better platform to serve people taking our courses.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

Starting up a business has really taught me the value of being crazy enough to believe in your idea. We all have bright ideas, from thoughts of solving sanitation in a community to the idea of building an app or a platform that people from around the world use. Thoughts of creativity seem to flood our minds as people. But when that one thought lingers on; keeps you awake, keeps you working, makes you sacrifice time, resources and energy you know you have something to live for. You're however usually the only person who thinks so much of the idea, at least for a little while! So I think before anyone else believes in your idea, it's really important to first believe in it yourself.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

I've learned to have a lot of coffee. I'm kidding. If there is one thing I've learned it's to not only 'think outside the box' but to 'think like there's no box'. I recall earlier this year when Pre-ued had a stand at the BETT Show, the largest educational technology event in the world, attracting over 35,000 visitors. I was really excited to get to share a space in the Excel centre with some of the biggest names in technology, from Microsoft to Pearson, not forgetting the technology supergiant, Google. These are firms that have been doing phenomenal work for many years, so my fear was that we weren't going to get any attention, publicity or visitors to our stand, which was in the innovation zone and smaller in size. I for sure didn't have the cash to build a stand the size of Pearson's, Microsoft's and Google's! So I thought it best to do something different that would get us noticed. So I created a brick wall theme, using brick wallpaper, which gave a really fresh and innovative look. We then simply wrote on the wall "Publish your course for free" - this worked really well! We were able to really get noticed and get our brand out there. We had some phenomenal visitors who noticed our creative stand, including Dov Moran - the inventor of the USB stick. Most importantly, we had some great leads and partnerships to work with in widening access to education.

"Thoughts of creativity seem to flood our minds as people. But when that one thought lingers on; keeps you awake, keeps you working, makes you sacrifice time, resources and energy, you know you have something to live for."

What are your future plans for the business?

We want it to be possible for anyone around the world to take high school/secondary school courses and receive real-credit for them.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

I definitely would! The business support, from start-up to the journey in scaling up your venture is unparalleled. Even more than the monetary support, you'll get a lot of inspiration and encouragement from the Careers & Enterprise team. On the start-up journey, when things can be quite tough in the initial stages, that support is really needed. It's also a great feeling to know there are people who believe in you as a person and in your idea. So go on, apply!

**www.pre-ued.com**

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James Borrell



Business:
Discover Conservation

Subject Studied:
PhD Conservation Genetics

Top tip for other students setting up a business:
Just start; learn as you go along.

Award Won:
Try It

Discover Conservation is an innovative online social enterprise platform. It aims to inspire an increased awareness in conservation by sharing adventurous real-life stories from scientists working in remote and challenging locations around the world. As well as learning about important issues such as deforestation and climate change, readers will also discover what it's like to dive on a remote and pristine coral reef, or trek for days through virgin rainforest, learning answers to questions such as 'what are the highlights and most moving experiences?', and 'what are the most challenging aspects of working in the field?'

Most importantly, all of the profits generated through advertising on the website will go towards bursaries for the next generation of young biologists to embark upon projects of their own.

How has your business progressed since you won the award?

Since winning the 'Try It' award, I've been able to invest in developing an online platform. Having outside input from designers and web developers has been hugely valuable, and will really help to create the engaging style that I am hoping for.

"Focus on your central concept, your product, or your aim: in my case, to produce brilliant content from inspiring scientists, and then to generate lots of funding for young biologists."

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Without the funding, things would be progressing much slower. It would also have been much harder to achieve the professional design that we are currently developing.

For me, winning the funding was also a huge validation of the idea. I didn't know what people might think, and whether they would like it. The comments from the panel were very positive, and really inspired me to keep developing the idea.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

It's taught me that the most important thing is just to get started; it's OK to keep learning as you go along. I've been thinking about doing this for some time, but having the deadline for the 'Try It' awards really encouraged me to pitch my idea and see where it took me.

It's also important not to get distracted. Focus on your central concept, your product, or your aim: in my case, to produce brilliant content from inspiring scientists, and then to generate lots of funding for young biologists. There are lots of other aspects to business, but remember what is most important to yours.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

Yes, the experience really encouraged me to think about my unique selling point (USP), and how I could persuade the enterprise fund panellists that this was a social enterprise worth supporting.

What are your future plans for the business?

At the moment I'm concentrating on getting the platform online and attracting the first round of advertisers. In the future, I have a huge number of ideas (too many!). I would love to explore whether we can make the concept even more engaging, perhaps through designing lesson plans based on conservation fieldwork, or doing Skype Q&A with scientists in the field.

The 'Try It' fund has also taught me never to miss an opportunity, so if anyone is interested in getting involved or developing these ideas, get in touch!

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

Without hesitation! What have you got to lose?



www.jamesborrell.com
www.discoverconservation.org

Charlotte Downs



Business:

XYZ (a product of Cinter Design)

Subject Studied:

MEng Design and Innovation

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

Take advice from people that you trust but never commit to anything you are not comfortable in doing or fulfilling.

Award Won:

Grow It

XYZ is an exciting construction platform. It offers limitless, imaginative and expansive play. XYZ supports exploration and interaction in a safe enclosed environment and looks to re-engage the young to experience risk through experimentation. It teaches the basic principles of engineering, creating an ever growing demand as a learning tool for all levels, including university. XYZ is the only construction set to enable integration of play with other toys, allowing children to quickly build structures big enough to climb on, under, or even within.

How has the business progressed since you won the award?

Since winning the 'Grow it' award we have been able to shorten our timelines for route to market, delving into critical manufacturing steps much earlier than expected. This gave us the capability to jump on an opportunity to attend the Gadget show live event which took place in Birmingham this April. We have recently launched pre-sales of limited edition XYZ tiles in sets of 50, 100 and 250 on our website at www.xyzbuilds.com. Due to the pace of our

growth, experts have been brought on board to assist us in the marketing and merchandising of XYZ so we can get it to consumers as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

The funding has played a huge part in the progress of XYZ. As a new enterprise, funding for developing the product was minimal and the injection of the 'Grow it' award has given us the opportunity to take the steps which we had carefully prepared for but not been able to act upon. Winning the funding has also given us the ability to take advantage of events and media that has been offered up to us.

"You really can't over-value a great team and I'm very lucky to have my business partners."

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

When nurturing a business, rewards are offered at every step of its growth. Sometimes the rewards aren't obvious and patience is one of key skills I have developed through this experience. It can seem a massive challenge at times, but there is a huge sense of achievement to be gained by realising our goals. It's necessary to cultivate an understanding that there will be difficult times. Building a trusted support network has helped me to prepare for what lies ahead. It is also important to have a realistic personal outlook and understand the value of different perspectives and opinions. You really can't over-value a great team and I'm very lucky to have my business partners.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

In the early stages of a business the learning curve is exponential and inherently you undertake a vast array of roles. Not only do I use my existing skills and capabilities learnt in academia

and prior to starting the enterprise, but it has been essential to develop new ones to cover and accelerate particular areas of the business. Marketing, sales and forecasting are all things I have developed through my experience thus far.

What are your future plans for the business?

Our plans are to make a profitable, sustainable business through slow organic growth with a strong reputation for sustainable practice, design excellence and customer satisfaction. We hope to create employment and to constantly challenge the systems and practices we encounter every day.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

Yes, it has allowed us to make valuable progress in bringing XYZ to market. I would like to advise that applicants think carefully about how the funding could be best utilised for their enterprise.

www.xyzbuilds.com

Twitter: @XYZBuilds



Enterprise Awards

Eric Orlowski



Business:

The Executive

Subject Studied:

BSc Geography with Management

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

Don't do everything yourself. Have a strong team to work with. You can't excel at everything.

Award Won:

Grow It

'The Executive' magazine is a men's luxury lifestyle magazine based in London. The Executive differs from many other lifestyle magazines by incorporating topics which are typically kept apart. The four archetypes are Business, Style, Technology and Travel.

The Executive can be found across a variety of venues; typically hotels, clubs, bars & lounges. Whilst based in London, The Executive has since expanded its distribution to other cities in Europe, namely Paris, Copenhagen and Stockholm.

How has your business progressed since you won the 'Grow It' award?

The Executive's main goal right now is to widen our digital distribution and become more accessible across all digital platforms. As such, we have elected to create a cross-platform app, allowing us more seamless digital distribution. Due to the 'Grow It' award, the Executive have been able to invest in the development of an app, which is currently underway. With a little bit of luck it will be available to launch for our summer issue this year.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Had we not received the funding from the 'Grow It' award, we would have been unable to commit to creating a digital app, thus halting our development into a more digital market – an existence which currently is mandatory for a successful magazine.

Additionally, without the creation of an app, it would have become substantially more difficult to effectively form collaborations with other companies, as digital distribution, as well as physical distribution, is now seriously considered. Lacking on this point would be greatly damaging to the magazine's ability to stay afloat.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

Setting up a business has taught me a plethora of things; both large and small. The most important things I've been taught from this whole experience are threefold. Firstly, make sure you have a strong plan. Always make sure you know what you need to do, what you are doing, and to what end. Of course, plans can change, and they often do, but having a well-defined goal allows you to keep track of your progress a lot easier. Also, it allows you to question whether what you are doing is actually necessary to the business, thus eliminating any potential time-wasters. Secondly, don't be afraid to have a team, and don't be afraid to rely on them. You cannot be an expert on everything, and you most certainly cannot always do everything there is to do. Having a small and loyal team helping you set up the business can not only be very helpful, but it can spell the difference between success and failure. Finally, don't give up. At times it's frustrating, or stressful, or altogether bleak. But don't give up; redefine your plan if you have to, change the timeframe but don't scrap a project because it isn't working out exactly the way you envisioned it to. Learn to work with your own mistakes, and to effectively turn them around.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

It is impossible not to learn something from an experience like this. The number one skill I've learned is how to effectively create, design and execute strategies – something which sometimes is easier said than done.

I have also gained insight into, and more in-depth understanding of the publishing and printing industries – naturally a necessity for running a magazine. However, in learning more about how the publishing industry functions, it has also brought about more understanding of how other industries are connected to it, thus allowing us to understand how to begin collaborations with other companies.

Finally, there has also been a lot of focus on sales and contracts – something I severely lacked experience with prior to beginning the project; but something I (and others in the team) have been forced to learn and master.

What are your future plans for the business?

In short; to keep the magazine going, and to grow it as much as we can. We feel that we have done very well so far, and for a project that began as a modest 'what-if' question, we are

all excited to see how far we can take it, and for how long, especially as we enjoy what we are working on. It is something the whole team can feel pride over.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

I would definitely recommend the 'Grow It' award programme to other students. Firstly, the prize money is enough to make a difference for a small start-up, which is important, but also the overall experience is valuable. Learning how to successfully fill out an application with a business plan, followed by having to pitch the idea to a panel is a valuable experience, which in itself is worth a lot for any aspiring entrepreneur.

“We feel that we have done very well so far, and for a project that began as a modest ‘what-if’ question, we are all excited to see how far we can take it, and for how long, especially as we enjoy what we are working on.”



Enterprise Awards

Ariel Kamara



Business:
Wild Heart Chocolates

Subject Studied:
Design and Innovation MEng

Top tip for other students setting up a business:
Go for it! Now is a great time to try things out. Especially since such great support is available from Queen Mary.

Award Won:
Try It

We are Ariel and Daniella, raw chocolate makers. This chocolate business has evolved out of a product we love. We developed a recipe for delicious, nutritious, healthy chocolates that you will all love too. Our raw chocolate truffles are packed full of natural ingredients and goodness; we use single origin organic fair-trade Cacao butter and powder, super Lucuma, and it is sweetened only with organic date syrup! We fill them with raw date brownies, fresh almond milk ganache and coconut almond fudge.

What is raw? Our chocolate has never been heated above 47 degrees Celsius, which means that it keeps all its beautiful mineral properties intact at their most nutritious and delicious. There is no dairy, gluten, soy or added sugar. Instead our wonderful flavour comes from using the very best ingredients; good quality cocoa

products, fruits such as mango, goji berries, mulberries, dates, coconut, nuts and seeds. We like to pack each chocolate with as much goodness as possible.

How has your business progressed since you won the 'Try It' award?

Before 'Try It' our business was really just an idea, something we wanted to do in the future. We had begun to take an active approach to our health, which is how our recipe was developed. This chocolate left us feeling happy, healthy, energised and free of guilt. So we had a product that we thought had potential (friends and family insisted on us selling it!), but we didn't really know where to begin. Since we won our 'Try It' award we have begun to sell our chocolates, catered our first event, and are now working on our website. Things really feel like they are coming together, and it has all happened so quickly.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Yes, starting a business from scratch seemed like such a huge impossible step and neither of us were sure about where to start. 'Try It' provided us with the motivation to take that first step. Just going through the presentation process helped us to focus and begin building our business plan. The money was an amazing help and gave us confidence and security to get things rolling.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

This experience has really shown us how much we are capable of. Before 'Try It' neither of us really knew the first thing about starting a company, but we quickly learned about company structure, property rights and we are now learning about marketing and branding.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

Yes we have definitely developed many new valuable skills as we have faced each new stage of our business. We have also had the opportunity to meet other start-ups and have mentoring from professionals, through which we also gained knowledge from their experiences.

What are your future plans for the business?

Our goal is to reach as many customers as possible. We would absolutely love to shout from the roof tops that eating healthily and leading a healthy lifestyle does not mean denying yourself all the delicious treats you enjoy, but rather eating them at their most nutritious. This is real food. We would like to expand our range of products and start up our website. We would also like to begin shipping overseas.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

Yes, the support we have received and continue to receive is invaluable. We cannot even begin to express our thanks for all of the amazing advice and opportunities that we have been given. Starting a new business can be a scary thing and to have all that support so readily available to you is amazing. The process of applying for and then also winning the 'Try It' award really helped to give us the confidence and push we needed to get things started.

To try our delicious chocolates check out our Facebook page:
www.facebook.com/wildrawchocolate



“Try It” provided us with the motivation to take that first step. Just going through the presentation process helped us to focus and begin building our business plan. The money was an amazing help and gave us confidence and security to get things rolling.”



Enterprise Awards

Ismail Moghul



Business:
Muon Code

Subject Studied:
Biomedical Sciences

Award Won:
'Try It' (2013) and 'Grow It' (2014)

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

"Setting up a business is not as simple as it may seem; it requires a lot of organisation and dedication."

Muon Code is a small enterprise that provides professional-looking and engaging websites to existing and developing companies. We also design iconic logos and high quality user interfaces for apps and web-apps.

How has it progressed since you won the 'Try It' award?

In the last 3 months, we have signed a number of contracts with various clients. We have made a responsive website, designed a number of logos and are currently working on a number of other projects.

"The most important thing I learned was that starting my own business was not as impossible as I once thought it would be."

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

The 'Try it' Fund has given me a huge opportunity in the enterprise world, in providing the necessary start-up funds and the support to start my own business. Without this support, I probably would have never started a business; at least not in the next 4-5 years.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

Setting up a business is not as simple as it may seem; it requires a lot of organisation and dedication. Through setting up this business I have been able to develop a huge range of skills, from basic organisation skills to accounting skills.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

I have learned a lot from this experience, from learning how to

secure deals with clients to how to deal with difficult clients by being professional yet assertive. However, the main and probably the most important thing that I learned was that starting my own business was not as impossible as I once thought it would be.

What are your future plans for the business?

I wish to take my business to the next stage by diversifying and providing extra services on top of the graphic and web designing I currently provide; specifically I am looking at designing and developing business solutions systems, apps and web-apps.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

I would recommend the awards programme to other students who have an idea, since it provides you with the opportunity to actually take it to the next level.



Priya Srirajan



Business:

Priya's Cakes

Subject Studied:

Computer Science and Mathematics

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

Believe in your brand, if you don't nobody else will.

Award Won:

Try It

Priya's Cakes specialises in making bespoke cakes for all occasions, whether it's "just because" you fancy a sweet treat, or need something for the event of the year!

How has it progressed since you won the award?

Social media is a fantastic tool to promote small businesses. The Priya's Cakes Facebook page in particular is a great way to advertise. Since winning the award, I have been able to promote my page significantly. I have gained over 400 likes in the past few weeks alone!

"You can never be too organised. There will always be something that pops up unexpectedly and it will catch you off guard. You need to prepare the things you can beforehand so that you can focus on the unexpected when the need arises."

The funding has also allowed me to get business cards designed and printed. This was a good investment for Priya's Cakes as people put them into their purses or wallets, whereas leaflets tend to get thrown away. I have also gained a better sense of direction, in terms of what my brand represents and where I want the brand to be by the end of the year.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Definitely! Living on a student budget is hard enough, never mind investing some of it into a small business. I had come to a halt as I couldn't financially afford to advertise or invest more into the brand in terms of purchasing new tools and equipment.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

You can never be too organised. There will always be something that pops up unexpectedly and it will catch you off guard. You need to prepare the things you can beforehand so that you can focus on the unexpected when the need arises. Make sure you do your market research and research your competitors! Never underestimate the power of Google.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

I've definitely gained a lot of confidence. After being invited to numerous networking events, I don't feel so awkward talking about my brand and myself! I'd happily strike up a

conversation with anyone and even go so far as to give my card to someone after a short conversation, which I definitely wouldn't have done before!

What are your future plans for the business?

In the near future, I hope to continue building and growing my brand. I'd eventually love to see my cakes at big corporate events. My dream is to cater London Fashion Week. Imagine those fashion-inspired cupcakes!



Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

Absolutely! After speaking to friends and acquaintances at other universities, I have realised how great an opportunity the scheme is and so I'd definitely advise other students to take advantage of it. Financially it is amazing. However it also opens doors that wouldn't be opened otherwise and puts you into contact with like-minded students and people that you may not meet in your everyday surroundings.



www.facebook.com/priyacakes

Contact: priyascakes6@gmail.com
priyascakes – Instagram

Enterprise Awards

Ashley Smith



Business:
STAG Music

Subject Studied:
Environmental Science with Business Management

Top tip for other students setting up a business:
Be your own boss and just do it – stick with it and you won't look back!

Award Won:
Grow It

STAG Music are live music specialists. We provide live music, event production and sound & lighting hire for events across London and the UK. The most common types of events that we work on are weddings, corporate events, graduations and parties. We work alongside London's top musicians from Conservatoires such as the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Royal Academy of Music & Trinity Laban to ensure our performances are always of the highest level.

How has your business progressed since you won the 'Grow It' award?

Since winning our 'Grow It' award we have seen a rise in bookings. So far this year we have secured £41,000 of new bookings, which is considerably more than our first year of operation. We have worked with many new clients, including Barclays, top hotels such as Claridge's and Grosvenor House, and Britvic for the launch of a new drink - the 'J20 Glitterbomb'. With this increase in bookings we are able to support more up-and-coming musicians and give them the performance platforms that they deserve. To date we have worked with 95 young musicians and have provided them with opportunities throughout the country.

When we won our 'Grow It' Award we invested in a top of the range PA system. This has since been very popular with our clients and has enabled us to become an Entertainment and Event Production Company. Furthermore, we are now in the process of setting up a division of the company called 'STAG Audio' that will be dedicated to audio hire. As part of this extension, we are keen to continue keeping up with demand and are investing in more new equipment.

Would your progress have been different if you hadn't received the funding?

Yes! Very different. Our award gave us a cash injection which was invaluable, enabling us to work on far more new events and purchase new equipment. It is hard to get a business loan as a young start-up, as we do not necessarily have the assets required to secure a loan. Our 'Grow It' award gave us a huge initial boost – we have already seen its effects and will continue to benefit for years to come.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

Setting up your own business is not easy at all. It requires a huge amount of dedication, patience and hard work. At STAG Music there are 3 core team members. We all run the company in addition to undertaking other employment to ensure that all of our initial profit is re-invested into the company. This will allow us to continue developing to a point where we are fully functioning and operational.

I think that a massive part of running a business is to not lose sight of your initial aims. Along the way there are always great highs and lows, and you cannot lose touch of reality and your goals. You must learn to trust everyone involved in your campaign, and to ensure that everything is well delegated and planned. It is hard work but extremely exciting and rewarding as well!

"Since winning our 'Grow It' award we have seen a rise in bookings. So far this year we have secured £41,000 of new bookings, which is considerably more than our first year of operation."

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

When you decide to launch a new business you are the 'business' and you must quickly learn to do everything. On a day-to-day basis I am in charge of sales, artist booking & management, web development, marketing, accounting, strategy and networking. Before starting STAG I had a small amount of experience in sales, but that was it. The company has thrown me completely out of my comfort zone, but as a result I now have a huge amount of experience in all aspects of business which I would never have gained otherwise.



What are your future plans for the business?

Over the next year we are aiming to secure £100,000 worth of bookings and to continue to grow our STAG Audio and STAG Lighting sectors to keep up with increasing demand. We will also be looking further afield across the UK and are starting to look at international markets for live music. When we first set up the business we always said we wanted to be the leading corporate event organisers and STAG Music was the way in which we would get into this very competitive market.

Would you recommend the 'Try It/ Grow It' programme to other students, and why?

Yes, I would thoroughly recommend the 'Grow It' programme to other students. It has proved invaluable to our business, allowing us to develop and expand STAG at an incredibly quick rate. We have been able to realise our initial dreams and goals with the company, and are continuing to expand as a result of this programme's support.

For all enquiries please email Ashley:
Ashley@stag-music.com



www.stag-music.com

Facebook – www.facebook.com/stagmusic

Twitter – www.twitter.com/stag_musicuk

Oluwaseun Daniel Orija



Business:

Daniel and Lade

Subject Studied:

Chemistry with Biochemistry

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

Believe, work hard, keep believing, work even harder and never stop believing.

Daniel and Lade is a bespoke menswear brand. We aim to provide our clients with their dream outfit to make their occasion unique and an unforgettable experience. We provide custom made-to-measure blazers, shirts, suits, tuxedos, trousers, overcoats, shoes and more for any occasion which are all tailored to the customer's specifications. Daniel and Lade bespoke menswear is committed to providing the befitting man with a fitted suit at a fitting price.



Why did you decide to start your company?

We provide affordable luxury garments and shoes, bridging the gap between quality and cost.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

To always be prepared by planning effectively, working hard, believing, and when things are not going as planned, to pick myself up and keep at it. Most importantly, to review my performance and learn from my mistakes in order to keep improving.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

Business development, branding, marketing, social media marketing, fashion design and photography.

Did you receive any support from the Careers & Enterprise team?

Yes I did, I had more connections and access to information that I'd otherwise have not been aware of. They also gave me access to more networking and funding events.

What are your future plans for the business?

To continue with my vision of making the brand a household name globally. In the short/medium term, I plan to effectively market our 3D platforms to increase revenue, and to set up a one of a kind hi-tech bespoke store with augmented reality by 2016.



www.danielandlade.co.uk



Tier 1

Chris Verbick

**Business:**

Cinter Design

Subject Studied:

MEng Design and Innovation

Chris Verbick received endorsement from Queen Mary for the Tier 1 (Graduate) Entrepreneur Visa.

How did you find out about Tier 1?

I spent a few months researching my options, starting one year before my visa expired. I spoke to an immigration lawyer and studied the Home Office policy documents. I also searched through forums and attended informational sessions, both

at Goldsmiths College and at Queen Mary. I also spoke to contacts that held various visas.

What was your experience of the application process?

The application process is intensive. The team at Queen Mary will look intensely at your business proposition. The in-person interview will examine every aspect of your business, so you must be well prepared. It was challenging, but ultimately beneficial to my business. There was an unexpected benefit to the intense interview process: once it came time to apply to the Home Office, everything was in place and I received my visa within two weeks.

What has the visa allowed you to do that you wouldn't have been able to do without it?

Stay in the UK and start a company! I was apprehensive about seeking out employment in the UK as a non-EU citizen. I also had a fantastic team of friends that were keen to start a business. Going back to the USA was

certainly an option but I had a really good feeling about Cinter.

How did you come up with the idea for your business?

Cinter is a direct reflection of the valuable skills that I gained in the Design and Innovation programme. I came to the UK specifically for a very unique programme and building a business with a team that had a similarly unique and valuable skillset made for an easy decision. Within Cinter we have many business ideas. The company itself was much more a professional practice than it was an idea.

What are your future plans – do you think you'll stay in the UK to pursue Cinter?

If the business succeeds and grows, I will remain in the UK as long as it takes. I've already been reading policy documents for the next stage—the Tier 1 Entrepreneur visa—which brings with it a whole new set of challenges for 2016. Time will tell. First, I've got to get this business rolling.

“The in-person interview will examine every aspect of your business, so you must be well prepared. It was challenging, but ultimately beneficial to my business.”

What is Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur)?

Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) is an immigration category that allows graduates with genuine and credible business ideas and entrepreneurial skills to stay in the UK to start up a business under the supervision of their UK academic institution.

Queen Mary University of London is an authorised endorsing body of Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur). To apply for endorsement through Queen Mary, students are required to complete a written application in the form of a short business plan, and to prepare a video pitch. If a student passes this first stage, they are invited to present their business idea to a panel of judges from the university. The judges ask them further questions about their idea to test its credibility.

If a student successfully receives endorsement and the UK government grants the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) immigration permission, Queen Mary will monitor the progress of the business via a series of four 'staged gate meetings' over the year.

Eligible students are invited to attend enterprise 1-1 appointments, events and workshops for support with their idea, both before they apply for endorsement, and if they successfully receive it. Under the Tier 1 permission students are also eligible to apply to the Enterprise Prize Funds via the Careers & Enterprise Centre.

For more details visit: <http://www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/students/enterprise/tier1>

Tier 1

Jinseok Choi



Business:

Salt & Vinegar Tour Company

Subject Studied:

MSC Marketing

Top tip for other students setting up a business:

Do not try to sell what you like to sell but sell what customers like to buy. Passion and interests are not enough to start a business; substantial market research and finding a niche market are critical.

Jinseok Choi received endorsement from Queen Mary for the Tier 1 (Graduate) Entrepreneur Visa.

My business, Salt & Vinegar Tour Company is a tour company which provides various guided tour services in Korean language in the UK. It especially targets independent tourists who are managing their own itineraries by providing various guided tour programmes of London (museums, galleries and other city attractions) and its suburban areas. There are few guided tour services in Korean language in the UK, although there are more than 150,000 Korean visitors to the UK every year. I found a niche market there.

How has your business progressed since Queen Mary endorsed you for the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa?

The endorsement from QMUL helped me to stay here in the UK for a year initially to set up and run my business, with the possibility of extending the endorsement to a second year if I meet my goals. It takes quite a long process to set up a business as a foreigner. I have been sorting out the administrative works such as getting a National Insurance number, registering the business and setting up a business bank account before I'm ready to trade.

What has the experience of setting up a business taught you?

Although I am still in the early stages, it has taught me how to deal with every detail in various areas of work, and what the responsibility of being an owner of a company feels like. Unlike being an employee, which I've experienced before, I need to be aware of various areas of work at the same time rather than focusing on just one element.

Have you learned any new skills from the experience?

I've learnt and I am still learning how to deal with people as I make more contacts for the business. Particularly, as an owner of the company and also, as a tour guide, it is a significant skill to interact with many people. This skill helps me to deal with many things happening at the same time. People are the best assets to have for my business especially. I have also applied to acquire an official guided tour certificate (called 'Blue Badge') which will improve my tour guiding skills.

What kind of support did you receive from the Careers & Enterprise team after you were given the endorsement?

The Careers & Enterprise team has helped me in every step of establishing the company. As they encourage me to plan details and manage my time I've been able to set up and evaluate my business more critically. Also I have taken the opportunity to apply for the

Blue Badge course which the staff suggested I take in order to help the future development of my business. It is always helpful to have someone to discuss ideas with and to get advice from.

“Applying for the Tier 1 visa endorsement scheme was a great opportunity to start a business after graduation in the UK.”

What are your future plans for the business?

I am now starting the business with a few guided tour programmes. However, I am going to develop more creative and more varied programmes by running study groups for our tour guides as the customers' interests change. The study groups for the tour guides will keep their information up-to-date and will develop their knowledge constantly. By learning about London and the UK we can guarantee the best quality guide services for our customers. Also in 2 years, by working together with freelance tour guides we will provide more programmes than any other tour companies that provide Korean language services. Korean visitors will experience London and the UK with proper explanations from us.

Would you recommend the Tier 1 (Graduate Entrepreneur) visa to other international students?

Yes, of course. Applying for the Tier 1 visa endorsement scheme was a great opportunity to start a business after graduation in the UK. If you would like to start a new business rather than looking for a job in the UK as an international student, this scheme is the best option to choose.

Salt & Vinegar
Tour Company

www.snvttour.com

Competition Winner

Nishtha Chopra



Subject Studied:

PhD Electronics Engineering

Nishtha entered a competition to win a QMUL fully funded place to attend the Engineering YES training programme. Engineering YES is a business plan competition that is specifically designed for postgraduate engineering researchers to introduce them to the world of business. It is one of a number of external enterprise training programmes that QMUL Careers & Enterprise provide funding for via regular competitions.

Why did you want to take part in Engineering YES?

Currently I am pursuing a PhD in Electronics Engineering, and this competition especially focuses on Engineering Researchers who wish to

understand business, start-ups and industry. The programme provides a complete package to students, from mentorship to real business experience. I was tempted to apply for it, not only because of its credibility but also to break free from the regular lab/experiment life. It was indeed a great experience.

How did you find out about the QMUL competition to fund the programme?

I received an email from QMUL Careers & Enterprise. I keep track of their emails as they are very helpful in the long run.

What kind of activities did you do while you were at Engineering YES?

We attended amazing talks from elite industry professionals. The intriguing aspect of this was that many of the speakers were former PhD researchers or scientists, and had subsequently started their own business from scratch. It was a privilege to be amongst them and to share their experiences. We also had some tasks on professional networking, team work and elevator pitches. It was a three day event, and the last day was a business plan competition. To help us prepare for the competition we were all provided with personal mentorship on business development, marketing, finance, presentation skills and intellectual property. It was invaluable to connect with all the mentors.

What did you enjoy most from the three days?

I enjoyed the mentorship sessions where we could discuss the plan, our queries and future plans on a one-to-one basis. They were all genuinely interested to know about us and our future plans.

What was the most useful thing you learned?

After completing my entire programme, I learned a great deal about start-up businesses. I developed a particular interest in market analysis and business development.

How do you think Engineering YES will help your future work or study?

I am not yet sure what future holds for me, but I have now had a glimpse into the other side of the coin that is the business world. I will have understanding of both academia and industry, thanks to both my PhD and Engineering YES.

Would you recommend Engineering YES to other students?

I would strongly recommend Engineering YES to other students.

Enterprise Societies

Queen Mary has two societies that entrepreneurial students can get involved in to meet like-minded people.

QMUL Entrepreneurs



Our main aim as a society is to promote enterprise and entrepreneurship within Queen Mary. We want to create a framework for students that allows them to make their business idea

a reality. This means providing assistance from the initial idea phase to helping students to get in touch with potential investors. We work closely with QMUL Careers & Enterprise and have a large database of contacts that we can utilise. However, our aims are not confined to students who already have a business idea. We also hold events designed to promote creative thinking and other skills that are essential in today's competitive labour market.

Key achievements

Winner of a £3000 innovation grant from NACUE in 2014, which we will be using to develop our programme of activities in 2014-15.

Join Us

QME is the ultimate society for anyone interested in making a difference. We are looking for the best and brightest students who are interested in going out there and being successful. Bill Gates, Richard Branson, and Steve Jobs all took a chance with their ideas and changed the world. QME provides students with valuable experience, networking, and guidance, increasing your chance of becoming the next big thing!

QMUL Enactus



Enactus Queen Mary is a dynamic team of students who are passionate about transforming our local and international communities. We take

on various projects that are aimed at improving the quality of life and standard of living for those in need. Through these projects we hope to develop critical thinkers by equipping our members with entrepreneurial and management skills.

Our current projects are:

- 1. KERBB.** KERBB works with Barka UK, a Polish charity dedicated to helping homeless Eastern European migrants in crisis. We provide free consultancy services to Barka UK and we will be expanding our project by helping Barka UK to develop an enterprise arm to provide employment opportunities for their beneficiaries.
- 2. Pepperpot Consultancy.** The Pepperpot consultancy team works with The Pepperpot Centre, a once vibrant centre for the elderly Afro-Caribbean Community in West London. The centre has been in crisis after funding cuts and the team is now looking for ways to help it gain financial sustainability and increase membership figures.
- 3. (Un)wasted Potential.** Old Fadama is an illegal settlement in Ghana with scarce resources. With little support from the government, its people are forced to use toxic sources of fuel such as charcoal for their daily lives. Our team is

currently developing biomass briquettes, which are made from 100% waste materials that are readily available in Old Fadama to solve this problem. We hope to equip impoverished women with the skills to make these briquettes that they could sell to obtain an additional source of income to improve their standard of living.

Key Achievements

Qualifying to the opening round of the Enactus UK 2014 National Competition.

Join us

The diversity of our projects sees us requiring the talents of students from different fields, and everyone is welcome!



QM Enactus

Support at QMUL Careers & Enterprise

I have continued to receive support and guidance from Careers & Enterprise. The best thing is being able to send an email just asking for advice or suggestions on where to go next. It is always wonderful to get other people's opinions.

We asked our enterprise award winners:

“Did you receive any support from the Careers & Enterprise Centre after you were given the award?”

Here is a selection of what they said:

They were extremely helpful in arranging introductions with the appropriate Queen Mary staff while trying to arrange permission to operate on campus, as well as while exploring different ways to advertise the service to both students and staff. Both of which had positive outcomes and revealed new opportunities that may have not otherwise been realised.

Yes, the support we have received so far has been amazing; from business and legal advice to securing our first catering event. We were also invited to participate in their events, where we met other start-ups, made connections and even gained some new customers.

Yes! I have been invited to entrepreneur events and networking evenings, which I thoroughly enjoy and are very inspiring. I've even received a few orders through the recommendations of Careers & Enterprise!

Even after I received the award, I was blown away by the number of follow up emails I received from the Careers & Enterprise team. We learned about events & really great opportunities across the start-up scene, not only at Queen Mary, but in London as well.

The Careers & Enterprise Team have been hugely helpful. They have suggested all sorts of places that I can get support for specific aspects of my social enterprise, and have taken a genuine interest in seeing it develop. They have also helped introduce me to other award winners, and it's been very useful to share ideas and network.

From our first meeting with Rachel, the Enterprise Programme Coordinator, we have had more support and advice from the team than we could ever hope for. We were made aware of our ideas fitting into the social enterprise category and what we could do to give ourselves the best chances of winning the award. During the interview, the panel were able to see the passion in our vision and were keen to aid us with their expertise in our efforts to deliver success. Since then, we have been grateful for all their guidance and direction that has allowed us to progress.

In the early stages of business growth it is valuable to gain support and consult with experienced mentors and advisors who you trust. Careers & Enterprise provides a sounding board to discuss opportunities and challenges which the business faces. The centre also offers valuable advice in order to introduce focus to agile young businesses in order to accelerate growth.

Yes I did, I had more connections and access to information that I'd otherwise have not been aware of. They also gave me access to more networking and funding events.

I had my ideas set out before starting – the greatest support was their understanding of the potential my idea had.

3 Day Startup

Queen Mary held its first enterprise bootcamp in June 2014 as part of London's first dedicated Technology Week - a week-long celebration of the city's role as the digital capital of Europe.

Careers & Enterprise worked in partnership with the company 3 Day Startup (3DS) to facilitate the event, which hosted 33 students from universities across the UK, including 10 students from Queen Mary. The students gathered together to work in teams to develop businesses from seed ideas over the course of just 72 hours.

Day one saw students arrive with individual business ideas to pitch to the group. A blind vote was carried out to select the 7 most popular ideas, which were then developed over the next 2 days with the support of an experienced facilitator from 3DS, flown in from the United States, and mentors from a range of different organisations including Gumtree, Propercorn, UK Trade & Investment and app developers Pandapay.

On day two students were tasked with conducting market research to refine their ideas. They took to the street, made calls, and knocked on the doors of Google Campus to quiz executives and get feedback on their plans.

Students spent day three finalising and rehearsing their pitches. They were presented on the evening of Thursday 19 June at Mother London in Shoreditch to a panel of judges, including QMUL Vice-Principal for Public Engagement and Student Enterprise Professor Peter McOwan, and Fred Schmit, Austin-based serial entrepreneur.

Business ideas were primarily tech-based, including an app to gather 'mood analytics', and an app to support architects with property designs. Queen Mary hope to support a number of businesses from the bootcamp to get started via their 'Try It' Enterprise Prize Funds.



We hope to make the bootcamp an annual event at Queen Mary, so if you'd like to participate as a student in the next event, or would like to volunteer as a mentor or workshop facilitator please email: enterprise@qmul.ac.uk



Get Involved

To find out about more about the support we offer, including funding, Tier 1 (Graduate) Entrepreneur guidelines, enterprise events, and external competitions visit: <http://www.careers.qmul.ac.uk/students/enterprise>.

To arrange an enterprise appointment, call the front desk on 020 7882 8533 or call in to the Careers & Enterprise Centre, WG3, Queens Building.

If you have an enquiry about anything enterprise-related that you'd like email advice on rather than a 1-1 appointment, please email enterprise@qmul.ac.uk.

If you would like to be a mentor to a QMUL student entrepreneur, please email rachel.brown@qmul.ac.uk.

If you are a QMUL student and would like to mentor a student entrepreneur from Tower Hamlets College, please email rachel.brown@qmul.ac.uk.

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