

The Impact of Enterprise Support at Aberystwyth University

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At Aberystwyth University we are committed to:

- Encourage innovation from new ideas and actions, within an entrepreneurial context, striving to unlock individual potential
- Empower all our students, regardless of their subject area and level of study, to gain relevant skill-sets (including Entrepreneurial skills and competences) by ensuring these reside within the curriculum
- Embed employability (and, specifically, enterprise) skills across our range of programmes, including further opportunities for work experience, volunteering, international experience and other transferable skills
- Invest in the development of both the impact of our research and the entrepreneurial skills of our researchers
- Foster diverse mind-sets throughout the academic curriculum and via extra-curricular activities, specifically with regard to enterprise, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship, using the new EntreComp skills model

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The attributes we promote through our approach and vision aim to ensure our students and graduates are:

- Inclusive: in all that they do and with all who cross their paths
- Ingenious: in nurturing their skills to think outside the box and solve global (and local) problems
- Inspiring: in utilizing all opportunities that come their way, unlocking their future potential
- Independent: in developing them to be informed and confident citizens
- Individual: in creating their own unique career paths and contributions to the world

These attributes are particularly relevant to our graduates who are going on to set up and run new business and social enterprises.

Our Mission, in terms of Entrepreneurship, is to align our drive to engage, empower and equip our students in a way that complements the Regional economic priorities highlighted in the Economic Action Plan for Wales.

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The ‘Student journey’ at Aberystwyth in 2023-24 gave our students the opportunity:

- To engage with the concepts of entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship and business and social enterprise start-ups through “entrepreneurial insight events”; departmental talks; Freshers Fairs and the Careers Fair.
- To experience the inspirational stories of local, Welsh, Big Ideas Wales role models and Alumni presenters to inspire entrepreneurship
- To attend an on-going series of ‘equip’ workshops covering Market Research, Marketing, IP, Finance & book keeping, Tax, Networking, Digital marketing, Crowd-funding, etc. – incorporating Global Enterprise Week
- To take part in our annual *InvEnterPrize* – Student Ideas Competition
- To access one-to-one mentoring sessions with BIW business mentors, hosted on-line and in-person

- To take part in the Summer Start Up Week – This ran in June and was a full week of workshops designed to equip participants with the knowledge, skills and connections they will need to start their own businesses/social enterprise, or develop and grow their existing enterprise.

The IMPACT of Building an Entrepreneurial eco-system:

- Aberystwyth University is central to the entrepreneurial eco-structure in Mid Wales and we are committed to staying at the heart of it.
- We organise and host quarterly information-sharing sessions with Big Ideas Wales; the role model network, the Mid Wales Enterprise Hub; NPTC-Powys and Coleg Ceredigion, sharing resources where practicable.
- We maintain a link between the Mid Wales Entrepreneurship (information sharing) Network and the University’s Strategic Enterprise Group, which meets twice a year.

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The IMPACT of having a Strategic Lead to drive the entrepreneurship agenda at the University forward, as follows:

- To ensure that Entrepreneurship is adequately engaged with by the University’s Senior Management Team.
- To Chair the Strategic Enterprise Group, reporting its progress back to the University’s Executive Team.
- The Strategic Lead for Entrepreneurship is, in turn, supported by Faculty responsibility for Enterprise through the three senior Faculty Enterprise Champions. These are the three Faculty Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching. They are responsible for Entrepreneurial activity in their respective faculties.
- In turn, they are supported by “ACEs” (Academic Champions of Enterprise), who are responsible for Entrepreneurial activity in their respective teaching departments. Although the ACEs work individually, we have a system which coordinates all enterprise activities, enabling us to record and report back on this information.
- We have recently reinforced the AberPreneur brand & the work we do with some new marketing literature promoting new ‘Graduate Starts’. These leaflets feature two of our recent graduates who have gone on to start their own successful enterprises.

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Our “Partners in IMPACT” in 2023-24:

- AGCAS Entrepreneurship Task Group. Tony is part of the group which supports Careers Advisers to advise students on entrepreneurial matters (UK)
- EEUK – We are members of this Enterprise Educators organisation (UK)
- Antur Cymru - delivery of workshops & finance information for clients (Mid)
- BANC – delivery of workshops & finance information for clients (Wales)
- Business Wales/BIW - delivery of workshops & provision of mentoring (Wales)
- The Mid Wales Enterprise Hub (Mid)
- AberInnovations (Mid)
- Freelance Aberystwyth – we have a reciprocal relationship (Mid)

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Creating IMPACT through ‘Alumni Connections’:

- In 2023-24 we continued developing a more formal relationship with DARO, meeting with them on a regular basis to explore collaborative projects.

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Creating IMPACT through supporting Enterprise Clubs & Societies to accelerate entrepreneurship:

- By supporting these clubs & societies our aim is to harness the entrepreneurial mind-set within the different societies and groups whilst make them aware of the support offered through the Youth Entrepreneurial Grant Funding, to enable them to utilize the services offered to their full potential.
- In **2023-24** we continued to develop a close working relationship with the Clubs and Societies secretariat at the Students Union and scoped out the current clubs and societies, identifying those with strong entrepreneurial links.
- We looked at training gaps in terms of working with clubs and society officers and their needs for entrepreneurial competence based training.
- In **2023-24** we continued to work with Freelance Aberystwyth and its members.

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Creating IMPACT by promoting Start-up and Growth:

- In **2023-24** we continued to work ever more closely with the other Welsh colleges and Universities to plan, develop and run a series of all-Wales enterprise events for students and graduates.

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2023-24 IMPACT Achievements:

- We ENGAGED with **629** students
- We EQUIPPED **492** “event attendances and one-to-one support” for students and graduates supported with their business & social enterprise ideas
- We SUPPORTED **56** of these students/graduates to start trading as business or social enterprises
- We ENGAGED **20** Members of Staff to Champion this work (including **14** ACEs (Academic Champions of Enterprise) and **6** Careers Consultants)
- We SECURED **£22,500** in cash and **£4,000+** “in kind” from Private Investment to support this work



<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/careers/enterprise/>