



# Enterprise for all?

Kelly Goodwin reviews the Lord Young's report 'Enterprise for all' (June, 2014) exploring the implications for Higher Education (HE). Comments are provided from Maureen Tibby, Consultant in Academic Practice at the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and Rob Ward, the Director of the Centre for Recording Achievement (CRA).

**Parents living vicariously though their children**  
 In June (2014) the third part of the report on enterprise and small firms was released – 'Enterprise for all'. Written by Lord Young, adviser to the Prime Minister on small business and enterprise, the report focuses on the need to foster an enterprising attitude in formal and informal education as well as encouraging learners to enter self-employment. Recent statistics note a surge in enterprise activity for all age groups (BIS, 2013). 35% of the total adult population have stated that they aim to start their own business with 55% of those wishing to work for themselves aged between 18 to 30 years (Populus, 2013). Due to this fact 'Enterprise for all' reinforces further the need to embed within the education system teaching practices relevant to the world of work. As Maureen Tibby notes, "Increasingly, students are expected to be; innovative, adaptable, resilient, and flexible and to have an enterprising mind-set. Enterprise education enables students to develop the characteristics, attributes and skills that they need and that will enable them to make effective contributions to the economy and society."

**Enterprise 'E-star' Award**  
 The drive to raise the standard of employability education in Higher Education is such that methods are being proposed to incentivise universities to include enterprise activity and to recognise those who deliver the strongest enterprise ethos and student outcomes. The Duke of York will patron an Enterprise "E-star" Award which, it is hoped, will become a sought after accolade bringing with it enormous prestige.  
 The need for Higher Education to address enterprise and employability is clearly stated as is the need to understand career progression routes and for the curriculum to be aligned to industry needs

(Goodwin, 2012). What is new is the drive to transform the way that young people assess which academic institutions and subject areas offer the best educational and career prospects including opportunities for self-employment. A key recommendation from the report is the introduction of a Future Earnings and Employment Record (FEER) that identifies graduate employment rates and earnings in the short, medium and long term (10 years post).  
 FEER has several intentions: (1) to increase competition between universities raising the standard of employability and enterprise education; (2) to inform student choice about where to study by making clear the financial and economic return that might be expected including future employment and career prospects and (3) to enable national government and stakeholders to compare the effectiveness of institutions. It is proposed that this resource be used to advise young people about future academic choices and as a means to identify optimal pathways to achieve a chosen profession.  
 For some courses, career progression routes are not always clear or the earning potentials are considered low compared to other professions or both, however, such courses still have value due to learners choosing their degree pathway due to a passion for the subject area. Higher Education is now considered a serious economic decision and the introduction of FEER may however, have the potential to reduce the attractiveness of some courses to the more cost sensitive learner and their families. Higher Education programmes with unclear career progression routes and/or limited earning potential may need to consider carefully how this can be best managed when FEER comes to fruition.

FEER and accountability are not the only considerations that Higher Education need to be aware of. 'Enterprise for all' is a review that looks at creating lifelong experience of enterprise through real-life contact with business and work in 'all' levels of education starting at primary, continuing in secondary, Further and Higher Education. Careers Statutory Guidance recently published (2014) recommends that schools make an enterprise offer to pupils reinforced via a new national volunteer network of 'Enterprise Advisers'. These will be coordinated by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) who will work closely with school heads to advise about the ways employers can engage with the school. It is also recommended that local businesses, other occupations and professions are enlisted to provide real-life experience of the world of work and business engagement. The need to embed enterprise into curriculum materials and examinations is clearly stated as well as providing teachers with experience in business as part of their continued professional development. Accountability is important and how well schools engage with enterprise and employability learning will become a part of Ofsted school inspections.

**Schools to adopt an online record of students' extracurricular activity**  
 The review recommends that Schools adapt the curriculum to better prepare pupils for the work place but also proposes the introduction of an 'Enterprise Passport'. The passport will follow similar lines to the Higher Education Achievement Record (HEAR), which is currently the online method being adopted by Higher Education to record student achievement for activities where no formal credit exists. Like HEAR it is intended that the Enterprise Passport will be accessible by potential employers at any time.

**Higher Education needs to be aware that in the future work-related learning will be an Ofsted focus and pupils will be used to being able to evidence extracurricular enterprise via their Enterprise Passport.**

Prospective Higher Education students may arrive with a different set of expectations and, as Rob Ward notes, with "an increased awareness of the significance of the learning and sense of achievement that can result from activities outside the classroom - or lecture theatre – and how this might be important when applying for future opportunities." Pupils will have been guided from primary school, through secondary and Further Education to consider how they best develop their employability and to the need to record this effectively for external consumption. For those Higher Education programmes where employability is yet to be a resourced priority, there is a need to be aware of the increased employability focus within the curriculum in all levels of education pre-university. Ultimately, future Higher Education students may arrive with greater employability savvy reinforced by FEER directing student choice with an expectation to be able to progress this type of learning and personal self-development. It will take time to see how Lord Young's proposals are implemented allowing time for Higher Education to prepare effectively a curriculum that is robust enough to assure student progression in the areas of enterprise and employability. Coupled with the introduction of FEER, a failure to prepare adequately may have the potential to affect student satisfaction therefore league tables, recruitment and the potential longevity of some Higher Education programmes. ■



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