



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:



# Finalist's case study

## Royal Agricultural University Enterprise and Employability Enterprise Programme



### About the project

#### Summary

The RAU Enterprise Programme provides a robust and supportive educative programme for our students and recent graduates – from the embryo of an idea through to the launch of a fully tried and tested business. We do this through our Think it, Try it, Launch it, Grow it delivery model and at each stage provide relevant support ranging from workshops and competitions at each level through to peer and external business mentoring, trading opportunities and space to develop their business within our enterprise centre. We ensured that sustainability is integrated throughout this programme, from supporting social enterprise to adding sustainability criteria in our flagship business competition.

#### Profile

- Higher Education
- 1,100 students
- Country location on the edge of Cirencester

#### Project partners

We work with a number of businesses and without the support of our mentors, sponsors, judges and guest speakers we would not be able to deliver our programme, we are really grateful for all of their support. Businesses who have supported us include; Burges Salmon Law Firm, Pillow May LLP, DCS Group (UK) Ltd, NatWest and Old Mill Group to name a few.

### The results

#### The problem

The need to provide enterprising and entrepreneurial students with relevant support and guidance to launch their own businesses.

#### The approach

All extra-curricular activities offered by the Enterprise Programme have been placed within a framework making it easy for students to engage at the appropriate level:

- Think It – Find a good idea. Research it. See if people like it.
- Try It – Test the idea. See if people will buy it. Build a plan for launching the business.
- Launch It – Finalise the business model and plan. Make it happen.
- Grow It – Build the business.

#### Our goals

The purpose of all RAU Enterprise activities is to:

- Create awareness of the value of enterprise and entrepreneurship skills, knowledge and abilities amongst the RAU community.
- Provide inspiration to students, staff and alumni to follow their passion for business



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:



# Finalist's case study

- Give support to those students who wish to pursue an enterprising or entrepreneurial path.
- Enable progress to be made in the development of ideas from creation to concept testing to business start-up.
- Nurture the RAU enterprise and entrepreneurship eco-system.

## Obstacles and solutions

Obstacles	Solutions
Generating and evaluating business ideas	Our "Think It" level activities are designed to provide inspiration through guest speakers and tailored workshops which will teach students how to evaluate their business ideas. Our student entrepreneurs in residence also provide a peer mentoring provision so ideas can be openly and easily discussed.
Proving the concept	This is a critical stage of developing the business from an idea into reality. As such we offer "Try It" level workshops hosted by professionals such as business banking managers, accountants and commercial lawyers. We also provide students with the opportunity to apply for proof of concept funding. If successful, they will receive a small grant, a business mentor and access to hot desk and meeting space at Trent Lodge Enterprise Centre.
Successfully launching the business	If the concept has been well researched and their proof of concept findings have been positive. We will encourage students to make it happen. This will start with developing a business plan with the support of a business mentor and academics at the RAU. Students have the opportunity to submit this to our Grand Idea business planning competition. A key criteria within this competition is if the entrepreneur has addressed the environmental and social impact the business may have once launched. At our "Launch it" stage we will also provide support with the early sales via our trading opportunities at events such as BBC Countryfile Live and Big Festival.

## Performance and results

We have been running our Enterprise Programme in its current framework for two academic years. Over this time we have seen a significant increase in the number of students and graduates participating in the programme. During this time we have awarded over 35 proof of concept awards and supported almost 20 businesses successful launch.

This academic year (2016/17) has seen a further increase in engagement with the Enterprise Programme, with over forty students with concepts they wish to develop, enrolled in the programme by week 2 of term!

## The future

### Lessons learned

Our programme is currently in its third year which has provided us with the opportunity to review and amend some areas of the programme such as our competitions and events. We have developed a strong guest speaker portfolio who deliver great "Enterprise Wednesday" speaker sessions at each level, but finding the right speakers took time.



Green Gown  
Awards 2016



Dissemination  
supported by:



# Finalist's case study

We have also relaunched our Enterprise Society this year. The society provide the important social side by bringing together like minded students from all subjects and years to discuss ideas, visit local business and relevant tradeshows and conferences.

## Sharing your project

As our programme is designed to benefit the student body and enhance their experience whilst studying at the RAU, we have focused initially on internal communication. We have created a section on our University's VLE, send email updates to both staff and students and have spoken at staff meetings.

We have also created a film based on the programme which is on the Universities website and is shown at open days.

Now the project has developed we want to promote our programme and the businesses which have launched from it more proactively.

## What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

We are delighted to be nominated as a Green Gown Award finalist. It is fantastic to gain recognition for our programme, especially as we are a small and specialist institution.

## Further information

Katy Duke – Head of Enterprise  
Tel: 01285 889835  
Email: [enterprise@rau.ac.uk](mailto:enterprise@rau.ac.uk)  
Web: [www.rau.ac.uk](http://www.rau.ac.uk)