

GRADUATE START-UPS IN WALES



Universities
Wales
Prifysgolion
Cymru

WHERE IN WALES



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INTRODUCTION

Across Wales, universities play a crucial role in supporting and driving the Welsh economy. An independent study found that Welsh universities in 2015/16 generated £5bn of output and nearly 50,000 jobs in Wales. The nature of that economic contribution is broad, from directly employing staff to research and innovation links with communities and employers.

Perhaps an area that isn't always considered when examining the impact of our universities is the ways in which universities generate and support Start-ups. This takes many forms, for example staff at universities will often start spin-out companies based on their research work. But a key part of the start-up support universities offer is the support they provide to students and graduates.

Entrepreneurship by students and graduates has been an important focus for Universities Wales over the past 12 months. We have worked to highlight the innovative and valuable contribution these businesses make to Wales and the ways in which universities support those students and graduates on their Start-up journey.

Wales performs well on graduate Start-ups. The annual Higher Education Business and Community Interaction survey consistently finds that Wales outperforms the rest of the UK on the number of graduate Start-ups we have per capita and these Start-ups are more likely to last three years or more than those elsewhere in the UK. And, as such, student and graduate start-ups have the potential

be an important part of Wales' future economic prosperity.

The support that universities offer these Start-ups is broad including practical assistance on office space, bursaries to help with setup costs, and support in identifying and securing investment opportunities. Students and graduates also benefit from mentoring and advice from tutors, lecturers and dedicated enterprise staff who offer support on every step of the Start-up journey.

The Start-ups that we've engaged with throughout this work show us the diversity of businesses generated by students and graduates. From videogame developers and augmented reality companies to designer homewear businesses and forestry education social enterprises. Everyone's Start-up journey is different, and although all were at different stages of that journey they shared an enthusiasm and entrepreneurial spirit that should be championed and celebrated.

As a sector there is always more we can do. There are opportunities for us to provide a more consistent offer, and to build further links with local businesses that can help Start-ups further connect to their local communities. And similarly, there are opportunities for other stakeholders to

think about how they can offer good working space for Start-ups, and opportunities for Start-ups to meet, network and collaborate. The ability to share learning and support each other was a key theme that emerged from our conversations with these businesses.

This publication highlights a selection of just some of the 1,635 graduate Start-ups active in Wales and the ways in which each of our universities supports and encourages entrepreneurship. We would like to thank all those who have given their valuable time and engaged with us in this work and who have shared both how they have been supported in starting a business, and the things that could be done to help people like them in the future.



Julie Lydon

Professor Julie Lydon OBE,
Chair, Universities Wales

ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

Aberystwyth University is a leading research institution with a reputation for teaching excellence and high levels of student satisfaction.

Established as the first University College in Wales in 1872, Aberystwyth offers an extensive range of programmes across the arts, sciences and social sciences. They blend academic rigour with individual attention, developing discipline-specific knowledge alongside the skills their students need for lives of success.

Aberystwyth University supports students, graduates and staff who wish to start new businesses, particularly where these businesses are related to the knowledge and expertise of the University.

Whatever the student's current thinking or level of readiness their Careers Service is there to offer help

and advice on all aspects of turning their good idea into a great enterprise through their AberPreneurs service, which offers:

- Free Start-up workshops and presentations held on campus
- Free one-to-one Start-up mentoring from a professional business consultant
- InvEnterPrize - Aberystwyth University's annual £10,000 student ideas competition
- Business Start-up Week - a whole week, each June, of workshops and presentations for budding entrepreneurs
- Funding Advice
- Networking





Kerry Ferguson & Emlyn Jones Business: GWE Cambrian WEB

Great websites from Wales - specialising in bilingual website design and development, Kerry and Emlyn work closely with a range of businesses and organisations. They're also experts in digital marketing and social media.

"Attending Aberystwyth University provided us with great skills when it came to running our own business – including management, time keeping, confidence and resilience. There's also a great team at the University to help develop ideas that aren't on the usual career path, and a fantastic network to build on in the town."



For more information:



Louise Somerfield
Enterprise Administrator



abpstaff@aber.ac.uk



01970 622378



www.facebook.com/
AberUni.Enterprise



BANGOR UNIVERSITY

Bangor University provides their students with opportunities to develop their enterprise and entrepreneurial skills and to support those interested in taking their business ideas forward.

From Product Design students at the School of Education to those with a desire to explore their own ideas at Pontio's innovation spaces via the Enterprise by Design programme, students at Bangor have access to specialist facilities and support packages tailored to their needs. Students wishing to develop their business ideas even further also have access to incubation space at M-SParc, the University's Science Park on Anglesey.

Bangor University supports student entrepreneurialism by providing:

- Workshops to develop enterprise skills
- Guest speaker events
- One-to-one mentoring
- Funding to conduct market research or to develop enterprise skills

- Opportunities to develop enterprise skills at the annual Student Christmas Market
- Start-up placements
- Networking opportunities
- Enterprise competitions
- Participation in Enactus programme and Santander Universities Entrepreneurship scheme

Bangor University supports graduate Start-ups through:

- Business Start-up workshops
- Specialist Bootcamps for aspects such as Digital Marketing
- Free 6-months incubation at M-SParc
- Prototyping capacity at Pontio Innovation
- Test-trading at the annual Student Christmas Market

- Enterprise bursaries
- Pitching events
- Networking opportunities
- Start-up competitions



Jemima presenting at an employability event about the opportunities available in forestry



Mima Letts Business: Tree Sparks

Tree Sparks is a social enterprise on a mission to dispel the myths surrounding forestry and demonstrate that forestry careers are viable and hugely rewarding for everyone!

"I only started my own business because of the encouragement and support I received from everyone at Bangor University. I went from never considering being an entrepreneur to being a business owner, being able to see a business advisor, get funding for projects and support at competitions from B-Enterprising, encouragement from my lecturers and publicity from the corporate communications team".



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY



For more information:

 Lowri Owen,
Enterprise Projects Manager,
Skills & Employability Service

 01248 388424

 Lowri.owen@bangor.ac.uk

CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

Established in 2013, the Centre for Entrepreneurship (CFE) is Cardiff Metropolitan University's dedicated department for developing and encouraging students, graduates and staff to engage in entrepreneurship education.

The award-winning team includes entrepreneurship education specialists and experienced entrepreneurs who promote a modern take on entrepreneurial pedagogy and create a centre for excellence within the University.

In 2017 the Centre opened the newly named CF5 incubator and accelerator programme providing an eco-system for graduate Start-ups and an innovation hub for local businesses and Welsh graduates. CFE currently supports over 100 Start-ups and freelancers annually.

CFE offers:

- Dedicated Entrepreneurship Engagement Manager
- Newly appointed Entrepreneurship Education Lecturer to support the development of entrepreneurship pedagogy across the 5 academic schools
- Multiple events such as boot camps, workshops, networking and competitions each week.
- Active and funded Entrepreneurship Society
- Incubation space and accelerator to all UK graduates and entrepreneurs
- Start-up Visas for Cardiff Met graduates and UK Postgraduates
- Advice from established graduate Start-ups, including Santander Universities Student Entrepreneur of the Year and Cardiff Business Awards Young Business Person of the Year winners
- Access to investment network, angels, mentors and seed funding





Jenny Evans
Business: Jenny Kate
www.jennykate.co.uk

Jenny Kate is a luxury homeware and fashion accessory company, manufactured exclusively in the UK. The brand is passionate about celebrating British nature, manufacturing and promoting sustainability.

“Cardiff Metropolitan really helped take my business to the next level. The Centre for Entrepreneurship helped me work out how to target business customers and ultimately gave me the confidence to apply for the Santander Universities Entrepreneurship award. Winning this award gave me the seed money and confidence to rebrand and build Jenny Kate to be what it is today”.



JENNY KATE
OPEN THE DOOR TO NATURE

CardiffMet
MetCaerdydd



For more information:

 www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/entrepreneurship

 entrepreneurship@cardiffmet.ac.uk

 @CardiffMetEnt

 @CardiffMetEnt

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

At Cardiff University the Enterprise and Start-up Team empower students to bring their ideas to life. The team run events and workshops in and out of curriculum to enable students to think creatively, identify opportunities, solve problems and take action.

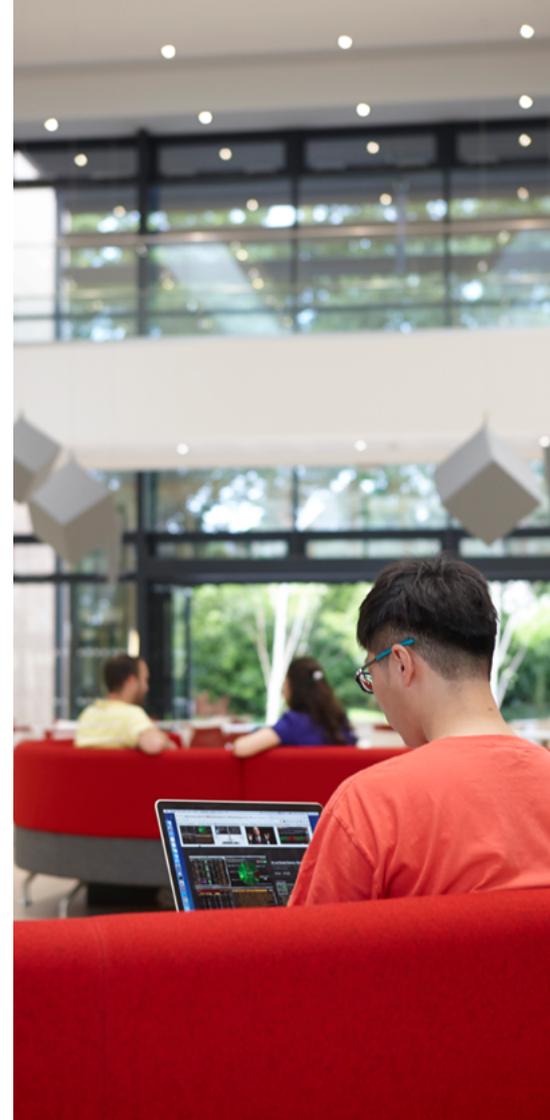
The team also offers a Start-up Support Package, a three-staged journey to take students from concept through to launch a venture. Working through the support package grants students' access to mentoring, seed-funding, desk space, accelerator programmes and our annual Student Start-up Awards with a prize pot of £30k worth of cash and support.

Cardiff University supports student entrepreneurialism through:

- Skills workshops
- Speaker and networking events
- Seed-funding

- Business mentoring
- Workspace
- Student Start-up Awards
- Accelerator week
- Test-trading events
- Hands on experiential projects in the local community
- Tier-1 Start-up VISA endorsement
- Free graduate office space for 12-months

Cardiff University also offers extensive support for graduate starting their own business. Up to 3-years after graduation Cardiff students can access all services provided by the Enterprise & Team and wider Careers & Employability department.





George Bellwood

Company: Virtus Tech

A Cardiff based virtual reality company that brings a new innovative way of showcasing businesses online and combing real time data through an interactive platform.

"Having gone to Cardiff University it has given me the ability to unlock multiple opportunities both in starting up my company and learning. They have provided me with endless support for my business and myself as an entrepreneur, either being given advice from experienced Cardiff academics or a general discussion with the Cardiff Enterprise team in the students' union".



For more information:

 Skills Hub, 2nd Floor Cardiff University Students' Union, Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3QN

 02920 781 442

 enterprise@cardiff.ac.uk

THE OPEN UNIVERSITY IN WALES

Students study with the Open University through supported distance learning, meaning they can study at a time and place that suits them. Two-thirds are in employment while they study and many will be running their own businesses or studying in order to pursue a business idea.

The OU offers a range of support for students who want to develop their entrepreneurial skills and is perfect for those who want to earn while they learn. Students can also take an Entrepreneurship module as part of their degree.

Innovation and creativity is at the heart of everything the OU does. They support students to access:

- A Badged Open Course on Entrepreneurship
- An Open Educational Resource for Start-ups
- An entrepreneurship competition for grant funding

- A boot-camp style accelerator weekend

The Open University is a member of the Welsh Government's Entrepreneur Champions network, Enterprise Education UK, and they work with partners such as Big Ideas Wales to embed enterprise, innovation and creativity into courses.

The OU in Wales supports graduate Start-ups through:

- Working closely with innovative companies that offer shared work space and collaborative projects
- Partnering with organisations that encourage creativity and innovation to support students on their entrepreneurial journey
- Supporting an entrepreneurship competition and accelerator weekend (open to students up to three years after they graduate)
- Support from the Careers and Employability Service





Natasha Davies Business: Because U Can

Because U Can provides mindset coaching packages to individuals, workshops to organisations on topics such as creating confidence, anxiety, goal-setting, mindfulness and navigating change, and Womenspire Leaders Groups.

“The Open University made things more accessible. As a single parent I was able to study and work part time. The first person in my family to attend university and not fully believing I could complete a degree, I decided to have a go, one year at a time. I started to question what else was possible? And have consistently asked this question since then.”

 **BECAUSE U CAN**



WALES CYMRU



For more information:

For OU students or those wishing to study with at the OU please visit:

 www.open.ac.uk/wales

For more information about the OU's graduate Start-up support please contact:

 RES-Student-Programmes@open.ac.uk

SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

Swansea University is a vibrant research-led academic institution and has been making a difference since 1920 in various areas of research and development. Their diverse and welcoming community thrives on exploration and discovery, with a balance of excellent teaching and research, alongside a superb quality of life.

Swansea University has made a commitment to enterprise and entrepreneurship and the development of their students' ideas and businesses, with the aim of driving research-led enterprise and creating a lasting impact on both the UK economy and the world.

Swansea University offers students a range of services to support entrepreneurialism:

- Advice & Mentoring
- Skill Development Workshops
- Entrepreneur Talks
- Test Trading Opportunities

- Entrepreneurial Work Placements
- Seed Funding through Competitions
- Acceleration Programmes
- Incubation Space
- Hackathons
- Christmas Market

Swansea University also provide support for graduate Start-ups:

- Funding
- Ongoing support
- Mentoring
- Intellectual Property (IP) Support and Commercialisation
- Incubation Space





Luke Green Business: GoGo Coffee

Based in Swansea, GoGo Coffee offers local Pembrokeshire roasted coffee on the go served out the back of a smart car. They serve all their drinks in compostable cups.

“Swansea University have helped me considerably in setting up GoGo Coffee. Their support has boosted my confidence at times when I was struggling for motivation. I had weekly mentor meetings with Dave Bolton and Kelly Jordan which allowed me to stay focussed on achieving regular short-term goals.”

“Go Compare works with the University and they offered me a £2200 grant to help financially.”



For more information:

✉ Enterprise@Swansea.ac.uk

☎ 01792 606060

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES

The University of South Wales (USW) is committed to providing students with inspirational teaching in stimulating environments to enable them to develop within a professional culture of creativity, enterprise, discovery and innovation.

USW's vision for entrepreneurship is that all students are equipped with enterprise skills regardless of subject area. This enables them to compete effectively in a globalised and digital market and establish businesses that meet the needs of the Welsh and UK economies.

To support this vision, USW is committed to developing a culture where entrepreneurship thrives and acts as a beacon of activity within the regional enterprise eco-system.

USW services to support entrepreneurialism:

- One-to-one mentoring sessions and business surgeries

- Bright Ideas Den - funding of up to £1,000 available to test and develop a business idea
- USW Freelancers Academy - where entrepreneurial students/graduates are prepared for Start-up
- 5-9 club - evening events working for those with a business idea they wish to explore

Services USW offers graduate Start-ups

- USW's incubator - Startup Stiwdio (Stiwdio Sefydлу) – has 18 desks (all with an Apple iMac), 4 offices and hot-desking space for up to 20 graduates
- Enterprise scholarships are available to cover cost of first six months at the incubator
- All tenants take part in the incubator boot camp which includes an intensive programme of Start-up support





Gemma Hallett Business: miFuture

miFuture connects digitally native Generation Z with suitable opportunities in the world of work. Their mission is to mobilise 100,000 young Welsh people towards employability and prosperity.

“Having obtained a PGCE from the University of South Wales, I spent 10 years in teaching. Through teaching and my pastoral commitment of supporting our leavers towards the world of work I identified a real need for a relevant solution, I took redundancy and returned to the University of South Wales to study Assessing Business ideas and Entrepreneurship to help ignite this entrepreneurship journey”.



For more information:

 Professor Dylan Jones-Evans, Assistant Pro-Vice Chancellor for Enterprise
 dylan.jones-evans@southwales.ac.uk

 www.startup.southwales.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID

“Widely recognised as one of the world’s foremost institutions in creativity-led entrepreneurship education...(UWTSD’s) publications have been leading international discussions” -*Yves Punie, EU Joint Research Centre, Seville*

UWTSD specialise in helping teach entrepreneurship to teachers. Creativity and innovation are at the core of UWTSD’s mission to transform, shape and develop futures, and it all relies on the ability to see new ways forward. They are proud to be recognised around the world for what they do, even the United Nations chose them as their place to learn about becoming entrepreneurial.

UWTSD has some of the highest number of active Start-ups in the UK!

With partners including Welsh Government and Big Ideas Wales, UWTSD offer a huge range of opportunities, including:

- One-to-One Meetings
- Creative Bubble supports student-led activities with a pop-up shop for exhibitions, performance, fundraising, networking and meetings
- Meeting with like-minded students, alumni and entrepreneurs
- Industry Links - projects, inspirational guest speakers and networking
- Intellectual Property and Creativity Workshops
- Enterprise Week events - held annually in November
- Institutional and Welsh Government funded support
- Extra-curricular activities, competitions and Start-up workshops

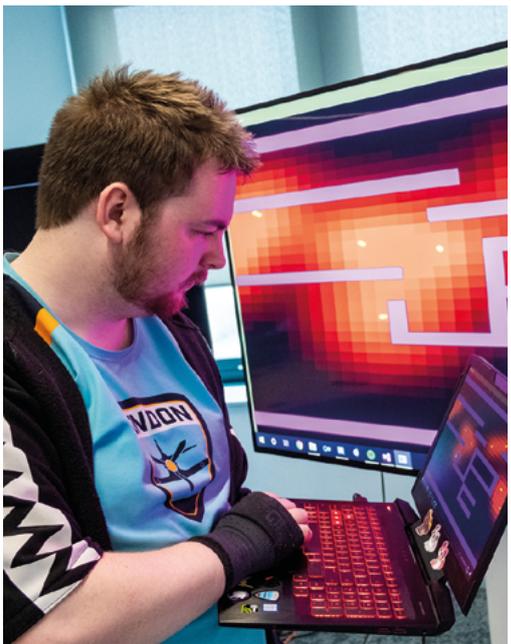




Daniel Huxtable Business: Fightwear Store UK

Fightwear Store UK designs Martial Arts gear, uniforms and accessories, has them manufactured from their suppliers in Pakistan & China and sells them around the world. All the products are custom designed by Daniel.

“Going to University was crucial in helping me start up my business I did not only receive mentorship I received the necessary technical skills from my graphic design course in order to make my business a success! Thank you UWTSd for everything you have done for me.”



For more information:

 www.uwtsd.ac.uk/for-business/enterprise/

 Kathryn Penaluna,
Enterprise Manager

 kathryn.penaluna@uwtsd.ac.uk

WREXHAM GLYNDŴR UNIVERSITY

Wrexham Glyndŵr University's Mission is to work in partnership to inspire and educate their students and enable social and economic success.

The Enhancing Entrepreneurship team provides students and graduates of Wrexham Glyndŵr University with a range of opportunities to help develop their enterprise skills and/or to support them in starting a new business. Whether they are interested in starting a business, freelancing or increasing entrepreneurial skills, the Enhancing Entrepreneurship team are there to help.

Services available to both students and graduates to support entrepreneurialism:

Events - Both internally and in collaboration with external partners, events are organised across the year. Events range from short one-hour sessions to full day conferences and include topics of interest to those at all stages of self-employment or just wanting to develop their entrepreneurial skills.

One to One support - Students and graduates can access one to one business Start-up support to help develop ideas, discuss steps and possible funding for self-employment, or discuss how to grow an existing business.

Business Start-up Space - Wrexham Glyndŵr University offers flexible business Start-up space for student and graduates to run their businesses.

Enterprise Lounge - Offering affordable shared office space on the main campus, ideal for early-stage businesses with desks starting at only £12 per week.





Alice Murray
Business:
Giggles and Games –
The Giant Game People

Giggles and Games provide confidence boosting fun activities through workshops and team building. We also arrange corporate events and hire giant games to wedding clients.

“Glyndŵr University helped me to start my business during my final year of study. They have supported me with relevant information and valuable contacts whilst boosting my confidence, in order to achieve my goals. The support is ongoing, even after graduation”.



For more information:

- : ✉ enhance@glyndwr.ac.uk
- 🐦 @WGUEnhance
- 📷 @wguenhance
- f @enhancing_ entrepreneurship





**Universities
Wales**
**Prifysgolion
Cymru**



Universities Wales
2 Caspian Point
Cardiff
CF10 4DQ



+44 (0)29 2044 8020



www.uniswales.ac.uk



info@uniswales.ac.uk



@Unis_Wales