

Jo Bolton, Business Adviser at the City centre site for Sheffield College, talks about how their top-down commitment to Enterprise builds on students' experiences in earlier years.



'The College has got five strategic drivers - Excellence, Employment, Enterprise, eEnabled and Engagement. Each is linked to our Curriculum Blueprint, so every student has an entitlement to Enterprise. I think Enterprise and Employability share the same DNA. They are linked. You are either selling a product or you are selling yourself. We take an enterprising approach to employability, which comes from the top. Heather Smith, our Principal, believes that enterprise gives our students a competitive edge out there in the marketplace.'

'Enterprise is now firmly embedded in the teaching practice of many tutors. Some subject areas lend themselves to it more easily. As part of the self-assessment process, staff are able to show what they have done with Enterprise in the past year and how they will build on that during the next year. We find that, as we work with one set of tutors, they talk with others in associated courses who then ask how they too can embed Enterprise.'

'Statistics suggest there is about a million businesses starting out there, with a huge failure rate. So, we are opening their eyes to Enterprise. Whether they go on to university or straight out into a job, they have been exposed to Enterprise and they are scanning the horizon for opportunities. With an enterprising mindset, they are not just looking for a job.'

'As part of our careers offer, the first thing we do is to ask young people what they are good at. You may have an elevator pitch for your business, but you can have an elevator pitch for yourself: Who you are, what you can do and the benefits of that to an employer. We have students who tell us about job interviews where the employer only wanted to talk their enterprise project.'



'They may not specifically use the word 'Enterprise' but our students can talk about exciting experiences from their time at college.'

‘The Peter Jones Enterprise Academy is the pinnacle of our enterprise provision. It was one of the first and is now the biggest of the enterprise academies. All the students have to set up a business as part of the course. The number of awards won by our students show that enterprise is alive and kicking in Sheffield. Many students go on to university and then progress on to start businesses. Even if they work for another organisation, they go into it with a business development mindset – knowing how the business works and how they can best add value to that.’

‘For students coming through to us from local schools that have been involved with the BiG Challenge, Enterprise is not something new. You are really preaching to the converted. Enterprise is on banners and part of everyday language in college, and the BiG Challenge acts as a really good warm-up act.’

‘Employers expect young people to have certificates, but they are more interested in the person who is holding them. They may not specifically use the word ‘Enterprise’ but our students can talk about exciting experiences from their time at college.’

