UNIVERSITY OF Southampton

Careers and Employability Service

STUDENT INNOVATION PROJECTS

Client Guide
2020/21

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1 INTRODUCTION

Our Student Innovation Projects enable businesses and not-for-profit organisations to task ambitious students with a business issue and receive inspiring solutions. For students, it offers an opportunity to gain invaluable experience of working on a real-life business problem. We work with organisations of various sizes and across all sectors.

One to two student teams, from a range of subjects and year groups, will work in teams of 4 or 5 to deliver innovative solutions to your business challenge. Project start dates will run from 1st February – 5th April and each project will span 6 weeks.

Hosting a Student Innovation Project provides you with a number of benefits, including:

- Access to high calibre students at a University ranked among the top 100 globally
- Receiving insightful recommendations from students through a final presentation and report
- Exploring fresh approaches to organisational needs through enthusiastic students
- Capitalising on theoretical knowledge from a range of disciplines
- Enjoying an additional resource to provide dedicated consulting skills to a business issue

What we will do for you:

- Select one to two teams of students to work on the project
- Arrange training for the students before the project commences
- Support you and the students throughout the project
- Use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the students complete the project

At the University of Southampton, we recognise that enhancing our students' employability is key to their success as graduates. By providing a worthwhile project that offers good work experience, clients will enhance a student's CV and help support their long-term career goals.

2 HOW STUDENT INNOVATION PROJECTS WORK

2.1 What defines our Semester Student Innovation Projects?
- Each Student Innovation Project lasts **6 weeks**
- The programme is coordinated by the Careers and Employability Service
- The project should provide the student with the opportunity to develop or work on a project of importance to the client
- The project should be a **'research and recommendation'** project. Students will research the business issue/need and deliver proposals for possible solutions
- Students will apply for projects based on a broad description of the brief; they will be shortlisted and appointed by the Careers and Employability team
- Students will be grouped into teams of 4/5 from a range of subjects. They will not necessarily be aligned to a specific project because of their degree discipline
- We advise students that they will typically spend between 4-6 hours per week each on the project over the 6 weeks
- Student Innovation Projects are available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students

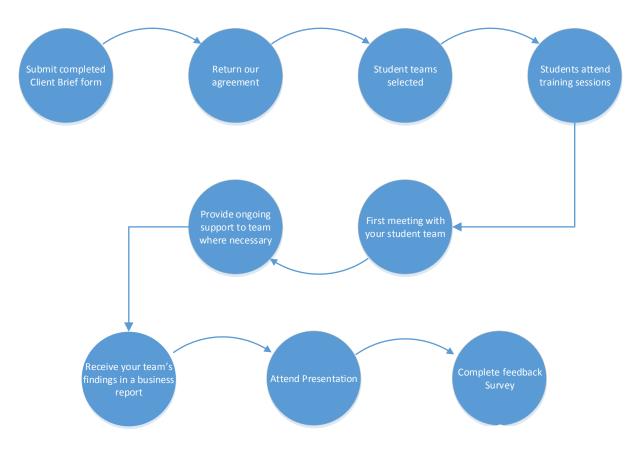## 2.3 Client & Project Eligibility
- ✓ Employers must ensure students work on a project of importance to the organisation. For examples of previous projects, please see our website
- ✓ Projects must be exclusive to University of Southampton students
- ✓ Projects must be suitable for a virtual setting throughout

2.4 Duration and Process of Programme
Students will work part-time (around 4-6 hours per week) on a project for 6 weeks. The process will be as follows:

1. Brief to be submitted two weeks prior to being advertised
2. The application period will last two weeks
3. The Careers and Employability Service will shortlist and appoint student teams in the following two weeks, then send out initial information and training content to the students
4. The first week of the project will commence with an initial meeting between the student team and the Careers and Employability Service. The Careers and Employability Service will answer any questions the students may have and reveal the details of the organisation they will be consulting for
   a. The initial virtual client meeting will occur at your convenience on the Wednesday, Thursday or Friday of this first week
   b. The students can then schedule in one more virtual meeting with you prior to their report and presentation, please have some potential times and dates ready for this (around week 3/4) and the virtual presentation so all can be organised for you and the students in advance
5. The students will then continue to work on the projects (4 – 6 hours a week per student) for the next four weeks, they will receive weekly guidance and support opportunities from the Careers and Employability Service throughout
6. The virtual presentation will take place in week 6
   a. The students will submit their report to you two days ahead of the presentation date to give you an opportunity to read through and prepare questions in advance

2.5 Timeline of Programme

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[Submit completed Client Brief form] → [Return our agreement] → [Student teams selected] → [Students attend training sessions]
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[Provide ongoing support to team where necessary] ← [First meeting with your student team]
          ↓
[Receive your team's findings in a business report] → [Attend Presentation] → [Complete feedback Survey]
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2.6 How to participate in our Student Innovation Projects

We welcome submissions from a wide variety of businesses and not-for-profit organisations. All clients wishing to participate must send a completed brief to us for approval.

To participate, please follow the steps below:

Step 1
Email employ@southampton.ac.uk to discuss which project dates are available and would work well for your organisation, once a date has been agreed we will send you a Client Brief Form and Client Agreement Form to complete

Step 2
Email the completed 'Client Brief' to us for approval employ@southampton.ac.uk

Step 3
The Careers and Employability team will recruit one to two student teams to work on your project

Within the client brief, clients should:
- Give the project a suitable title
- Give a broad overview of the project
- Explain the background of the project

- Outline the business need or issue in detail – this will form the basis of the project
- Highlight the project aims and what you hope to achieve from it
- State which skills you think would be useful to complete the project
- Provide a date for the initial meeting with students

The information provided in the client brief will be conveyed to students ahead of the initial virtual client meeting. Please ensure the content of your brief is clear and outlines the project in detail. The students will be able to ask further questions about the project when they have their initial virtual meeting with you in week 1.

Please note, we require separate briefs for different projects. Therefore, if clients wish to run multiple projects, different briefs must be submitted.

Due to the necessity to provide students with a wide range of opportunities, we cannot guarantee that each completed application form will be approved as a Student Innovation Project. Projects are approved as they are submitted and we encourage project submissions as early as possible.

2.7 Recruitment Process for Students

Students will apply to participate in a Student Innovation Project through 'MyCareer', our online careers platform. Student applications consist of a CV and application form asking them the following questions:

- Why do you wish to be part of the Student Innovation Projects?
- What skills and experience can you bring?

After the closing date, applications will be shortlisted and suitable students will be selected.

Students will be put into teams of 4/5 and be from a range of subjects. They may not be aligned to a specific project because of their degree discipline.

2.8 Training Session

Students who have accepted a place on the Student Innovation Projects are expected to complete the Training Module sent by the Careers and Employability Service.

This will be an opportunity for the students to gain information on a variety of topics before the project commences. These include:

- Building a relationship with a client
- Being innovative and creative towards solutions for the client
- Research skills
- Building credibility and professionalism
- Writing a business case
- Working effectively as a team
- Project management principles
- Working remotely effectively

Reflection Activity

After the projects have been completed, students are required to complete a Reflection Module. This is extremely important for helping students identify the work-based skills they have acquired during the programme.

2.9 Our Agreement

A Client Agreement will need to be completed and signed on approval of your client brief. This outlines what is expected from you as a client as well as what the University will do. Students will also sign an agreement before commencing on the project.

Any changes to a project

If for any reason a student team is unable to complete the project, or if there are any changes to the project or business, we must be informed immediately. If there are any other issues or queries please do not hesitate to get in contact and we will be more than happy to help.

3 FUNDING

3.1 Student Contribution

As Student Innovation Projects are fully virtual for this academic year, the students will receive no funding towards expenses.

4 FEEDBACK

4.1 Feedback

Every year we look to improve our processes and service to both students and clients. To help us achieve this we send out feedback emails to all students and clients who have engaged with the programme to gauge areas that we can improve. It is crucial that we receive this feedback to allow us to provide the best service possible, so please spare time to help our decision making and the programme.