Careers and Employability Service

STUDENT INNOVATION PROJECTS

Client Guide
2019/20
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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 and we work with organisations of various sizes and across all sectors.

Students from a range of faculties and year groups will work in teams of 4/5 to deliver innovative solutions to the business problem. Our semester projects run twice a year and last for 6 weeks during either Semester 1 or 2. We are piloting a 3rd project cohort in summer 2020 offering finalists and postgraduates the opportunity to complete a 2 week project in June.

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

- Access to high calibre students at a University ranked among the top 100 globally
- Receiving insightful recommendations produced by the 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 a team of students to work on the project
- Arrange for students to attend a mandatory training course before the project commences
- Support you and the students throughout the project
- Use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that the students complete the project
- Contribute £100 towards expenses for all students upon completion of the project

At the University of Southampton, we recognise that enhancing our students’ employability is key to the success of our 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?
- A project lasts 6 weeks during either semester 1 or semester 2
- 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
- Students will be grouped into teams of 4/5 from a range of subjects. They will not be aligned to a specific project because of their degree discipline
- We advise students that they will typically spend between 4-6 hours each on the project over the 6 weeks
- Student Innovation Projects are available to all undergraduate and postgraduate students

2.2 What differentiates our Summer Student Innovation Projects?
- A project lasts for 2 weeks in June
- Teams are comprised of final year undergraduates and postgraduate students
- The initial client meeting and presentation date is scheduled in advance of the projects commencing
- We advise students that they will typically spend 12-18 hours per week on the project for the 2 weeks

2.3 Client & Project Eligibility
- The project should be based in the south of the UK with exceptions to be considered
- 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 students from any degree discipline

2.4 Dates and Duration of Programme
Semester Student Innovation Projects run twice a year. Students will work for 6 weeks on a project part-time (around 4/6 hours per week). Our Summer Student Innovation Projects run in June.

- Semester 1 projects - October
- Semester 2 projects - February
- Summer projects - June
2.5 Timeline of Programme

Step 1
Submit completed Client Brief form

Step 2
Return our agreement

Step 3
Student teams selected

Step 4
Students attend training sessions

Step 5
Provide ongoing support to team where necessary

Step 6
First meeting with your student team

Step 7
Attend presentation

Step 8
Receive your team’s findings in a business report

Step 9
Complete feedback Survey

2.6 How to participate in our Student Innovation Projects

We welcome submissions from a wide variety of businesses and charities. All clients wishing to participate must send a completed brief to us for approval.

To participate, please follow the steps below:

Step 1
Download and complete the ‘Client Brief’ found on our website

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

Step 3
The team will send you an agreement form to return

Within the client brief, clients should:
- Give the project a suitable title
- 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
- Fill in all the required information
The information provided here will be conveyed to students. Students will be assigned a project and do not choose which project they work on. Please ensure the content on 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 meeting with you in week 1.

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

Due to the necessity to provide students with a wide range of opportunities as well as limited funding, 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 on a Student Innovation Project through ‘MyCareer’ our online Careers platform. Student applications consist of a CV and application form asking them the following generic 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 faculties. They will 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 attend the Training Session coordinated by the Careers and Employability Service.

We have developed a programme of activities, organised to help give students the best possible foundation to commence their project. Training is mandatory for all students and those that do not attend are unable to take part in the programme.

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

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

After the projects have been completed, students are required to attend a Reflection Session. The session is extremely important to help students identify the work-based skills they have acquired during the programme. Times are as follows:

- **Semester 1** – January
- **Semester 2** – May
- **Summer** – June/July

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, 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 a member of the team will be more than happy to help.

3 FUNDING

3.1 Student Contribution

All students who participate in our Student Innovation Projects will be given a contribution towards expenses of £100 at the conclusion of the project following completion and presentation of the final report. This contribution is funded by the University and Santander and comes at no extra cost to the client.

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. Therefore, it is crucial that we receive this feedback to allow us to provide the best service possible, so please spare time to help influence our decision making.