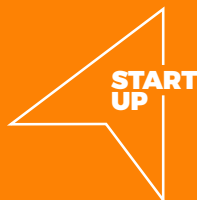




Young  
Enterprise

Member of JA Worldwide



# INSIDER

2025/26

## THE START UP PROGRAMME MAGAZINE



The ultimate employability and  
entrepreneurship experience  
for HE and FE students





# Welcome

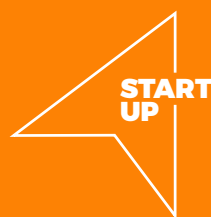
Young Enterprise is a national financial and enterprise education charity. Our vision is that every young person has the opportunity to learn the vital skills and enterprising mindset needed to earn and look after their money and make a positive contribution to their community.

Our Start Up Programme gives students aged 18+ the ultimate opportunity to develop their employability skills and prepare for the world of work. Start Up is a bespoke curriculum enrichment programme that supports a wide range of courses from Sports Science to Psychology, Fashion Studies to Business Management.

The programme also provides an excellent enrichment activity outside the curriculum and has been specifically designed for Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) to enhance educational experience and deepen learning.

With access to our online platform housing extensive resources, videos and step-by-step guidance, teams make all the decisions about their business, from company creation to marketing, as well as selling to the public.

The Start Up Team



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# THE 8 STEPS OF START UP

Start Up Programme can be run flexibly from 12 weeks up to a full academic year. Over the course of the programme students complete eight key milestones.

START  
UP

1



#### STARTING UP

Decide to set up a commercial or social enterprise company.

5



#### LAUNCHING

Launch the products and services.

2



#### CREATING THE BOARD

Decide the structure of the company, allocate director roles and set up a bank account.

6



#### RUNNING THE ENTERPRISE

Start selling the products or services and have opportunities to participate in competitions.

3



#### GENERATING THE IDEA

Brainstorm and evaluate ideas for the product or service.

7



#### WINDING UP

Host an AGM and decide how to distribute the profits of the company.

4



#### BUSINESS PLANNING

Conduct market research, develop a business plan and start to raise capital.

8



#### LOOKING BACK & NEXT STEPS

Develop a personal action plan, update their CV with their skills and join the YE Alumni network and the Opportunities Hub.





# How can Start Up support my university or college?

Start Up can be delivered inside or outside of the curriculum. Academics can adopt the full programme or tailor it to specific needs. Bespoke models are co-designed with YE, academics and mentors, with academic staff maintaining full control over both content and delivery.

## KEY FEATURES:

- Students...**
- Set up and run a company from start to end
  - Are provided with access to our dedicated digital platform – Company Connect with resources and guidance
  - Are provided with access to YE Trading Station, our e-commerce platform
  - Can participate in competitions and celebration events locally, regionally, nationally and up to European level
  - Have opportunities to participate in trade fairs
  - Receive a personalised certificate evidencing progression of the employability skills

## ADD-ONS:

- Mentoring support and advice from trained business mentors
- Bespoke business workshops tailored around your curriculum (e.g. on visual merchandising or digital marketing)

***"Start Up programme gives university students the opportunity to develop employability skills and prepare for the world of work."***

Tutor

TO FIND OUT MORE, SCAN THE QR CODE OR EMAIL THE TEAM: [STARTUP@Y-E.ORG.UK](mailto:STARTUP@Y-E.ORG.UK)



## FUNDER INSIGHT

### IN CONVERSATION WITH...



# Marcel Landau



Chairman, The Chartered Institute of Export & International Trade

#### What's your name, role and who do you work for?

My name is Marcel Landau, and I am the Chairman of The IOE Foundation which although a separate Charity, is an integral part of the main Chartered Institute of Export & International Trade. The Institute, which is a Professional Membership Organisation, was founded back in 1935, and is acknowledged as a leading international source of education and business advice on all matters concerning Exporting and Importing. I am also the Vice Chairman of the Institute. The role of the Foundation is to help the advancement of education of young people in export and international trade primarily within the ages of 16-25 in the UK by the provision of financial grants which support initiatives at schools, colleges and universities.

#### Why does The IOE Foundation choose to support Start Up?

We got involved with the Start Up programme because we believed that working together with Young Enterprise would help achieve our own objectives of helping young people understand the career possibilities that international trading can offer. We believe that by trading internationally, this will help not only the UK to thrive, but also help to share understanding and respect amongst many different races and nations.

#### What do you see are some of the key skills developed by Start Up that employers look for?

We see an increasing number of employers looking for young people to join their businesses who have the ability to build an understanding of international Trading into their business thinking. When we first got involved with the Start Up Programme, not many embryonic traders had considered this as part of potential growth, but it has been fantastic to see the difference over the last 3 years, as this becomes a natural part of a businesses development.

One of the attributes that employers look for are people with the ability to be confident about their plans generally and to convey enthusiasm about their long term intentions. There are so many potentially interesting avenues to look at within international Trading, that someone interested in making their career in this field can show positively to a prospective employer.

I believe that another factor for young people to show, and as demonstrated so well by the Start Up presentations, is the ability to share management responsibilities with others in their team, and to appreciate and understand when to let team members have their say.

#### What would you say to a business who was considering supporting Start Up?

If another business was considering supporting Start Up, I would say Go for it! It is incredibly heartwarming to see young people who were initially nervous about pitching an idea, grow into their own planning and be able to successfully talk about it. Any help from experience that can be given to a young person starting their business planning can only be of material assistance in aiding them pull together a viable business plan.

#### What's the best piece of business advice you've given or received?

One of the best pieces of advice I received in my own career was not to be afraid of making mistakes. If you do not try something, you will never know if you would have been successful. Even if something does not work out as planned, make sure you try and learn something positive. As has been said many times by others, is that even the most successful business people will have made mistakes somewhere in their careers. The Start Up programme is an ideal vehicle to try out ideas and learn new skills.



CHARTERED  
INSTITUTE  
OF EXPORT &  
INTERNATIONAL  
TRADE





# From Classroom to Boardroom: Salford's Award-Winning Start Up Module Empowers Future Entrepreneurs

University of Salford Business School



**Gabi Round**

Lecturer in Enterprise,  
Salford Business School

In 2020 I had the pleasure of meeting with the then Young Enterprise Start Up Manager to bring the Young Enterprise Start Up programme to Salford Business School, with the view of providing our students the facility to develop and start their own business enterprise. We wanted a module where they could develop their enterprise and entrepreneurial learning mindset as these are seen as key employability skills for next generation business graduates.

Four years have flown and with Gabi Round, we have developed a multi-award-winning module that our students enjoy, engage with, and sometimes don't want to leave! Irrespective how far our students progress in the Start Up programme, the skills they gain from starting their own business enterprise and working alongside mentors from industry, helps them to develop transferable business skills and employability skills ready for post-graduation. At the time of writing, we have successfully graduated over two hundred fifty students from the module in four years, and we are immensely proud of their team and individual journey achievements.

We recognise as academics that supporting student success could not be done without great teamwork. During our time working with Young Enterprise, we have had some fantastic industry mentors. Our mentors are really engaged and bring so much value. Our programme and success at Salford could not happen without their support. Thank you.

*"Irrespective of how far they progress, the skills students gain from launching their own business are truly transformative."*

Jonathan Owens

We've experienced lots of highlights in a short period and it's impossible to list them all. Hearing teams shouting with sheer joy when they have got a prototype right having never done 3-D printing before, to hosting the UK final and meeting Royalty, Prime Ministers, and Presidents. However, the best moments come when we get to hear students from all over the UK and Europe explaining their Start Up Businesses, seeing the pride and joy on their faces. None of this would not be possible without Young Enterprise and Junior Achievement Worldwide.

What's next. We are working with the Universities of Liverpool, Hertfordshire and Manchester Metropolitan. We are presenting a workshop at the upcoming 2025 Advanced HE Teaching and Learning conference on our combined experiences of the Young Enterprise Start Up programme, and will engage the workshop through the Salford Business School Ideation game. Following this we are currently in discussions with a publisher for a Teaching a Learning Case Study book-based partly on experience with the Start Up programme. So, watch this space.



IN CONVERSATION WITH...



## Nigel Coates



Chair, The Marketing Trust

**Can you tell us why The Marketing Trust supports the Start-Up Programme and Young Enterprise?**

The objectives of the Marketing Trust can be described as: the advancement, for the benefit of the public, of education, practical training and research into the art and science of marketing.

Marketing includes the creation, promotion, sale and distribution of products/services. Hence our support for YE and the Start Up programme is addressing the 'education' through the experiential learning students undertake in their start-up businesses. A critical part of a successful business is one that has a product/service offering that customers/clients are wanting at a price that enables the business to be sustainable.

**What do you see are some of the key skills developed by Start Up that employers look for?**

These are many and varied for example,

- An Entrepreneurial mindset; a way of thinking that enables people to create and seize opportunities, overcome challenges, and succeed in different settings.
- An understanding of strategic intent that shows clarity of purpose and a clear business model that shows it can be profitable to justify its existence and demonstrate its commercial viability.

- Marketing in terms of product/service innovation, target marketing and implementation of a market strategy.
- Financial including budgeting, financial forecasting, or the ability to interpret complex financial information.
- Project Management skills.
- Critical analysis - understanding how different ideas / evidence / perspectives relate to each other.
- Developing collaborative relationships and team-working.
- Communications including verbal, written and presentation skills.

**What are the most important marketing lessons that have stuck with you?**

An appreciation of the importance of ensuring there is sufficient profit margin in the products/services that you are providing to your target customers. Unless the business has sufficient headroom, it will not be able to grow and invest in the future.

**How can future Start-Up Programme student teams best create impactful marketing strategies that deliver?**

They need to answer a series of questions....Who is your target market (taking into consideration size and competition)? What product/service are they wanting? Will you be addressing a gap in the market/ do you have a USP?

What price will they pay and will that provide you with a sufficient profit margin after you have covered your costs (both fixed and variable)? How will you supply/distribute your product/service? How will you communicate (considering both on and offline) with your market?

*"The Start-Up Programme nurtures the entrepreneurial mindset, strategic thinking, and marketing know-how that employers value - and future businesses depend on."*

Nigel Coates, Chair, The Marketing Trust







# Helena Bazidwal

Young Enterprise Start Up Programme UK • Student Journey Award winner

Manchester Metropolitan University

## Helena Bazidwal - Honoured for Transformational Journey at YE Start Up UK Final

In May 2025, Helena Bazidwal was awarded the UK Student Journey Award, at the Young Enterprise Start Up programme UK Final, held at the University of Hertfordshire.



Helena Bazidwal receiving her Student Journey Award at the UK Start Up Final in May 2025

**A student at Manchester Metropolitan University, Helena took the role of Managing and Operations Director for the Young Enterprise team SAFE in late 2024.**

Helena's journey led to the development of non-toxic, sustainable and affordable menstrual products made from organic bamboo and jute. This case study explores Helena's role in the business, the evolution of the team's ideas, challenges faced, and the impact of the Young Enterprise programme on Helena's personal and professional growth.

### BACKGROUND

David Taylor, Lecturer at MMU, who nominated Helena for the Journey award explained: "In 2020, Helena arrived in the UK from Afghanistan as a refugee, with little knowledge of English and unfamiliar with the education system. Overcoming the challenges of learning a new language, adjusting to a new culture, and rebuilding her life, she earned a Business Level 3 Diploma and secured a place at university. Fast forward to 2025, and this same young woman, once a beginner in English, is now leading her team, SAFE, to the National Finals of the Young Enterprise Start-Up programme. Her journey from language learner to entrepreneurial leader speaks volumes about her resilience, determination, and positive spirit. Always with a smile, her great sense of humour and appreciation for life shine through in everything she does. This enthusiasm has infected those around her."

**"Her journey from refugee to entrepreneurial leader is not just a story of resilience - it's a testament to what happens when determination meets opportunity."**

David Taylor, Lecturer at MMU

Judges from the Institute of Leadership, Rebecca Martin and Andrew Kincaid, interviewed all the nominees for the Student Journey and Student of the Year Awards, to determine which of the candidates would be selected as the winner. Speaking about their rationale for recognising Helena's achievements with the Journey Award, Rebecca commented: "Both Helena and the winner of the Student of the Year award, Marcos, have shown what true leadership looks like—vision, grit, and a commitment to making an impact. We can't wait to see what's next for them."

### PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Helena led her team, a group of international business and accounting students with little experience in applied modules, through developing SAFE. The business offers chemical-free, biodegradable feminine sanitary products that prioritise health, planet and accessibility. Their aim is to create an impact in menstrual care to make periods safe for everyone and the planet. This is to be achieved through eco-friendly products that are free from toxins; priced to match mainstream brands; and distributed via subscriptions, retail, and CSR partnerships.

### CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATION

The team's greatest challenge during their journey was from launching the business in February 2025, over four months behind most other teams. This put SAFE at a disadvantage, limiting their time for idea generation, market research, and branding. Despite the setback, Helena led with focus and optimism. She helped the team quickly define roles, set clear objectives and build momentum. This turned a delayed launch into a successful, high-impact project through resilience, adaptability and determination.

As Managing and Operations Director, Helena brought cohesion to the team and transformed their confidence. As they faced obstacles such as limited finances and scheduling conflicts, she maintained strong coordination with weekly meetings and supported

each team member in feeling valued and empowered to contribute. SAFE had to deal with real-world challenges, such as ethical sourcing from suppliers, legal compliance and production costs. Her calm and confident leadership not only drove SAFE forward by combining academic theory with her practical experience, but she also sparked personal growth in each member of the team, leaving a lasting impact on each individuals future development.

### PERSONAL LEARNING JOURNEY

Helena has shown remarkable personal growth that has paved her way to the Young Enterprise Start Up programme. Since arriving in the UK as a refugee in 2020, she learned English through an ESOL programme, and within a year earned a Business Level 3 Diploma that progressed her to university. She adapted to a new education system while facing tough social and cultural barriers and now stands as a determined final-year university student.

Throughout the YE Start Up programme Helena has proved she has been equipped with leadership, confidence and entrepreneurial skills to support her professional development. Her ability to coordinate workflows, foster team morale, and maintain strategic clarity demonstrated both growth and foresight. Her team's commitment to sustainability and menstrual health equity reflects a strong sense of purpose and a values-driven approach to business. Professionally, her skills gained throughout mark a promising future in business and social impact, providing practical skills ready for the world of work.







Vivek Bahri and Midhusa Mohan

Cognizant

# Future-Focused: Cognizant and Young Enterprise Celebrate Student Start-Ups Making a Difference

Cognizant supports Young Enterprise's Start Up programme because of its alignment to our focus on economic mobility through entrepreneurship, alongside developing young people's financial capability and employability skills.



▲ UK Winning team Passing Presence, collecting their award from Vivek and Midhusa. From left to right, Caroline Hands, Abbie Kleiner-Mann, Paris Read, Vivek Bahri, Caragh Gray, Holly Hadley, Midhusa Mohan, Sarah Porretta, Rory Montgomerie and Elaine Fairhurst.

Now in their third year of partnering with YE, are professional services and leading digital transformation company Cognizant. Pictured here at the UK Start Up Final at the University of Hertfordshire in May, are Vivek Bahri and Midhusa Mohan from Cognizant, a key supporter of YE's Start Up programme. Presenting the Overall Winner award to the team Passing Presence from the University of Liverpool, Midhusa commented: "It is a pleasure to present this award to the Passing Presence team, whose compassionate and creative solution for such an emotive topic really moved all the judges. I am delighted to see how the team has progressed from winning the Northwest Final of the competition earlier this year. Passing Presence have clearly identified a gap in the market with a company that has huge breadth and depth to its appeal."

A team of Psychology students, Passing Presence created a unique and impactful company centred on enabling individuals to leave letters, videos and gifts for loved ones after passing. Marketing Director Caragh Gray commented: "As Psychologists, we know that compassion and care are paramount in navigating the grief process. We aim to support both individuals and their loved ones through the grief journey, helping to create lasting connections and closeness that endures, even after loss. We strive to create a more compassionate, empowering end-of-life experience."

Passing Presence also won the Best Presentation award and were Overall Winners at the Northwest Final earlier in the year, when judges recognised the team's unique and highly scalable business proposition.



## COMPANY FOCUS

Passing Presence created a unique and impactful company centred on enabling individuals to leave letters, videos and gifts for loved ones after passing.

**"YE is deeply grateful for Cognizant's continued support for Start Up and the difference this enables us to make for over 1000 young people through this impactful programme every year."**

Suzanne Lockwood  
Start Up Programme Strategic Lead



Above: Midhusa Mohan crowning Passing Presence as North West winners in February.

Midhusa added: "Cognizant supports Young Enterprise's Start Up programme because of its alignment to our focus on economic mobility through entrepreneurship, alongside developing young people's financial capability and employability skills. All the Start Up teams have developed the skills and confidence that are so key for young people preparing to begin their careers. It's been inspiring to see the examples of creativity, teamworking, communication, problem-solving, financial aptitude and resilience from the young people participating. As an employer, we value all these skills and consider them essential attributes for the world of work."

Through interacting with the student teams as part of their Start Up programme journey, colleagues from Cognizant have met, advised and helped to motivate the diverse teams of young people taking part. Thanks to this interaction, the young people become aware of Cognizant and the career opportunities they offer. As an employer, supporting Start Up programme gives

Cognizant some valuable insights into the next generation, which help to shape how they deliver their other ESG-supported programmes. Through YE's alumni network and Opportunities Hub, Cognizant can signpost graduate roles to the young people who've taken part in Start Up and whose employability prospects have been significantly enhanced, as a result.

Suzanne Lockwood, Start Up Programme Strategic Lead concluded: "YE is deeply grateful for Cognizant's continued support for Start Up and the difference this enables us to make for over 1000 young people through this impactful programme every year. We love partnering with Cognizant because they are so willing to get involved with all stages of the programme and their skills as volunteers add so much value to the whole Young Enterprise team."







**Young Enterprise has given me far more than business knowledge. It has built my confidence, sharpened my public speaking, and taught me how to collaborate and grow within a team.**

Alanna Francis

## Alanna Francis

Post Graduate, University of Hertfordshire  
MBA in Project Management

# More Than Business: Alanna Francis on Building Confidence and a Company

**My name is Alanna Francis, and I am a postgraduate student at the University of Hertfordshire, pursuing a master's in business administration with a specialisation in Project Management.** I joined the Young Enterprise (YE) programme because I believe education should be more than just theory; it should empower real action. YE gave me the platform to transform my idea into something meaningful, proving that with the right vision and support, students can become powerful changemakers.

That vision became DoQuMate, an AI-powered educational platform built for students who, like me, juggle studies, work, and personal responsibilities. I created DoQuMate to simplify the learning process and help students take control of their academic journey through smart, intuitive tools—because I know what it feels like to be overwhelmed by school and life.

The highlight of my journey with YE has been watching DoQuMate evolve from a simple concept into a fully functional prototype. I've pitched to real investors, received invaluable feedback from mentors, and connected with student

entrepreneurs whose passion continues to inspire me. One of the biggest challenges I faced was learning how to lead and collaborate within a diverse team. We all came from different backgrounds with different perspectives—but by staying grounded, learning to listen, and embracing empathy, I grew as both a person and a leader.

Young Enterprise has given me far more than business knowledge. It has built my confidence, sharpened my public speaking, and taught me how to collaborate and grow within a team. Most importantly, it's shown me that resilience and vision go hand-in-hand.

To any student thinking about joining YE: don't hesitate. Your idea matters. Your voice matters. With the right support, you won't just build a business. You will start a journey that could change your future forever.

***"To any student thinking about joining YE: don't hesitate. Your idea matters. Your voice matters. With the right support, you won't just build a business. You will start a journey that could change your future forever."***

Alanna Francis

### COMPANY FOCUS

DoQuMate is an AI-powered educational platform designed to help students manage their studies, work, and personal responsibilities more effectively. It offers smart, intuitive tools to simplify learning, enabling students to take control of their academic journey, improve productivity, and reduce overwhelm.







## FUNDER INSIGHT

### IN CONVERSATION WITH...



# Fergus Kidd



Research and Development Engineering lead, Avanade

**Can you introduce yourself and tell us about your role at Avanade?**

Hi, I'm Fergus Kidd. I work at Avanade as the Research and Development Engineering Lead. My role involves exploring new technologies and thinking about how they can improve the future of business for our clients across various sectors.

**Why does Avanade choose to support Start Up?**

Start Up is a great collection of young innovators, and Avanade is truly passionate about supporting the next generation. As a people-focused business, the future generation is vital to us—not only for recruitment but to ensure they have the skills needed to succeed, whether they work for us, our clients, or aim to change the world. For example, I participated in the UK finals to teach them about AI and ethical AI through a workshop, providing resources on Microsoft Azure to help them build their AI skills. It's inspiring to see their businesses and how they tackle tomorrow's challenges.

**What are some of the key skills developed by Start Up that employers look for?**

Right now, AI skills are definitely in demand. Every team I saw this year used AI in some capacity—whether for graphic design, coding, software, or copywriting. At Avanade, AI literacy and ethics are fundamental skills we look for. We've found that software engineers are 50% more

**"Start Up is a great collection of young innovators... It's inspiring to see their businesses and how they tackle tomorrow's challenges."**

Fergus Kidd

effective and productive when they use AI tools. Besides technical skills, the drive and passion of Start Up participants are crucial. As an employer, I look for determination and the ability to create something amazing from a basic idea.

**What would you say to a business considering supporting Start Up?**

I would say, just do it. You'll make amazing connections with the next generation and meet interesting peers from other enterprises and businesses. It's a chance to make a real impact because the guidance from real businesses in real industries is invaluable to these start-up students

**What's the best piece of business advice you've given or received?**

The best advice I can offer is not to be afraid of experimenting. Coming from a research and development background, I've learned the importance of experimenting, failing fast, and being willing to change direction.

For Start Up students, it's crucial to throw yourself into your idea and not be afraid to change it if it doesn't work or if feedback differs from expectations. Taking a scientific and experimental approach is key; adapt if something isn't working, and pursue it if it is. This advice also applies to technology—don't be afraid to learn new skills or step out of your comfort zone. The most successful businesses and start-ups often push boundaries, and being at the forefront can be uncomfortable but rewarding.

#### COMPANY FOCUS

Avanade is a global professional services company focused on delivering digital, cloud, and advisory services.

They are known for their expertise in helping clients leverage Microsoft solutions to transform their businesses, with a strong emphasis on areas like cloud computing, AI, and modern workplace strategies. Avanade partners with Microsoft and serves over 5,000 clients, including a significant portion of the Fortune 500. They operate in 28 countries with over 60,000 professionals.



## MENTOR INSIGHT

### IN CONVERSATION WITH...



# Faye Boswell



CEO and Business Mentor, Let's Listen

**What is your name and do you have a day job?**

I'm Faye Boswell, founder and CEO of Let's Listen. Our mission is to help organisations create healthier, more supportive environments by raising awareness of mental health and promoting overall well-being. Through impactful training, bespoke programmes, and public speaking, we provide the tools and insights needed to foster a culture of mental health awareness and resilience.

**Why did you decide to be a mentor with startup?**

I was lucky enough to take part in the YE Start Up programme during my second year at Liverpool Hope University, and calling it a transformative experience doesn't fully capture its impact. I started university with very little confidence, but the programme helped me recognise my skills and realise my potential. It taught me how to make my voice heard and confidently contribute my ideas. The skills I gained have been invaluable in running my business today. It's a full-circle moment for me to now mentor and help guide other students on their own journeys.

**What's been your most memorable experience as a mentor?**

It's been incredible seeing students blossom and gain confidence, just as I did. Recently, I worked with a group called Miles Better in the

24/25 academic year, who aimed to introduce a loyalty scheme for public transport users. Initially, the group struggled with ideas, largely due to a lack of confidence. However, after sharing some of my own experiences and seeing the students' growing enthusiasm for the programme, I watched them transform into confident, aspiring leaders!

**Have you had any challenges?**

Initially, I found it challenging as a mentor not having all the answers! Every student faces unique obstacles tailored to their business, and of course, it's impossible to be an expert in every area. I decided to approach it the same way I run my own company: while I might not have all the answers, we can work together to find solutions. I truly believe collaboration is the key to success!

**What would you say to someone considering being a startup mentor?**

I can't recommend it highly enough! It's incredibly rewarding and truly a privilege to be part of a student's journey, witnessing their growth and achievements throughout the programme. With the impressive talent on display from these emerging business leaders, you never know – you might be working together again down the line!

**"It's a full-circle moment for me to now mentor and help guide other students on their own journeys."**

Faye Boswell



Above: Faye and her team 'Sweet Sips' at the national Start Up final in 2019







# Marcos Knight

Young Enterprise Start Up Programme UK  
Outstanding Student of the Year Award winner

Loughborough College

## From Triathlete to Trailblazer: Marcos Knight's Journey to Leading Water Innovation



Marcos Knight took the role of team leader for the Loughborough College team Cloudwell, aiming to end water scarcity. Their solution is to combine atmospheric water generation with renewable solar power energy, to create a completely off-grid system and improve access to water.



Team Cloudwell celebrating their numerous awards after the national Start Up final



Cloudwell team members Marcos and Svetlana, with their mentor Laurence Steijger collecting their Marketing Award from Nigel Coates

Marcos began his journey at a personal crossroads. After dedicating much of his life to competing as a triathlete, he began to accept that a professional sports career may no longer be his path. He took on a Business Enterprise Module and began his Young Enterprise Journey while adjusting to this personal shift, which ended up driving his journey.

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

As team leader of Cloudwell, Marcos played a central role in developing the company's strategic vision, starting in September 2024. He brought the same mindset that helped him succeed in sport: focus, resilience, and a drive to contribute to the team's success. Under his leadership, Cloudwell matured into a functioning business model, and they created a prototype that successfully verified water generation. Marcos organised meetings, stepped in to help when others were overwhelmed, and facilitated decision making.

Iqbal Ullah, Lecturer and Course Manager at Loughborough College, explained when nominating Marcos "Today, Marcos carries not just the determination he started with, but also a growing set of entrepreneurial skills-strategic thinking, leadership, collaboration, and confidence in public speaking. If one were to illustrate this journey, it would begin in muted greys, reflecting uncertainty, gradually blooming into a full spectrum of colour – demonstrating clarity, purpose, and self-assurance. Marcos has truly painted a new vision for his future, one that now includes the realistic and exciting possibility of becoming a successful entrepreneur."

**"Marcos carries not just the determination he started with, but also a growing set of entrepreneurial skills - strategic thinking, leadership, collaboration, and confidence in public speaking."**

Iqbal Ullah, Lecturer and Course Manager, Loughborough College

### CHALLENGES

One of Marcos' biggest challenges was transforming from an individual performer to a collaborative leader. In sport, he was used to pushing himself with internal discipline; in business, success required openness and the ability to trust others. Marcos approached this shift with maturity and humility. When surrendering control and allowing others to lead, he leaned into this discomfort and opened his mind to doing things differently.

### PERSONAL GROWTH

Marcos's growth throughout the YE Start Up programme has been transformative. Public speaking, once a daunting task, became one of his strengths. By the final presentation he delivered with assurance and authenticity and conquered his fears. Importantly, he matured in communication style. He recognised the importance of emotional intelligence in team settings and created space for quieter voices and mediated differences of opinion, continuously seeking feedback. According to his lecturer, "Marcos' personal growth has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this experience."

At the outset, he doubted his ability to lead or speak confidently in high-pressure settings. Yet, by embracing these very challenges, he has transformed into a leader who is both capable and courageous."

Today, Marcos is no longer defined by a single career path. What once felt like the end of his dream of becoming a professional triathlete became the start of another, as he unlocked his potential and developed a leadership style grounded in empathy and authenticity. The skills he gained has evolved him into a promising entrepreneur with a clear sense of future purpose.

### COMPANY FOCUS

The team, led by Marcos Knight, developed a sustainable atmospheric water generator that can run on solar power and provide water for multiple homes.



**Loughborough**  
COLLEGE est. 1909





# Passing Presence: Student Start-Up Triumphs in UK Finals, heads to Athens!

After winning the North West regional final, hosted by their University in February, Holly Hadley, Caragh Gray, Abbie Kleiner-Mann, Rory Montgomerie and Paris Read of Passing Presence, headed off to Hertfordshire on 14th May for the UK Final hosted by the University of Hertfordshire's Enterprise Hub, the perfect venue to celebrate our eleven national Start Up finalists.

## COMPANY FOCUS

**Passing Presence**  
(a bereavement service)

Passing Presence focuses on providing compassionate and person-centered support during the grieving process, offering services designed to help individuals create lasting memories of their loved ones.

The team, consisted of Paris Read, Holly Hadley, Rory Montgomerie, Abbie Kleiner-Mann, and Caragh Gray.

Each team had worked incredibly hard to reach the national stage, from over 200 Start Up companies this year, these were the top 5% who had won each stage of their competition. There were several awards presented on the day, and Passing Presence were chosen as winners of the Best Presentation and Best Overall company, winning a trip to Athens to represent the UK at the biggest entrepreneurship festival in Europe.

Their idea stemmed from an ageing module the group were studying as part of their Psychology degree. The team used Lego serious play to begin generating ideas, and Passing Presence was born. The concept is simple; the company supports individuals nearing the end of life to leave messages and gifts for loved ones when they have passed. The team's execution of this idea was brave and delivered with passion.

Speaking of their success, Caragh Gray, Marketing Director for the team said; "We would not be where we are today without the incredible support, commitment and encouragement from our university lecturers and mentors. We are truly fortunate to collaborate with mentors who inspire us and share our passion for supporting individuals throughout the grieving process. We as a team are so excited to represent the UK in Athens and continue to support individuals nearing the end of life, to ensure their presence remains."

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Caragh Gray, Marketing Director,  
Passing Presence

Dr Caroline Hands leads the Business and Enterprise in Psychology Module, said; "This module enables students to develop and start their own small business, bringing together entrepreneurship and social purpose through psychological concepts. I'm incredibly proud of the Passing Presence team, who drew on psychological principles to develop a powerful business idea in their third-year psychology module.

Across just twelve weeks of teaching and support, the team worked tirelessly on their idea and despite having no prior business experience, they went on to win the best presentation and best Start-Up company 2025 at both regional and national levels, beating hundreds of university teams from across the UK. This phenomenal team have worked together to overcome challenges and demands of developing a business and I'm looking forward to seeing how they

develop this in the future." Dr Warren Donnellan, internationally recognised expert in ageing studies, spoke of Passing Presence's idea; "It's rare to see a service that's as innovative and meticulously researched as Passing Presence. My view is that the deeply committed and compassionate team behind Passing Presence really have struck gold. Not only does it fill a critical gap in end-of-life care provision, but it also has the potential to start a wider conversation around death and dying, a topic that is still taboo in most parts of the world."

**"Despite having no prior business experience, they went on to win the best presentation and best Start-Up company 2025 at both regional and national levels."**

Dr Caroline Hands, Psychology  
University of Liverpool

Passing Presence with JA Europe CEO,  
Salvatore Nigro, waiting to be judged  
at the expo in Athens







UK Finalists in Athens: Company Programme UK winners Solasta alongside Passing Presence with YE CEO, Sarah Porretta, Eloise McNearny, YE Scotland and Suzanne Lockwood, YE Start Up Lead.

*"This year's event was a testament to the creativity and determination of young entrepreneurs across the UK and Europe."*

Holly Hadley, Managing Director, Passing Prescence



## ABOUT GEN-E

Gen-E is Europe's largest Entrepreneurship event, a celebration of entrepreneurship and the achievements of European youth. Thousands of European students, from 15 years old onwards, showcase their cutting-edge business ideas online and on-site. The Gen-E Festival also combines two annual European entrepreneurship contests for the winners of JA Company and the JA Start-Up Programme from over 40 countries. Gen-E 2025 will be held in Athens, Greece.



## ABOUT JA EUROPE

JA Europe is the largest and leading organisation in Europe dedicated to inspire and prepare young people to succeed. For over 100 years, JA Worldwide has delivered hands-on, experiential learning in entrepreneurship, work readiness and financial health. In the last school year, the JA Europe network provided over 6.6 million learning experiences for youth in online, in person and blended formats. For two consecutive years, Junior Achievement has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for its global reach, youth economic empowerment delivery at scale, and ability to find unity in diversity.

Passing Presence were lucky enough to spend 3 days in Athens, pitching to a jury consisting of judges from Nestle, Titan, Pepco, SAP, Aegean, Vodaphone and EIT Digital. The team were joined by the winning UK Company Programme of the Year students from Fortrose Academy in Inverness, with their business, Solasta. Both teams took part in a full expo day, connected with other like-minded students, presented on a huge stage and experienced the culture of the Greek capital, visiting the Acropolis and original Olympic Stadium.

The GEN-E 2025 entrepreneurship festival welcomed students from over 40 countries, with incredible business ideas, many driven by social purpose and utilising AI and emerging technologies to create viable businesses that our addressing many of the worlds current problems. Our congratulations go to Pigi from Albania and VeriflyID from Denmark for winning the Start Up and Company Programme Company of the Year titles!



Above: Solasta, from Fortrose Academy in Scotland, ready for their interviews at the Expo day in Athens / Right: Passing Presence outside the impressive Zappeion building ready for the evenings events on day 2 in Athens, after a visit to the Acropolis (below).



The Young Enterprise Start Up and Company Programme competitions continue to play a crucial role in nurturing the next generation of business leaders, providing them with the skills, confidence, and experience needed to succeed in the competitive world of entrepreneurship.

This year's event was a testament to the creativity and determination of young entrepreneurs across the UK and Europe.





# AWARD WINNERS



**DAVID BOADU**  
Founder of Vistella Ltd. and Start Up alumni, for compering the UK Start Up Final 2025.



**KERRY EASTER**  
Young Enterprise Ambassador, Head of Global Supply Chain - EU Spirits, Diageo

Wednesday 14th May 2025 Enterprise Hub • University of Hertfordshire

## YOUNG ENTERPRISE UK START UP COMPANY OF THE YEAR AWARD

### WINNERS

**Passing Presence**

University of Liverpool

Awarded by Vivek Bahri and Midhusa Mohan, Cognizant



## SILVER AWARD

**Cloudwell**

Loughborough College

Awarded by Salvatore Nigro, CEO of JA Europe



## BEST PITCH DECK

**Greendining**

University of Hertfordshire

Awarded by Iheanyi Ibe, University of Hertfordshire



## SUSTAINABILITY AWARD

**Sipocado**

Edge Hill University

Awarded by Fergus Kidd, Avanade



## A ROUND-UP OF THE CATEGORY WINNERS...

## MARKETING EXCELLENCE AWARD

**Cloudwell**

Loughborough College

Awarded by Nigel Coates, The Marketing Trust



## EXPORTING MINDSET AWARD

**Cloudwell**

Loughborough College

Awarded by Andy Gibson, The Institute of Export and International Trade Foundation



## OUTSTANDING STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

**Marcos Knight (Cloudwell)**

Loughborough College

Awarded by Becky Martin, The Institute of Leadership



## SOCIAL MEDIA AWARD

**Smart Armour**

Loughborough College

Awarded by Tony Croom, The Marketing Trust



## BEST PRESENTATION

**Passing Presence**

University of Liverpool

Awarded by Jess Jones, The Department of Business and Trade



## STUDENT JOURNEY AWARD

**Helena Bazidwal (SAFE)**

Manchester Metropolitan University

Awarded by Andrew Kincaid, The Institute of Leadership





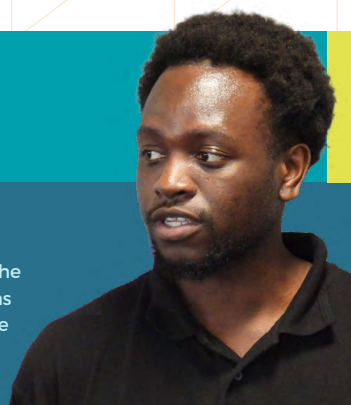


## STUDENT INSIGHT

### Nathan Kabwebwe

Graduate, Manchester Metropolitan University

Start Up UK Finalist, Nathan Kabwebwe, co-compered our YE Company Programme of the Year Final (with fellow SU Alumni), which was hosted by MMU in June. An example of the many opportunities offered to our alumni.



# Beyond Start Up: Supporting the Next Steps

The end of the Start Up Programme is just the beginning. Our Next Steps offer ensures that alumni continue to build their skills, confidence and networks.

From a university team to a national finalist, Nathan's journey shows what's possible when young people are supported in turning ideas into action.

Now a graduate of Manchester Metropolitan University, Nathan is preparing to volunteer in Fiji, where he will support youth empowerment projects. He credits Young Enterprise with helping him develop the confidence and leadership skills he'll bring to this next chapter:

*"I learned that leadership doesn't have to look a certain way. The best leaders are relatable. YE helped me become more confident in taking charge - in a way that fits my personality."*

For Nathan, the hands-on nature of the experience was especially powerful: *"Entrepreneurship is effort-driven. The more you put in, the more you get out."*



He also reflects on the challenge - and value - of learning to lean on others: *"I grew up with a lot of independence, so letting go and trusting my team was difficult, but really rewarding."*

Nathan believes that getting involved with YE earlier could help even more young people explore paths they might not have considered: *"I only heard about YE in my final year. If more students had that exposure earlier, I think it could open a lot of doors."*

Above: Nathan and his Start Up, Brolly, competing at the NW and national Start Up finals in 2025

***"I grew up with a lot of independence, so letting go and trusting my team was difficult, but really rewarding."***

Nathan Kabwebwe

## ALUMNI

# ALUMNI HUB

Young Enterprise alumni can access continued support through our alumni network - designed to help them take their next steps in education, employment or entrepreneurship.



### BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Up to £2,000 in start-up funding
- Fully funded degree scholarships
- Jobs, apprenticeships and volunteering
- Skills training and personal development
- Mentoring & careers guidance
- Mental health and wellbeing support

### Amplifying Youth Voice

Alumni can shape the development of the alumni network in a variety of ways; they can complete alumni surveys, take part in annual check-ins, and join our reward and recognition system to take part in focus groups and much more.

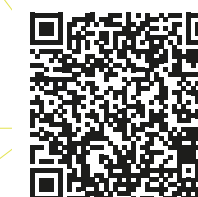
### Reward & Recognition

Young Enterprise is introducing a new Reward and Recognition system to ensure the time, effort and impact of Start Up alumni are formally acknowledged. This includes digital badges, certificates of achievement, and nomination opportunities for national awards - designed to enhance CVs, LinkedIn profiles, and personal statements.

### Opportunities to Get Involved

A range of new volunteer opportunities are being developed exclusively for Start Up alumni—offering meaningful ways to stay connected and contribute to the programme. From peer mentoring and judging competitions to speaking at events or supporting recruitment, these roles are designed to fit around study or work commitments while helping alumni build leadership experience, networks, and confidence.

**ALUMNI CAN SIGN UP HERE:**



Students can sign up here

### FIND OUT MORE, CONTACT:

**Kerry St Leger**  
Next Steps Manager  
Email: [kerry.stleger@y-e.org.uk](mailto:kerry.stleger@y-e.org.uk)





# START UP

**The ultimate employability and entrepreneurship experience for HE and FE students.**

## ABOUT US

**Young Enterprise is a national financial and enterprise education charity.**

We are passionate about developing the financial capabilities and enterprising mindset of the next generation, and believe that increased access to meaningful opportunities, combined with ongoing support, can change young people's futures.

Young Enterprise works directly with young people, teachers, and volunteers, with the support of corporate partners, to build a successful and sustainable future for all young people.

**Helping young people realise their potential beyond education and empower a generation to learn, to work and to live.**



## GET INVOLVED

If you would like to introduce Start Up Programme in your university or college, or have any questions about the programme, please email us at: [startup@y-e.org.uk](mailto:startup@y-e.org.uk)



### FIND OUT MORE

Discover more about Young Enterprise and our work to support young people at [www.young-enterprise.org.uk/start-up-programme](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/start-up-programme) or by scanning the QR code.



**Young Enterprise**

Member of JA Worldwide