



Young
Enterprise

Member of JA Worldwide

- FINANCIAL CAPABILITY
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- WORK READINESS



YOUNG ENTERPRISE
**START UP
PROGRAMME
INSIGHTS
2025-2026**



BUILDING ENTERPRISE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS



Young Enterprise (YE) is the UK's leading financial and enterprise education charity, helping young people build confidence, manage money, discover entrepreneurship and shape their own future.

Our Start Up Programme gives students aged 18+ the opportunity to create and run their own business, developing employability and enterprise skills through practical, team-based learning.

Designed for **Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE)**, the programme works across a wide range of courses, from Sports Science and Psychology to Fashion Studies and Business Management.

It can also be used as an enrichment activity outside the curriculum, helping students apply their learning in a real-world way.

By taking part, students build confidence, develop transferable skills and gain practical experience for the world of work. The following insights highlight the programme's impact and the skills young people develop through the experience.

START UP

"The course was well organised, and I felt encouraged to take a step out of my comfort zone"

Start up participant



MEASURING IMPACT:

2025-26 AT A GLANCE

Start Up doesn't just teach students about business. It gives them the chance to experience it first-hand, **building confidence**, **developing transferable skills** and gaining **practical experience** for the world of work.

THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS...



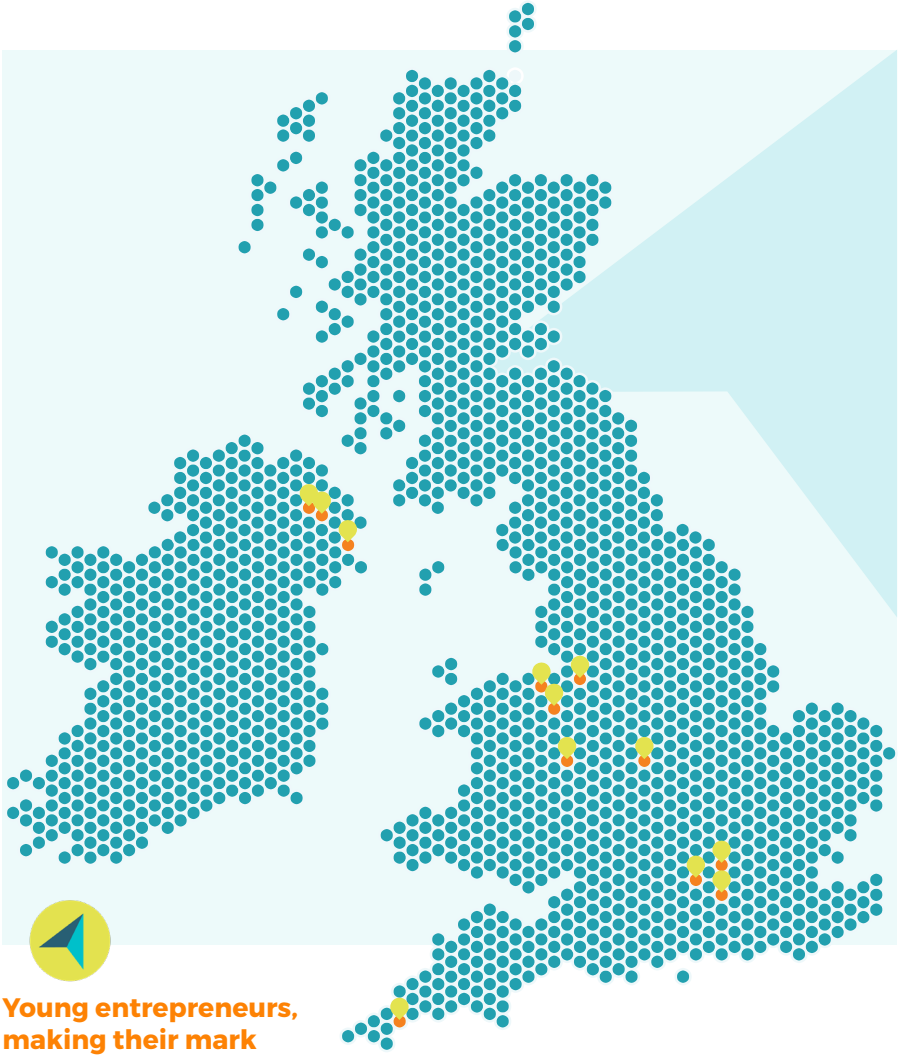
16
education providers
across the UK



1,430
young people took part



8
regions across the UK



My confidence developed significantly and allowed me to grow in a safe space with my peers and mentors
Start up participant

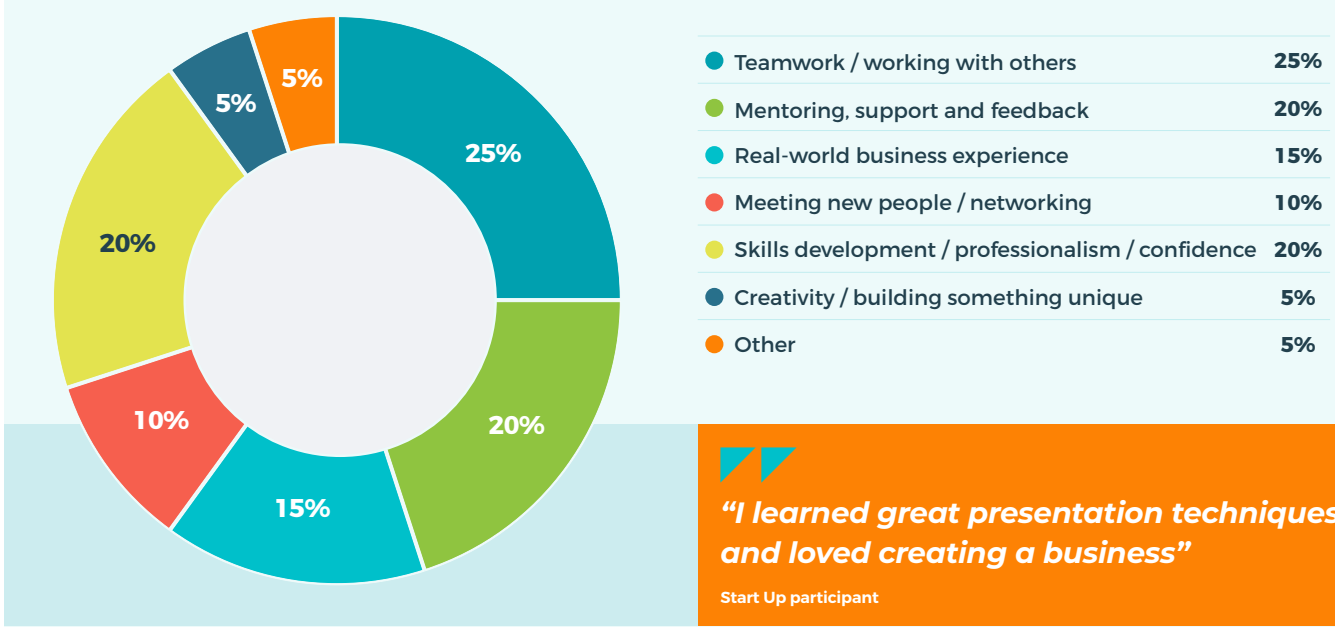


STUDENT SURVEYS SHOWED:



START-UP SURVEY RESPONSES:

Positive Aspects of the Programme





STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES:

UK START UP SHINES AT EUROPE'S BIGGEST YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP FESTIVAL



**RIFF SNACKS, HARPER ADAMS UNIVERSITY
GEN-E 2026 FINALISTS. RIGA LATVIA**

**3RD PLACE
OVER ALL
IN EUROPE**

From 7-10 July, Young Enterprise's UK representative, Riff Snacks from Harper Adams University, travelled to Riga, Latvia to compete at Gen-E 2026, Europe's largest entrepreneurship festival.

"Young Enterprise has opened doors, taken us across the world, and been brilliant from a networking perspective."

Lucie Campbell, Riff Snacks



From University Idea To European Stage

Riff had impressed judges at each stage of the competition from regional finals through to the UK event; they stood out with their delicious high-fibre snack bar made from wonky fruit and surplus ingredients that would normally go to waste. Their innovative idea aims to both improve gut health as well as reduce food waste.

Taking on Gen-E 2026

The week in Riga began with stage rehearsals, a city-wide Riga Rally, and opportunities to connect with fellow young entrepreneurs from across Europe. As the festival got underway, Riff Snacks founders Hannah Plush, Lucie Campbell, Ava Kind and Cayden Ayliffe, took to the stage to deliver their business pitch, impressing the audience with their confidence, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit. Alongside the competition, participants took part in networking events, cultural experiences and celebrations that highlighted the power of youth entrepreneurship.

A European Achievement

The festival culminated in a spectacular Gala Awards Dinner, recognising the very best young businesses from across Europe and celebrating the achievements of thousands of participants.

While the competition was fierce, Riff took 3rd place overall. They represented the UK with passion, resilience and professionalism. From rehearsals and live presentations to exhibition stands and networking sessions, they embraced every opportunity and did the UK proud.

"It's hard to quantify the sheer scale of what I've learned over the past six months. Yes, Young Enterprise has opened doors, taken us across the world, and been brilliant from a networking perspective, but more importantly, I've learned so much about myself, how I handle pressure, how I make decisions, and the real impact of mistakes. Those aren't insights you can get from an assignment or a week of work experience, and for that I'll be forever grateful." Lucie Campbell, Riff Snacks

Polly Gibb, Director of Women in Rural Enterprise and Zoe Harrison, Senior Lecturer in Food Business and Enterprise said;

"We couldn't be prouder of what Riff have achieved. To go from developing an idea as part of a university enterprise competition to representing the UK on a European stage just a few months later is extraordinary.

"Riff have turned a simple idea into something with genuine commercial potential."

Zoe Harrison, Senior Lecturer, Harper Adams University

What impressed me most in Riga wasn't simply that they came third in the JA Europe Start-Up of the Year competition, but the way they held their own among some incredibly strong young businesses from across Europe. They were confident, credible and completely committed to what they had created.

Riff began with a simple idea – taking food that might otherwise go to waste and finding a way to give it new value – but Riff have turned that idea into something with genuine commercial potential. Watching them realise that for themselves has been one of the most rewarding parts of the whole experience.

Third place in Europe is an incredible achievement, but I have a feeling this is only the beginning for them."

COMPANY FOCUS

Riff Snacks turns surplus and overlooked ingredients into high-fibre, high-protein snack bars. Its plant-based, dairy- and gluten-free bars use upcycled ingredients, come in compostable packaging, and help tackle food waste and the UK's fibre gap.



BACKING STUDENT ENTERPRISE

YOUNG ENTERPRISE START UP AND THE SMALL BUSINESS CHARTER

Young Enterprise's Start Up programme is helping universities demonstrate their commitment to student entrepreneurship, employer engagement and wider economic impact – with the programme now referenced in both **Small Business Charter accreditation** and a new book on experiential learning in higher education.

The **Small Business Charter (SBC)** recognises business schools that demonstrate excellence in supporting student entrepreneurship, engaging with small businesses, and contributing to local and regional economic growth. SBC accreditation specifically assesses the impact and effectiveness of business schools in developing entrepreneurial talent and supporting enterprise activity.

Young Enterprise's **Start Up programme** provides participating universities with a proven mechanism to evidence these ambitions through experiential enterprise education, measurable student outcomes, employer engagement and entrepreneurial activity.

Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Salford are two examples of partner universities with SBC accreditation, with assessors highlighting the contribution of YE Start Up to their wider enterprise and entrepreneurship activity. [Download here](#)

At both universities, Start Up supports strong regional business engagement, including the involvement of business mentors and judges from local employers, while student businesses engage directly with local customers – creating opportunities to develop entrepreneurial skills and contribute to local economic activity.

At the **University of Salford**, which was reaccredited in February 2026, assessors specifically referenced the YE Start Up programme as part of their assessment, highlighting its role within the university's wider enterprise and entrepreneurship activity.

SUPPORTED BY:



“Business mentors were fantastic, kind and very knowledgeable”

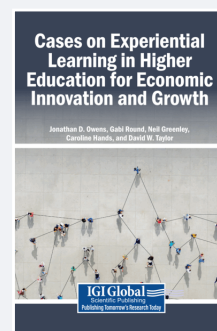
Start Up participant

START UP IN ACTION

Young Enterprise's Start Up programme has also been referenced in a new book, **Cases on Experiential Learning in Higher Education for Economic Innovation and Growth**.

Written through a collaboration of academics from the University of Salford, University of Liverpool, University of Hertfordshire and Manchester Metropolitan University, the book explores the important role of experiential learning in higher education and its contribution to economic innovation, enterprise and growth.

It includes chapters featuring Start Up as an example of how students can develop entrepreneurial skills, confidence and real-world business experience through practical learning. This reinforces the value of Start Up as a model for connecting academic learning with enterprise, employability and wider economic impact.



Available to download
Cases on Experiential Learning in Higher Education for Economic Innovation and Growth.



CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE BOOK

ALUMNI

WHAT'S NEXT?

START
UP

THE START UP JOURNEY CONTINUES...

The Start Up Programme may come to an end, but Young Enterprise's support for young people continues.

A new alumni offer will launch in the 2026/27 academic year, helping students stay connected, build skills and confidence, grow their networks and access opportunities linked to education, employment and entrepreneurship.

As the offer develops, Young Enterprise is keen for young people and students to help shape it, ensuring it reflects their needs and ambitions.

The alumni community offer could include opportunities for young people to network, share experiences, support others, take part in events and help influence future activity.

ALUMNI CAN SIGN UP HERE:



Students can sign up to the **Alumni Network here** and explore the Opportunities page [here](#).

For further information, please contact us at:
info@y-e.org.uk

HELP SHAPE WHAT COMES NEXT.

STAY CONNECTED:



- FINANCIAL CAPABILITY
- ENTREPRENEURSHIP
- WORK READINESS

WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS:

Thank you to our supporters for their continued passion and commitment to transforming the lives of young people.



CONTACT US



Scan the QR code to find out more about Start Up or for a full range of programmes and services visit:

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