SBC Application & Guidance Notes

The specific aim of these guidance notes is to help prospective schools complete, document and succeed in applying for the SBC Award. They have been developed as part of an on-going evaluation of the application process by the SBC board. They have been written by members of the SBC Management Board who are familiar with the assessment process. It is important to note that the SBC acknowledges that every business school is different and has avoided taking a prescriptive approach to what we expect to see contained within each dimension. On the other hand, it provides a 'flavour' of what prospective schools might choose to include for each dimension in order to provide clarity when preparing their applications. Nevertheless, at its core the SBC expects to review applications that are business school led and can evidence how they have created impact and benefit for multiple beneficiaries, namely (1) SMEs, (2) stakeholder and (3) student community. This underpinning is shown diagrammatically in Figure 1.

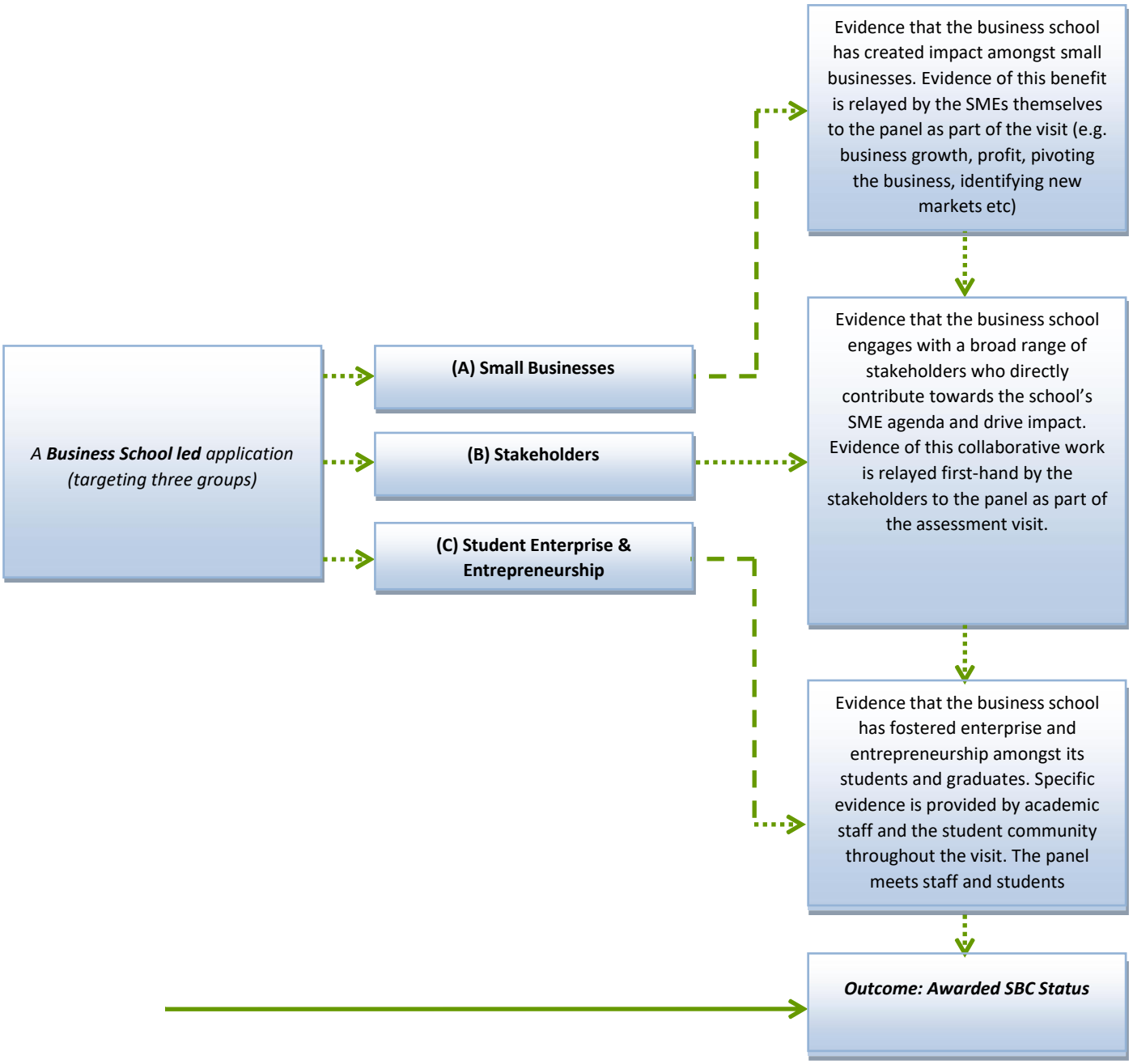

Figure 1: The underpinnings of the SBC accreditation process

Application & Guidance Notes

A DIMENSIONS - *Small business support for growth*

A1 – This is a mandatory dimension. Small Business Growth and Leadership Programme (s)

- This dimension looks to understand how business schools are supporting SMEs through dedicated growth programmes. These can take many forms and may have been supported as part of Government (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) or European (ERDF) funding mechanisms. Other programmes schools have cited in the past include Goldman Sachs 10,000, Small Business Leadership Programme, MADE Smarter, Help to Grow Management. Sometimes these programmes are provided by central university departments - these can be included if there is clear evidence of business school involvement.
- More specifically, we are looking to hear more about the infrastructure in place to assist and support small businesses, opposed to a couple of days workshop.
- Historically, schools involved in these types of programmes would aim to evidence this dimension highlighting the impact it created amongst its cohort of SMEs. Over the course of the visit SBC assessors would expect to meet SME participants who have taken part in these programmes and hear how this learning has directly impacted their businesses.
- It's worth noting that for this dimension business schools can also draw upon postgraduate (level 7) programmes (such as their MBA) that may offer specific cohorts, learning streams and training to SMEs. Evidence would include the number of SMEs who have been involved in these programmes and again impact from their learning.
- The assessors want to be able to see the impact to the SMEs that have taken part in the programmes and how it has tangibly benefitted them, e.g. new approaches, increased sales, looking at new markets etc that have been implemented because of the learning from taking part in the programmes offered.

A2 Innovation/Accelerator/Start-up Space

The provision within the institution of dedicated (physical or virtual) innovation/accelerator/start-up space

- Here the focus is on business schools showcasing the dedicated space you have available to SMEs and start-ups. In the case of remote visits, this is a space that the assessors encourage prospective schools to film to allow them to get a better feel of how businesses can interact in this environment. This space can be used by current students (as well as graduates) who have started a business, but in order to differentiate from dimension C22, can non-current students use the space?
- One form of this is alumni who have graduated and started a business and based themselves at the space.
- Importantly, can a totally external SME, that has no alumni, no connection to the university or business school, sign up to have office space / a base within your business school and therefore have closer access to the academic expertise, the cutting-edge technology on campus, the ecosystem of support offered in accelerators etc.?
- Important information to consider and evidence includes how many SMEs are housed there, how many are fully based there as opposed to just having access to a hot-desk as and when they want it.

A3 Publicly Funded Business Development Initiatives

Experience of publicly funded business development initiatives such as voucher schemes, and evidence of their performance

- More recently we have seen an increase in schools applying for this dimension, especially if they have been in receipt of government or European funding to support SMEs. Previous examples have focused on ERDF funded programmes. Many of these are multidisciplinary and involve central departments or other schools. This makeup is fine, as long as the business school is directly participating and making a core contribution. As part of the visit the assessors want to meet some of these businesses involved in this work. Previous examples can include SMEs who are receiving mentoring or training support to help grow their business.

A4 Small Business / Enterprise Unit or Centre

A dedicated facility and / or team of people with the capability and capacity to respond to the needs of small businesses

- This dimension is always a hot topic as many schools are very keen to show off their dedicated Enterprise Unit and often refer to this in their welcome presentation and the introduction of their application form; therefore, the assessors often hit the floor running with this dimension. More specifically, if an SME approaches the business school or comes through one of the many entry points at the university, does that SME get immediately hooked up with someone from this team/dedicated centre that can help to initially assess what the SME wants, what support is then most applicable and what conversations need to be facilitated off the back of that initial approach. This process may lead to the SME partaking in a growth and leadership programme like in A1, maybe a KTP like in A5, maybe pitching small projects that current students can work on through their curriculum such as A7 who could be wanting to have access to the university equipment or have discussions with academic expertise on some research that has been conducted etc.
- The support the SME receives doesn't just have to fall into one of the (A) dimensions as the examples highlighted above show, but the gist of this A4 dimension is when an SME engages with the school. Is there an entity/team whose job it is to ensure that the SME benefits from that engagement, in whatever form that may be?

A5 Knowledge Exchange Projects with Small Businesses

Experience of managing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and other similar knowledge exchange projects with small businesses

- Again, this is a frequently cited dimension as Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) have been going since the 1970s and business schools often find securing a KTP to support SME easier than winning money from a research council. Consequently, KTP projects and their team are often brought in to discuss this work. To be clear, we understand that different universities have different capacities and resources, so we therefore don't have a minimum number of KTPs we expect a business school to have in order to meet this criterion. We encourage any school involved in a KTP (that satisfies the time period for this application) to attempt this dimension. The KTP project can also be multidisciplinary and involve more than one school across the University. Nevertheless if the business school is involved then we want to hear about it.
- The volume of the KTPs is one aspect, but we are also looking at the scale of the impact on the SME, how much the KTP has benefitted, what the KTP has allowed the SMEA to do that they would not have otherwise been able to do without the expertise brought into the business by the KTP.
- Whilst we understand that KTPs often have input from different departments, we are looking for KTPs where the business school is the lead on the KTP as it is the business school that we are assessing, but by all means evidence can be submitted from all the KTPs where the business school is involved.

A6 Small Businesses Active in Enterprise Programmes and the Alumni Network

The active engagement of small businesses in university activities such as supporting alumni, mentoring, peer support, awareness raising and role modelling for university staff and students

- When you approach this dimension there are several things to consider. Do you get SMEs and their leaders to come in and give guest lectures and workshops and judge student competitions?
- Are live case studies from SMEs brought into the classroom?
- Do SMEs mentor students who are involved in enterprise programmes or just through the mentoring schemes that the university/school runs?
- How are those mentoring programmes run? How involved are the SMEs? How are participants matched up? How many hours are involved? Etc.
- Do SMEs come and run workshops/events for students/academics/other SMEs to attend?
- If so, then this is the type of evidence we want to see and hear about over the course of the visit.

A7 Individual Small Business Development Projects

The opportunities for projects explicitly with small business / enterprise focus.

- Here, the focus is on the small business development project. In other words, are SMEs you are working with providing real world problems/opportunities for the current students to work on?
- Are you bridging the gap between the student talent that sits within the business school and the SME community which often wants to be able to access that talent on a project to project basis?
- How many modules do you have in this element? What is the duration of the projects? Is it a one-day hackathon/brainstorm session or does it take the form of when an SME comes in and pitches their problem/opportunity to the students, who then go away and research and write up an individual or group report that then gets presented back to the SME? Typically, this is a dimension that business schools enjoy evidencing as they can often draw upon plenty of examples of SME development work. On the day we also like to meet these SMEs and hear at first-hand about their involvement and impact.

A8 Small Business Events / Workshops – Leadership and Management; General – Tax; Finance; International Trade. The existence of wider provision to support the needs of small businesses / enterprise for growth and evidence of its impact

- Try not to overthink this dimension. Is the business school running events and workshops that SMEs can benefit from whether it be hearing from other SMEs, or academic staff connecting with SMEs about their latest research and areas of focus, or SMEs who have been through a KTP sharing their experience with other SMEs to give them a better understanding of the way they work and benefits?
- These events facilitate connections being formed, be they academics and SMEs who want expertise, SMEs getting a better understanding of how KTPs work and gaining a better understanding of how the expertise in your institution can apply to their business specifically.
- These sessions are run both in person and remotely, but the business school is involved.

A9 Strategic Focus on Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

Evidence of the role enterprise and SME development play within the mission of the institution / business school

- This dimension can often speak about the true role and involvement of SMEs within the fabric of the school. Here we are interested in seeing evidence of the role enterprise and SME development play within the mission of the institution/business school. For example, do you have SMEs on your advisory board that are having an input into strategic decisions in order to ensure that the school is meeting the needs of this community?
- Do you have SME input into curriculum design to ensure that the talent that comes out of the school is in the form that the SME community requires?
- Are you ensuring that the academic activity undertaken is used productively by the SME community and is not just a piece of academic work that is not of use to SMEs?
- Are you ensuring that the academic world and the business world are bridging the divide between the two, making sure that academics are reaching out to SMEs and that SMEs are being invited into the institution to facilitate the connections?
- Is there recognition that enterprise skills are not just about how many students go on to create their own businesses, but the exposure to enterprise and the mentality created are desirable traits for SMEs in employees?

A10 Small Business Research Outputs Including Co-production of Knowledge

Evidence that research conducted within the institution / business school underpins and involves the enterprise / small business activity.

- Here, the panel is keen to see evidence that research conducted within the institution/business school underpins and involves the enterprise/small business activity.
- Specific evidence may draw on REF Impact Case studies, academic conferences and peer reviewed publications.

- The assessors are keen to meet these SMEs and hear about their involvement, how this relationship came about and also the benefit and impact that it has created for those small businesses.

A11 Business Schools participation in the broader University- led engagement in the Design and Delivery of Small Business Initiatives. Evidence of collaboration(s) that improve quality, achieve reach or scale activity

- Finally, A11 brings an end to the (A) dimensions. Here, the assessors are keen to see evidence of business schools' participation in the broader University-led engagement in the Design and Delivery of Small Business Initiatives. For example has the business school managed to share best practice in areas where it has more experience compared to other departments, e.g. KTPs, embedding enterprise in modules, sharing how the business school has bridged the divide between academics and SMEs and showing other areas of the University the benefits of always looking externally to ensure an impact?

Guidance Notes

B DIMENSIONS - *Stakeholder engagement to support growth*

B12 Business School Governance – Small Business Role

Small businesses' role in shaping the mission and the strategy of the business school

- The focus here is on business school advisory boards. Many business schools have established advisory boards who meet, for example, quarterly to help advise on the running and direction of the school. In this case, schools can provide background information on the advisory board, when it was established and what topics they discuss (e.g. L&T, KE and Research). The key here though is showing how many members of this advisory board are representing small businesses. A common mistake is to bring in members of the advisory board who are from larger businesses and can't speak about how the school supports SMEs.
- Common areas that are highlighted: SME representatives discuss how they support the school with the employability agenda, internships and placements and involvement in accreditations and external engagement. They also discuss how members of the advisory board promote awareness of the links the school has with SMEs with their industry connections.

B13 Working with other Business Schools in Design and Delivery of projects that impact Small Business

Evidence of collaboration(s) that improve quality, achieve reach or scale activity

- Many schools work collaboratively on dedicated knowledge exchange or research projects that are aimed to impact SME businesses and growth. Here, detail on this work (adhering to the two-year time scales) can be mentioned, who was involved and what is the specific aim of the project work. More importantly, how does this collective group working together create significant impact to small businesses. Previous applications have taken the opportunity to cite ERDF and or Government funded projects (e.g. The Dept. for Business Energy Industrial Strategy - BEIS) to talk about funding they have received as part of a consortium. Tip: you don't need to be the PI or lead school to discuss this work. Co-I status is fine.

B14 Engagement with High Profile Small Business Leaders / Regional and / or National Entrepreneurial Networks. Involvement in regional and national networks of entrepreneurs and small business fora

- Schools are encouraged to submit specific detail on the people at their school (and also the broader university) who contribute to the regional and/or national Entrepreneurial networks.
- Detail here on their role, length of service, position and the work they do to impact small business leader can be discussed. The better application emphasizes the contributions these people have made which is something the panel will want to see during the visit.
- Bullet points can be used to answer this question.
- Note: some of these names may appear in B18. That's fine, but B18 has a different focus looking at the dedicated representative bodies.

B15 Engagement with Small Businesses as Suppliers for the University

- Don't overthink this answer. You either do it or you don't. Many schools developing their first application don't have access to this data. Therefore, they will look to evidence this at reassessment. For those schools that do, detail on the type of SMEs that are considered suppliers and hearing how your procurement department has proactively looked to attract SMEs is something you should write about in your application. For the visit, the panel will be keen to speak to someone from procurement and an SME who is a registered supplier.

B16 Business School Visibility as a Source of Advice / Support for Small Businesses

The business school's profile as a source of advice / support for small businesses and enterprise advice

- Here the focus is on visibility. In other words, the business school has achieved a strong profile amongst the business community for supporting SMEs. Visibility could have been achieved through online and offline press coverage and also hosting dedicated events or through benefiting from public relations and TV coverage. Evidence of this marketing and press coverage will have to be presented. Previous applications have focused on presenting marketing analytical data e.g. on news stories and press releases. These often incorporate university staff and stakeholders. These stakeholders are encouraged to attend the visit and can then speak to this specific activity and the impact.
- The panel is looking for a balance of evidence and representation at the visit, not simply a long list of weblinks.
- Today, many business schools can access university website data from the central marketing team. You are encouraged to submit this.

B17 - This is a mandatory dimension. Engagement with Small Business Representative Bodies

Engagement by the business school with representative bodies for small business and entrepreneurs e.g. Chambers of Commerce, FSB etc

- As mentioned above, this dimension has a similar feel to B14, but here the focus is on evidencing the relationship with representative bodies at the impact from these connections. It is normal to see senior members of the University Executive cited here, such as the VC or the PVC for Enterprise. This broader institutional data is fine, but schools are also encouraged to drill down and identify any staff that may hold positions in dedicated SME bodies. Previous examples include links to the LEP, local Chamber, Federation for Small Business and regional small business support organisations.
- Again, what impact has been created through these connections?

B18 Integration with Public Sector Small Business Support

Evidence of working with other government business support agencies, e.g. Department of International Trade (DIT), Innovate UK, Scottish Enterprise, Business Wales, Invest NI

- Tip: don't get confused here with the next dimension (B20) looking at 'Engagement with Gov. Agencies'. They are different. Some schools in the past think that both B19 and B20 have the same focus.
- Again, engagement with this question seems to be dependent on the size of the school. Some larger schools will answer this as they have established a team to apply, for example, for a piece of collaborative research funded by the Government. It is common to see, for example, BEIS funded projects looking to boost SME productivity cited here. This includes Proof of Concepts and full projects.
- Again, what impact has come from these projects and how has it impacted the SME community?

B19 Engagement with Government Agencies and Authorities on Business Support Strategy and Growth Agenda

- Here the focus is on informing policy.
- Impact of work completed by the school may have directly informed government policy for growing small businesses.

- In this case, which projects inform policy? Which Government departments and or small business agencies are interested in this work and what could be the potential for future impact longer-term?

B20 Assessment of University / Institutional Impact on Small Businesses. Evidence of how the business school or wider university impacts on small businesses

- Previous applications have cross-referenced with A1 and A5.
- The focus is on evidencing institutional impact on small businesses, created (or co-created) through the school.
- For example, an evaluation from a KTP project (A5) could show how drawing upon academics from a number of schools across the University has contributed to a multidisciplinary study and associated outputs. Here the impact of this KTP (or multiple projects over the given time period) have been formally evaluated and recognised as having substantial impact on the small business community.
- Other schools have drawn upon the work with start-up and incubators and how they have developed start-ups that are now trading in the local region. The impact of these new businesses and what they contribute towards the economy (GDP) can be cited as impact.

Guidance Notes

C DIMENSIONS - *Encouraging student enterprise and entrepreneurship*

C21 Dedicated Start-up Space for Students (Incubators). Dedicated start-up space for students within the institution

- There is often a relationship between the incubation approach discussed in C21 and that of A2, however it is important not to simply duplicate the evidence as C21 focusses specifically on students of the Business School and the wider University.
- It is not uncommon for this facility to be the responsibility of other departments in the University such as careers services, or commercialisation departments. Where this is the case it is important to evidence the nature of the relationship between the Business School and the responsible department. Do Business School staff sit on management groups or advisory boards? Are staff involved in supporting the start-ups using the incubator?
- Where the Business School is the responsible department, it is useful to evidence how it makes the facility accessible to students of other departments and how it draws on the strengths of other University staff.
- Data is required to give an understanding of the size of the incubator and its use. Please quantify the amount of space dedicated/accessible to students specifically, as well as the number of Business School and non-Business School students using the space.
- Assessors will be looking for 'significant' engagement of students in the space so be sure to articulate why you believe the usage reported is significant in your context.

C22 Start-up Programme for Students / Recent Graduates. Opportunities for students to participate in a dedicated business start-up programme within the business school/ university

- Typically, the Start-up Programmes discussed in C22 are extra-curricular as C28 discusses modular/credit-bearing/programme-based activity, though it is possible that both formats will result in actual business creation.
- Again, it is often the case that these programmes are the responsibility of other departments in the University. In these cases, it is important to describe the relationship of the School with programme design, management and delivery.
- Please provide outcome data for Business School students and other students and comment on the inclusivity of the programme and the diversity of its participants.
- It is beneficial to be able to comment on what impact the programme has on the University's Higher Education Business and Community Interaction (HE-BCI) survey return.

C23 Careers and employability - Raising awareness, providing support, and promoting opportunities for self-employment and employment in small businesses

- Please describe collaborative and independent activity highlighting self-employment and employment in small business as viable career choices.
- Provide evidence of involvement in related workshops/training, identification and promotion of employment opportunities, including internships in start-ups and small businesses.
- It is likely that this will involve collaboration with careers and employability services. In such cases the nature of the relationship with the School should be evidenced as well as examples of the support provided by the School.
- Non-programme-based placements in start-up and small business should be included here.

C24 Placements in Start-up and Small Businesses as Part of Course or Programme. Placements in small businesses within a student's course or programme (core requirement or elective)

- Typically C24 focusses on work placement opportunities of between 3 and 12 months duration, but it can include non-traditional placement approaches such as self-employed placements and work integrated assessment exercises such as consultancy projects.
- Evidence should include examples of the impact that the students have on the host organisations and this should be quantified in terms of additional sales, turnover, profit, investment, and/or savings where possible.
- It is helpful to evidence the impact of the placement experience on the students' skills development and career thinking where possible.
- Where placements are optional, please evidence how the School promotes the opportunity.

C25 Mentoring of students by entrepreneurs and/or small businesses. Small business owners and entrepreneurs mentoring students

- Mentoring can be curriculum based and/or extracurricular, and can include short, informal as well as formal/longer term relationships.
- Please comment on the diversity of the mentor pool and the extent to which it is representative of the student body.
- Evidence should identify the value added by the mentoring experiences and the extent to which alumni of the School are utilised.

C26 Involvement of Business School in supporting enterprise, entrepreneurship and small businesses within student-led societies and initiatives. Evidence of nature and scale of Entrepreneurship Society in terms of membership- this should be wider than a business school

- The extent to which the School supports the design, delivery and sustainability of student-led initiatives involving enterprise, entrepreneurship and/or small business should be evidenced here.
- This could include the provision of funding, space, speakers, marketing and promotion, and leadership mentoring.
- Student initiatives can be ongoing and recurring such as entrepreneurship societies and/or Enactus teams, or they might be one-off competitions or events.

C27 Dedicated Small Business / Enterprise / Entrepreneurship Faculty. Details of roles, responsibilities and impact.

- Please provide details of relevant staff roles, responsibilities, publications, and involvement in the provision of business support.

C28 This is a mandatory dimension. Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Modules.

Enterprise modules for students in business schools and the wider institution

- Please provide module outlines, examples of assessment and evidence of skills/knowledge outcomes.
- Please also provide evidence of impact of the courses on career planning decisions where possible.
- Involvement of enterprise education pedagogy should be highlighted including the use of quality frameworks like the QAA guidance on enterprise and entrepreneurship education, and the EntreComp framework.

C29 Entrepreneurs and small business engagement in enterprise and entrepreneurship curriculum. Enterprise modules that involve contributions from current small business managers and entrepreneurs

- The extent of the entrepreneur/small business' involvement in the design, planning and evaluation of the module, as well as its delivery, should be evidenced where possible.
- Please comment on the diversity of the pool of contributors and the extent to which the pool is representative of the student body participating.
- Please also evidence the methods used to prepare and support the entrepreneur/small business to contribute and the effectiveness of the approach taken.

C30 External funding to support student enterprise activity.

Income received by the business school that supports students to work on enterprise activity (such as starting societies/community projects or seed funds for business ideas) and / or to work in small businesses (such as internships or other work-based learning initiatives).

- Please outline the source and scale of funding raised/used to support students with the development of enterprise, entrepreneurship and/or small business activity. This can include income that the business school has secured that allows students to create enterprise related societies, community projects and start-up seed funds, or income that has been used to allow students to access work-based learning initiatives within SMEs.

- Please provide evidence of the impact of the funding and comment on the inclusivity and diversity of those benefitting from it.

- Evidence of how the School uses its relationships with established small business and other economic development stakeholders to leverage and manage financial support should also be included where possible.