Enterprise Evolution Programme

Bridging the gap between education and entrepreneurship is a critical challenge that Ireland needs to overcome to achieve its ambition of a knowledge intensive and export led 'Smart Economy'. Currently there are unprecedented numbers of graduates and industry professionals with science, technology, engineering and business backgrounds on social welfare. Many of these people are highly qualified and experienced. Additionally, many do not view entrepreneurship as a valid next step in their career progression. The Irish economy is not getting full value from these graduates from a return on investment point of view.

The Enterprise Evolution Programme will take 80 currently unemployed graduates of science, technology, engineering and business and get them to work in cross disciplinary teams to create new, innovative and export led enterprises and solve innovation problems for Irish industry.

This programme is a new paradigm in enterprise development in Ireland. It will add a layer of multidisciplinary awareness and skills that are particularly relevant in a high growth business environment to these graduates and professionals, along with a strong up skilling in the project management, personal effectiveness, research and problem solving arenas. It is a public private partnership between Innovo Training & Development and the Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT)*, involving the Synergy Business Incubation Centre on campus and the Institute's School of Business.
Participants will be immersed in the unique atmosphere of the Synergy Centre, with exposure to a wide range of knowledge-based businesses, as well as active researchers and academics.

Commencing in September 2010, the Enterprise Evolution Progamme will up-skill participants in 'Enterprise Innovation' over a 5 month rotation. The programme will take participants out of their educational specialisms and broaden their skills base, in line with the objectives of national policy, particularly the 'National Skills Strategy' and 'Delivering the Smart Economy'.

It is now well recognised internationally that it is the cross pollination of graduates in the science, technology, engineering and business disciplines that drives real innovation and value for existing enterprise and for the creation of new ones. This programme will demonstrate how bringing graduates from disparate academic disciplines together in cross functional teams to drive real innovation in a programme of creativity and practical application can be an innovative model for interventions that can greatly assist Ireland's economic recovery.

This holistic programme has significant benefits for the personal development, activation and up-skilling of the individuals who participate on the programme. It will create Smart Economy champions with extensive problem solving, creativity, team working, research and entrepreneurship skills. Graduates of the programme will also have a full appreciation of the challenges and nuances of delivering economic value through export led start-ups, R&D and intellectual property creation.

The key outcomes of this project are as follows:

1. Participants will progress to start their own export led innovative enterprises
2. Participants can progress onto enterprise programmes at the Synergy Centre and beyond
3. Participants can progress to further education at level 8, 9 and 10 on the NFQ (Masters and PhD)
4. Participants will improve their employability profile and be recruited into R&D in the public and private sector
5. Participants will achieve a supplemental award in ***'Enterprise Innovation'*** equal to a value of 60 credits at Level 8 on the NFQ accredited by IT Tallaght.

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** (the Synergy Business Incubation Centre and the Department of Lifelong Learning are the units within ITT that are involved)*