6 Ways to Develop an Enterprising Mindset at University

It’s important to make the most of your time at university and seize all opportunities to develop enterprise skills and attributes, but make sure that you don’t get overwhelmed by the range of activities that are available, or you could feel like you’re trying to juggle too many things at once. The key to success is to consider the activities that you’re currently involved in, or things you would like to pursue, and think about how you could use these to challenge yourself to become more enterprising.

Adapted from the first module of our Skills and Attributes for Career Success: Developing an Enterprising Mindset programme, here are six ideas for activities that could help you to develop an enterprising mindset while you’re at university:

1. Student societies
   Being a member or president of a student society can help you to develop skills such as leadership, teamwork, negotiation, collaboration, diplomacy, and problem solving, to name just a few. Being enterprising is about seeking opportunities, and making ideas become a reality. If you do not wish to join any of the societies that your university offers, show off your enterprise skills and attributes by starting one up.

2. Sport
   Being part of a sports team or club will help you to develop strong communication and teamwork skills, and as a team captain you could demonstrate strong leadership skills and initiative. You could identify new opportunities, such as organising an annual friendly match. You could also be creative and innovative by organising fundraising events.

3. Projects
   Do not forget about the valuable skills and experience you gain in your course of study. Group work and co-curricular projects help you to develop your analytical and problem solving skills. They also require you to work effectively in a team and communicate well with others. Think about how you can use these experiences as evidence of your enterprise skills and attributes. For example, have you had to take responsibility for a group decision, put an idea into action, or persevere when things were difficult?

4. Part-time job
   Having a part-time job during your time at university demonstrates that you have independence and good time management. Make the most of your part-time job by developing your problem-solving skills and creativity. You could suggest how to make improvements to the work flow, or volunteer to create a new product or process. Show you have a can-do attitude and initiative.

5. Internships
   An internship gives you the opportunity to gain relevant, graduate-level experience in a work-place. It can help you to develop a range of employability skills, including project management, commercial awareness, creativity and problem solving. You will need to adapt to new environments and be able to work autonomously. This will all help to build your self-confidence and will look impressive on your CV.

6. Volunteering
   Employers know that volunteering can develop a wide range of enterprise skills and attributes. As a volunteer you can demonstrate enterprising characteristics when faced with challenging situations. Often you have to be aware of political and ethical considerations. You can also gain other important skills when volunteering, such as being able to challenge assumptions, being adaptable and proactive, and having professionalism.

Adapted from the Skills and Attributes for Career Success: Developing an Enterprising Mindset programme.