

# The System of Entrepreneurship Education in UK's Higher Education and Its Enlightenments for China

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**Keywords:** Entrepreneurship education, UK, Higher education, Enlightenment

**Abstract:** Entrepreneurship education is an education that applies innovative behavior, attributes and capabilities to creating cultural, social or economic value. In the 21st century, university innovation and entrepreneurship education in the UK is gradually moving towards a mature stage of diversified development. The entrepreneurship education has achieved great success and could give much enlightenment to China. China can learn from the implementation of entrepreneurship education in UK, and taking measures in teaching resources and modes, management systems and making close relationship between education and markets so as to lay a solid foundation for a society full of entrepreneurship spirit.

## 1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship education is defined as an education that applies innovative behavior, attributes and capabilities to creating cultural, social or economic value by QAA in 2018 (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education). Innovation and entrepreneurship education aims to develop students' ability to identify opportunities and initiate organizations. It focuses on the application of entrepreneurship spirits, knowledge and skills, and encourages students to apply them to various environments, including businesses, charities, NGOs, the public sector and social enterprises. The innovation and entrepreneurship education in British universities appeared in the 1970s and sprang up in the 1980s supported by government. The entrepreneurship education in UK has been popularized to educational institutions at all levels and formed its own unique education model. China has started to build a county with culture of entrepreneurship since 2012. However, many local governments and universities confronted variety of problems in teaching resources, teaching environment and etc. The experience of entrepreneurship education in UK's Higher Education will be useful for China's development of entrepreneurship.

## 2. The Entrepreneurship Education System in UK's Higher Education

### 2.1 General Situation for Entrepreneurship Education

The origin of innovation and entrepreneurship education in Britain can be traced back to the early 1970s. The entrepreneurship programme, introduced on a small scale at Manchester Business School in 1971, was hugely popular and quickly became the centrepiece of the MBA. Since then, other schools such as Sheffield Polytechnic, Durham University, London Business School and Cranfield Institute of Technology had launched a variety of entrepreneurship courses. The main reason was that British government had much concern about unemployment in 1976-77. The government held that self-employment and the establishment of small and medium-sized enterprises could alleviate unemployment. In the 1980s, the British government began to offer a series of courses for the individual entrepreneurs who intended to start enterprises through the Training Services Division of the Human Resources Council. And the innovation and entrepreneurship education in the UK has entered the stage of universal development; Since the 1990s, entrepreneurship education has become the mainstream courses of universities, and innovation and

entrepreneurship education in British universities has entered a rapid development stage. After privatization of British training institutions, they are more inclined to cooperate with private training institutions, resulting in an excess of academic staff with SME development skills in universities; In the 21st century, with the establishment of the British Science and Entrepreneurship Centre and the National College of Students Entrepreneurship, the Higher Education Innovation Fund and the Science Entrepreneurship Challenge Fund, having been gradually put into operation, systematic teacher training has promoted entrepreneurship of college students through small business services and business connection networks. University innovation and entrepreneurship education is gradually moving towards a mature stage of diversified development.

## **2.2 Curriculum for Entrepreneurship Education**

In the UK, innovation and entrepreneurship education not only trains people's ability to become entrepreneurs, but also is a kind of quality education, which enables people to have a positive attitude towards life and develop strengths and avoid weaknesses. The innovation and entrepreneurship education of British universities has achieved a good combination of theory and practice in curriculum setting. According to QAA, the UK's innovation and entrepreneurship education includes two levels of entrepreneurial quality education and entrepreneurial practice education. Quality education aims to cultivate students with the comprehensive qualities such as personality characteristics and consciousness that entrepreneurs should have. Practical education focuses on how to deal with practical problems encountered in entrepreneurship and cultivate the ability to solve problems. There are generally two types of innovation and entrepreneurship courses: one is the basic course of entrepreneurship for students of the whole school, which is a description of the basic knowledge and basic theories of entrepreneurship, such as entrepreneurship theory, business innovation thinking, business networks, and personal entrepreneurship skills; the other is a course for students who are interested in entrepreneurship and studying entrepreneurship. It has a strong professionalism and emphasizes practicality, such as how to open an online store, start a business, and manage small businesses. The core is to form a culture that inspires and encourages innovation and entrepreneurship, and rewards success in the whole society.

## **2.3 The Teacher and Teaching for Entrepreneurship Education**

The teachers should have a solid professional background, innovative thinking, and business practice capabilities, with the mode of “full-time teachers + part-time corporate teachers “. Teachers with strong academic ability, doctoral degree or professional title are invited to teach theoretical courses and engage in scientific research work; Teachers with experience of management and doctoral degrees are arranged to teach practice-oriented courses; Teachers with entrepreneurial experience and master's degree or higher are responsible for counselling to students in entrepreneurial practice. These universities also hire experts with rich work experience from different folks of society to serve as part-time teachers to teach students practical and policy-oriented courses such as law and finance.

The courses of entrepreneurship in British universities consist of classroom teaching and practical activities generally. Classroom teaching is to teach theories and knowledges related to innovation and entrepreneurship, allowing students to receive professional and modular curriculum education. There are various forms of classroom teaching that are student-oriented and highly interactive, including teacher lectures, student group project research, case study and entrepreneurship simulation, etc. There are three levels in the different grades of the higher education. The first grade mainly focuses on the introduction and training of basic theories and basic abilities. The second grade involves financial and legal issues in business operations and small business management. The third grade focuses on business partner management, business opportunity identification and strategy, etc; Extracurricular activities refer to the unique “entrepreneurial compartment” in the UK higher education system. The university provides students with opportunities and places for entrepreneurial practice through establishing science and technology innovation centers and entrepreneurial parks, and organizes entrepreneurial workshops to provide guidance to students. They also provide office space for students who are just starting a

business for free or at a lower price, offer consulting and support services to students with entrepreneurial ideas, and seek financial support from universities and external companies for student entrepreneurship projects that already have mature business operation plans and market potentials. Through practical training, students will acquire knowledge and skills in innovation and entrepreneurship in practice.

## **2.4 Funding for Entrepreneurship Education**

The funding for entrepreneurship education in UK is mainly from the government, and the rest is donated by private and enterprises. The British government regards innovation and entrepreneurship education as an important measure to promote economic growth and improve national competitiveness, so it has invested a lot of human, material and financial resources. Among them, the Higher Education Innovation Fund and the Scientific Entrepreneurship Challenge Fund are two well-known funds established by the government. At the same time, British universities are also actively applying for relevant funds from EU, such as the EU 's SPEED PLUS Program, the EU Regional Development Fund, and the EU Horizon 2020, to conduct entrepreneurship education and research. The remaining funds can be self-raised or sought from corporate investment. For innovative products, the university sign agreements with students, promising to assist them in patent recognition for free. According to the agreement, after a successful determination, the university is eligible for a specific percentage of patent ownership.

## **3. Enlightenment to China's Entrepreneurship Education**

The entrepreneurship education has achieved great success and could give much enlightenment to China.

### **3.1 To Improve the Management Mechanism and Encourage Multi-Channel Cooperation**

Compared with the United Kingdom, the management mechanism of entrepreneurship education in China is not well organized. In 2015, China officially incorporated innovation and entrepreneurship education into the national education system, and the General Office of the State Council promulgated the Implementation Opinions on Deepening the Reform of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education in Higher Education Institutions. However, the policies, management and organization of these innovative entrepreneurship education are concentrated on the field of higher education, mainly in the science and technology parts of universities, and there are few research centers for specialized innovation and entrepreneurship education. Thus, Chinese universities should establish a complex three-dimensional multi-party cooperation mechanism, through the establishment of combine the universities, research and development centers, entrepreneurship centers, intermediaries and other institutions to form an organic and effective unity. At the same time, more exchanges and cooperation between universities and governments, social organizations are encouraged, so as to provide a broader platform and financial support for students' innovation and entrepreneurship. In addition, the management of entrepreneurship education in primary and secondary schools should also be integrated into the overall management and guidance.

### **3.2 To Establish a Comprehensive Curriculum System for Entrepreneurship.**

The entrepreneurship education system in UK focuses on the development of “people”, that is to integrate innovation and entrepreneurship into all stages of education and cultivate innovation consciousness from an early age. Innovation and entrepreneurship education is not simply equivalent to entrepreneurship education, nor should it be equated with successful entrepreneurship education or “entrepreneurial training”. The real significance entrepreneurship education is to train innovative talents for the future, who have the innovative spirit and can promote economic and social development. China can learn from the “Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Learning Channel” released by the QAA in 2018, and integrate resources both inside and outside the universities, building a curriculum system of internal and external integration under the core of large-scale curriculum combining theory and practice.

In addition, The assessment of students' entrepreneurship is often considered a major challenge, as the multiple skills and competencies are difficult to measure. High-quality entrepreneurship education must rigorously assess its learning outcomes and their effectiveness. Therefore, on the basis of a perfect curriculum system of entrepreneurship, China should further establish national evaluation standards evaluation mechanism depending on practical and detailed examples, such as the list of student academic results, self-assessment form, study diary and other materials. By building a scientific and sound curriculum system, we can create a healthy national innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

### **3.3 To Cultivate Qualified Teachers for Entrepreneurship Education**

As entrepreneurship becomes more complex in depth and breadth. High qualified teachers are in great demand and the teachers should have not only professional skills, but also the corresponding vision and support system. First of all, the cultivation and development of innovative and entrepreneurial educators require the joint efforts of many parties in society. Only when people highly recognize the culture of entrepreneurship will they form a joint force. Secondly, innovation and entrepreneurship education itself is a multidisciplinary, cross-school, multi-competency integration education, and the cultivation of students' creativity, leadership, action, data analysis ability needs the social forces at all levels of coordination and cooperation. The teacher's professional development not only needs the individual professional knowledge and teaching ability, but also the collective wisdom of the team. Therefore, we can provide guidance, help and support for teachers by way of different teaching courses, various kinds of projects and other learning inside and outside the classroom. The team members of experts includes, but is not limited to, faculty, entrepreneurs, founders of social institutions or organizations, government personnel, university professors, etc. Interdisciplinary teams of experts have multidisciplinary advantages, and the consistency of innovative entrepreneurship through different methods and pathways helps to update teaching concepts and change traditional teacher-centered teaching methods. In addition, the role of individual guided teachers in the entrepreneurship education team is an important factor. Teachers, as professionals, need to get the support of continuous learning and growth, and constantly improve themselves. Therefore, the planning and continuing education for teachers' professional development of teachers in entrepreneurial education should be well emphasized.

## **4. Conclusion**

The Reform of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education in China has achieved a lot in Colleges and Universities and is still be given much attention. Therefore, China can learn from the implementation of entrepreneurship education in UK, and taking measures in teaching resources and modes, management systems and making close relationship between education and markets so as to lay a solid foundation for a society full of entrepreneurship spirit.

## **Acknowledgement**

Note: Funding: This article is supported by Chinese Production and Research Funds (NO:201901297003), Funds for Teaching and Research of Hubei Normal University (NO: 2019013) And Funds For Innovation and Entrepreneurship of Chinese University Students (NO:201910513024X).

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