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The 2013 Survey of Enterprise and Entrepreneurship in Higher Education

**National Council for Graduate Entrepreneurship
Institute for Small Business & Entrepreneurship
Paper Presented at the 36th ISBE Conference, November 2013**

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Swansea University**

Introduction

Background

This article provides the results of the fourth survey in enterprise and entrepreneurship in higher education (Hannon et al., 2006; Hannon 2007a, 2007b; NCGE, 2006, 2007, 2010; Rae et al., 2010). Over time the survey has enabled changes in the provision and engagement in enterprise and entrepreneurship education to be observed and comparisons made of the study findings.

In the previous survey published in 2010 it was concluded that ‘action needs to be taken to scale up and embed enterprise and entrepreneurship education to reach all students’. This is a theme that has been reinforced through recent reports and policy documents as shown below.

At the time of the 2010 survey the economic crisis was hitting the UK and its effects beginning to be felt in education. The 2012 survey was undertaken against a backdrop of immense upheaval in higher education in England and significant changes in the regional economic landscape resulting from a worsening economic recession during the period since the previous survey from which many institutions drew their additional support. UK universities were facing many pressures causing substantive institutional reviews and restructuring.

Despite this the 2012 survey achieved a significantly high 79% response rate. The data provide insights into the state of enterprise and entrepreneurship education in higher education across England and Wales.

Context

A series of UK Government reports, commissions and Agency reports over the past 15 years (for example Dearing (1997), Lambert (2003), Leitch (2006), Roberts (2002), Browne (2010), Warry, VITAE (2011), BIS (2011), Wilson (2012), QAA (2012), Young (2013), Richards (2013)) has been encouraging HEIs to engage in and encourage entrepreneurship in its education provision, its innovation capacity, its SME support and through its impact on local and national economies.

Further afield, across Europe, the emphasis on entrepreneurship in education has maintained a strong policy focus (EC, 2008) and has continued to gain strength with the publication of

the World Economic Forum report (2009) and the European Commission's 'Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020' (EC 2012a, 2012b) wherein entrepreneurship education is presented as the 1st Core Action Pillar.

Changing Landscape for HE

The UK HE sector has continued to be under pressure from changes and uncertainties across the education landscape. For example,

- The introduction of increased student fees in 2010/11 and the uncertainties of the impact of this on recruitment and institutional income;
- The changing role of Local Enterprise Partnerships following the demise of the Regional Development Agencies and the more recent government decision to funnel EU Structural Funds through these new organisations. HEIs have relied on regional funds to support enterprise activity;
- The challenges of the UK Border Agency and the new rules about student visas and the unpredictable effect on the demand from international students for engaging in entrepreneurship and start-up opportunities;
- Government policy to encourage higher levels of private sector provision and the ways in which this may affect the viability of certain HE provision. This is in addition to the global growth in Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs) with their potential for delivering entrepreneurship education;
- The emphasis on the FE Sector by government as another route for delivering HE provision and the development of the Gazelle Group as a group of colleges aiming to be entrepreneurial colleges and their connection with Babson College in the USA for providing leadership development;
- The ongoing and lingering effects of the 2008/09 economic recession into the 21st Century and its impact on public sector funding.

In summary, the context for the 2012 survey has been at a time of immense upheaval and change. The financial crises from 2008/09 have continued and pressures on public spending have been severe. Although there has not been such an approach in England, in Wales the Government announced a reduction in the number of HEIs to be funded from 2013/14 from 11 to 6.

However, the political narrative has remained strongly aligned with the need for education to contribute more to economic regeneration and to emphasise within the student experience the value and opportunities from engaging in developing entrepreneurial mindsets and behaviours as a response to coping with an increasingly uncertain, unpredictable and turbulent global environment.

Key priorities for HEIs during this period have focused on organisational re-structuring, re-thinking competitive strategies, re-evaluating student offerings, positioning in national and global league tables and rankings, and securing optimal outcomes in the forthcoming REF.

The 2012 Survey has captured data for the academic year 2011/12 which illustrate the capacity for UK HEIs to provide enterprise and entrepreneurship learning and development opportunities, the level of engagement by students in these opportunities and the perceptions of respondents to the future for enterprise and entrepreneurship in their institutions. This is at

a time when more than ever before the UK needs its HEIs to develop entrepreneurial responses appropriate to the turbulent and challenging environments they are facing.

Approach

For the 2010 survey, the previous survey tool was evaluated and significantly revised between January and April 2010. Given the need for consistency to allow comparison with the previous surveys, a range of questions and data fields had to be retained. The 2012 survey tool was kept very much in line with this in order to maintain the ability to compare and contrast previous years. As with the previous survey, user consultation and feedback enabled further clarification of questions. Those that were problematic or burdensome to answer were eliminated where possible or simplified. The overall length and number of questions and data fields were reduced. As with the 2010 survey, SurveyMonkey was selected as meeting the requirements for the 2012 data collection method. This had the advantage of being familiar to many respondents, perceived as “easy to complete”, and offered greater reliability as well as basic analytical capability in comparison with the previous method. The survey questionnaire was set up on SurveyMonkey and tested with respondents in April-May 2012, enabling final changes to be made to the instrument. Ensuring the highest response rate as well as data quality was a continuing priority. A dataset of HEIs, principal and respondent contacts was provided by NCEE. This was checked by the survey team, who contacted HEIs to verify or correct contact details. Finally the survey questionnaire was released online in June 2012 and all 113 HEI contacts were asked to complete it by the end of July 2012. Respondents were asked to collect the data beforehand, as it was noted that some of the requested data would be held in different offices/departments and this might be difficult to obtain. In some cases an excel version of the survey tool was requested in order to more easily facilitate the collection of data from multiple departments before being input online by a single person. Responses were monitored online, which enabled contact to be made with HEIs who had not opened the survey or who did not complete it a one month extension was given to respondents due to the holiday period. Calls to advise and help respondents were made by the survey team and as a result by the end of August 2012 89 HEIs had responded. This was a lower response rate of 79 per cent compared with 92 per cent in 2010, 96 per cent in 2007 and 94 per cent in 2006. Although not every HEI completed all 65 questions in the survey, the response rates overall were sufficient for there to be a high degree of confidence in the results. The survey team were grateful to all

those who responded to an in-depth and searching questionnaire at a busy time of year. As with the 2010 survey, data was collected on this occasion from those Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish HEIs who chose to participate in the study. However the proportion of responses was significantly lower, hence these have not been included in the results. Following completion of the survey, the dataset was extracted from SurveyMonkey and converted into an Excel format for initial analysis. The data was then imported into SPSS and in some cases recoded for ease of analysis. This also gave the option of more advanced analysis in the future. The dataset was examined carefully for duplicate entries, possible errors and omissions, of which there were many. These were checked with respondents and the data “cleaned”. Initial analysis provided descriptive statistics with charts and graphs, enabling comparison with the previous surveys. More advanced analysis was performed to explore possible trends and correlations within the data. However it was found that concerns over data quality, with response rates to some questions lower than the overall response rate, limited the degree of advanced analysis that would provide reliable results.

Summary of results

In summary, the survey demonstrated the following results:

- 89 HEIs in England responded to the survey from a total of 113, a response rate of 79%
- 99% of responding HEIs support student enterprise and graduate entrepreneurship
- Of these, 85% offered credit-bearing awards and modules in enterprise and entrepreneurship leading to academic qualifications while 96% provided extra-curricular support for student and graduate entrepreneurship
- The rate of student engagement in enterprise (SER) increased to 18% in comparison with 7% in 2006, 11% in 2007 and 16% in 2010
- Data on male:female participation was not collected by all universities but for the 64% of those which did male student engagement was 57% and female engagement 43%, an increase in male:female ratio compared to 2010
- Of those reporting gender (with accredited programmes), 6% had no female students on their accredited enterprise programmes.
- 92% of the 85 HEIs who responded support students and graduates in new venture creation

Student engagement in enterprise (SER) was developed by Hannon (2007) to measure reported student involvement in enterprise education or extra-curricular activity, as a percentage of all students in HE. It is a synthetic indicator, with accompanying limitations and possible distortions. For example, because it includes a gross figure for student involvement across an HEI, there is no way of excluding students who participate in both an enterprise education course and one or more extra-curricular activities, so an unquantifiable degree of “double-counting” is inevitable. However this may compensate for a likely degree of under-counting of students participating in extra-curricular events. As a measure, SER is not precise but it is a useful indicator of the general level of student involvement in enterprise, both institutionally and nationally. Table 1 summarises the changes in key indicators over the five year period between 2007-2012. Owing to differences in the method of data collection and retention in the 2006 survey, there were too few points of comparison to include this survey in the table.

Overall Indicators	2012	2010	2007
Response rate from HEIs	79	92	96
Student engagement rate (SER)	18	16	11
Public funding for enterprise and entrepreneurship	85	80	80
Average start-ups per HEI	35	28	22
Male participation	57	53	53
Female participation	43	47	47
<i>Institutional support and provision: in-curricular provision</i>			
Business and management delivery	50	60	61
Undergraduates	69	78	80
Postgraduates	31	22	20
Full-time	71	63	87
Part-time	29	37	13
<i>Institutional policy and infrastructure</i>			
Explicit enterprise and entrepreneurship policies	49	50	47
Pro-Vice Chancellor for enterprise and entrepreneurship	61	60	46
Staff development for enterprise and entrepreneurship	58	64	51
Student Enterprise clubs	70	67	52
Enterprise and entrepreneurship as part of the HEI mission	57	63	45
Faculty level action plans	33	40	36
Hot-desking facilities	67	58	53

Notes: Other than number of start-ups, figures shown are percentages

Table 1. Changes between 2007, 2010 and 2012 surveys

Key Findings from the survey

Student engagement rate (SER)

The student engagement rate is an indicator of the number of students participating in enterprise activity as a percentage of the total student population. The SER of 18 per cent at national level was an increase on the 18 per cent in 2010 and 11 per cent in 2007. This increased to 23 per cent when applied to the HEIs that responded to the survey. As has already been identified in section four, there are limitations in such measurements. There is the problem of double counting students as it is impractical to expect institutions to count unique students for each module or activity. There is also the problem of under reporting. This is either done through misinterpretation of the question, unwillingness to complete the question or an inability to complete the question due to the data being unavailable. Figure 1 illustrates the SER rates and includes the breakdown of students involved in curricular and extra-curricular enterprise activities. With two thirds of the SER contribution coming from in-curricula activities, there is an indication of a movement away for the ‘voluntaristic’ approach to enterprise education. The graphs in the following sections show the percentages of participating HEIs which offer support in the areas specified.

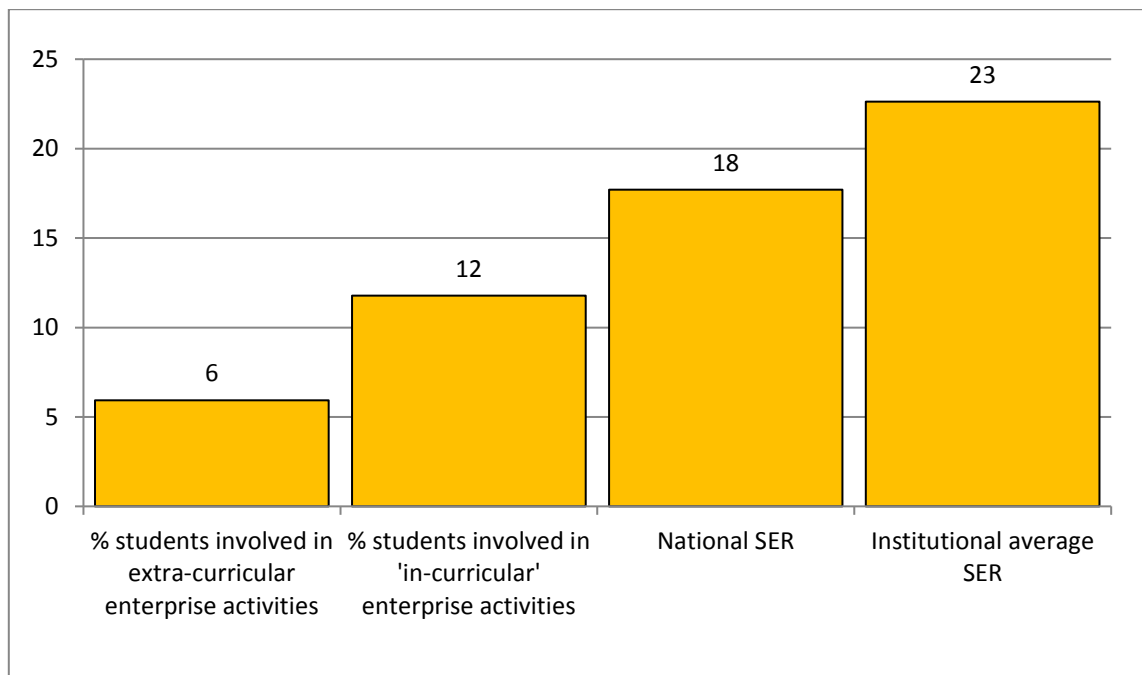


Figure 1. Student engagement rates

In-curricular provision of Enterprise & Entrepreneurship

This includes full awards, as well as specific enterprise and entrepreneurship modules, and modules in which enterprise and entrepreneurship comprised at least 50% of the content.

Overall for in-curricula provision, 69% of the provision is for undergraduate and 31% is at postgraduate level, whilst 71% is for full-time and 29% is for part-time students. Business and management provided the lead faculty subject base for 50% of the full awards and specific enterprise and entrepreneurship modules.

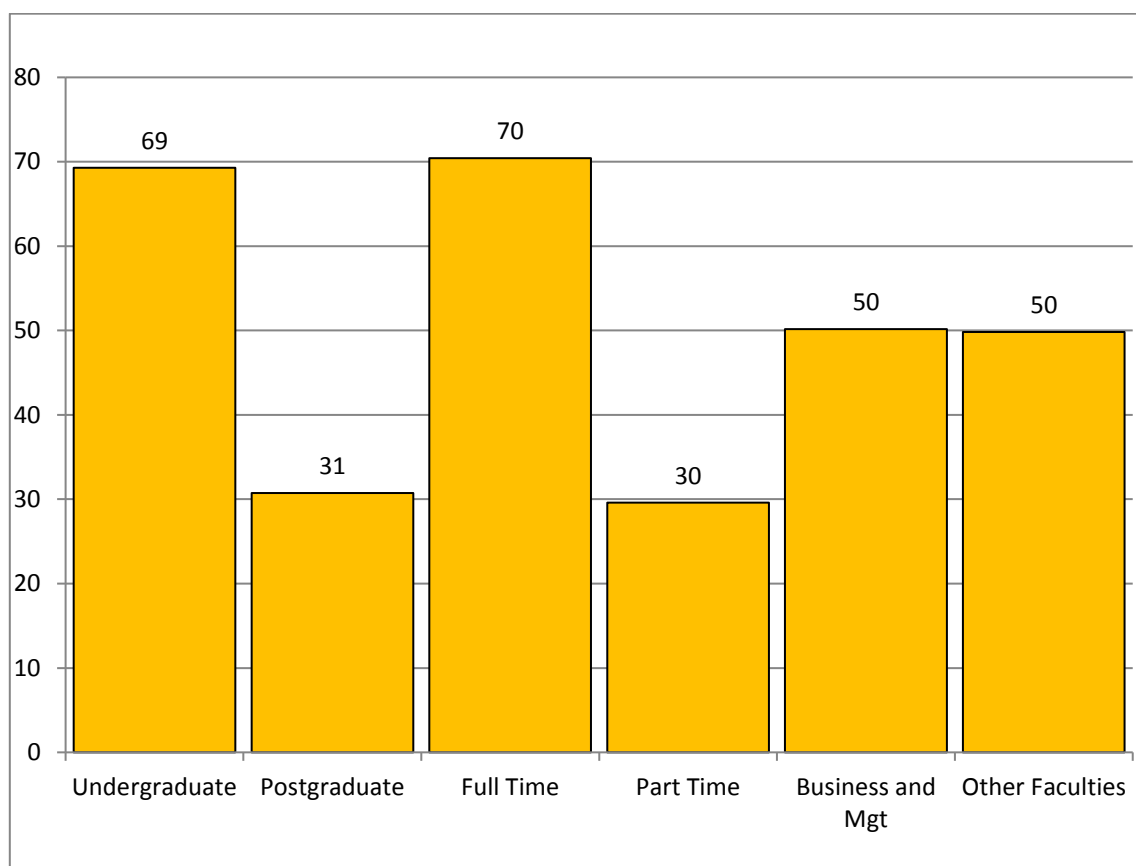


Figure 2. In-curricular provision of enterprise and entrepreneurship

Extracurricular Enterprise & Entrepreneurship provision

Extra-curricular activities, offered by 100% of the sample, are an essential means of raising student awareness of enterprise and providing opportunities to develop skills and confidence in practical ways. The survey tracked activities in idea generation and business planning; venture creation; enterprise skills development; networking events; and events targeted at specific themes, such as social enterprise, creative industries, science and technology, ethnic minorities and female students.

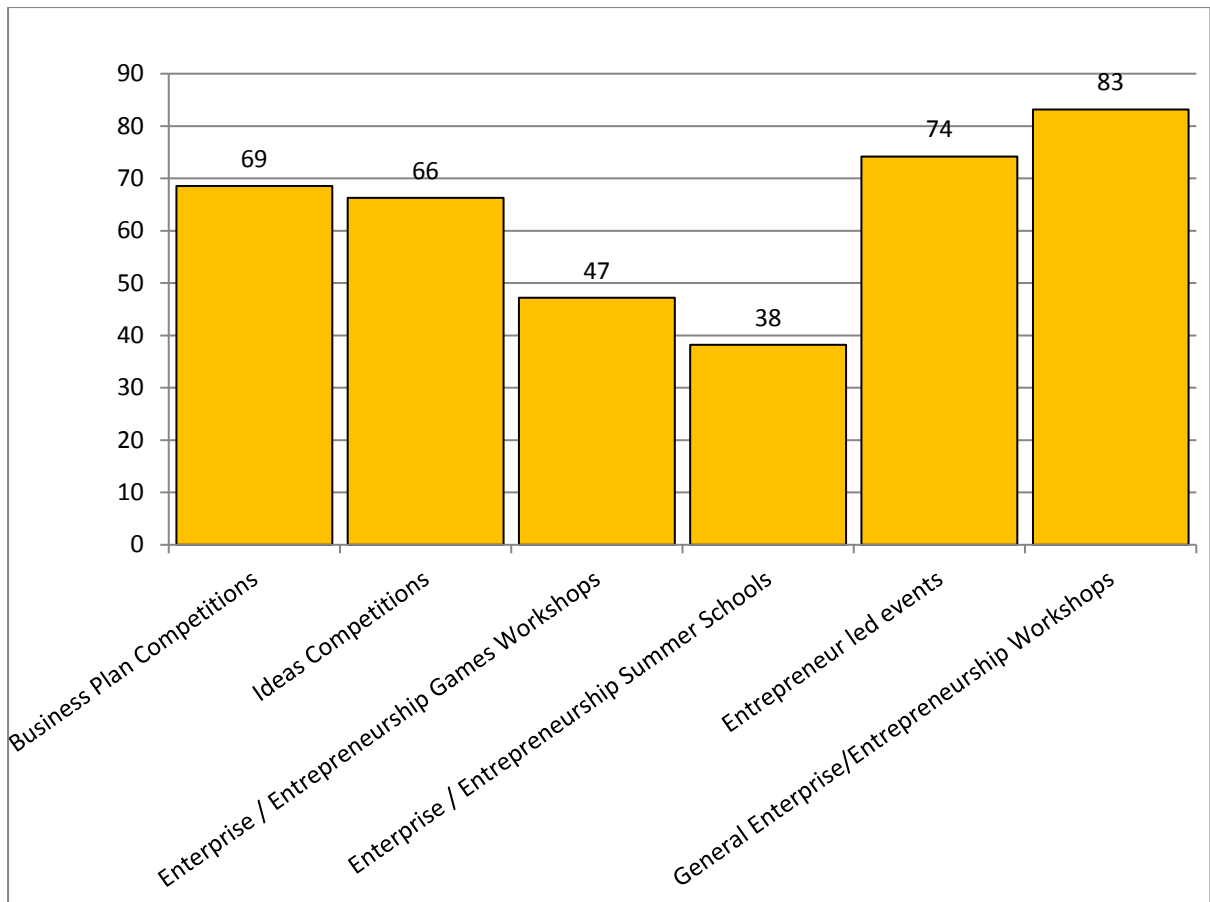


Figure 3. Extracurricular enterprise and entrepreneurship provision

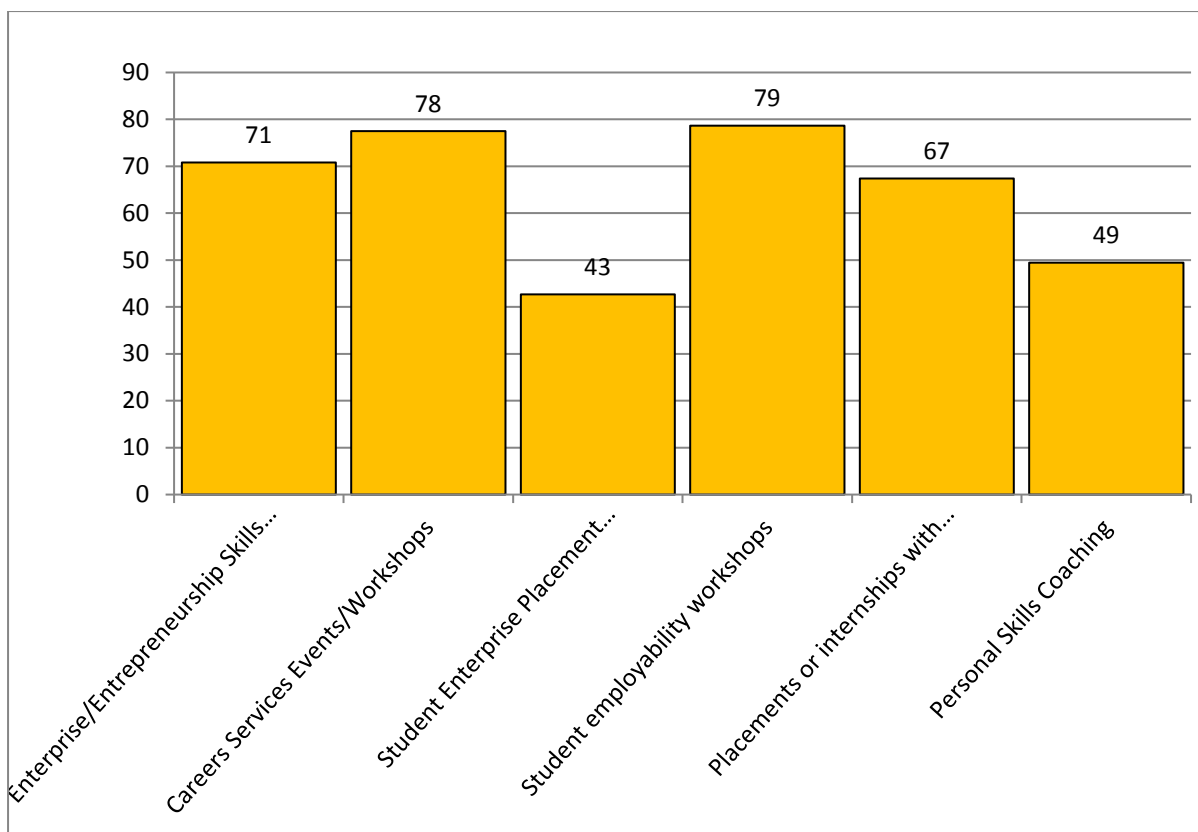


Figure 4. Enterprise skills development

Funding Sources for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship

Enterprise and entrepreneurship activities draw on a range of funding sources. The percentages of Universities receiving funding from public and other sources are shown in the following figures.

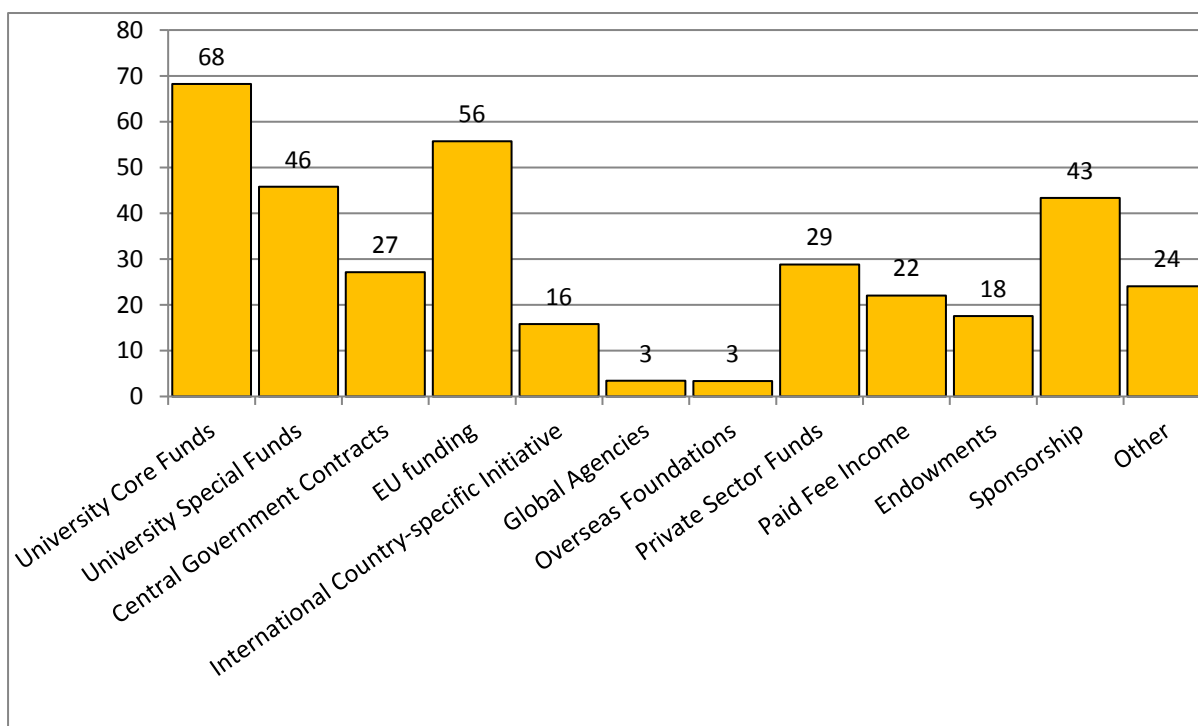


Figure 5. HEIs receiving funding for enterprise from all sources

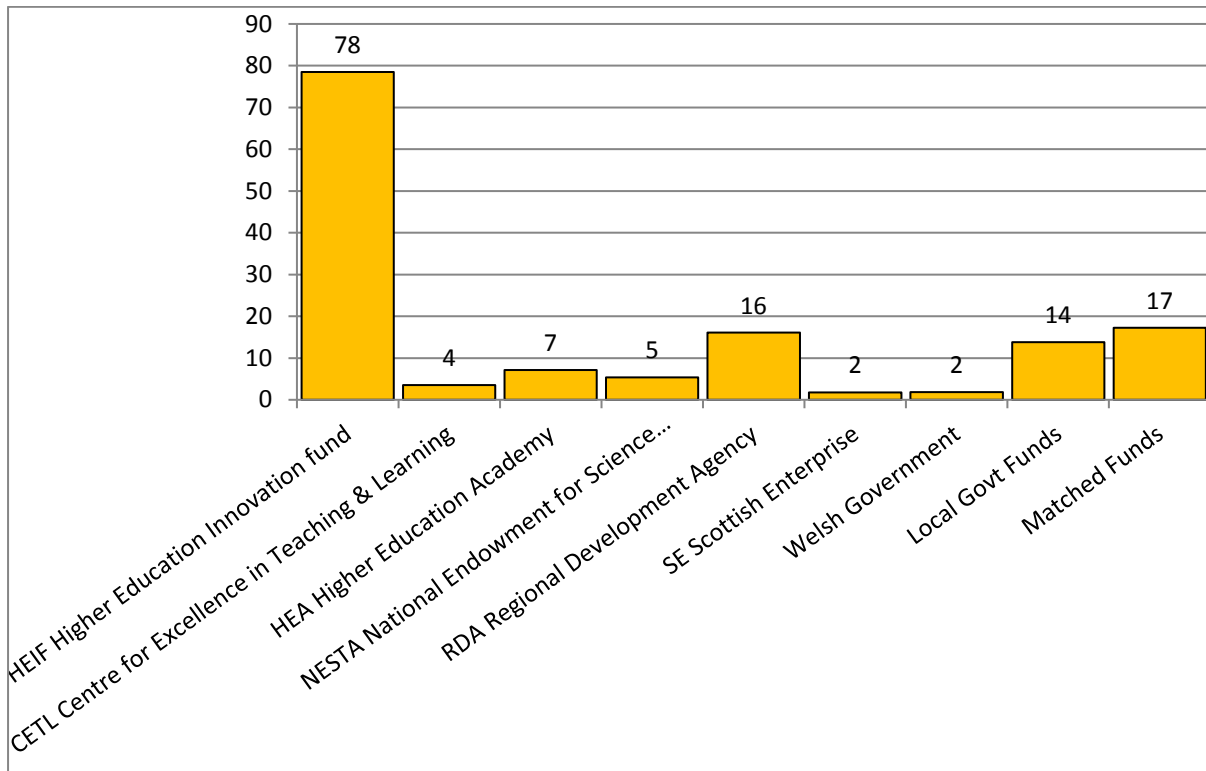


Figure 6. Universities receiving funding from public sources

Institutional Policy, Infrastructure and Staffing

The survey demonstrated that a significant majority of HEIs connect their policies on support for enterprise with those for employability, teaching and learning, innovation, research and knowledge transfer, and, surprisingly to a lesser extent, business incubation as shown in the following figures.

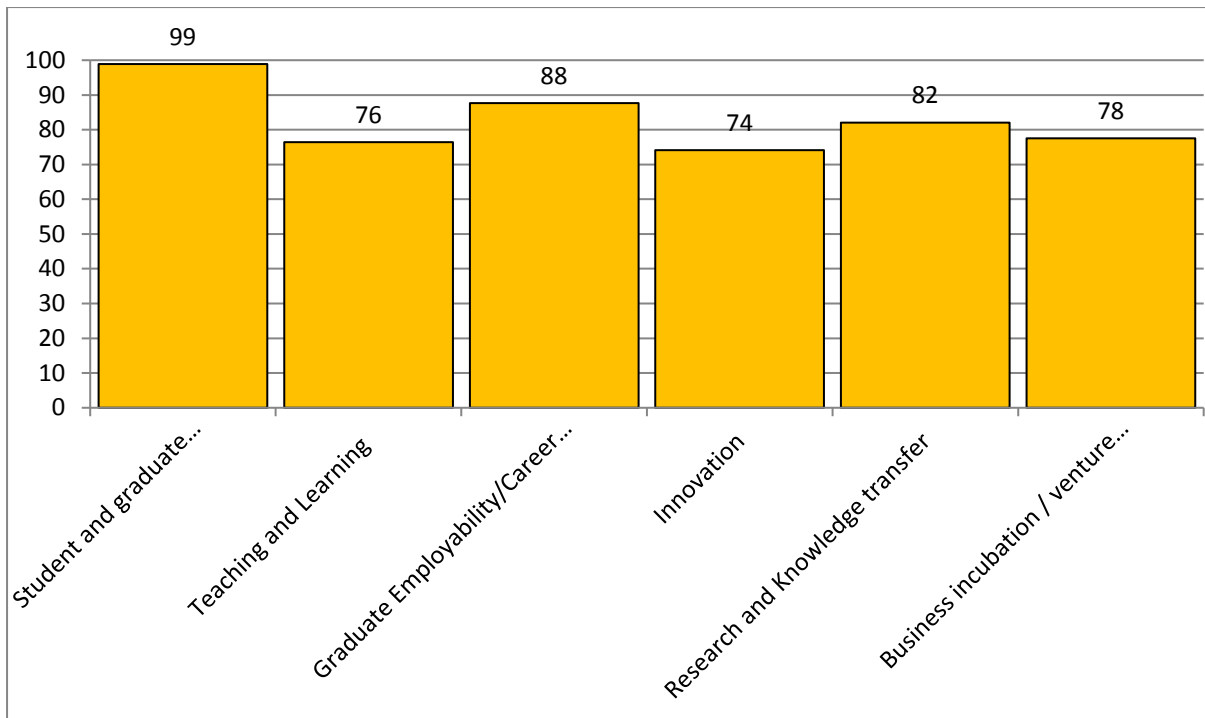


Figure 7. Policies for enterprise support

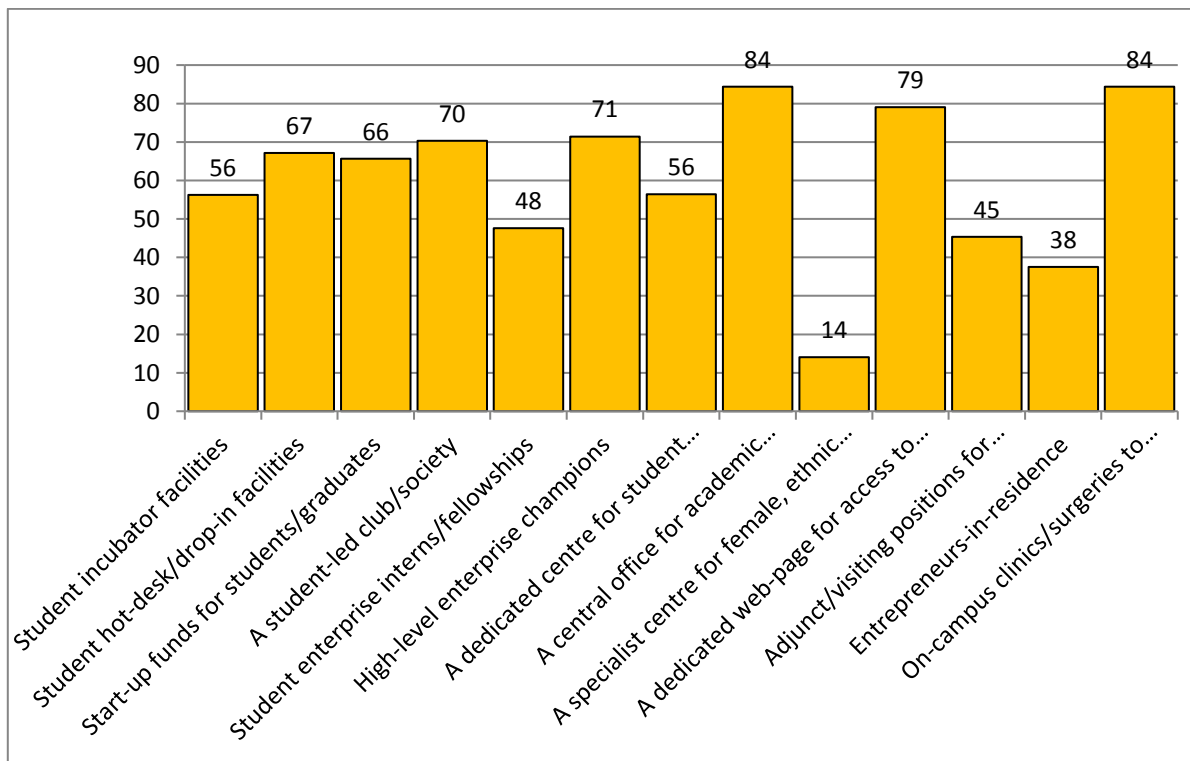


Figure 8. HEI infrastructure provision

61% of HEIs have a Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for enterprise, but only (57%) have enterprise embedded in the institutional mission. An institutional policy on entrepreneurship is present in half of the respondent universities, 51% had an external advisory board. However, only 33% had faculty-level entrepreneurship action plans, possibly indicating that these were seen as less of a priority.

70% have a student-led enterprise club or society. Support for staff development in enterprise dropped from 64% in 2010 to 58%. 87% have appointed academic staff to teach enterprise, 55% have appointed professors and 35% have visiting positions for entrepreneurs.

Venture Creation Support

90% of HEIs support students and graduates in creating new business ventures. The average number of start-ups per respondent is 35. Responses showed that 1650 new ventures were created in 2010/11.

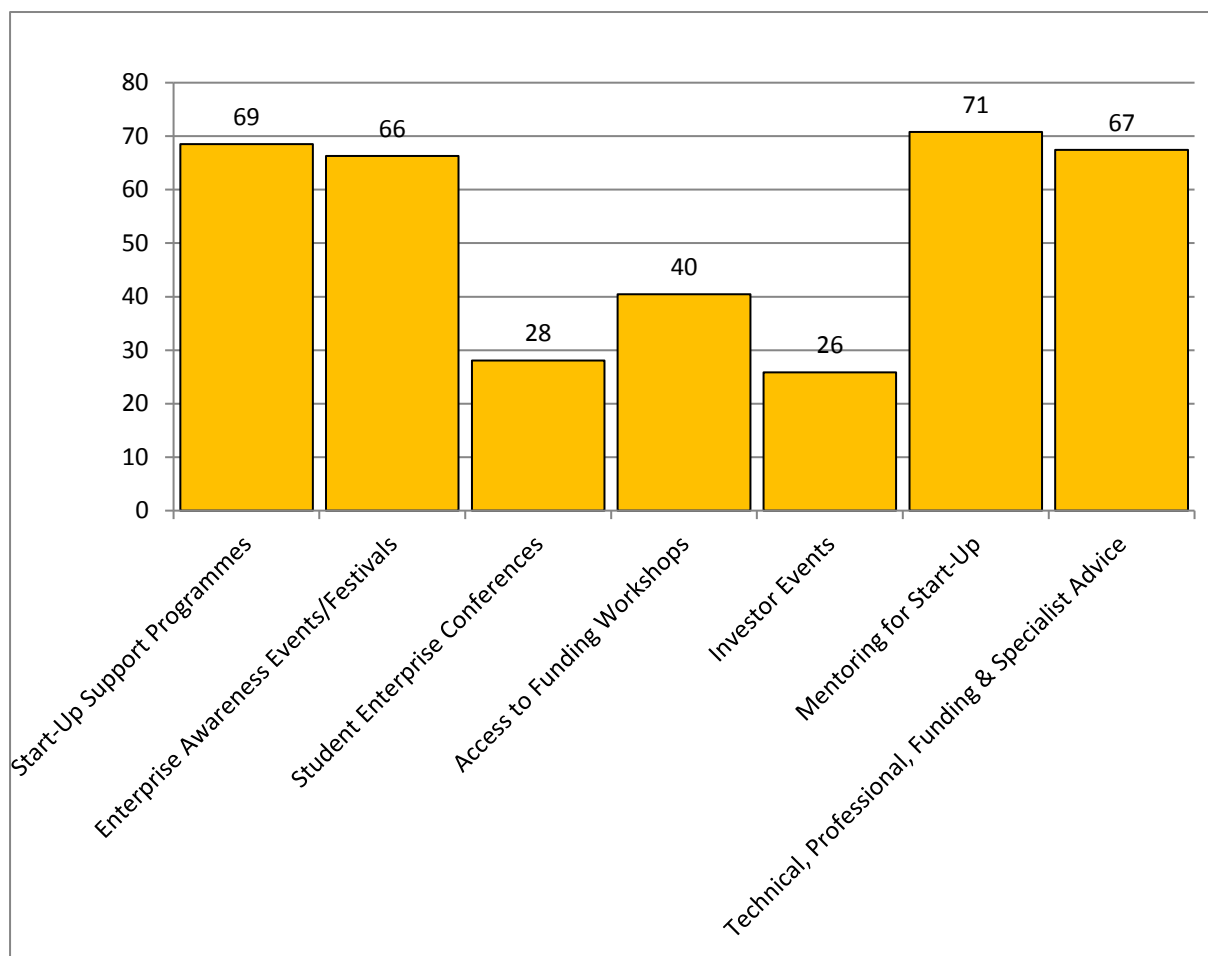


Figure 9. Venture creation support activities

Future Confidence in Enterprise Activity in HE

84% of respondents confirmed that student enterprise and entrepreneurial activities had increased over the past two years. A similar number were confident or very confident that educational activity would be sustained over the next two years. Most were also confident that extra-curricular and start-up enterprise support would be sustained, although some

commented that this depended on access to future funding. Regarding their ability to sustain staffing infrastructure for enterprise and entrepreneurship, most were again confident of their ability to maintain this with similar concerns regarding funding. Overall, there is a stronger measure of confidence in entrepreneurial activities and staffing than might have been expected given the context of public funding, suggesting that most HEIs see these as priority activities.

Conclusions

- SER has continued to rise despite a reported fall in investment.
- There has been an increase in ‘in-curricular’ provision as a proportion of SER suggesting that Universities are moving enterprise activities into their core business.
- Provision within Business and Management has continued to fall relative to that of other departments. This is not due to a fall in management provision, but rather an increase in provision from other departments.
- 82% of institutions reported that they employed academic staff to teach entrepreneurship in 2010. In 2012 this figure had increased to 87%.
- In 2010 93% of institutions reported an increase in enterprise and entrepreneurship activity. In 2012 this figure had fallen to 84% with 6% of institutions reporting that activity had declined over the past two years.
- All of the above has contributed to the 25% increase in business start-ups.
- In 2010 the cost per engaged student was £557, in 2012 this figure had dropped to £359. However, the level of financial reporting fell from 80% in 2010 to 47% in 2012, so this figure needs to be interpreted with some care.

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