

Press Release

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Staff given the chance to turn business ideas into a reality

The Big Idea staff category gives London Met staff the chance to pitch their business idea with the chance of propelling it into a reality.

The Big Idea Challenge is a competition run by the Accelerator, London Met's business incubator based in Shoreditch. The staff category, which was first trialled in 2015, allows staff to pitch their ideas with a chance of winning a prize pool to be shared amongst the finalists.

The staff category is one of four categories in the competition; the other three, creative, commercial, social impact, are open to London Met students and graduates.

"The academic and support staff at London Met have a deep pool of skills and experience in their specialist fields. When we opened up our student business competition to staff two years ago, we were keen to uncover some interesting ideas," said Toby Kress, Head of Accelerator.

"We had everything from professors working on the cutting edge of artificial intelligence who wanted to turn their research into a commercial businesses to a dietician lecturer building the next generation of dieting programme based on cognitive behavioural therapy.

"But most exciting for us was that the vast majority of ideas were around making the University and student experience better. The Big Idea Challenge organically became a hot-bed of ideas for internal research and development and a channel for implementing the best of these ideas in a non-bureaucratic and entrepreneurial way led by people who are truly passionate about them."

The winners of the staff category receive £3000 of start-up funding, business mentorship and support from Accelerator to turn their idea into a reality. The finalists were James Hunting, with The Cass Textile Bureau, and Nick Gardiner and Raffaella Pontonutti with their Virtual Injury Clinic.

"Winning the Big Idea will enable me to launch a student focussed and student work led textile sample bureau. This will enable students to realise a financial gain from their samples, expose them to the professional sample business and raise their confidence and engagement with the working environment," said James Hunting, course leader at the Cass, who won with his idea; The Cass Textile Bureau, a way to present samples from Cass students to the textile industry.

"As a course leader on the textile degree, it is vital that my students understand the working world, the creative vision required and the need for endless ideas and

developments and the excellent initiative of the Big Idea has and will enable me to ensure this happens. Unlike many specialist textile sample bureaus, the added interest will be from the multi-disciplinary approach of the textile degree programme here, and the student led design ideas.”

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About London Metropolitan University

London Met has been providing education to people from all backgrounds since 1848, with the creation of the Metropolitan Evening Classes for Working Men.

Four faculties teach cutting-edge, relevant courses across the arts, sciences, business, law and humanities. Accelerator – London Met’s specialist business incubator – helps graduates get their enterprises up and running and was named among the Top Five ‘Most Active’ accelerators in Europe in 2015, highlighting its contribution to London’s booming start-up industry.

London Met is home to world-leading academics who regularly give expert comment to the media. The University scored well in the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, being ranked 4th in the country for Area Studies and performing strongly in Education and Social Studies.

The University is strongly focused on employability. In 2016, London Met recorded its highest ever graduate employment score, with 93% of all 2014/15 graduates in work or further study six months after graduation.

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