

The Creative Enterprise Star

A guidebook for mapping and evaluating
creative enterprise education

2026

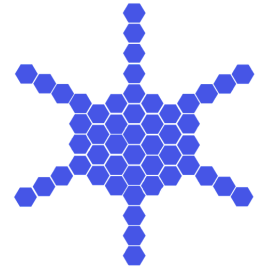


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Introduction



Enterprise education (EE) is increasingly recognised as a key component of Higher Education (HE), particularly for the socially, culturally and economically vital but increasingly precarious creative industries (Hill et al., 2024; Nesta, 2020; QAA, 2018; QAA, 2026). Frameworks such as EntreComp (Bacigalupo et al., 2016; McCallum et al., 2018) provide valuable guidance but do not fully address the distinctive needs of creative entrepreneurs, including the prevalence of portfolio careers, high levels of neurodiversity, and the challenges of identity work (Gross and Musgrave, 2020; Khlystova et al., 2022; McRobbie, 2016; McSherry, 2024; QAA, 2026). While enterprise educators bring substantial experience and subject knowledge, those without enterprise expertise may experience capability, confidence or workload barriers in integrating enterprise and entrepreneurship into their curricula (Dinning, 2015; Edwards and Jordan, 2024).

The Creative Enterprise Star (Star) was developed through academic and practice-based research to address this gap. It is a multipurpose applied framework designed to support educators in preparing, embedding, reflecting on, and evaluating enterprise teaching within creative curricula. It can be used by enterprise educators or non-specialists to extend and develop the competences outlined in EntreComp into specific, actionable creative enterprise competencies. This makes it directly relevant to the needs of creative learners and the industries they aim to enter.

The Star was initially created by the London College of Fashion (LCF) enterprise team and formed an integral part of the Office for Students-funded StART Entrepreneurship Project (2020–2022) with the Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Since then, it has been further refined and tested, providing evidence of its practical applicability and impact in creative EE.

This approach has been used to teach undergraduate and postgraduate classes across a variety of creative subjects including design, creative direction, fashion futures, photography, illustration, pattern cutting, fashion management, and marketing. Its multipurpose functionality has been developed and tested across co- and in-curricular activities exploring a wide range of sectors, including fashion, fine art, education, PR, community social enterprise, beauty, technology and retail.

In summary, the Star has been developed for use by educators across the creative curriculum, regardless of their experience of EE, to support entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial opportunities.

Acronyms

EE	Enterprise education
HE	Higher Education
LCF	London College of Fashion
PG	Postgraduate
UAL	University of the Arts London
UG	Undergraduate



The Creative Enterprise Star

Rationale, Design and Insights

WHY does enterprise matter in creative education?

QAA Subject Benchmark Statement for Art and Design: Creative graduates navigate a constantly changing environment. They need to be resilient and adaptable, ready to apply themselves in a range of careers.

HOW do educators teach enterprise?

EntreComp Framework: Defines the competences needed to spot opportunities, manage resources, and turn ideas into action.

HOW can universities support EE?

Advance HE Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Framework: Outlines the institutional practices to support entrepreneurial learner journeys and educator capabilities.

HOW can educators embed EE?

QAA Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Guidance: Provides explanations and practical guidance for integrating experiential and reflective learning opportunities.

WHAT does EE look like in creative disciplines?

Creative Enterprise Star: A multipurpose practical framework that helps educators embed enterprise into their creative curriculum.

What are enterprise competencies?

These are the **knowledge, skills, and attitudes** that contribute to business performance, particularly during venture creation and long-term sustainability (Bacigalupo et al., 2016; Gustomo et al., 2017). They are observable and distinct, meaning they can be taught, learned and assessed (Morris et al., 2013). This makes competencies a practical foundation for embedding EE within higher education

curricula. Focusing on competencies enables educators to move beyond teaching enterprise as a body of knowledge towards intentionally developing the capabilities learners need in professional practice. As the QAA (2018) notes, these competencies are transferable and interchangeable, creating value across graduate employment, freelancing and entrepreneurship.

Creative learners need enterprise education.

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) has emphasised the importance of embedding enterprise within creative subjects. This provides opportunities for learners to gain the competencies that employers value, and learn to navigate an increasingly changeable industry (2026). Regardless of their future career path, it is valuable for learners to develop financial awareness, professional networks, strategic plans, resilience, presentation skills, and the ability to “[have] an idea and [make] it happen” (QAA, 2018, p9).

The Star is a comprehensive framework of 52 competencies that capture the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable entrepreneurial development in creative contexts. It extends and develops EntreComp by adapting its competences into a creative enterprise teaching context. Practical tools, applied activities, and concepts that help educators embed enterprise within a creative higher education curriculum are presented as fully flexible ‘pick-and-choose’ competencies.

The Star has been applied and iterated within the LCF creative curriculum since 2020. During this time, analysis produced the following five insights:

1. Enterprise education is flexible and non-linear

Enterprise learning is not delivered through a single standard sequence. Some teaching prioritises deep subject-specific knowledge, while other approaches focus on breadth and exposure to multiple activities and perspectives. Sequencing also varies; some educators foreground individual reflection and self-awareness before strategy, while others begin with research or theoretical concepts followed by experiential learning. This non-linear sequencing of enterprise education is underpinned by quantitative

analysis, which informs a forthcoming journal article. The Star reflects this by presenting competencies as modular, without fixed start or end points, enabling educators to select and sequence competencies in ways that suit their context.

The modularity is shown within the Star as hexagonal shapes. Any competency can be combined with any other competency to create tessellating structures. These structures are multi-functional and may represent a lesson, a module, a course, a learning journey or a practical project. Competencies can be repeated or omitted, allowing the framework to adapt organically in response to the complexity and needs of different creative practices.

The Star can quickly and intuitively be used by all educators, regardless of their experience with EE. Any competency can serve as a start or end point, and any can become a core or complementary focus. Nothing is mandatory; educators can use the competencies they require.

2. Breadth reflects real-life complexity

At first glance, 52 competencies may seem extensive. However, comprehensive mapping, benchmarking, and evaluation work suggests this breadth reflects the diversity and complexity of entrepreneurial learning in practice, particularly in creative contexts.

Educators are not expected to cover all competencies within a single module. Unlike some frameworks, the competencies are not presented as a progression, checklist, or scorecard. Modules that embed more competencies are not necessarily ‘better’ or more entrepreneurial. Instead, the 52 competencies, organised into eight themes, provide a flexible resource which educators can prioritise and adapt to suit their context. The Star emphasises

educator judgement, enabling them to determine what is most relevant to their learners and to their intended outcomes.

3. Reflective practice is a foundation of enterprise learning

Analysis of teaching across LCF identified reflective practice as the most consistently embedded element of enterprise learning. It appeared as a core or complementary competency across all courses, levels, and disciplines.



This finding suggests that reflective practice may play a broader role within EE than simply functioning as a discrete competency. Reflection supports learners to interpret experience, make sense of uncertainty, connect theory and practice, and identify their future actions. Although not a requirement, educators using the Star may wish to consider how the pink 'Reflective theory and practice' hexagon could be incorporated as a complementary competency within each session.

4. The Star is adaptable and fully embedded in creative curricula

Analysis shows that competencies from all eight themes are taught across every discipline and level of study led by the LCF enterprise team. This indicates that enterprise learning in creative HE draws on a broad combination of competencies, rather than focusing on isolated entrepreneurial skills. The Star makes these relationships visible, helping educators identify and intentionally embed competencies.

Although the emphasis and combination of competencies varies, no single theme or competency was restricted to a particular level or discipline. This again highlights the non-linear nature of enterprise learning. The consistent findings from different contexts demonstrates the flexibility of the

Star and its suitability for a wide range of creative HE contexts.

5. A practical tool for teaching design, delivery and evaluation

In practice, individuals and teams have used the Star in many different ways. Examples include:

- Mapping competencies to modules and courses to identify gaps;
- Comparing modules to identify duplication and opportunities for progression;
- Structuring teaching content and lesson planning;
- Visually signposting learning goals to learners;
- Aligning reflective prompts to taught content;
- Developing creative reflection activities;
- Mapping personal learning journeys;
- Aligning learning outcomes with assessment requirements;
- As pre- and post-module self-assessment and evaluation measures.

This adaptability supports use across diverse cohorts, modules, and teaching contexts.

How the Star Was Developed

The Creative Enterprise Star has been developed using a multi-stage collaborative design process to ensure credibility and relevance. The five stages are outlined below:

Stage 1: Benchmarking best practice (2020)

Frameworks, including the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework - EntreComp (Bacigalupo et al., 2016), Advance HE's Framework for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education (2019), QAA's 2019 Art and Design benchmark, QAA's Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Guidance for HE Providers (2018) and national and international programmes and HE courses, were reviewed to identify best practice in EE. The analysis identified 69 enterprise-related keywords including 'roadmap', 'manage your own learning' and 'practitioner identity'. These keywords informed Stages 2 and 3.

Stage 2: Mapping internal enterprise provision (2020)

Inductive and deductive content analysis of module handbooks coded learning outcomes, assessment briefs and content to capture how enterprise was taught within LCF's creative curricula. Each module was mapped against the enterprise keywords and external frameworks to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities for alignment. This analysis established the evidence base and themes for Stage 3.

Stage 3: Initial framework development (2020-2021)

The keywords and content analysis themes were grouped and refined through a series of co-creation workshops, stakeholder feedback and educator testing. This produced the 52 competencies organised across eight categories. The competencies were shaped as hexagons to allow for complex tessellations and positioned in a star-shape to represent the non-linear and modular nature of this approach.

Stage 4: Implementation and iteration (2021-2025)

The Star was embedded across LCF's in- and co-curricular enterprise teaching. Entrepreneurs, educators and learners were invited to co-create learning activities, and ongoing evaluation drew on class feedback, attendance, assessment outcomes, and analysis of the frequency each competency was taught. The data was used formatively to iterate and strengthen the framework. Positive feedback and growing interest led to Train the Trainer workshops, supporting wider adoption beyond the initial team. Educators were encouraged to test and adapt the Star to support transferability and alignment with real-world teaching and learning challenges.

Stage 5: Impact measurement and evolution (2025 onwards)

The Star provides a shared framework for EE, while allowing flexibility for subject-specific contexts. Impact is currently monitored through staff adoption, student and staff feedback, attendance and assessment outcomes. It has contributed to internal and external institutional recognition including the UAL 2022-2032 Strategy and LCF's Small Business Charter accreditation. The next phase focuses on sharing the Star beyond LCF to explore how it can be adapted and applied in different contexts.

Understanding the Competencies

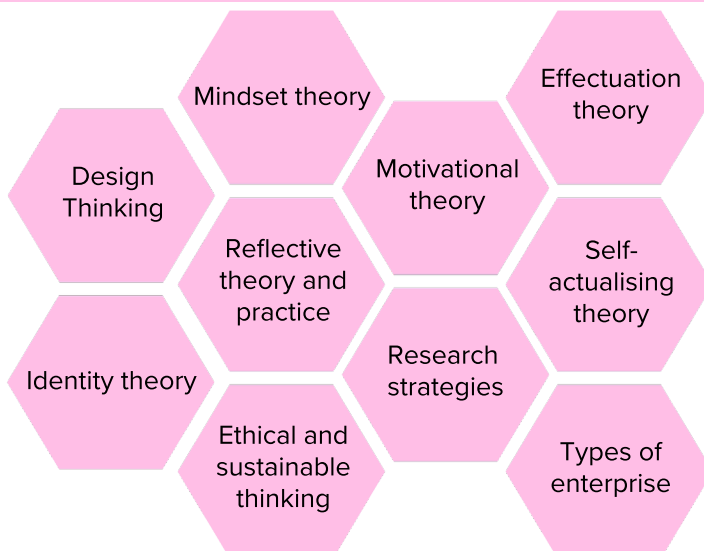
The Star builds on EntreComp by translating its competences into the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that support enterprise teaching and learning in creative HE. These are the Creative Enterprise Competencies, organised into eight themes. All eight themes are embedded across all UG and PG enterprise-focused teaching at LCF.

Personal and Professional Effectiveness and Development



Use this category when you want learners to... strengthen the personal habits, confidence, and interpersonal skills that help them sustain progress, communicate professionally, and handle uncertainty.

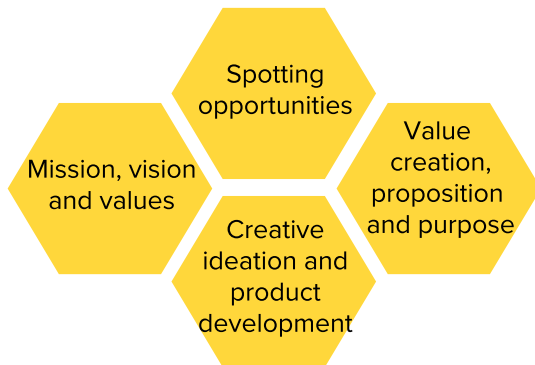
Enterprise Theory and Practice



Use this category when you want learners to... explore the concepts and evidence base to interpret enterprise in creative contexts and make informed choices about how they work and learn.

Consider how **Reflective theory and practice** could complement each session.

Creativity and Innovation



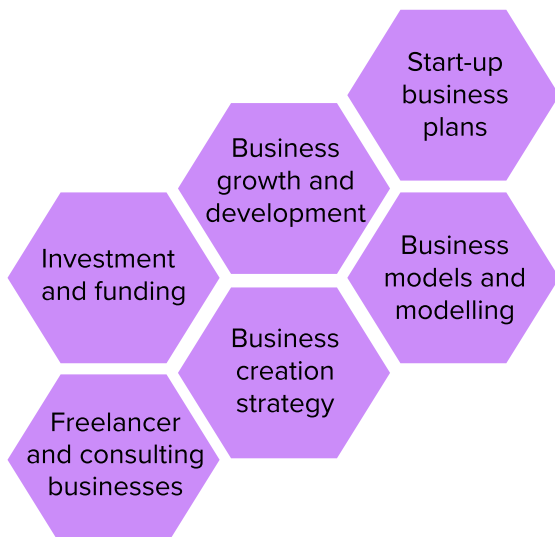
Use this category when you want learners to... generate strong ideas and shape them around purpose, values, and clarifying the kind of value they want to create.

Concept Development



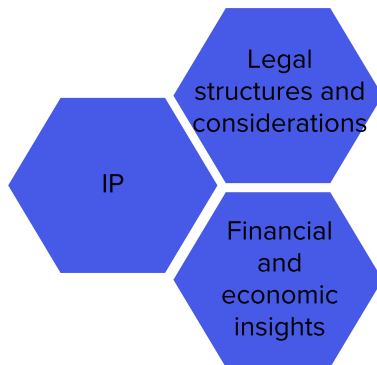
Use this category when you want learners to... develop an early idea into a workable concept they can test, refine, and justify, using customer insight, differentiation, and practical planning.

Implementation Strategies



Use this category when you want learners to... plan a route forward, choose a suitable enterprise outcome, and make strategic decisions about models, growth, and funding.

Finance and Legal Insights



Use this category when you want learners to... make realistic plans by understanding the financial and legal factors that affect viability, risk, and ownership of creative work.

Marketing and Branding



Use this category when you want learners to... clarify who they are speaking to and communicate their value clearly through brand, promotion, and persuasive storytelling.

Leadership and Management



Use this category when you want learners to... convert individual initiative to coordinated action, so projects progress and teams function effectively.

The Star in Context

The Star does not replace existing resources. Instead, it complements and extends them by providing practical, evidence-informed insights derived from enterprise teaching in creative HE. It translates enterprise frameworks into creative educator-focused themes that support curriculum planning, lesson design and assessment. Additionally, it makes entrepreneurial learning explicit, highlighting reflective practice, enterprise theory, and pedagogies that can be assumed within existing frameworks.

Rather than prescribing what should be taught, the Star offers complete flexibility, and can make existing learning in the creative curriculum visible. This provides educators with a shared language for identifying, planning and discussing EE.

How the Creative Enterprise Star builds on Entrecomp

Personal and Professional Effectiveness and Development

Extends **Into action**, particularly **Self-awareness & self efficacy**, **Motivation and perseverance**, and **Coping with ambiguity, uncertainty, & risk**, by emphasising the skills required for portfolio careers, collaboration and professional visibility.

Enterprise Theory and Practice

Makes explicit the theories and approaches that underpin entrepreneurial learning. **This theme is not explicitly represented within EntreComp**, and illustrates how the Star makes implicit aspects of EE more visible and accessible. As discussed on page 7, reflective practice is positioned as a discrete competency which complements entrepreneurial learning across all themes. This extends the conceptualisation of reflection beyond that found in EntreComp.

Creativity and Innovation

Deepens **Ideas & opportunities**, particularly **Creativity**, **Vision** and **Valuing ideas**, by recognising creative practice as a process of generating social, cultural, environmental and economic value.

Concept Development

Adapts **Ideas & opportunities** and **Into action** by translating opportunity recognition into iterative concept development and creative experimentation processes.

Implementation Strategies

Applies **Into action** and **Resources** to the strategic planning, resourcing and implementation of creative businesses.

Finance and Legal Insights

Extends **Resources**, particularly **Financial & economic literacy**, by applying financial and legal knowledge to the realities of the creative industries.

Marketing and Branding

Contextualises **Into action**, particularly **Mobilising others** and **Communication**, by focusing on audience engagement, storytelling and brand development within creative industries.

Leadership and Management

Translates **Into action** and **Resources** into the practical leadership, collaboration and project management skills required to deliver creative work.

How the Competencies Are Used in Practice

Taught sessions rarely cover a single topic. Theory, practical activities, reflection, and examples often introduce additional competencies to support learning and connection-making.

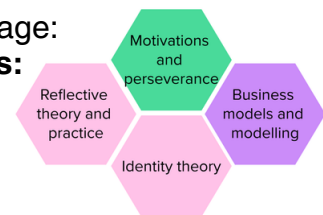
To reflect this, an individual session or activity is given one **core** competency (main focus), and up to six **complementary** competencies (supplementary focus).

For example, as shown on the 1-hour lecture example on the next page:

Core Competency:



Complementary Competencies:



This allows the educator to focus on a main objective, while drawing from supporting competencies and linking to other topics. Assigning complementary competencies also encourages the educator to consider what opportunities for incidental or accidental learning they could encourage. To maintain focus, it is suggested to limit complementary competencies to a maximum of six within a single session.

The presence of core and complementary competencies makes measuring competency use more complex. To date, research has focused on core competencies, the next step is to measure and map complementary competency use. When only counting core occurrences, some competencies appear infrequently. This is not because they are less valuable, but because they are more often integrated into other areas of teaching. They remain an important part of the Star due to their relevance to EE and their role in supporting its flexible use across curriculum design, communication, reflective tasks and journey mapping.

The data below analyses the core competency of 397 classes delivered across LCF in the 2024–2025 academic year.

The **most** frequently taught core competencies:

1. **Research strategies and analysis**
2. **Financial and economic insights, literacy and management**
3. **Business strategy creation**
4. **Communication**
5. **Investment and funding**

The **least** frequently taught core competencies:

48. **Motivational theory**
49. **Team development and human resource management**
50. **Stakeholders management**
51. **Identity theory**
52. **Self-actualising theory**

The following case studies demonstrate how competencies can be combined and applied to different teaching contexts. Examples of concepts, theories and activities included within the case studies illustrate one way the competencies can be taught. Alternative approaches may be equally appropriate depending on the learning outcomes and context.

Applying the Star: 1-Hour Lecture

Context: Postgraduate, 40 students from multiple creative courses, 20-credit option module, group project, x 1 online lecture and x 1 group tutorial per week, lecture 1 of 5.

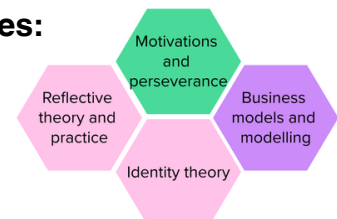
Learning purpose: Evaluate different leadership approaches, reflect on personal leadership identity, explore organisational roles that support a business model.

Assessment: Group Business Model Canvas and 1500 word individual reflection.

Core competency:



Complementary competencies:



Competency selection

Core: **Leadership and organisational management** was selected to present leadership theories before the learners allocate roles during the group tutorial.

Complementary: Selected to support the assessment, sustain motivation through the group project, and explore their personal leadership identity.

Impact and feedback

Feedback suggested exploring organisational management and team roles strengthened engagement and collective responsibility. One learner reflected, "I realised I didn't have to do everything and could trust my team". All learners passed the module, with 64% achieving an A or B and the lowest grade awarded being a C-.

Relevant concepts, theories and activities

- Transformational leadership
- Imposter syndrome
- Business model canvas
- Belbin team roles
- Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

Potential adaption

Later sequencing in the unit could shift the emphasis from understanding organisational roles for team role allocation to reflecting on leadership and their contribution to the group so far. A module without groupwork could shift the focus to leading and motivating yourself, planning a project, or accessing knowledge and resources.

Lesson Plan

Time	Focus or Activity	Corresponding Competency
5 mins	Introduction, discuss what makes a successful creative team	Leadership and organisational management
10 mins	Transformational leadership, different leadership approaches	Leadership and organisational management
10 mins	Who am I as a leader?, imposter syndrome	Identity theory
10 mins	Reflective prompts adapted from Belbin to identify personal leadership strengths and areas for development	Reflective theory and practice
10 mins	Intrinsic motivation, overcoming challenges in group projects	Motivations and perseverance
10 mins	Use the Business Model Canvas to identify leadership responsibilities and organisational roles	Business models and modelling
5 mins	Summary and group tutorial preparation	

Applying the Star: Full Day Workshop

Context: Undergraduate, Year 2, 24 students from BA Hair, Make-up and Prosthetics for Performance, part of a 20-credit industry engagement unit, 5 hours plus breaks, in-person.

Learning purpose: Evaluate freelancing as a career pathway, position themselves in the market, identify opportunities for self promotion, explore simple budgeting and pricing approaches.

Assessment: CV and a portfolio

Core competency:



Complementary competencies:



Competency selection

Core: Exploring **Freelancing** helps prepare learners for professional practice and the realities of portfolio careers within the creative industries.

Complementary: Developing key skills freelancers need, and enabling reflection to strengthen their CV and portfolio.

Relevant concepts, theories and activities

- The Golden Circle
- Perceptual Positioning Map (PPM)
- The Customer Empathy Map
- Risk register
- Personal survival budget
- What? So what? Now what? reflective model

Impact and feedback

Learners reported increased confidence in understanding freelancing and valued the workshop's practical focus. Feedback included, "It's helping my confidence in planning my career", "I have started connecting with people [and] it's useful to know I'm doing the right thing", and "Realising I've done some of these things before has made me feel less worried".

Potential adaption

A different course might shift the core focus to consulting, collaboration, or business startups. Different complementary competencies could alter the outcome of the workshop. For example, outcomes could include creating a personal website, identifying personal values, finding target customers or developing mental toughness.

Lesson Plan

Time	Focus or Activity	Corresponding Competency
45 mins	Introduction to freelancing - advantages, disadvantages, portfolio careers, misconceptions	Freelancer and consulting businesses
50 mins	Positioning your practice - Golden Circle, USP, PPM, empathy map	Spotting opportunities
70 mins	Freelance finance - personal survival budget, setting prices, fixed costs, case studies	Financial and economic insights
60 mins	Building your professional profile - mapping your network, social media, networking practice	Networking
45 mins	Creating opportunities - word of mouth marketing, freelance platforms, case studies	Self promotion
40 mins	Managing yourself - time management, energy mapping, risk register, setting goals	Project management and goal setting
30 mins	Reflection and planning - What? So what? Now what? model	Reflective theory and practice

Applying the Star: 6-Week Module

Context: Undergraduate, Year 3, 70 Fashion Business School students (4 courses), x 2 3-hour in-person workshops per week (12 sessions).

Learning purpose: Design a research strategy to develop and test a new fashion business concept, in preparation for writing a research-based business plan.

Assessment: 10-minute live presentation.

Core competencies:



As this is a **module**, there is more than one core competency. Complementary competencies are selected by the teaching team depending on the core focus of the session.

Competency selection

Research Strategies appears most often to support the development of a research-based business plan. Other selected competencies support the assessment format and build evaluative, planning and research skills for future modules.

Impact and feedback

Learners demonstrated increased confidence in developing a research strategy and pitching. Aggregated self-assessment scores show a 16.5% increase in research confidence and a 7% increase in pitching confidence between the start and end of the module.

Relevant concepts, theories and activities

- De Bono's Six Thinking Hats
- Three lenses of innovation
- Identifying personal assumptions
- Action research
- Go-To-Market strategy
- Research ethics
- Divergent and convergent thinking

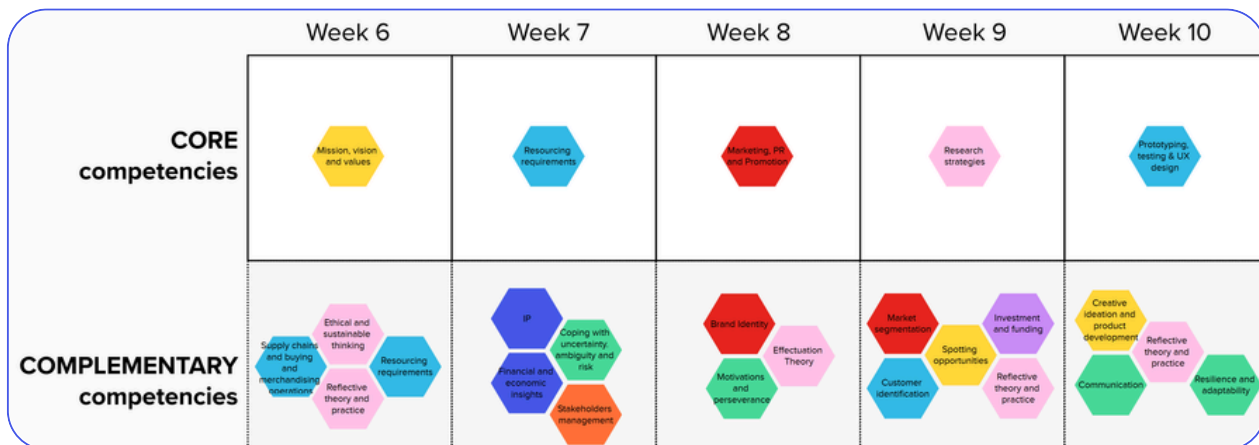
Potential adaptations

A different learning purpose or assessment format could significantly change the competencies selected.

Scheme of Work

Week	Title	Core Competency
1	Business Idea Development	Design Thinking
1	Research Design and Strategy	Research strategies
2	Action Research for Enterprise	Research strategies
2	Research Methods and Analysis	Research strategies
3	Reliable Sources for Secondary Research	Decision making
3	AI for Enterprise Research	Ethical and sustainable thinking
4	Formative Assessment: Peer Presentations	Storytelling, pitching and presenting
4	Innovation and Creativity	Creative ideation and product development
5	Presentation Skills	Storytelling, pitching and presenting
5	Developing a Research Plan	Project management and goal setting
6	Unit Review and Revision	Research strategies
6	Summative Assessment: Live Pitches	Storytelling, pitching and presenting

Star Resources



Educator's Mapping Tool

Accessed through Mural, the digital mapping template is an interactive resource for educators. Users will first need to create a free Mural account, and then click the red '**New Mural from template**' button to edit. The template allows for multiple sessions, units or courses to be mapped and compared. Competencies can be dragged and dropped, and all labels are editable for easy customisation. This template can be used to plan future teaching, or to review existing content.

The [Creative Enterprise Star template](#) can be shared directly with learners. They will also need to create a free Mural account before they can edit. The template includes prompts and reflective questions. It allows learners to drag and drop competencies to map their learning journey.

Looking Ahead

This guidebook is intended for enterprise and creative educators to experiment with the Creative Enterprise Star in your teaching practice. It makes it simpler to embed enterprise within creative curricula, and offers new perspectives to identify opportunities, concepts and connections relevant to your own context and discipline. We would like to know how you have used and adapted it. Please [complete our feedback form](#) to let us know how you get on.

You can also email Beki Gowing (b.gowing@fashion.arts.ac.uk) or Henrietta Garnett (h.garnett@fashion.arts.ac.uk) if you have feedback, suggestions or ideas.

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Notes



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Additional Resources

[Arts and Humanities Entrepreneurship Hubs](#) - Tools to support entrepreneurial training for arts and humanities staff and students.

[Centre for Sustainable Fashion](#) - Resources and educational toolkits for the fashion and creative industries.

[EntreComp Into Action](#) - User guide and practical examples of the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework.

[Enterprise Educators UK: ETC Toolkit](#) - A bank of resources categorised by subject designed to develop enterprise skills and confidence.

[The Golden Circle of Enterprise Education](#) - Resources to support, enhance and validate enterprise education.

[Interaction Design](#) - Blog posts, eBooks and resources supporting design development and Design Thinking approaches.

[Nesta: Creative Enterprise Toolkit](#) - Practical resources to plan, build, test, communicate and launch a creative business.

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