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BNU Academic Conference 2026: 30 June – 1 July

Day Two – Teaching and Learning

Title - Postgraduate Entrepreneurship Education: Improving Engagement and Learner Outcome through Industry Collaboration and Assessment-Conference Mapping

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Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the integration of industry collaboration and assessment-conference mapping within the postgraduate module Entrepreneurship and Business Venturing at Buckinghamshire New University. Guided by the Quality Assurance Agency's Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education (2018) framework, the initiative was designed to enhance pedagogical authenticity, strengthen external collaboration, and elevate student engagement.

Student feedback consistently highlighted a desire for greater industry involvement and the creation of learning experiences that extend beyond the classroom. In response, a structured assessment-to-practice framework was developed and operationalised through the inaugural BNU International Business Management Conference 2025. The module's core assessment, a business plan for a start-up venture, was mapped to a competitive pitching process. Ten high-performing students were shortlisted to present at an internal pitch event, with three finalists advancing to deliver their ventures to a panel of industry leaders at the conference, where cash prizes were awarded. This approach significantly enhanced the realism of the assessment by simulating entrepreneurial practice and fostering heightened learner motivation, professionalism, and engagement. The initiative also generated broader institutional value by strengthening external networks and showcasing student innovation.

Following the successful pilot, the framework has been enhanced through structured industry coaching for all learners and the formal involvement of professional judges with relevant sector expertise. Embedding an assessed component within an annual conference offers a distinctive pedagogical model that other institutions may adopt to promote authentic learning, employability, and the development of viable student start-ups contributing to wider entrepreneurial environments.

Author Bio

Uchenna Nweke is the Programme Lead for MSc International Business Management at Buckinghamshire New University. He is a certified management and business educator, a Senior Fellow of Advance HE, and a Chartered Manager and Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute. In addition to his academic leadership, he serves on the Academic Adviser Panel of the Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, where he contributes to the assessment of startup proposals and the promotion of enterprise and entrepreneurship. His research and professional practice focus on fostering inclusive and supportive learning

environments, especially for postgraduate students, and advancing pedagogical innovation in higher education.