

# **Becoming Self-Employed**

**Careers & Employability Service**

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**[www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/guides)**



**Manchester  
Metropolitan  
University**

This document is available in alternative formats – please contact [careers@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:careers@mmu.ac.uk) for details.

## **BECOMING SELF EMPLOYED – ADVICE FOR STUDENTS AND GRADUATES**

You are probably reading this for one of two reasons: -

- 1) You want to work for yourself and have your own business
- 2) Working freelance is the main way to follow your chosen occupation. This is especially the case for graduates who wish to work as artists, designers and makers or in the Performing Arts, the Media, Fitness and Alternative Therapies, or Business Consultancy.

Every year, some 2-3% of MMU's graduates go freelance or set up their own business. A fair proportion of these will have begun accepting commissions or trading whilst they were students. Yet more of our graduates see working for themselves as a long term careers objective and use their first years in employment to gain essential experience, develop business networks and generate finance to start up.

You may be very clear about what you want to do and already be taking steps to secure financial backing, market your product or service, and protect your idea(s) from the competition. Alternatively, you may be just setting out – wanting to be your own boss but not sure what is involved or what it is you want to do.

Which ever stage you are at, there are a number of issues that you will need to consider before deciding if this is the best option for you – including business structure and planning, lifestyle implications, finance and premises.

One in three small firms do not survive the first year. There can be many reasons for this, but the most common is a failure to get the right advice and to plan properly. Remember, ***'If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.'***

This leaflet is designed to give you initial contact details for organisations and professional networks that provide start up advice and information and/or showcasing opportunities, primarily in the North West, which are available to you as a fresh graduate – or as an undergraduate running a business alongside your degree. Some are actually based in MMU.

The careers and employability advisers will always be happy to talk through your initial ideas and point you in the direction of further help and advice either within MMU or more widely in the City and North West region.

**NB. Please note: the organisations appearing in this handout are not listed in any particular order.**

### **WHERE TO START? INTRODUCTORY SESSIONS AT MMU**

The Careers & Employability Service regularly offers a two hour interactive workshop ***"Getting Started"*** to introduce the issues that you need to consider prior to making the decision to go into business and identify the sources of support available to you whilst at MMU.

You may also like to assess yourself against the University of Durham's General Enterprising Tendency (GET) questionnaire at [www.get2test.net/test/index.htm](http://www.get2test.net/test/index.htm)

Take part in MMU's annual **Interfaculty Business Challenge - INNOFLUX**. Working in a small team you will be able to discover the elements of business planning in a practical way by developing a business idea, with the help of local entrepreneurs who act as consultants during the day and at the end as dragons judging each team's pitch. Prizes are awarded to the best individuals and teams and you also have the opportunity to be selected to represent MMU at national final - see [www.flux500.com](http://www.flux500.com)

Free **networking events** which focus upon ideas creation together with specific aspects of running a business or working on a freelance basis are offered to MMU students throughout the year at Innospace, MMU's graduate incubator ([www.innospace.co.uk](http://www.innospace.co.uk)). You can get tips on getting started from successful local entrepreneurs as well as having the opportunity to discuss your initial business ideas informally with experts. For details of the current programme see [www.mmucfe.co.uk/services/providing/enterprise-champions](http://www.mmucfe.co.uk/services/providing/enterprise-champions)

**Details of all these events will be posted on departmental notice boards and on our web site at [www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/events](http://www.mmu.ac.uk/careers/events)**

You should also join Linked In - **the essential social network** for entrepreneurs and business professionals - at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com). Tips on how to build your profile professionally and make effective links through LinkedIn groups are offered at <http://learn.linkedin.com/students>.

## **RESOURCES ON THE WEB**

### **1) Prospects**

[www.prospects.ac.uk/links/selfemp](http://www.prospects.ac.uk/links/selfemp)

A detailed guide specifically for university students and graduates.

### **2) National Council for Entrepreneurship in Education**

[www.ncee.org.uk](http://www.ncee.org.uk)

Detailed start-up information and resources for students plus an opportunity to take part in the NCGE "**Make It Happen**" programme [www.mihmentoring.com](http://www.mihmentoring.com) which offers free webinars, start up resources and mentoring support.

### **3) Business start-up forums**

Small Business UK - [www.smallbusiness.co.uk](http://www.smallbusiness.co.uk)

Start-ups – [www.startups.co.uk](http://www.startups.co.uk)

The Start Up Donut which also offers specific resources on marketing, legal issues and IT for new businesses - [www.startupdonut.co.uk](http://www.startupdonut.co.uk)

The Federation of Small Businesses - [www.fsb.org.uk](http://www.fsb.org.uk)

### **4) National Business Link**

[www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk)

Business Link Helpline 0845 600 9 006

Government backed service providing a range of initiatives to help small businesses. This site includes an on-line directory to help identify suitable funding pathways. There is also a useful format for your business plan:

[www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1073869162](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1073869162)

The Government also hosts [www.startupbritain.org](http://www.startupbritain.org) in support of its policy of encouraging entrepreneurship.

**The National Federation of Enterprise Agencies** - [www.nfea.com](http://www.nfea.com) – lists local business advice agencies across the UK.

#### **5) Grants and Loans**

[www.i4b.co.uk](http://www.i4b.co.uk)

The most comprehensive database of business grants in the UK offering quick and simple searches. Details of over 2000 grant and loan schemes for small businesses and can help put you in touch with relevant funding providers.

#### **6) Venture Navigator**

[www.venturenavigator.co.uk/](http://www.venturenavigator.co.uk/)

An online business support service backed by several universities, VentureNavigator helps you take a strategic look at your business plan, your strengths, weaknesses and what you should do next.

#### **7) Disabled Entrepreneurs Network**

[www.disabled-entrepreneurs.net](http://www.disabled-entrepreneurs.net)

Provides a number of employment related fact sheets including job hunting, self employment and teaching. It also provides networking opportunities and enables self-employed disabled people to share information and issues.

#### **8) SMARTA**

[www.smarta.com](http://www.smarta.com)

Founded and run by some of the UK's top entrepreneurs for business owners and entrepreneurs, Smarta delivers real-time access to people actually running businesses and to live professional advice from lawyers, accountants and other service providers free of charge.

### **LOCAL ADVICE & SUPPORT AGENCIES**

**Innospace** - MMU's graduate incubator

[www.innospace.co.uk](http://www.innospace.co.uk)

Minshull House

47- 49 Chorlton Street

Manchester

M1 3FY

0161 247 3850

For an annual service charge of £495 (as at June 2011), plus telephone line rental, you get a city centre post code for your business and access to IT, business support and general office facilities. With 120 other entrepreneurs and freelancers in the community, you will find networks, contacts and support from professional business advisers, mentors and other like-minded individuals. Current MMU students may join for a lower fee.

### **Business start up in the City of Manchester**

See the Business section at

[www.manchester.gov.uk/info/100002/business\\_support\\_and\\_licensing](http://www.manchester.gov.uk/info/100002/business_support_and_licensing)

### **Business Support Solutions**

[www.gmchamber.co.uk](http://www.gmchamber.co.uk)

Churchgate House

56 Oxford Street

Manchester

M60 7HJ

0161 228 1111

Provides advice through the Business Link branded service.

### **Business Link North West**

[www.businesslink.gov.uk/north\\_west.html](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/north_west.html)

### **The Blue Orchid**

[www.theblueorchid.co.uk](http://www.theblueorchid.co.uk)

Provides start-up support via awareness sessions, one to one advice and workshops in the North West. Also sign posts to other agencies providing support.

## **SUPPORT FOR THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

1) **North West networks** that can support freelancers and new business start-ups in the creative sector include:

**Creative England**

**North West Vision and Media**

[www.creativeengland.co.uk](http://www.creativeengland.co.uk) (replacing  
[www.visionandmedia.co.uk](http://www.visionandmedia.co.uk))

**North West Design Initiative**

**Creative Industries Networking Group**

**Creative Enterprise Network**

**Manchester Fashion Network**

**NW Creative Times**

**Future Artists**

**Creative Industries Trafford**

[www.designinit.org.uk](http://www.designinit.org.uk)

[www.meetup.com/C-I-N-G](http://www.meetup.com/C-I-N-G)

[www.creative-enterprise-network.com](http://www.creative-enterprise-network.com)

[www.manchesterfashion.com](http://www.manchesterfashion.com)

[www.creativetimes.co.uk](http://www.creativetimes.co.uk)

[www.futureartists.co.uk](http://www.futureartists.co.uk)

[www.creativeindustriestrafford.org/links/](http://www.creativeindustriestrafford.org/links/)

Check out what each offers in terms of professional networks, showcasing opportunities, master classes, training events and internships

2) **Manchester Digital Development Agency**

[www.manchesterdda.com](http://www.manchesterdda.com)

Manchester Digital Development Agency  
Lower Ground Floor  
117-119 Portland Street  
Manchester  
M1 6ED  
0161 255 8111

Provides support to enable small businesses to benefit from broadband technologies, and collaborates with innovative arts projects on their use of new technologies.

MDDA also work closely with **Manchester Digital**, the independent trade association for the ICT and new media industries in the North West - [www.manchesterdigital.com](http://www.manchesterdigital.com). Useful social media networks in Manchester also include [www.how-do.co.uk](http://www.how-do.co.uk) and [www.socialmediamanchester.net](http://www.socialmediamanchester.net)

### 3) Skillset

[www.skillset.org](http://www.skillset.org)  
08080 300 900

Extensive provision of advice, training and resources specifically for start-up in the audio-visual industries sector. In particular, see [www.skillset.org/careers/guide/#freelancer](http://www.skillset.org/careers/guide/#freelancer)

### 4) NESTA

[www.nesta.org.uk](http://www.nesta.org.uk)  
020 7438 2500

NESTA is the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts - a unique and independent body with a mission to make the UK more innovative. NESTA invests in early-stage companies, informs and shapes policy, and delivers practical programmes that inspire others to solve the big challenges of the future. NESTA does not currently fund individuals.

### 5) Arts Council

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)  
0845 300 6200

Manchester House  
22 Bridge Street  
Manchester  
M3 3AB

The national development agency for the arts, that develops and invests in a range of artistic activities from theatre to music, literature to dance, photography to digital art, carnival to crafts.

### 6) Crafts Council

[www.craftscouncil.org.uk](http://www.craftscouncil.org.uk)

The national agency that provides a range of support for makers and contemporary crafts people.

## 7) MMU Design and Media Labs

[www.artdes.mmu.ac.uk/designlab](http://www.artdes.mmu.ac.uk/designlab)

Based on the All Saints campus, MMU's Design LAB provides an environment to encourage postgraduate experimentation in process and material alongside business and entrepreneurship.

Sponsors, who include established designers, design groups, researchers and public organizations, introduce projects which enable you to develop an understanding of the needs of clients and collaborative partners and learn how to balance these needs with an experimental approach to your own creative practice.

[www.media-arts.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.media-arts.mmu.ac.uk)

Enables postgraduate experimentation with a broad spectrum of screen media methodologies in interdisciplinary groups and in close collaboration with an extensive, regional network of cultural and media organizations. Students develop professional link research and creative projects with the region's key arts and media organizations.

## 8) M.Enterprise Art & Design

<http://www.artdes.mmu.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/menterprise/>

Again based at All Saints, this one year programme is designed to enable creative practitioners to propose and develop their ideas within a commercial environment. The programme is multi- disciplinary and run in collaboration with the Business School (MMUBS) so that artists and designers study alongside students drawn from across the fields of science, technology and business. You are supported throughout the year by creative and business specialists and benefit from a comprehensive range of art and design workshops and studios as well as the facilities of Innospace.

## 9) Chartered Society of Designers

[www.csd.org.uk](http://www.csd.org.uk)

0207 357 8088

**10) Specialist resources developed by the University of the Arts, London, and the University for the Creative Arts in Surrey:**

[www.arts.ac.uk/careers.htm](http://www.arts.ac.uk/careers.htm)

[www.ucreative.ac.uk/careers](http://www.ucreative.ac.uk/careers)

## **SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**

The Social Enterprise Coalition [www.socialenterprise.org.uk](http://www.socialenterprise.org.uk)

The Social Enterprise Alliance [www.se-alliance.org](http://www.se-alliance.org)

The Social Investment Business [www.thesocialinvestmentbusiness.org](http://www.thesocialinvestmentbusiness.org)

UnLtd [www.UnLtd.org.uk](http://www.UnLtd.org.uk)

Funding for organisations, ventures and projects in the Manchester area  
[www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/funding](http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/funding)

## **SUPPORT AIMED AT YOUNGER GRADUATES**

### **1) Shell Live Wire**

[www.shell-livewire.org](http://www.shell-livewire.org)

Promotes enterprise amongst 16-30 year olds. Encourages business planning and offers monitoring and support to increase the survival chances of new businesses. On-line mentoring also available.

### **2) Prince's Trust - Business Programme**

[www.princes-trust.org.uk/need\\_help/the\\_business\\_programme.aspx](http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/need_help/the_business_programme.aspx)

Offers support for 18- 30 year olds (who have been at least 6 months unemployed or work less than 16 hours per week), and have a business idea, but need help to get started. Includes access to low interest loans, and ongoing advice from a volunteer business mentor.

## **OTHER USEFUL CONTACTS**

### **1) UK Intellectual Property Office**

<http://www.ipo.gov.uk>

Information on the four main types of Intellectual Property – **Patents** for inventions, **Trade marks** for brand identity, **Designs** for product appearance, and **Copyright** for literary and artistic material.

### **2) Own It – The Creative Intellectual Property Advice Service**

[www.own-it.org](http://www.own-it.org)

Information for creative enterprises with news on general issues relating to Intellectual Property.

### **3) British Franchise Association**

[www.thebfa.org](http://www.thebfa.org)

### **4) Institute of Patentees and Inventors**

[www.invent.org.uk](http://www.invent.org.uk)

### **5) Legal Advice**

[www.lawsociety.org.uk/choosingandusing/helpyourbusiness/foryourbusiness.law](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/choosingandusing/helpyourbusiness/foryourbusiness.law)

A network of 1,200 solicitor firms in England and Wales which offer legal services to small and medium-sized businesses.

**6) HM Revenue and Customs**

[www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/startingup) and [www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/selfemployed)

Impartial but vital advice on tax and tax credit information.

**7) Companies House**

[www.companieshouse.gov.uk](http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk)

The Government database of existing companies so you can check if your proposed trading name has already been used.

**8) Nominet**

[www.nominet.org.uk](http://www.nominet.org.uk)

For web domain registration

**9) Mintel**

[www.mintel.com](http://www.mintel.com)

Useful site for gathering market intelligence.

**10) The Tutor Pages**

[www.thetutorpages.com/free-tutoring-ebook](http://www.thetutorpages.com/free-tutoring-ebook)

The Tutor Pages produce a free Guide which explains the private tuition industry in the UK. The Guide contains information on tutoring, from tax and insurance advice to safety, self-promotion and effective teaching. It's available as a free download from the website.