

# UCA

Speaking the right language



## **INTRODUCTION**

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The University for the Creative Arts is a specialist institution offering art, architecture, communications, design and media across five campuses in the South East of England.

## **SPEAKING THE RIGHT LANGUAGE**

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Philip Ely, Associate Dean in the Faculty of Research and Innovation in the Creative Arts, is emphatic in his praise for the Creative Enterprise Toolkit: "It's fantastic! It is easy to use and has everything you need for a teaching module. Students like that it is interactive and have responded well to it. The language relates to students and their practice and manages to get across some difficult principles without being too business technical."

Another strength is its relevance across creative disciplines. So far, 75 students, staff and graduates have been through the programme including fine artists, graphic designers, fashion designers and filmmakers.

## **INSPIRING CONFIDENCE**

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Students who have used the Toolkit are often inspired and display a newfound inner confidence in presenting their ideas and themselves, whether they are planning to set up in business or preparing for employment. Philip explains: "Students gain a basic understanding of the language and considerations that are important to creative business leaders." It has proved to be a valuable tool for preparing fashion students for industry placements and is now embedded in one of the many Fashion degree courses at UCA.

It provides a reality check for would-be entrepreneurs, suggests Philip: "Prompting the student to test whether their idea really is a viable business opportunity." It has helped some realise they have been too ambitious, and for others the process has made them revisit old ideas to explore their potential.

## **PREPARATION AND PLANNING**

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Nothing like the Toolkit existed before, and tutors had to retell their own stories, through anecdotes of their experience in industry. The Toolkit relieves staff of the time and effort involved in preparing a syllabus from scratch. Some have used it to reflect on their own practice and to explore how they can manage their own businesses more effectively.

Staff can also benefit from using the Toolkit for planning activities or courses. Philip says: "I've used some of the worksheets to help me work out my audiences and stakeholders when developing propositions for the Business & Community School."

Interest in the Toolkit has grown and Philip is keen to encourage even wider use: "We are trying to champion the use of the Toolkit and spread the work. It feels like a crusade! It started with two of us, there will now be up to 20 staff using it in the new academic year. And more staff development courses are planned."

## **QUALITY GIVES CREDIBILITY**

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Having a free online resource does not outweigh the importance of having a tangible quality, branded product. Philip explains, the physical presence of the Toolkit has impact: "Having high quality content in well-designed packaging, from the box to the kit of parts, and with attention to small details like the post-it notes, combined with the NESTA branding, gives the Toolkit credibility with staff and students."

## **THE FUTURE**

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Philip is passionate about the value and future potential of the Toolkit: "I think it should be embedded in every undergraduate and postgraduate programme. Or at least, every student should be given the opportunity to take the module as an extra-curricular option."