

G U I D A N C E

Entrepreneurial Experiences (EEs)

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Empowering Students to Find and Solve Problems



MVA DEFINITION

Using input and support from multiple stakeholders, learners identify, research, develop, and implement a solution to fill a social or market need.

MVA-Level EEs Include:

- Student-identified social or market need that, when fulfilled, provide value to the community or stakeholders
- A market and stakeholder research summary.
- Authentic methods and tools used by professionals in the work environment, including project management and process.
- A business plan that includes an assessment of costs and benefits associated with the development and operation of their solution.
- Mentoring from one or more SMEs with multiple interactions throughout the process (4+ hours).
- Feedback from relevant external stakeholders obtained through exhibition or Shark Tank-type pitch opportunities.
- 24 hours of engagement in project work that aligns with course goals.

Why?

Students become armed with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to pursue entrepreneurial ventures, whether starting their own business shaped around the identification of a market need that demands an innovative solution or becoming leaders effecting change in their communities. These skills might include business fundamentals, marketing and sales, financial literacy, and risk management.



**MVA-level EEs
need a connection
to the external
business
community.
Why?**

Fostering Networking Opportunities

Interacting with professionals and stakeholders allows students to expand their professional networks, potentially leading to mentorship, internships, or future collaboration opportunities.

Bridging the Gap Between Theory and Practice

Professionals can offer insights that go beyond the classroom setting. Feedback helps students understand market dynamics, customer needs, and industry trends, which are essential for developing viable business ideas.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANNING

- Anticipating potential barriers or circumstances that may crop up will allow the RWL team to support students adapting to events such as difficulty setting up a pitch with potential external stakeholders or securing funding for implementation.
- Recognizing the difference between duplicating an existing approach to filling a need and innovating through a new approach is often a hurdle in EEs. Teaching creative processes often requires patience and a variety of resources for students to try until they find techniques that fit their style.



Pre-MVA Opportunity

Students who are familiar with using a project process will likely be more successful in an EE, where they have more independence to apply the process and may not be working in a team. Pre-MVA projects such as simulations can help students build the skills they will use in an EE.

STUDENT PREPARATION

Explore various community partner sites (in person or virtually) to identify opportunities for potential social or market needs that could be met by a product or service.

Review policies, procedures, and resources with students, ensuring they can access them easily.

Help students set clear personal goals and revisit them regularly with you and their counselor.

SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT (SME) PREPARATION

Develop an onboarding process that ensures the SME understands their role, the role of teacher and RWL coordinator, what to expect, and who to contact with questions or issues.

Review district policies with the SME including modes of communication and travel, if applicable.

Remind SMEs that while a viable solution to the identified need is desirable, they may be working with students who are still working on the skills to produce quality products.

Make sure the SME understands they will be working with the students directly and not with the teacher as an intermediary unless absolutely necessary.

Encouraging Student Agency

Encouraging student agency is not always natural for clients (or even educators.) Make sure all adults are aware that the goal is for students to develop skills they can transfer to other experiences, and working to remove reliance on adults is a crucial step in the process. Jumping in to help at the first sign of struggle can signal to students that they can't be trusted to make decisions.



01 Assemble The Team

RWL COORDINATOR

A representative from the school who helps facilitate mentor or SME connection.

TEACHER/EDUCATOR

A teacher supervising student groups.

MENTOR OR SUBJECT MATTER EXPERT

Determine who could assist the student as they tackle their opportunity. Consider subject matter experts and/or “connectors” in the identified stakeholder groups.

02 The Plan

PROJECT PROMPT FROM STUDENT

Identify an opportunity that exists in the world - whether social, economic, civic, etc. Create a coherent project prompt to guide the work.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Develop a plan that includes deliverables and a time frame for completion.

ITERATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING

Engage in an iterative process, like design thinking or lean start-up.

03 Quality Considerations

- Project planning documentation showing process.
- Use of authentic methods and tools relevant to the industry.
- Viable product and/or service that is evaluated by the client.
- Work aligns with students' course of study.

04 Student Voice, Agency & Support

Refer to Student Centered Practices on Page 24 - 27, but a few things to consider:

- Students request and receive feedback from professional mentors or SMEs.
- Students retain some agency of the project (not a predetermined series of steps).
- Students can describe their experience and the value of the achievement and be prepared to add it to their resume or LinkedIn profile.

05 Assessment & MVA Completion

- Engaging in at least 24 hours of project work with 4+ hours of client connection.
- Work in a collaborative/team setting and complete a project process cycle.
- Employer provides feedback.
- Demonstrate mastery of course learning standards and reflect on development of student outgrowths.



Is starting your own lawn mowing business an Entrepreneurial Experience?

The value of the Entrepreneurial Experience largely rests on how the student identified an opportunity and the rigor with which they took advantage of it. A student who launches their own business can undoubtedly reach an MVA-level EE, provided they can show evidence of:

- Why their arrived-at solution was the best approach to solve a problem.
- How they solicited and implemented stakeholder input.
- How they iterated on their solution.
- When and how did they engage with authentic SMEs during their problem-solving?
- How they reflected on their progress.

How is an EE different from a CCP?

Entrepreneurial Experiences and Client-Connected Projects share key similarities:

- Structuring problem-solving around a key prompt or opportunity.
- Engaging with real-world professionals.
- Amount of engaged time in solving a problem.

Differences exist in who dreams up the key project prompt (e.g., a client vs. a student) and/or for whom the intended solution is for (e.g., a client vs. an identified stakeholder group). If both of these dimensions lean more towards a client, the project is closer to a Client-Project Project. If both of these dimensions lean more towards a student or a different stakeholder group, the project is likely more of an Entrepreneurial Experience.

Are pitch competitions MVA-level Entrepreneurial Experiences?

As mentioned above, the value of the Entrepreneurial Experiences largely rests on how the student identified an opportunity; and the rigor with which they took advantage of it. Pitch competitions certainly provide opportunities for students to ideate solutions to a given problem, and depending on their rigor and real-world connectedness, they may constitute an MVA-level experience. Refer to the guidance in this document to help make that call.



**LINK TO ENTREPRENEURIAL
EXPERIENCES RESOURCES**