



COMPANY OVERVIEW

StudentCRT

“Put Student Wellbeing First”

Founded by Andrew Markwick

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Funding Received: £2,000 Ignition Award



Three words to describe your journey so far... Exciting, Rewarding, Interesting!



Tell us a little bit about yourself, the Enterprise and your journey so far. My name is Andrew Markwick and I'm developing StudentCRT. I have been a lecturer in the School of Physics & Astronomy here for 11 years. As such I have some experience of students and the potential problems they may have during their studies which affect their work and lives. I also have experience of the ways we monitor their attendance and progress as part of our teaching duties. Through my research work and my own personal interest, I have gained a lot of experience of web application development over the years. I have developed several well-known applications of this kind in my research field. StudentCRT is a secure online system that rationalises all the monitoring we do of our students in terms of attendances, reports and non-exam marking. Most importantly it uses this information to help us identify students who may be struggling or beginning to struggle, so that we can intervene quickly. It's a holistic student monitor. It presents our Student Support Officer, for example, with a list of the students most likely to be suffering based on the available data. The purpose of StudentCRT is to ensure we "Put Student Wellbeing First".

How was your idea conceived? In recent years, we have had cases of suicide and attempted suicide among the student population in our School. Upon realising this, it made us consider whether we were doing our best with the data we had available to try to identify at risk individuals before things could escalate. I took it upon myself to design a system that would make us confident that we were doing our very best for them and identify at risk students. As such StudentCRT was born.

What is your company mission? The primary goal is simply to identify students who may be struggling, quickly, so that a responsible member of staff can intervene to help and support the individual before he or she goes missing (or worse!) The secondary goal is to improve staff workflow by rationalising the systems of attendance monitoring, reporting, and non-exam marking that we do. This helps academics and tutors,

who now only need to enter data in one place, in a consistent and intuitive manner. Furthermore, our administrative staff no longer need to collate all the separate bits of data before they can act, as the system does all that for them.

At what point, did you realise that the idea had commercial potential? To be honest, almost straight away. It's clear to me that any other school, university or organization where the people 'in charge' (e.g. staff) have an interest in the wellbeing of the people they have a duty of care to (e.g. students), and have the means to collect data on their attendance and performance, could benefit from this system.

What approaches did you first employ to develop the idea? I spoke to key people in our School; Head of School, Head of School Administration, Director of Teaching and Learning, Student Support Officer, Student Experience Manager, to make sure there was buy-in on all sides. Then I designed and

built the system having regular meetings with some of these people. The system is a secure web application which allows staff to input and gather data. We rolled the application out in our School of Physics and Astronomy in September 2016 and it has met with universal praise. I was inspired by the desire to do our best for the students and make our existing systems more unified and sensible.

How did you get involved with the Innovation Optimiser? I contacted UMIP through our School's Technology Translation Fellow, Alick Deacon, and then met with one of UMIP's Commercialisation Executives, Natalie Mera-Pirttijarvi. It was Natalie who first told me about the Innovation Optimiser and the Roadmap sessions. After meetings with Laura Etchells and Ellie Buckley I was invited to go on the Roadmap Series in June and apply for the UMIP Ignition funding.



How did this engagement help you? I received the Ignition award of £2,000 which I'm using to organise a meeting of potential stakeholders within the University to learn more about the process of identifying students with wellbeing issues and how other Schools do it. I will use the knowledge gained at this meeting to improve the system further, at the same time advertising its existence to potential customers within our institution.

Were there any standout moments from Innovation Optimiser that helped to propel your idea forward? The Roadmap sessions were very useful in the sense of confirming my existing ideas on how to proceed and on how to 'get out of the building'. It was really helpful to talk to others about their innovation journeys and share learning with one another.

What have been your major milestones and achievements so far? The major achievement so far has been deploying the system (product) in our School for real and watching it monitor over 1100 students by about 100 academic staff. It's been wonderful hearing from the office that it has greatly improved (maybe revolutionised) this aspect of student support and confirms there is potential to expand on this.

How has being involved with entrepreneurial activity benefitted you? Working on this project has undoubtedly made my work life better. I feel like I'm making a real difference to the lives of my colleagues and, though they don't know it, the students too.

What future support are you looking for to progress your business? In terms of my next steps for the application itself, I'd like to fine-tune the way the system identifies struggling students based on the experience of this academic year. I'm hoping to roll the system out in at least another School next academic year. I also have a meeting to get buy-in from the Student Lifecycle Project which would pretty much guarantee at least the local success of the system/product. Finally, I'd like to find external paying customers. In terms of the support I need, I'd really like more help with the last bit – finding paying external customers. This could be as simple as funding to travel around talking about it, or funding to cover my teaching commitments to do that. It would also be very useful to have someone to talk to who had been through this process before!



Would you encourage other staff, academics and research students to seek support for their ideas through the Innovation Optimiser? Absolutely! The Roadmap sessions were really helpful and I'm sad it's over to be honest.