

Practitioner information

Introduction

This resource helps learners build their understanding of the importance of employability skills and an enterprise mindset in an engineering career. Learners consider the importance of resilience, initiative, and a growth mindset, and identify opportunities to develop their skills, personal qualities, and enterprise mindset.

Topic links

- Enterprise
- Skills for employability, teamworking, and project management

Suggested learning outcomes

Learners will be able to:

- name and describe skills for enterprise and employability
- describe an enterprise mindset and a growth mindset
- identify and plan for opportunities to develop their enterprise mindset.

Why this topic is relevant for engineers

Learners need to understand that qualifications are not enough on their own: success, whether through career progression or enterprise, depends on mindset. An enterprise mindset, along with a growth mindset, initiative, and resilience, is essential not only for personal or organisational success, but for a thriving and innovative engineering sector.

Delivering the theory: Your enterprise mindset and skills

- Begin by asking learners, in groups, to discuss and define what 'employability skills' and 'enterprise mindset' mean. Learners can research each skill.
- Highlight that many of these skills may also be known as soft or transferable skills.
- It can be helpful to consider these skills like the tools in a toolbox, or the apps on a smartphone, which are available to use when needed for a variety of purposes. The most important of these purposes is to build and demonstrate an enterprise mindset.
- Highlight that 'being enterprising' describes a broad mindset that spots and seizes opportunities, some of which can be more specifically called 'enterprise'.
- It's helpful for learners to practise using STAR as this is a useful model for talking about skills and personal qualities in applications and interviews.

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Delivering the theory: Your path to entrepreneurship

- Ask learners to identify some short-, medium- and long-term career aspirations. They may be able to group these into broad ideas such as first job, developing specialism, leadership, business ownership, and so on.
- Explore the diagram to highlight that learners might take a 'career' route towards enterprise, or choose enterprise as a first career step, building skills as they go.
- Emphasise the central role of initiative, which can be summed up as not waiting to be told but taking independent action. However, this relies on other skills such as critical thinking and communication to evaluate whether an idea is good, right, or safe. Initiative also closely links to resilience, and a growth mindset, which learners explore next.

Delivering the theory: Developing your enterprise mindset

- Ask learners to share examples of when they have received feedback. How did they feel about and respond to positive and negative feedback? Identify that while all feedback is helpful, negative feedback often offers the most significant opportunities to learn and develop.

- Review examples of where ad-hoc or informal feedback is available during learning, for example during workshop practice, first submissions of written work, while on industry placement, and so on.
- Emphasise the role of resilience alongside a growth mindset and being enterprising. Resilience helps learners 'bounce back' from negative feedback. A growth mindset helps them focus on the opportunity to learn, and being enterprising and using initiative helps them spot and seize specific opportunities.

Delivering the case study: Seizing opportunities to develop

- Highlight that Tarik might also want to develop these skills to become an entrepreneur.
- Emphasise that the suggestions for Tarik will include many ideas learners can copy.
- Review your college's own opportunities for personal development and encourage every learner to take advantage of as many as possible.
- Integrate these ideas into your course feedback and any broader personal development plans, to help learners build their growth mindset, resilience, initiative, and enterprise as well as specific skills and qualities.