



OPEN INNOVATION

BUSINESS PROJECTS

Open Innovation (OI) is a **fresh take on innovation** whereby a **firm looks beyond its boundaries** to exploit the creative power of users, communities, non-traditional players (non-customers, analogous lead users in other markets, outliers) and customers to **co-develop new products, services and processes**.

Students from a range of programmes can take this course including **Global MSc in Management, MSc Management of Information Systems & Digital Innovation plus MSc Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship**, ensuring an interdisciplinary student group and approach to tackle forward-thinking projects.

Encourage innovation with LSE knowledge | Develop your future workforce

To sponsor a project, email: dom.employers@lse.ac.uk

Open Innovation Course Overview

During the first 4 weeks of the course, students learn about:

- The emergence of OI and how OI differs from other sources of external innovation.
- How to differentiate between the different types of OI tools (Crowdsourcing, Lead Users, Innovation Intermediaries, Design intermediaries, Innomediaries, Open Source) and to choose the right OI tool for different problem sets.
- An emerging range of companies using open business models (e.g. Google, Facebook) in contrast to more traditional business approaches.
- The challenges of implementing OI and the drivers of success, not only based on practitioner sources but also in the context of organisational behaviour, innovation and network theory.
- **During the last 6-8 weeks of the course students work on a live industry project, developing solutions via the implementation of one or more open innovation tools.**

What makes this course different is the methodology we use to drive a higher probability of innovative outcomes. We leverage some key and proven methods like distant search, bridging structural holes and diversification of knowledge streams, to generate better ideation (generation of ideas) and then apply business principles to ground those ideas into a real world solution.



Sponsor testimonials

"The team had been tasked to find an innovative way to support company culture. They took the task on and underwent great amount of research and came back with some fantastic ideas." 2024 Sponsor

"From the LSE staff to the students everyone has been great to deal with. The team came up with a fantastic response and I loved their methodology." 2024 Sponsor

Examples of previous projects:

- Augmented Innovation – how GenAI can fuel (open) innovation process and results across the funnel – *Home appliance company*
- What are innovative ways companies can improve their employee happiness? – *Virtual events company*
- What impact will AI have on contact centres? – *Insurance company*

Business project proposal example



Student deliverables



- **Sponsor presentation** (sponsors can request the final slides from students)

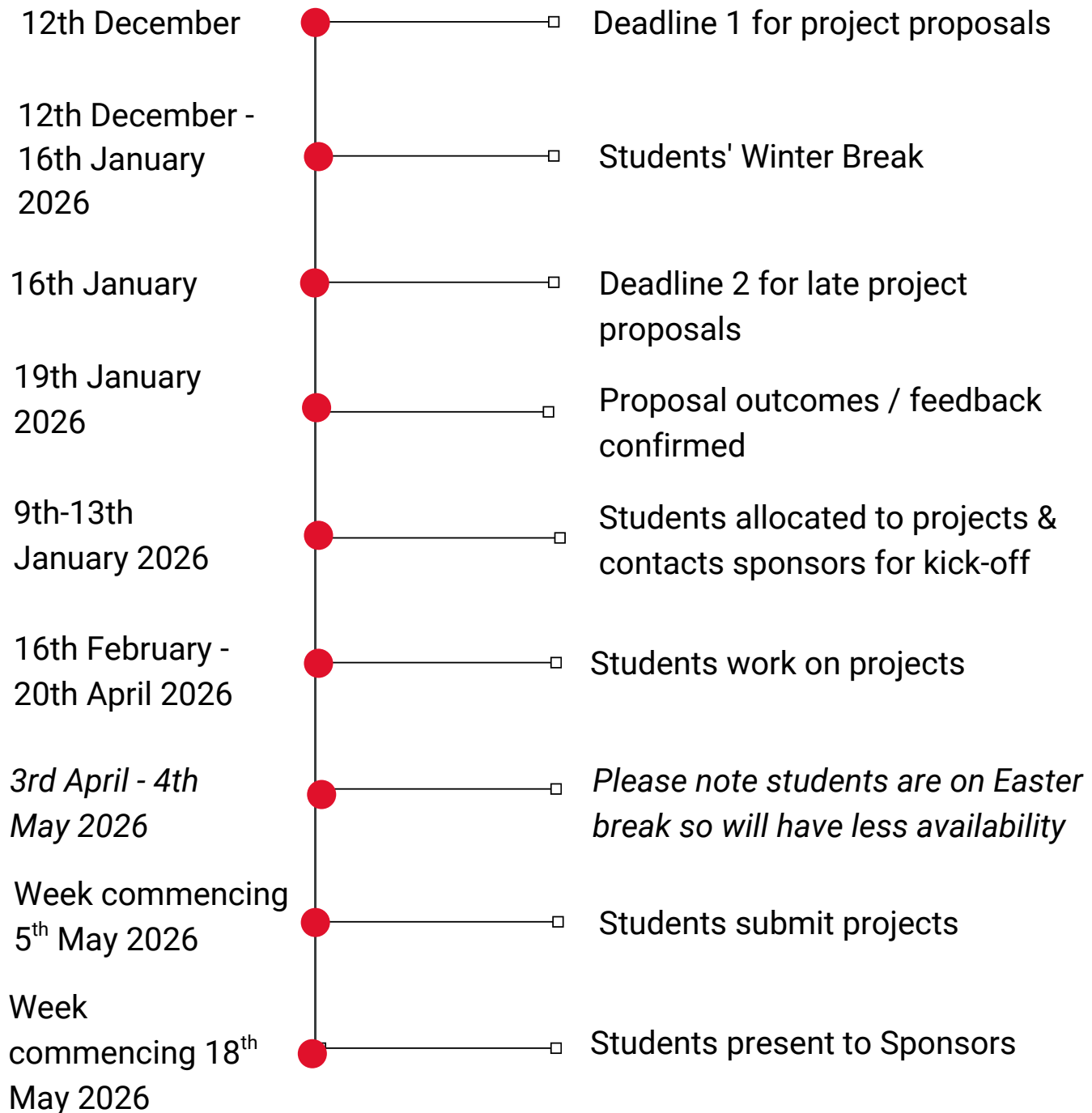
Students will deliver several innovative offerings (based on the knowledge they leveraged from crowds, lead users, intermediaries etc) and will work with the Sponsors and potential customers to choose the most viable. Thereafter, they will define the business model and make recommendations about implementation.

- A recorded presentation to LSE Faculty

PLEASE NOTE:

- We value projects in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. This course is perfect for a sponsor whose **primary objective is to develop an innovative offering, business model, process, customer experience or solution.**
- **This is not a technical course**, so whilst students for example will define and design the functionality of an app, they will not build a functioning app as a result of this course.
- The scope of the project must be **realistically defined to be completed within a 6-8 week period.**

TIMELINE 2025-26



Process and next steps

1

Sponsors submit project proposals to the LSE Employer Relations Manager. These will then be reviewed by our academic Faculty Lead and Sponsors will be informed of the outcome.

2

Accepted projects will be presented to students. 4-6 students will be assigned to a project.

3

Students work on their Business Project between February - May.

4

Students present their project outcomes to Sponsors and submit an academic presentation to Faculty.

5

Sponsors receive a feedback form for LSE to gather feedback on the project, students and overall experience.

Do sponsors need to supply company data?

It is ideal if firms are willing to either (a) provide access to company data (even if in a disguised format) or (b) provide access to representative customers from whom data may be elicited (or very closely guide the selection of the same). This is to ensure that the quality of the “data” (on the basis of which the student teams would be making their recommendations) is reasonably high.

What makes a successful project?

The best topics for a business project offered as part of curriculum are those that are **important but not urgent**. Note that students will need to follow and meet academic deadlines for their project. A team of students with access to LSE’s resources and academic supervision can achieve sufficient depth and independence of analysis to **kick-start debate and further action**, such as a framework for future business models or an initial plan. Successful projects set clear and realistic goals and importantly, **facilitate students’ access to necessary data**. **Keep in mind that students may have a limited network for industry interviews** - you will need to facilitate connections or contacts for students to conduct research and analyse findings. Students are also expected to work with current stakeholders rather than gain new stakeholders for Sponsors. Please also be aware that students follow [LSE’s Research Ethics](#) and are not allowed to undertake ‘undercover’ research.

Are there costs for Sponsors?

There is no charge to companies for sponsoring a project. Students do not receive pay for the project nor do they have any budget provided by LSE. They may need to travel for kick-off meetings or the final presentation so we recommend keeping this to a limited number and offer hybrid options. Whilst infrequent travel within London is to be expected, Sponsors should cover the cost of exceptional travel such as trains to locations outside of London. If more expensively produced reports are needed or for a larger quantity of contacts, we ask Sponsors to cover the cost of production (e.g. printing).

How can we protect company or sensitive information?

We can provide a Non-Disclosure Agreement for you, the students and the relevant Faculty member to sign. Request this from the Employer Relations Manager. Alternatively, you can ask students to sign your own company agreement and they can obtain their Faculty Lead’s signature if an LSE staff signature is required.

How can I best support students as a Sponsor?

We expect students to take responsibility for leading, planning and executing their project as this is essential to their development. The most important aspect for you as their Sponsor is to clearly define the problem you wish to investigate and be open to students' suggestions on how to find the answers/solutions. It is also crucial that you support them in gaining access to data (e.g. provide access to necessary internal data and interviewees). Your feedback on their work and presentation throughout the experience will be highly valuable for students' professional and personal development.

How regularly should we meet with students?

Whilst we expect students to work independently on their project, we hope Sponsors are flexible and understand students' academic deadlines and pressures. The ideal amount of contact depends on the Sponsor and project. Typically, students meet their Sponsor fortnightly, then more regularly at key times such as at the start and finalising of projects. We suggest establishing a structure in your kick-off meeting with students.

Are we expected to have any contact with their Faculty Coach (Academic Supervisor)?

Faculty Coaches support students on the research and academic elements for the project alongside their teaching, so you are not expected to have regular contact with them. However, the Employer Relations Manager can of course connect you with Faculty Coaches if necessary for any issues or discussions required. We are always keen for our Department to see the outcomes and success of projects so if you welcome Faculty Coaches and LSE colleagues to join your students' final presentations, please share details with the Employer Relations Manager who can coordinate LSE colleagues' attendance.

Do students need to have the ability to work in the UK in order to work on our project?

Students are not employed during the project. The project is a part of their curriculum and therefore covered under the provisions of their student visas. The project does not constitute an internship either.