

**Nomination for:**  
**Outstanding Student Engagement & Leadership**  
**(track: 5,000 students or less)**

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The [Institute of Entrepreneurship and Private Capital](#) (IEPC) at London Business School (LBS) aims to inspire entrepreneurs to pursue innovation and impact society by equipping them with the tools, expertise and insights to drive growth. The IEPC team is small but ambitious, and our outputs as a business school are largely amplified because of the highly engaged student leaders.

The IEPC actively supports the following student-run clubs and their activities at London Business School:

- Entrepreneurship Club
- Venture Capital and Private Equity Club
- Tech and Media Club
- Entrepreneurship through Acquisition Club
- Social Impact Club



In year 2021-2022 for example, we have supported the clubs listed above financially as well through guidance for initiatives such as start-up competitions, hackathons, skills workshops, conferences, and alumni networking events. All our initiatives are free to attend. We are extremely proud of the leadership of the students who run these initiatives with so much passion and enthusiasm. In the Entrepreneurship club in 2021/2022, the Executive Committee consisted of 54 students who managed nine initiatives which were all financially and otherwise supported by the IEPC. To list a few examples:

- **Launchpad:** pre-accelerator programme which brings together the brightest minds to transform ideas into viable business models.
- **HackLBS:** brings together business minds, developers, tech enthusiasts, designers, and anyone who loves to problem solve to get their ideas off the ground and launch new ventures together, all over an intense weekend.
- **Booster:** Early-stage LBS venture competition, giving founders the monetary boost to take their ventures to the next level

To empower the student leaders to take ownership of initiatives, we hold weekly steering committee meetings with attendance from club presidents, IEPC team members, as well as faculty members. These meetings are chaired by the presidents giving them the authority to decide on the format and agenda of the meetings. The agenda items mostly discuss new ideas to develop initiatives, issues that need resolving, and topics that need feedback from the IEPC team and faculty members. We believe this is a great way to hear the student voice as after all, the initiatives are built with students as the target users in mind, so we think there is no better way of developing our co-curricular activities as a school.

While the IEPC influences decision-making of the executive committee, we often act as a sounding board for the student leaders who brainstorm new ideas. We also help students overcome issues related to the institutional bureaucratic system.

All the entrepreneurship-focused initiatives benefit hugely from mentors, judges, speakers, investors, and sometimes sponsors, which the IEPC helps secure using the wide network of contacts of alumni and externals from the start-up ecosystem which we have built from over the years. It's worth noting that approximately 80% of the student population at London Business School is international which means they have limited

connections in London. The international nature of the study body at the school also gives us the pleasure of embracing diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Given that the IEPC team is relatively small with academic directors who have teaching responsibilities, one executive director, and two programme and communications managers, we would not be able to achieve the results that we do without the excellent student leadership that we have observed over the years. See Appendix 1 for some snapshots from our latest Impact Report.

One initiative that we would like to highlight is **LBS Launchpad**: a pre-accelerator programme which brings together the brightest minds to transform ideas into viable business models. As the school's flagship start-up competition and as part of the IEPC core agenda, student leaders have managed to completely own this programme which involves: recruiting an executive organising team, attracting applicants, working with faculty to shortlist applicants, organising workshops, securing mentors and judges, as well as organising in-person pitch nights on campus.



The programme is open to absolutely everyone. Launchpad is designed to encourage collaborations within the UK's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and to reduce the amount of friction - ensuring that those with great ideas have space to work on the ideas together. In 2021-2022, 53.1% of the participants were affiliated with LBS, and 46.8% were non-LBS. This is the result of the student organisers who went above and beyond to reach other institutions and individuals by making use of engaging promotional content such as interview blogs with previous winners. The selected cohort brought together diverse set of backgrounds together to support each other through their entrepreneurial journeys.

In 2021, the IEPC also opened up admin access to our Entrepreneurship LinkedIn page giving student leaders the freedom to post content directly. The [LinkedIn page](#) was created two years ago and now has around 7.3k followers. As a reference, Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship has 5.2k followers. This joint effort helps us connect better with the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Europe and beyond.

The Launchpad programme 2021-2022 received 145 applications from 17 countries. In this cycle, participants had to be available to attend workshops in London, unlike the previous year programmes were run virtually.

Eight workshops ran on topics such as 'Growth & Unit Economics' and 'UX and Prototyping'.

302 attendees registered to attend the Final Pitch Night on campus on 11 May 2022. Please note that the largest Lecture Theatre at LBS holds 120 people, so to accommodate a larger audience, two Lecture Theatres had to be joined together, removing the portable partition in the middle. See photo above. The event was a huge success.



**Caroline Williams (LBS MBA 2021), Founder of Junee, Launchpad 2021 winner:** “Launchpad proved to be highly beneficial for Junee because of its structured nature. This helped us to organise our thoughts and develop a realistic business model. Additionally, multiple pitch practices and guidance from our mentor helped us greatly in finalizing our idea. Coincidentally, it was one of the judges of the final pitch night that connected us to a venture capitalist, who later invested in our first funding round. Launchpad truly opens doors because of the endless opportunities to network.”

Junee went on to join the LBS Incubator which supported their entrepreneurial journey as alumni.

On 29 October 2021, Junee was nominated to participate in StageTwo competition, a pan-European early-stage competition which took place in Berlin. The founders brought home the ‘Female Founder Award’ of 10,000 Euros.



**Nina Brener-Hellmund, (LBS MBA 2019) Founder of Cult MIA, Launchpad 2019 Winner:** “Launchpad helped me build and find my founding team, giving me the momentum I needed to push the idea forward. The mentors each provided valuable feedback, and the final pitch proved to be extremely valuable, clearly revealing the gaps investors saw in our business.”

Nina comes from quite an international background: “My grandparents moved from Spain, Poland and the Netherlands to Mexico, which is where my parents were born and raised. In the 1990s, Mexico City was a dangerous place to be, with robberies and kidnappings taking place regularly. My parents wanted to live somewhere safer – somewhere where I could play on the street without them worrying – so my family first moved to Los Angeles, California and then to Houston, Texas.” Nina’s mother was one of the first women in Mexico to complete a computer science degree, and went on to set up the computer systems for some of the biggest banks in Latin America.

“Launchpad is an intensive five-month programme for aspiring entrepreneurs with a business idea, and it really pushes you to stress-test and develop your idea. At the end of the programme, you’re given the opportunity to pitch to VC judges, and my business idea – Cult Mia – won the 2019 programme, which told me that my business instinct was something worth following.

“Another reason for starting Cult Mia was to help micro-enterprises and female entrepreneurs grow their businesses. In 2019 – our first year – we on-boarded over 70 designers from 25 different countries, which was a huge achievement.

“My first Cult Mia employee was one of LBS’ Masters students who asked for an internship after hearing my pitch at Launchpad. I almost always have an LBS MBA student working with me, the most recent of whom had six years’ experience at Goldman Sachs in Tokyo and has just finished working on an operations project. Another of my first hires was an MBA2020 PR expert who came in and set up our communications strategy. If it wasn’t for the LBS community, I’d never be able to afford talent with this level of experience, so the School’s network really has been central to the success of my business.

“I wish more people knew that business school is one of the best places to start a business. It’s scary and risky, but you get a safe space to test and build your ideas for two years.”

# Challenges & Competitions

Led by students, supported by the IEPC

Our wide range of business creation activities allow students to put theory from the classroom in to practice in 'real-life' pitching, testing and idea-development scenarios. Students must work effectively as part of a team to impress a panel of expert judges. Such activities help students to intuitively grasp theory and transform it into practice that stands out and inspires others.

- **LBS Hackathon:**  
Business specialists, software programmers, developers, and designers come together to pitch ideas, develop something new, or test existing business ideas.
- **Venture Capital Investment Competition:**  
VC judges review and evaluate real business plans from entrepreneurs seeking funding.
- **HealthTech Challenge:**  
A fusion of enterprise, engineering and innovation in healthcare. The challenge offers mentorship, training, and prize money to the winners.
- **CleanTech Challenge:**  
Entrepreneurs and engineers unite to create viable clean-tech start-ups. Mentored by industry experts, teams compete for prize money.
- **MIINT Competition:**  
Teams identify a promising social enterprise on the verge of raising seed funding and carry out an impact investment fund's detailed due diligence.
- **Booster:**  
Early-stage LBS venture competition, giving founders the boost to take their ventures to the next level.



## Did you know?

500

Approximately 500 students participate in the competitions supported by the Institute each year.

## LBS Launchpad

LBS Launchpad is a startup pre-accelerator programme which brings together the brightest minds to transform ideas into viable business models.

This 16-week mentorship-based initiative gives cutting-edge businesses the push they need to grow. It brings together leading industry experts with idea-stage startups, to provide inspiration, guidance, and practical support.

We draw on the talent and diversity of the LBS community to find experienced entrepreneurship mentors, many of whom are alumni, for our students.

We currently have over 100 mentors who add distinctive value to the participants of LBS Launchpad.

## Multiple:X

Multiple:X is the flagship Private Equity and Venture Capital Conference hosted by LBS.

Attended by figures spearheading the industry, the conference provides a prestigious platform for rich debate, knowledge sharing and networking among prominent investment professionals and a selection of the brightest students from around the world.

The event capitalises on the deep industry links and academic stature of LBS to attract over 400 practitioners and enthusiasts each year, from general partners, limited partners, trusted advisors, students and other industry participants.



**“Launchpad helped me build and find my founding team, giving me the momentum I needed to push the idea forward. The mentors each provided valuable feedback, and the final pitch proved to be extremely valuable, clearly revealing the gaps investors saw in our business.”**

**Nina Brener-Hellmund**, Founder and CEO of Cult MIA, LBS Incubator '20



## APPENDIX 2: Testimonials

### Kathryn Larin, MBA 2021, Former Entrepreneurship Club President



While I was at LBS from 2019 - 2021, the world was hit by covid. I thought of the founders who were hit by several uncertainties all at once. I didn't want to sit back and not take any action. I reached out to IEPC with a proposal to start my own podcast. With their full financial support and confidence in me, I started my own podcast called '**Ride it out**' in which I interviewed founders & VC investors from the start-up ecosystem.

Regular meetings with the IEPC helped me figure out the best software programmes to run the podcast, discuss prospective guests, and get support in the promotion of each episode.

Typical topics we covered were: current trends in specific sectors, stories of companies who are having to pivot due to the pandemic, and career advice for students applying for jobs in a pandemic. VC guests included

Notion Capital, Mosaic Ventures, Octopus Ventures etc. Founders & CEOs included: The Intro, Divido (fintech), Pobble (edtech), Tenzo (restaurant tech), Pass the Keys, Amza bags etc.

Inspired by the many talented LBS founders over the years and wanting to showcase their ventures to a wider student audience, I co-wrote with LBS Prof. Gary Dushnitsky, the **first female LBS founder teaching case**. In addition, I co-wrote a **teaching case for LBS Entrepreneurship Summer School** on Grub Club, alternative protein food for dogs- the business is going full force.

In recognition for my efforts, I received the '**Leading through adversity award**' by the School.

In addition to the podcast, I ran the first-ever virtual **Hackathon** at LBS as in-person events were not allowed in the government guidelines. Teams of aspiring entrepreneurs spent 48 hours working with coders, designers and business minds to build their original start-up ideas. They then pitched those ideas to a panel of judges. All virtually for the first time! 250+ participants joined in from 76 global universities. The initiative was sponsored partly by BCG Digital Venture and partly by the IEPC.

In my final year at LBS, I found a gap in our entrepreneurial offerings where there was no one place to feature the fantastic founders that came out of LBS. Again, I brainstormed this idea with IEPC and proposed the creation of the '**LBS Founders Book**'. IEPC financially and otherwise supported this idea. See [Founders Book website](#).

After I graduated, I continued working with the Entrepreneurship Club and the IEPC. As an alum, I was passionate about creating regular opportunities for networking. I ran events together with the LBS Tech&Media Club which was a massive hit. The event was supported by IEPC.

I look forward to continuing to engage with the enthusiastic entrepreneurship community, together with the IEPC.

### Kristina Stoli, MBA 2022, Former Entrepreneurship Club President 2021/2022



As an Executive Member of the Entrepreneurship Club during 2020/2021, I was one of the student leaders in charge of **LBS Launchpad**, a pre-accelerator programme that helps founders turn ideas into viable businesses. With covid regulations constantly changing, we had to deal with a number of challenges including running virtual workshops, networking and pitch events. We were edging towards our final pitch night when the restrictions started to ease. This gave me the opportunity to end the programme on a high note by organising an in-person Final Pitch Night to give the entrepreneurship community a boost that was well-needed at that stage. My classmates had barely spent time on campus or attended any events, so we had absolutely no idea how to manage the logistics of holding a large event on campus. I

reached out to IEPC for support, and hence we were able to successfully host a hit event. That was the start of a close partnership with the Institute which was the biggest asset that I could access once elected as one of the Co-Presidents of the Entrepreneurship Club.

After a year spent off-campus engaging in virtual learning, the morale and engagement levels were very low as the new academic year 2021/2022 was about to begin. The biggest challenge on our hands was how to revitalize our community. IEPC through their funding support, industry contacts and world-leading faculty enabled me and my peers to think out of the box and bring together the entrepreneurship community in-person once again. IEPC supported us in running another edition of Launchpad, this time in-person where we had record-breaking applications and raving reviews from VCs on the quality of startups. The institute were able to secure for us the new, biggest hall on campus to run the biggest in-person **hackathon** in LBS history where 270 participants from London universities built new startup ideas over a weekend of hacking. IEPC was always open to new ideas and initiatives and helped us launch for the first time **Springboard**, a fortnightly meet-up featuring speakers, pitches and community building that was constantly attended by 100+ community members; LBS' own **VC newsletter** featuring regular raises by founders; startup **skills workshops** with experts which were often sold-out; and **alumni events** bringing together entrepreneurs and venture capitalist across multiple graduating classes. Through the faculty contacts of IEPC we successfully ran **ConceptionX**, matching business students with researchers from University College London (UCL) and fostered wider partnerships with research and science universities for more initiatives to come. On top of all the initiatives, through their stewardship for the first time we joined our voices and built a combined LinkedIn communication strategy showing the variety of events and initiatives that we opened to the wider community.

On a personal level as a club leader, IEPC always ensured I could access opportunities that would make me a better leader such as the LBS' prestigious **Leadership Incubator**, which gave me the skills to identify the best strategy to motivate peers to deliver our vision. I always felt empowered to bring forward my ideas and lead to implementation. At congregation, I was delighted to receive the **Student of the Year award**, a peer-nominated award due to my efforts in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship at London Business School. See below:

**Student spotlight: Kristina Stoli**



### Breathing new life into our hub of entrepreneurs

The London Business School Entrepreneurship Club plays a critical role within our school community to foster innovation and entrepreneurship. The club enables students to network, generate ideas and launch their own ventures – through hosting speaker sessions with entrepreneurial thought leaders, skills-building workshops, hackathons, accelerators, incubators and more. After 18 months of virtual events, last year's club leaders had the challenge of revitalising and re-energising the club and community.

Kristina Stoli, Leadership Incubator fellow, talks about their strategy this year as revitalising partnerships. "We built closer partnerships with accelerators, alumni, and other universities, showcasing LBS as a hub of entrepreneurs." It enabled them to return to in-person for their established events and launch a new host of initiatives – breathing new life into our community. New initiatives included: Springboard, a fortnightly club meetup featuring speakers, pitches and community building; ConceptionX, matching business students with research students from UCL; LBS's own VC newsletter and podcast, featuring 6 new episodes; a Startup Founders Social Circle and more.

**"The Leadership Incubator gave me the skills to identify the best strategy to motivate peers toward delivering well-received events for our community."**

Kristina Stoli, MBA2022, Co-President of the Entrepreneurship Club



- **Kristina Stoli MBA2022**  
Phenomenal in her role as co-president of the Entrepreneurship Club, Kristina worked hard to engage new students and encourage them to pursue their vision. She took an interdisciplinary approach, seeking partnerships with other clubs to help broaden the wider tech ecosystem at LBS. As an academic rep, she worked collaboratively with her classmates, and engaged with the Programme Office in a positive and constructive manner.