



## Students as Change Agents

### Vision

Applying learning through tackling 'real world' challenges, working with staff, external partners and students from other disciplines, accelerates students' development and prepares them to thrive in the future world of work. Skills gaps consistently highlighted by employers include lack of innovative thinking, commercial awareness, working across boundaries and project management ([Institute of Student Employers](#), Development Survey 2018, [UK Trendence](#) Research 2018)

The vision of the Students as Change Agents (SACHA) project is to help address these perceived gaps by creating a coherent, high quality, high profile framework to enable all students to benefit from experiential learning with external partners at some point during the course of their studies. The project aims to increase the volume, quality and impact of challenge-led experiential learning by taking the best from existing practice within the University and beyond, and piloting different models for delivering this at scale, through the curriculum and co-curriculum.

The Students as Change Agents model will provide a safe 'living lab' approach for students, staff and external partners to tackle challenges collaboratively, with significant potential to scale. It will increase the number and depth of partnerships with public, private and 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations as well as alumni who will act as mentors.

Students will practise innovation, problem solving and apply resilience in the context of live challenges. They will develop their digital and data competencies through engaging with industry experts and big data sources and critically reviewing the advantages and disadvantages of data-driven decision-making.

### Outline of programme

Funding has been awarded via the [Data Driven Innovation programme](#), initially for 2 years, to establish feasible ways to deliver scalable challenge-led student-industry engagement programmes.

Pilot activities will target UG and PGT students and will incorporate training in enterprise and data skills, underpinned by support from staff and mentors. Students will work in small, interdisciplinary groups to tackle live challenges, posed by external organisations, which have a social/environmental or economic impact.

The first pilot took place as a 5 day programme during the Festival of Creative Learning in February 2019 with a second 5 week long pilot being planned to allow students to earn academic credit via a SLICC (Student Led Individually Creaover the summer.

Please get in touch if you have any questions or ideas to share. We're particularly keen to hear from staff who have experience running experiential learning opportunities for students and have ideas about how we can make this available more widely: [sacha.project@ed.ac.uk](mailto:sacha.project@ed.ac.uk).

