

Cobweb is a leading publisher of information for enterprise educators and works with a number of universities across the UK

### GET IN TOUCH

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## Support for enterprise educators and student start ups

Building on over 20 years' experience supplying information resources to the UK business support sector, Cobweb is continuing to work closely with the enterprise support community in universities across the UK.

Our business reference resources and information are used by enterprise educators to help students and graduates research and develop their business ideas and micro-ventures, as well as by careers advisers to help people consider new career opportunities.

In 2017, Cobweb has welcomed a number of universities as customers, and continues to collaborate with existing partners to provide seamless and flexible access to Cobweb's technology, content and expertise.

This year, we have also made a number of changes to COBRA and how we make our content available.

One innovative development is our work creating a suite of pre-start and start-up apps. The interactive mobile apps will help students choose a business idea, evaluate their readiness to start a business and generate a unique list of action points to help them get started.



Over the past year, Cobweb has attended a number of events with universities and their partners. IEEC 2016 and the BLA Conference 2017 were both invaluable opportunities to hear from enterprise educators and to catch up with many of our customers and partners.

Cobweb is also delighted to be supporting Enterprise Educators UK (EEUK) by funding a bursary in memory of their former Vice-Chair, Dr Richard Beresford. Richard had a deep commitment to supporting the personal development of colleagues working in enterprise and entrepreneurship education, and Cobweb will now be funding one bursary each year.

Six bursaries have already been awarded by EEUK in 2016/17 and Cobweb looks forward to hearing about the positive impact the bursaries have on the successful recipients of the awards.

## Spotlight on COBRA

COBRA (Complete Business Reference Adviser) includes in-depth information about hundreds of small business ideas and practical business subjects.

It is ideal for helping students with market research, and for students who are looking for self-employment and career ideas.

COBRA is used in a number of universities across the UK, and these are the most popular fact sheets that have been downloaded over the last six months:

### Top subjects

Writing a Business Plan  
Developing a Marketing Plan  
Choosing the Right Business Legal Structure  
Profiling Your Target Market  
Creating a Marketing Strategy

### Top ideas

Mobile Takeaway  
Smoothie and Juice Bar  
Tea Room  
Make-up Artist  
Cafe

### Top sectors

Food and Drink  
IT, Digital and Tech  
Media, Creative and Publishing  
Manufacturing  
Property Letting and Management



# Supporting enterprise at Middlesex University

Since 2015, Cobweb has been working in partnership with Chest to offer cost-effective COBRA subscriptions for universities and colleges.

"Chest works with 99% of universities and 75% of colleges, supplying a range of software and online resource agreements at preferential prices for the academic community," explains Ben Offiler, Business Development Executive at Chest.

Chest Agreements are invaluable in helping universities access premium resources for their students. Ben explains, "If Chest Agreements didn't exist, universities would be buying fewer resources with the same money."

"Chest is only interested in resources we believe will benefit the academic community," adds Ben. "The employability of its graduates is critical to every university, and if they want to make their graduates more employable, they need the right resources, such as COBRA."

An increasing number of universities are utilising Chest Agreements to get cost-effective access to COBRA. One of these subscribers is Middlesex University.

The Enterprise Development Hub at Middlesex University has helped hundreds of students, staff and alumni start and grow their own business, as well as improve their employability by developing the skills employers want.

To help them with their work, the Hub team has access to premium online reference resources such as COBRA and Mintel. "A student will come in and we will ask them some tough questions to help them decide if their business idea is viable," explains Dr Simon Best, Senior Lecturer at Middlesex University and Head of the Enterprise Development Hub.

"COBRA is part of this process. Students can access it to research their idea, look at market trends and take their idea forward. We also use COBRA as part of our Graduate Entrepreneur Scheme which awards visas to students and graduates with a credible plan to start a business in the UK. For instance, if COBRA tells us something that contradicts the graduate's business plan then we can challenge them on it," explains Simon. "It's a really useful tool to help us make sure we grant visas to the applicants with the strongest business plans."



COBRA is not just a useful source of business information; it is also a great learning tool. "For me, it's not just about testing the viability of the business idea, it is about measuring a student's ability to use different tools and resources and to improve their research skills," adds Simon.

"As part of Simon's module, I teach students how to use COBRA, why it is so good and how it can help improve their grades," explains Laura Newman, Subject Liaison Librarian at Middlesex University. "I usually get one of the students to suggest an industry and I then show them the start-up guides, market research and business support directory that's on COBRA," says Laura. "They really like it. Just a couple of clicks and most of the information they need is there."

Students can also access COBRA from anywhere on campus. "It's online so they can access it whenever, wherever they want. When we get enquiries at the library we will direct students to it for information about starting a business or doing research for a job interview," adds Laura. "As a librarian, I really like it."



Eduserv's Chest Agreements are aimed chiefly at universities and colleges, offering significant discounts on three-year licences for online resources. COBRA subscriptions have been available via Chest Agreements since 1 January 2015.

For further information contact **Rachel Travis** on **0191 461 8000** or e-mail [r.travis@cobwebinfo.com](mailto:r.travis@cobwebinfo.com).



**Cobweb Flex** enables universities to have seamless access to Cobweb's technology, know-how and content to deliver their own innovative business support and careers advice platforms.

Cobweb's in-house development team has engineered its own CMS and API functionality that can integrate openly with existing university websites and publishing platforms.

Working in close partnership with your team, we can help to scope, pilot, test, deliver and maintain bespoke platforms and apps that are rich in practical content and tailored to the needs of your staff, students and graduates.

To discuss how **Cobweb Flex** can help you innovate and meet your university's specific objectives, please contact **Marianne Whitfield** on **0191 461 8000** or [m.whitfield@cobwebinfo.com](mailto:m.whitfield@cobwebinfo.com).

If you would like more information about Cobweb's products and services, please give us a call on **0191 461 8000** or e-mail [enquires@cobwebinfo.com](mailto:enquires@cobwebinfo.com)