

New Venture Creation in the Amsterdam Entrepreneurial Ecosystem



SYLLABUS

VU Amsterdam Summer School

6-17 July 2026

Any general questions for the Summer School support team? Contact amsterdamsummerschool@vu.nl.



Course Details

Title	New Venture Creation in the Amsterdam Entrepreneurial Ecosystem	
Coordinator(s)	Professor Dr Enno Masurel	
Other lecturers	TBD	
Form(s) of tuition	On campus and in the city Lectures, tutorials, excursions, and practical assignments	
Approximate contact hours	40	
Approximate self-study hours	40 (mostly in a group)	

Teaching staff (in order of appearance)

Enno Masurel (born 6 December 1959) is a Full Professor in Sustainable Entrepreneurship at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, since 2004. His educational background is business economics and microeconomics; in the last decade he has moved into the direction of business administration and entrepreneurship. His main activities are:

- Education: the compulsory course The Entrepreneurial Venture and supervision of master's theses in the joint VU & UvA MSc Entrepreneurship, supervision of academic papers of the pre-master Business Administration, various electives in entrepreneurship and the International Summer School 'New Venture Creation in the Amsterdam Entrepreneurial Ecosystem'.
- Supervision of PhDs: on the subjects of small business development and entrepreneurship, from the Netherlands and other countries. He has (co-) delivered 17 PhDs.
- Research: with focus on the determinants of successful entrepreneurship and small business performance, with special reference to innovation, sustainable entrepreneurship and the life cycle of the small firm. He has (co-)authored more than 70 refereed papers and books and numerous reports.
- Impact (Valorisation): bridging the gap between the academic world, on the one hand, and the private sector and the public sector, on the other, by showing mutual benefits and building long term relationships. One actual activity is the making of entrepreneurship cases, both about real-life entrepreneurs and semi-fictive cases. Another actual activity is the workshop 'The Entrepreneurial Family Doctor', for GPs in training and existing GPs.
- Management: he is the director-founder of the VU Center for Entrepreneurship and chairman of the Examination Board of the joint VU & UvA MSc Entrepreneurship, and the former program director of this master.

- Capacity building in Sub-Saharan Africa: supervision of PhDs and training of university lecturers in Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia and Zambia, in the fields of small business development and entrepreneurship.
- European projects: the Erasmus+ project 'Entrepreneurship in Renewable Energy', in which he participated, was labelled by the European Commission as 'Best Practice'.
- Various consultancy, advisory, voluntary and mediator assignments, partly paid, partly voluntary.

Course description

The creation of new ventures is one of the most important economic issues of this time, all over the world. It is not limited to start-ups only, but also applies to the development of new activities by existing firms (among them corporates) and spin-offs by universities, company expansions, take-overs, and scale-ups, and much more.

Amsterdam offers a broad and interesting palette of entrepreneurs, firms and entrepreneurial organizations, this is called the Amsterdam entrepreneurial ecosystem. The Center for Entrepreneurship of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam ([VU Center for Entrepreneurship - Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam](#)) plays an important role in the Amsterdam entrepreneurial ecosystem. Therefore, this international summer school is the right opportunity to study new venture creation and entrepreneurship.

This course follows a double approach. The first approach is the sustainable entrepreneurship approach, dealing with the economic, social, and ecological aspects of new ventures. The second approach is the life cycle of the small firm approach, dealing with the changes of the firm and the entrepreneur during the life cycle of the firm.

Next to above-mentioned approaches, an important part of the content of this course is determined by the students themselves, who are expected to come up with their own business ideas and contributions, guided by the course lecturers.

After morning lectures which discuss topics as the Business Model Canvas for Start-ups and Scale-ups and the Amsterdam entrepreneurial ecosystem, in the afternoons the students work on practical assignments, with additional support from outside experts.

The course ends with the online elevator pitches of the team assignments, in a Dragon's Den/Shark Tank setting.

Learning objectives

By the end of this course, students will:

- 1) Have developed an innovative outlook on entrepreneurship.
- 2) Have developed an awareness that value-adding opportunities not only contain financial aspects but also social and environmental aspects (sustainable entrepreneurship).
- 3) Have developed insight into, and actually developed, their own enterprising competencies.
- 4) Have learned about the processes involved in the recognition and exploitation of opportunities, about creating societal value, and about the nature and role of networks.
- 5) Have gained the ability to write a feasibility plan on how to bring an innovation to the market.

Assignments and Assessment

The assessment takes place along three lines:

- 1) Team assignment Business Model Canvas (Innovativeness (25%); Technological feasibility (25%); Commercial feasibility (25%); Pitch & Discussion (25%); Completeness of the report (points deduction); Readability of the report, points deduction). This line represents 50% of the final grade. The deadline is the final day of the international summer school (with one re-sit option before 1 August). This line corresponds with Learning Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
- 2) Essay. This will be assessed on the basis of persuasiveness. Ambiguity of the proposition and poor readability of the essay may lead to deduction of points. This line also represents 50% of the final grade. This line especially corresponds with Learning Goals 2 and 4. The deadline is the final day of the international summer school (with one re-sit option before 1 August).
- 3) Four small assignments (they will be assessed on the basis of Pass/Improve/Fail). This line especially corresponds with Learning Goals 3 and 4. The deadlines for these assignments will be the next day after the instruction (with one res-it option before 1 August).

The whole summer school will take place live on the VU campus, next to activities in the city of Amsterdam. The detailed schedule will be provided later, as it will be highly actual. The period is 6 to 17 July. The lectures and tutorials take place from Monday to Friday, daily from 10:00 until 16:00. Presence with all parts of the program is mandatory for each student. This presence will be checked with a presence list that is filled in by the students during each program part. In this way acquiring the 3 credits is justified. Next to that, mandatory presence contributes to the quality of the group assignment. During the whole program an active commitment and a social attitude of the students is required.

Provisional reading list

Masurel, E. (2019). *The entrepreneurial dilemma in the life cycle of the small firm: How the firm and the entrepreneur change during the life cycle of the firm, or how they should change*. Emerald Publishing.

Various papers and cases (these will be announced during the summer school). The book, the papers and the cases will all be provided free of charge. They can be downloaded for free from the VU Library by students or will be made available in another way.

Course Schedule

The schedule below is tentative, based on the schedules of previous years. The final course schedule will be adjusted to actual challenges.

Day 1	08:30 - 10:00	Welcome meeting and Campus Tour
	10:00 - 12:00	Introduction to the Course
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	13:00 - 15:00	Guest Speaker
	15:30 - 17:30	Pubquiz
Day 2	10:00 - 12:00	Instruction Business Model Canvas for Startups & Scaleups
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	13:00 - 14:00	Problem Discovery & Opportunity Recognition
	14:00 - 15:00	Tutorial Group Assignment #1: Value Proposition & Business Idea
	15:00 - 16:00	Presentation Group Assignment #1
Day 3	10:00 - 12:00	The Amsterdam Entrepreneurial Ecosystem
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	13:00 - 16:00	Social activity: Explore Amsterdam
Day 4	10:00 - 12:00	Tutorial Group Assignment #2: Clients & Client Relations
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	13:00 - 14:00	Presentation Group Assignment #2
	14:00 - 17:00	StartHub & Demonstrator Lab (Incubators at the VU Campus)
	17:00	Drinks at StartHub
Day 5	10:00 - 12:00	The Life Cycle Of The Small Firm
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	13:00 - 15:00	Tutorial Group Assignment #3: Financial Plan
	15:00 - 16:00	Presentation Group Assignment #3
Day 6	10:00 - 12:00	Sustainable Entrepreneurship
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	13:00 - 15:00	Mystery Guest in the City
Day 7	10:00 - 12:00	Tutorial Group Assignment #4: Sustainability Section
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	13:00 - 16:00	Assignment Andriana
Day 8	10:00 - 11:00	TBD

	11:00 - 12:00	Guest Speaker: Maroussia Tyl
	12:00 - 13:00	Lunch Break
	14:00 - 17:00	Social activity: Cultural Afternoon
Day 9	10:00 - 17:00	Remaining Building Blocks; Prepare Presentations & Slide Deck & Helpdesk
Day 10	10:00 - 13:00	Presentations
	13:00	Closure
	15:00 - 17:00	Goodbye Drinks

