

European Academy of Management (EURAM) 2025 Conference
Manuscript Abstract

Fit for Purpose? Organizational Design and Strategic Alignment in Centres for Entrepreneurship

Ismail, R., Vanderstraeten, J. & Slabbink, H.

Full reference

Ismail, R., Vanderstraeten, J. & Slabbink, H. (2025). Fit For Purpose? Organizational Design and Strategic Alignment in Centres for Entrepreneurship. European Academy of Management (EURAM), Florence, Italy, 22-25 June 2025.

Abstract

Achieving fit between organizational design and strategic purpose is critical for centres for entrepreneurship within higher education institutions, as misalignment can undermine their ability to support student entrepreneurship effectively. However, little is known about how centres for entrepreneurship design their internal structures and processes to achieve this fit within complex and evolving institutional environments. Building on organizational design and contingency theory, this study examines how these centres configure their internal elements to achieve purpose–design fit in complex institutional environments. Based on a multiple-case study of seven centres for entrepreneurship, this study analyzes how alignment across five key design dimensions, "purpose", "activities", "structure", "people and culture", and "collaborations", supports strategic coherence. The findings reveal that organizational purpose operates as a central organizing logic within the centres for entrepreneurship, shaping design decisions and maintaining internal consistency. The analysis identifies three distinct centres for entrepreneurship types, including venture-focused, mindset-focused, and hybrid models, each reflecting different fit patterns shaped by founding conditions. Additionally, the study shows that hybrid centres for entrepreneurship must engage in active recalibration to sustain coherence as they expand their missions. These insights advance the understanding of centres for entrepreneurship as dynamic, purpose-driven organizations and offer practical guidance for designing fit-for-purpose support structures that enhance entrepreneurial outcomes in higher education.