



Invest in Talent



Catherine McBride,
Operations Director
for Gradworks

A new initiative which allows employees to study for an honours degree without leaving full-time employment is being launched in Northern Ireland.

Edinburgh Napier University will deliver the BA (Hons) Applied Business degree from January 2020 in collaboration with Coleraine-based Gradworks.

The course will boost employees' skills and improve their career prospects. Gradworks will work with businesses from a variety of sectors to identify staff to recruit as students to the programme.

Employers will benefit from the work-based learning assessments

students undertake from the outset, which will balance theory with day-to-day work experience to give them fresh insights. Significant business benefits will also come from the assessed work-based projects students will undertake.

This three-year degree was developed to address the key skills gaps within a number of sectors; maintaining and developing current employees and attracting the best new talent to your organisation; and

providing opportunities for employers, employees, and organisations to work collaboratively in addressing problems/opportunities.

Catherine McBride, Operations Director for Gradworks stated, "As industry leaders in work-based learning, Edinburgh Napier University adopt a delivery model designed to minimise time out of the workplace. In Year one the teaching is delivered over 27 days off the job. In Years 2 and 3 the programme shifts to a blended learning approach and will operate on a 'day a month' release. Students are supported through directed learning delivered through Moodle, their Virtual Learning Environment. Each year the students will engage in a professional practice module. The employer, student, and academic mentor will agree upon a project bespoke to the organisation's needs."

"As industry leaders in work-based learning, Edinburgh Napier University adopt a delivery model designed to minimise time out of the workplace."

Edinburgh Napier University's Business School has a strong Industry track record in creating work-ready graduates for the national labour market. This new course is a significant step towards helping businesses to engage their key employees and thrive in a rapidly-evolving commercial environment.

The course allows students to achieve a BA (Hons) degree from one of the UK's leading universities in three years, and to learn in an environment that is directly linked to their degree.

Invest NI's Director for Skills and Competiveness, Niall Casey, said, "Gradworks have undoubtedly recognised gaps and opportunities in the labour market. This new

work-based degree programme will benefit local employers and employees in upskilling the workforce. The opportunity for organisations, employees, and academic staff to work together in solving real business challenges will produce graduates who are able to contribute to the future economic and social prosperity of the region. We welcome this programme which offers employers a facility to strengthen their leadership and provides employees the opportunity to study for a degree whilst remaining in employment, reducing financial barriers to accessing Higher Education opportunities. In addition, participating Invest NI companies may be eligible for financial assistance towards the course fees through our 'Skills Growth' programme."

The new Applied degree programme has been developed over the last two years in response to local industry needs. Gradworks has undertaken research with both the public and private sectors to determine the best and most cost effective way of upskilling their workforce and at the same time attracting new talent into the organisation. As a result, Gradworks will promote and facilitate undergraduates participating in a new Edinburgh Napier University's BA (Hons) in Applied Business which has been specially designed for the local economy.

In the QS World University Rankings 2017, Edinburgh Napier was awarded a maximum 5 stars for teaching and employability and it is ranked highly in the UK for nurturing student talent. The University will provide ongoing academic and pastoral support to students throughout the duration of their studies.

Eye

You can contact Catherine McBride at Gradworks via:
Tel: 02870511377
Email: c.mcbride@gradworks.co.uk
www.gradworks.co.uk