

18 March 2009

Graduates add value to North Devon businesses

The success of a recent North Devon scheme encouraging Torrridge businesses to take on skilled graduates has highlighted the benefits of increased collaborations between businesses and higher education providers.

This follows news that Exeter University has calculated that the potential value of graduates to businesses that take them on is around twelve times the actual cost.

Cathy Newman who runs the GSfT project, funded by Devon Renaissance and the Learning Skills Council said: "Graduate Business Partnerships represent a fantastic opportunity for businesses to work with talented graduates on a specific project with the support of either Exeter or Plymouth University. This is a real win-win for the business as recruitment costs are covered, the contract is temporary and they get a talented and enthusiastic worker to complete a project. "

Graduate Skills for Torrridge (GSfT), part of North Devon +, worked with businesses and higher education providers to identify and arrange project placements in the Torrridge area and surrounding towns of Bideford, Appledore, Hartland, Torrington and Holsworthy. The project exceeded its original targets, successfully assisting 21 businesses and placing 22 graduates into roles.

One such success story is Exeter graduate Matthew Hensby. He was recruited from huge competition through GSfT to work for the North Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) 50th anniversary celebrations. The placement was a 20-week Graduate Business Partnership.

Matthew said: "Obtaining my position within the AONB team as part of the University of Exeter's GBP scheme has contributed greatly to my future career prospects. I could have never imagined that I would have been given the freedom and responsibility I did and it has been a great experience, the best part about it being that I didn't have to leave North Devon to do it. I would, without hesitation, recommend this course of employment to any recent graduate, for me it really has been a case of you get out what you put in."

GBP placements can happen at any time of year and businesses interested in taking part in the program should contact the Careers and Employment Services at Exeter University, j.gill@exeter.ac.uk or find more information at www.exeter.ac.uk/businessprojects.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Release issued by pr dogs limited, public relations consultants, on behalf of Devon Renaissance and North Devon +. For further information contact John Taynton of pr dogs on 01822 600100 or email john.taynton@prdogs.com

Devon Renaissance is the rural regeneration partnership organisation for the county. It is a not-for-profit partnership of the private sector, local authorities and community-based organisations. The organisation is funded by the South West Regional Development Agency, Devon County Council, and North Devon, Torrridge, West Devon, South Hams, East Devon and Teignbridge district and borough

councils. With funding of £7 million over three years it is estimated to have brought in £25 million to the Devon economy with match funding.

www.ruraldevon.org