

Ready, steady, GO! Why NTU graduates hit the working world running

Ensuring students are well equipped for the world of employment is a huge part of NTU's approach - with mandatory work experience for every course one of the innovative new commitments. Here, OONAGH ROBINSON take a closer look at what makes the university stand out

The employability team offers a wide range of support from one-to-one appointments with consultants, to recruitment fairs and skill building workshops. Facilities and services are available to:

- full-time and part-time NTU undergraduate students.
- full-time and part-time NTU taught and research postgraduate students.
- NTU graduates for up to three years following graduation
- prospective students of NTU who have a confirmed offer of a place.

THE HIVE: Students and graduates seeking to develop a new business can also use The Hive, NTU's purpose-built development centre. The service is principally for students and graduates of NTU, but help is available to anyone with a viable business idea.

Acceler8: This is NTU's employability and personal development programme which will help students make the extracurricular activities they do really count. The award can be completed at a student's own pace, in a term, year or longer. It's open to all NTU students and recognises and rewards extracurricular experiences, giving an edge in the competitive graduate jobs market.

Institute of Directors: In 2012, NTU was the first university to launch the Institute of Directors (IoD) student membership programme.

This organisation represents more than 34,000 business and industry leaders throughout the UK. Each year, NTU covers the cost of 200 student memberships.

As an IoD student member, students have the opportunity to network and build contacts with directors who will mentor them through an exciting team business challenge.

THE traditional idea of "work experience" is being turned completely on its head by NTU's busy Employability team. Forget outdated notions about undergraduates turning up for their placement 15 minutes late, in scruffy clothes with their faces glued to their mobile devices - today's students are much more commercially aware and have an excellent grasp of what the world of work is all about.

And this is largely thanks to the unrivalled approach of the university's Employability team, who support young people to get great jobs from the minute they start their course right through to when they leave - and, indeed, for many years after graduation.

Rachel Heyes, Employability Business Development Manager at NTU, adds that the university is currently spearheading a "curriculum refresh" where every course is being meticulously reviewed to ensure all students are getting the very best support available and opportunities to learn through quality work experience.

She explains: "Although this might seem hugely aspirational, it will really set NTU apart from other universities both in the UK and globally and redefine what we are about."

"Work-based learning will be integral and partnerships with industry will become more important than ever."

"We want to tell businesses who've never previously considered taking on an undergraduate in any form - whether for a project, part-time work, freelance work or a placement - that we have fantastic talent here and we really want to engage locally."

"We don't want work experience to be a hassle, we don't want favours - we want businesses to see what benefits they can get from a student at very little cost to them."

"We work closely to give young people the skills they need and make sure they are professionally equipped for the world of work."

"And we're working much more closely with our alumni networks to ensure that the relationship with



Rachel Heyes, Employability Business Development Manager at NTU

NTU doesn't stop at graduation. Not only is NTU interested in the destination and lifetime career paths of our graduates, this approach brings enormous opportunities for our students to engage with working professionals and business leaders."

Although NTU has a long history of applied learning - having traditionally had more than 1,000 "sandwich placement" year in industry students each

year - in recent times, there has been investment in its dedicated Employability and Enterprise team, who are helping to drive forward the skills and employability agenda.

Rachel says: "By really believing in the talent of our students and helping them to be aspirational and aim high, taking time to understand the talent pipelines demanded by business of every size and sector, and finally by employing only the best talent into our team, we have been able to ensure the two come together and that's when the magic happens."

"Bringing students and employers together early is critical to help them to build their knowledge of the workplace, develop their



inspHire is an award-winning and leading supplier of software solutions to rental companies both in the UK and in more than 40 countries.

With a modern head office based in Nottingham and overseas offices in the USA, Netherlands and Australia, they have increased in size year on year since starting up in 1997 and are now more than 100 people strong.

Developing, selling, implementing and supporting their own applications, they are continually growing and pride themselves on providing an exciting place to work with great future prospects.

As an expanding business, inspHire has a constant need to recruit new talent into the business. inspHire regularly attend recruitment events at NTU organised by the Employability team, aimed at connecting employers with enthusiastic work-ready students and graduates.

Karen Miles, a Senior Manager at inspHire said the talent pool at NTU was a great source for her company.

"We're a local company and want to encourage graduates from local universities to the team and recruitment fairs and other events over the past few years at NTU have been a good way of doing that," she said.

Employability events have provided a great platform for inspHire to raise their company profile within the university and meet directly with NTU students.

Karen said: "The CV isn't everything, although important. Meeting a student face to face at these types of events means we get instant connections and it's easy to think where that student would fit within the company."

inspHire have recently attended the NTU Computing and Technology Degree Showcase an event where employers were invited to view students' final projects, promote their vacancies and network with

students and academics.

The format of the showcase event proved particularly attractive to inspHire.

"We've had a lot of success there," said Karen. "The beauty of this event is that the students attend this as part of their degree programme. We can sit with students and find out about their projects, and the face to face contact at the event is a fabulous way of meeting potential students for our Graduate Programme."

Karen stated that it was great to see how passionate the students were at the Degree Showcase and how strongly they felt about their project and degree course at NTU.

inspHire have taken five students from NTU over the last two years, predominantly from meeting and recruiting students at the Degree Showcase event.

Karen added they had a very positive experience at NTU's first Science and Technology Recruitment Fair, held last year at the university's Clifton Campus.

Karen Miles, a Senior Manager at inspHire, with NTU graduate Ryan Howells at one of the university's recruitment events.

97% of former NTU students are in work or further study

The latest survey from Destination of Leavers of Higher Education (DLHE)

Case study: Miles Waghorn, NTU graduate / entrepreneur

Entrepreneur's web business is a hit after help from The Hive

A Nottingham Trent graduate used the university's dedicated enterprise centre to help turn his business dream into a successful reality.

Miles Waghorn runs TechSilver, an e-commerce firm that sells technology and provides gadget advice to the elderly.

Having identified a gap in the market to provide technology support to an increasing ageing population, the 24-year-old sought the help of The Hive, Nottingham Trent's Centre for Entrepreneurship and Enterprise.

The Hive provides mentoring and training programmes to students, graduates and anyone in Nottingham who has a viable business idea as well as delivering expert entrepreneurship education across the university.

The past two months have seen TechSilver post record sales in terms of revenue since launching in July 2014.

The company sells easy to use mobile phones and tablets in addition to GPS dementia trackers and alarms to encourage independent living for the elderly with emphasis on providing helpful, honest and knowledgeable service.

Miles, from Kettering, Northamptonshire, studied Business Management and Entrepreneurship at Nottingham Trent and still works from an office in The Hive where the support and resources provided have been invaluable to his success.

"The Hive has been very influential in shaping the business and me as an entrepreneur with its continued support."

"I had the idea but they helped show me how I could put it into practice and make it work with access to funding and resources that made it possible to launch TechSilver."

"We are like a business family, everyone is very approachable and there is very much an open door policy so I am always able to access their expert advice," he said.

Miles has recently returned from a six-week tour of America having been awarded the Nottingham Roosevelt Memorial Travelling Scholarship which allows the recipient funding to explore their topic of interest.

The entrepreneur used the opportunity to research the relationship between ageing and technology in American society and meet with potential suppliers for TechSilver.

Miles added: "The trip was extremely useful and I have meetings set up with tech



Young entrepreneur Miles Waghorn

suppliers who are interested in using my knowledge of the market in the UK to sell their products."

"I do think resources like The Hive should be available across all universities mainly because of the employment-ready skills it gives you but also the confidence and ability to make positive decisions in your life."

"More and more people are going down the self-employed route or are trying to launch their own business and resources like The Hive give you the tools to be successful."

Chris Hall, Business Manager at The Hive, said: "Miles is one of the most able and determined persons I know who has entirely embraced the ethos and demonstrated all the traits and dedication required to create a successful business; as such he is a pleasure to work with, and we are delighted that he is now beginning to reap the rewards of a successful growing business."

and a Tech-varsity."

The key for the team is also to listen to what businesses need and help deliver real talent solutions - especially through its our work experience programmes.

"We are not asking for favours," Rachel says. "We really want businesses to see the university as one huge talent pool they can access to support their company to grow and innovate."

"Although it may appear that we operate a bit like a recruitment agency, we don't charge for our services."

"We want to work with regional SMEs just as much as large global organisations and we are passionate about being an engine to help drive

forward the local economy, with fantastic work experience initiatives like Grads4Nottm and the eNgage series.

"We are also in a great place to be able to offer funding grants to support businesses to hire NTU talent. Our large team of advisers are on hand to speak to companies of any size and location and help develop and promote opportunities."

Officially, students receive support up to three years after they graduate, but in reality this can end up going way beyond that remit.

Rachel says: "The better links we have with NTU alumni, the more likely they are to want to come back and work with us on innovative projects."