

# Supporting student employability

In an increasingly competitive graduate job market it is ever more important to complement degree studies with the skills and expertise necessary to succeed.

We aim to support our students and help them gain the knowledge and know-how to succeed in the competitive graduate job market.

Our graduate employability project GraduateOn offers a £1,000 subsidy to employers in West Sussex and neighbouring counties who can provide a paid opportunity to a UK graduate. Paying at least £8 an hour, the scheme is open to all recent UK graduates.

The project offers a range of internships across West Sussex and neighbouring areas and assesses every opportunity to ensure that it provides a valuable work experience for a graduate. Internships are usually full-time and last a minimum of 10 weeks. Some internships may last longer and may even be offered as a permanent post from the outset.

An illustration of GraduateOn's on-going success is the example of Kayleigh Reynolds of PPL, who was crowned Employee of the Year at the Arun Business Partnership Awards this month. PPL, a small company based in Walberton, is a specialist media company.

Kayleigh, a graduate from Southampton Solent University, was recruited as a GraduateOn intern by PPL in April 2011 to work-shadow their graphic designer. It proved to be a steep learning curve as the graphic designer returned to his native Poland almost as soon as Kayleigh started. But she obviously thrived on the experience as she was kept on by PPL, and in her time there, Kayleigh has had some amazing opportunities. She has been to Italy to assist with the production of the *Farr 40 Yachts* book for Rolex and to Alicante for the launch of *Sailing Legends*, a book she designed for Volvo.

Recently current Chichester students were given the opportunity to find out more about internships as a successful alumna returned to share her experience.

Vicky Stickland now works as a Key Accounts Manager at action-sport marketing company Brandwave Marketing, but she returned to ZeeBar to give an informal presentation to students.

During the session, Vicky spoke about her experience of completing an internship, how internships can benefit students and graduates and why she would recommend it to others. Students were then invited to ask questions and register for the GraduateOn paid-internship programme.

Whilst some students were learning how they can get their foot in the door, others were taking their first steps towards running their own businesses by participating in the University of Chichester Student Entrepreneurs Competition.

Right: Vicky  
Stickland.  
Main image:  
Vicky at work.



The competition saw students submit a proposal of a business idea they wished to develop, with the proposals then judged on their viability by an expert panel. Out of 15 entries, seven students' ideas were selected to go forward to round two and they won £250 to put towards their business idea. Among the ideas were a cardboard-based eco-friendly furniture company and The Duff Food Company.

The seven candidates who got through to round two presented a Business Plan in March, with the chance to win a cash prize, as well as twelve months' business support and a desk in a shared office in the Dome Enterprise Centre (DEC).

In the end there were four winners: Imogen Tagney won £500 for her idea 'Whiplash Trash', space in the Dome Enterprise Centre and business support; Linda Bernhard won £500 and support for her idea of art studios in Worthing; Joe Lyndhurst won £500 and business support for his bike attachment idea, and Karlene Bourne won space in the DEC and support for her project Waterproof Theatre Company.

As well as all this, we now offer a course designed for people who want to get work experience while they study. The Day Release Degree is a programme that offers tangible benefits for employers, who can attract ambitious young people to bring fresh ideas and make a real difference to their business, as well as the students themselves, who have the chance to achieve a BA (Hons) in Business Studies after four years. To reduce further the cost for the student, employers on the programme can sponsor a percentage of the tuition fees for the course.

Day Release Degree student Anna Hillard joined Classic Collection Holidays in October and has subsequently worked in two areas of the business – sales and data loading – while studying for her degree. Anna was attracted to the programme because it will give her four years' work experience alongside an academic qualification.

The modules in Anna's degree course bear plenty of relevance to her work at Classic Collection, she says, *"What I see in practice can be very useful in helping me to understand the business procedures and techniques we talk about in lectures. Similarly, what I am learning at university is helping me to become a better employee and it also gives me skills for future use, especially if I move up in the company."*

*"It takes a great deal of commitment and determination, no doubt about it, but it's an amazing opportunity for students who are looking to get a head-start in life. It gives you the vital experience that employers look for alongside your qualification."*

To find out more about the Day Release Degree, go to [www.chi.ac.uk/day-release-degree](http://www.chi.ac.uk/day-release-degree).

If you want to know more about internships, please contact the GraduateOn team on 01243 812075 or email [graduateon@chi.ac.uk](mailto:graduateon@chi.ac.uk). Full details can be found at [www.chi.ac.uk/graduateon](http://www.chi.ac.uk/graduateon).

## Can you offer careers advice to a Chichester student?

Help shape an undergraduate's future. For an initial discussion, please contact our Alumni Team.

- Email: [alumni@chi.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@chi.ac.uk)



All images:  
Providing  
advice at our  
Careers Fair.

