



Mar 02, 2017 10:02 GMT

European funding helps local SMEs recruit

Newcastle-based business James Design has employed a talented and ambitious graduate thanks to financial support from a European-funded project managed by Northumbria University.

The graduate strand of the Northumbria Enterprise and Business Support (NEBS) project aims to help 130 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Tyne & Wear and Northumberland find their next generation of graduate talent. Set up with support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) the scheme contributes £3,825 towards salary costs, and guarantees a

minimum starting salary of £17,000 pro-rata for the graduates. The funding removes much of the financial burden of recruitment and helps SMEs and graduates develop positive and productive relationships.

A recent success story is James Design and Northumbria Design for Industry graduate Tom Leslie. The company, which designs and makes a wide variety of high quality, made-to-order furniture for business and domestic customers, recently recruited Tom as an intern through the NEBS project.

Owner Nick James said: “The NEBS project from Northumbria is extremely useful, both for me as a small business able to take on talented staff like Tom, and for the graduates themselves looking for the right opportunity and experience. New graduates will generally have excellent design skills and capabilities, but they may not have had much industry experience. What NEBS provides is some much needed breathing space for an employer to train and develop a new recruit properly, without the financial pressure to deliver an immediate return. This is far more sustainable and can help build a more secure long future for the graduates.

“It is also worth mentioning the different types of orders we receive here at James Design, which can range from a large Board Room meeting table one day to a small coffee table and anything in between the next. This variety offers a wealth of experience for Tom.”

Commenting on his experience as an intern, Tom added: “It can be a struggle to secure a paid internship position within the creative industries, so the support from NEBs really does open doors. Working at James Design is a fantastic opportunity, allowing me to apply my own skills and develop my own designs. At the same time, it is giving me hands-on business experience – it’s the perfect stepping stone to the real world.”

NEBS funding is open to graduates from Northumbria and other universities.

If you’d like more information about Graduate Internships please contact Victor Ottaway, Graduate Internship Manager (victor.ottaway@northumbria.ac.uk / 0191 227 4044). You can also register your business’s interest at www.northumbria.ac.uk/nebs.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

If you have a media enquiry please contact our Media and Communications team at media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk or call [0191 227 4571](tel:01912274571).

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