



Ben Hayward

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## Graduate intern scheme has the longer-term answers for SMEs



**European Union**  
European Regional  
Development Fund

A paid internship programme managed by Northumbria University is helping

**small businesses grow from a very diverse range of sectors - and at the same time securing valuable work experience and permanent employment for scores of North East graduates.**

The Northumbria Enterprise Support Scheme (NEBS) has placed more than 110 graduate interns with small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the past 15 months. With many internships turning in full-time positions the scheme has been responsible for providing local employers with their next permanent employee or kick-starting successful careers.

Financial support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) also means that NEBS can contribute up to 45% towards the intern salary costs, and guarantees a minimum starting salary of £17,000 pro-rata for the graduates. The funding is proving invaluable to SMEs looking to take on talented graduates while controlling costs.

Of the many successful internships to be offered a permanent role is Ben Hayward. The Northumbria graduate joined advertising agency Everything Different last year initially on a 26-week paid internship to help with a major transformation programme at the business.

Commenting on the appointment, Different Managing Director Yousaf Khalid said: "Graduates like Ben have been a key part of our growth for the past six years, but will also continue to be a key part of our growth moving forward. So any grant support will be used to invest in the training of graduates. It helps us to subsidise the investment that we are making in the candidates already, rather than using it as a bottom-line tactic, and it allows us to mitigate some of the risk inherent in any recruitment".

Another intern taken on a permanent, full time basis is Northumbria graduate Grace Choi, who was recruited last year by South Tyneside manufacturing company Laminform to add Computer-Aided-Design (CAD) skills to the growing business.



Company Secretary Dave Presland said: “Working with NEBS was a way of finding graduates that was reasonably simple, and co-ordinated by someone. The funding is extremely useful and gives you an opportunity to look at someone over a period of time for a reduced cost. Grace was able to contribute almost from day one and so the initial signs were always very positive.

Victor Ottaway, Graduate Internship Manager at Northumbria, said: “The feedback from SMEs has been extremely positive. The benefits of being able to recruit a talented and work-ready graduate and to have financial support are obvious. There is still funding available through the ERDF, but the funding and time are both limited so I would urge any interested businesses to contact us now. We have funded internships in an incredibly diverse range of sectors from font design to oil/gas exploration as just two examples. Everything Different and Laminform are great examples of their past experiences being completely opposite in terms of graduate recruitment. Everything Different has an active graduate recruitment policy whereas Laminform have not previously actively looked to recruit graduates. This shows to me almost any business can benefit from the funding and employ a really excellent graduate, initially as an intern that leads to a permanent

role”.

For more information, please visit: [www.northumbria.ac.uk/NEBS](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/NEBS)

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