



L-r Visiting Professors Richard Swart and Caroline Theobald CBE

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Northumbria appoints leading business figures as Visiting Professors

Northumbria University, Newcastle, has appointed two prominent North East business figures as visiting professors.

Caroline Theobald CBE and Richard Swart are well known both regionally and nationally, for their support for SMEs and in areas such as women in business, responsible and sustainable business, and the manufacturing sector. They also have long-standing relationships with Northumbria's Newcastle Business School.

Caroline Theobald is a national figure in the start-up business community, founder of the Entrepreneurs Forum and dedicated business network group the Bridge Club. Founded in 2002, the Bridge Club works with SMEs across the North East to build connections, grow networks, mentor business leaders, and boost performance. Caroline has been working with Northumbria and supporting entrepreneurial students since 2007, in areas such as providing mentoring and guidance for securing business finance. She is currently Chair of the [Advisory Board](#) for Newcastle Business School.

A former journalist, Richard Swart is one of the most prominent and experienced manufacturers in the North East. After moving from his native South Africa, he founded Berger UK – a specialist firm constructing steel products - and has used his position and experience to support enterprise and foster industrial collaborations. Richard has served as an Honorary Vice President of the North East Chamber of Commerce and has chaired the Chamber's International Trade Committee. In 2020 he created the [Open North Foundation](#) as a not-for-profit organisation supporting regional businesses affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and he is also Chair of the [Advanced Manufacturing Forum](#), a community of industry experts offering help and advice to the region's manufacturing and engineering sector. Richard has created strategic partnerships with Northumbria through both these organisations.

Commenting on their appointments, Professor Robert MacIntosh, Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Business and Law at Northumbria and Chair of the Chartered Association of Business Schools, said: "We are delighted to welcome two individuals of such obvious standing to Northumbria as visiting professors. Both are vastly experienced, and with their connections, energy and drive they already make a significant contribution to the University. In particular their ability to inspire our students to pursue their entrepreneurial ambitions is a great fit with our own strategy as a sector leader for graduate start-ups. We are rightly proud of the entrepreneurial teaching and support we provide our students and these appointments will help take this to the next level, further enhancing the learning experience and career opportunities for our students."

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