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## Northumbria hosts degree apprenticeship event

Businesses are being invited to an event at Northumbria University to find out more about degree apprenticeships – the government-backed qualifications which allows students to gain a degree while working and earning at the same time.

*The Develop Your People: The Apprenticeship Levy & What it Means for Your Organisation* event will explain the benefits of the qualification and the impact of changes taking place this year.

Northumbria was one of the first UK universities to offer [degree apprenticeships](#), launching its first undergraduate degree apprenticeship course in Digital and Technology Solutions in September 2015.

Among the 18 students to enrol that year was Jennifer Gane, who will talk at the event about her experience and the benefits of degree apprenticeships for students and employers. Jennifer, who works for website and software development company [STCS Ltd](#) as a Junior Software Developer while carrying out her studies at Northumbria, said the qualification provided benefits for both students and employers.

She said: “For me, degree apprenticeships offer the best of both worlds – you can gain a degree level qualification while at the same time earning money and gaining real-life experience within the industry you are studying. Degree apprenticeships are as academically challenging and rigorous as a traditional degree, perhaps even more so in some ways because you are working at the same time. But the big benefit is that when you graduate you already have a job within your chosen field.”

John Wiseman, Director of STCS Ltd said: “The degree apprenticeship scheme at Northumbria University has changed the way we think about finding and developing talent. So far, we have three degree apprentices in the scheme at Northumbria and I have every intention of continuing to employ apprentices for this scheme alongside our more traditional graduate route.”

As the highest scoring student in the first year of Northumbria’s [Digital and Technology Solutions](#) degree apprenticeship course, Jennifer was recently invited to represent the university at a national event celebrating the success of degree apprenticeships.

Hosted by [The Tech Partnership](#), which provides accreditation for Digital and Technology Solutions degree apprenticeships in the UK, the event featured talks by companies such as IBM UK and Quicksilva about why they chose to employ degree apprentices.

Jennifer added: “It was great to meet other students taking part in degree apprenticeships and share stories. Our backgrounds are all very different – I have a degree and a PhD in Classics but have always had an interest in computer programming and it actually uses a lot of similar skills.

“I started looking into training options and when I found out about degree apprenticeships I thought it was perfect for me. It is a four-year course and each week I am in work for four days and at university for one. I still earn money so can support my family and will have a permanent job once I graduate in 2019.

“I can bring the skills I learn in the classroom to my place of work and vice versa, giving me a really rounded experience and education. I would definitely recommend this option to anyone considering a degree apprenticeship.”

Jill Bradnum, a Senior Lecturer in [Computer and Information Sciences](#) at Northumbria and programme leader for the Digital Technology Solutions degree, said: “The feedback from both the students and employers involved in the degree apprenticeship has been very positive.

“This course allows us to offer the same level of education and training as our traditional degree programmes but through a different route. The links we have established with businesses as a result will be beneficial for all our students and we hope to build on these connections in future.”

Last year Northumbria announced it would be investing £240,000 in expanding its degree apprenticeship courses, after securing funding of 140,000 from the [Higher Education Funding Council for England](#) (HEFCE).

From September 2017 Northumbria will deliver degree apprenticeships in Chartered Surveying and Chartered Manager, as well as Digital and Technology Solutions. There are also plans to offer degree apprenticeships in Architecture, Construction, Accountancy and Law (Solicitor) and other professional areas in the future, with the aim of providing almost 300 places by 2020.

Northumbria already works with national organisations including H.M. Revenue & Customs and Balfour Beatty to develop standards for degree apprenticeships and is looking to create new partnerships with other regional and national organisations in the future.

*Develop Your People: The Apprenticeship Levy & What it Means for Your Organisation* will give businesses the chance to find out more about the

different degree apprenticeships offered by Northumbria and how the programme can benefit them. It will also feature an explanation by Stephen North, policy lead for degree apprenticeships within the Department for Education, on the new Apprenticeship Levy, which comes into effect in April this year.

The event takes place on Wednesday 15 February, from 12pm to 3pm at the Newcastle Business and Law School, Northumbria University. For more information please visit <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/about-us/news-events/events/2017/02/develop-your-people-the-degree-apprenticeship-levy-what-it-means-for-your-organisation/>

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

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