



Dr Kellie Forbes-Simpson with graduate entrepreneur Kevin Cahill

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Northumbria launches redesigned entrepreneurship programme after a decade of producing young entrepreneurs

Northumbria University, Newcastle, has relaunched its entrepreneurship programme following 10 years of excellence and experience in the field of enterprise.

The newly-designed programme follows a decade of supporting hundreds of students in setting up their own businesses. In the past 10 years Northumbria's Newcastle Business School has supported almost 200 students

through its entrepreneurial business programmes who have created over 15 enterprises. This year's graduates alone have created 32 businesses over the three-year programme, with 11 of those carrying on after graduation. In their final year, these students turned over £150,000.

Among recent entrepreneurial business graduates Rob Lundgren Jones, 26, from Alnwick, owns and runs Lundgren Tours, providing guided coach and walking tours throughout the North of England and Scotland. Rob launched his business in 2017 while on the entrepreneurship programme at Northumbria University. Turnover hit £50,000 in 2019 and Rob won Silver in the Guided Tour of the Year category at the North East England Tourism Awards in 2018.

Rob said: "Although I was always quite academic, taking A-levels in maths, economic and physics, I didn't want to go down the traditional university route. In fact, I hadn't planned to go to university at all. I wanted to stay in the North East and I'm passionate about meeting people and my home county of Northumberland. I ended up taking a taster for the entrepreneurial programme and although I was thrown in at the deep end, I thoroughly enjoyed it and that changed my mind. The course, students and the whole entrepreneurial programme was really inspiring and I couldn't recommend it highly enough. It's nothing like the traditional academic degrees.

"I didn't even have a business idea, but I'm passionate about people and Northumberland and my coach showed me a newspaper article about a company running holiday cottages who were asking for tours – the rest, as they say, is history.

"I ran my first tour in 2017, then a few a year while I was still at university, then adapting to running virtual tours with the university during Covid restrictions. The tours are thriving now, and we run 90 tours a year. I have a very good quality of life, providing a few tours each week, but I am now at the point where I want to grow capacity and am very excited to be preparing to train new guides later this year."

Kevin Cahill is another beneficiary of Northumbria's entrepreneurial approach. His business, GCSE Catchup, offers a tutoring service for GCSE students, enabling them to learn and revise at a pace which suits them. It covers six core subjects: maths, English literature, English language, physics,

chemistry and biology. The company also benefits teachers in that it offers a resource for planning lessons, and helps them to monitor student assignments and set homework.

Kevin said: “When I was in high school I saw a gap in the market for this type of service. My business benefits both students and teachers. The students can get extra lessons without having to go to a private tutor, and can directly upload assignments to speed up the marking and feedback process. Teachers can prepare students for upcoming lessons by setting the lesson topic as homework in advance, which allows them to use in-person lesson time efficiently by answering any questions or alleviating any confusion on the topic. They can also use our platform to set homework that tests their students’ understanding of what they have learnt in lessons.

“I’ve been researching this sector since 2016 and have trialled various entrepreneurial ideas before starting this venture, which I really started pushing forward in the second year of my studies. It offers a blended approach to learning and revision and there’s great scope to sell this service to parents and teachers. I already sell it to schools directly.”

Kevin, who is originally from Wakefield, has a team of tutors in place to deliver the service and he says feedback so far has been really positive.

“The entrepreneurship course at Northumbria was fantastic in that it helped me to think more clearly about my idea and how I should go about implementing it. This course was the reason why I moved here from Wakefield. The facilities are great and the course is ideal for people who have a great idea but need help to turn it into a commercial venture. My business mentor at the university was very helpful and I found that the practical aspects of the course were so valuable – you learn far more than you would by being stuck at the back of a lecture hall.”

Dr Kellie Forbes-Simpson, course lecturer at Northumbria University, said: “Our BA Business and Entrepreneurship programme is a relaunch which takes our expertise in what we have learnt over the past 10 years. The new programme supports students to become entrepreneurs, as well supporting students who want more entrepreneurial careers.

Rob and Kevin are perfect examples of the talent, innovation and drive of our

students and graduate entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial programme represents real, authentic on the job learning and has a real community feel. There's nothing else like it in the North East. The University's focus on entrepreneurial learning and teaching and support for start up businesses is second to none. We'd like to congratulate all our graduates who are building successful businesses, creating high value jobs and contributing significantly to the regional economy."

Northumbria University's new BA Business and Entrepreneurship programme is an innovative, course in which students set up their own businesses from day one. Over their three year university studies, students learn about the ups and downs of running their own business, while supporting and coaching each other.

The practical course teaches students the skills needed to run a business by engaging in entrepreneurial activities. Students come up with and develop their business idea from scratch before learning what it takes to bring their business to life. As part of their studies, students get the opportunity to pitch for grant funding as part of the programme which is provided by the Willan Trust, who have agreed to invest up to £33,000 per year into student businesses

The latest Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS, 2021-22) ranked Northumbria University graduate startups as 6th in the UK on estimated turnover (£102.5m). It is also the highest ranked university in the North East for jobs created by graduate start-ups, with 1172 jobs created. Northumbria has ranked in the HEBCIS top 10 for the last 14 years, holding the top spot for five years.

With a strong track-record of supporting graduate enterprise, this latest HEBCIS report underpins Northumbria's growing reputation for entrepreneurial success. Services such as [Student and Graduate Enterprise](#) provide a range of support including entrepreneurial skills training, incubation/co-working space, workshops, mentoring, and specialist advice in areas such as IP/Legal, marketing, Sales, Business Growth and Finance.

Since 2003, Northumbria University has supported the creation of 500 businesses, many of which are based in the North East and trading nationally and internationally.

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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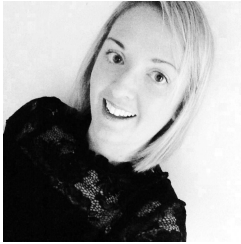
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