



Graham Baty, Head of Student and Graduate Enterprise at Northumbria University

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Northumbria students learn to be agile in challenging business environment

Students at Northumbria University are learning what it means to be agile in an ever-changing marketplace, with support from one of the world's most renowned business support companies.

Through the delivery of guest lectures, scholarship provision and grants for graduate business start-ups, the Agile Business Consortium is supporting students to enable them to respond quickly to threats and opportunities in a business arena, while keeping a competitive edge.

The Agile Business Consortium is a leading not-for-profit professional body that helps businesses worldwide to respond rapidly to changes in the internal and external environment.

Graham Baty, Head of Student and Graduate Enterprise at Northumbria University, said: “Agile businesses work faster, better and deliver greater value for money. By adopting an agile process they can stay productive, focused on customer needs and able to adapt to increasingly complex and uncertain environments, which is a very useful skill set for graduates to possess in the wake of the current global pandemic forcing the majority of businesses to operate differently worldwide.

“Having the Agile Business Consortium as a partner will give students direct access to the resources and knowledge required to support their studies and graduate as resilient, change makers.”

The partnership was first developed through alumnus and former Agile Business Consortium CEO, John-Mark Williams, who was keen to revisit campus and offer current students the opportunity to develop their business agility skills.

John graduated with an MBA from Northumbria’s Newcastle Business School in 2005 and has been a guest lecturer for many years at Northumbria and at universities elsewhere in the UK and internationally. He was recently appointed as the new CEO of The Institute of Leadership & Management.

He said: “The future is unpredictable, and with the world and its technology changing ever faster, it is creating greater uncertainty to our needs and requirements. Businesses that embrace agile can adapt faster; delivering little and often, testing the environment and remaining customer focused.

“Supporting students can open doors to research opportunities, not only for the academic realm but for businesses and practitioners, whilst also motivating and rewarding individuals. The more we can encourage our future leaders to be agile in their understanding, their mindset, and their behaviours, the more effectively we can meet the challenges facing generations to come”.

Working with Agile, staff at Northumbria University’s London campus recognise the changing higher education landscape and that students require

learning to be individualised, flexible, career-relevant, and contemporary in focus.

Dr Guy Brown, Campus Director at Northumbria University's London campus, said: "We can only be successful through learning from our people, whether they are our staff, students or wider stakeholders. To achieve a culture whereby feedback is the norm, we needed to create a distinctive campus philosophy that shouted out we want to learn, we want to evolve and to continually be ahead of the game. I am proud all of my team embrace this and as a result, thrive on agility."

Northumbria student Bethan Kitchen launched her business BRASH Theatre, an educational theatre company for teenagers, with support from the Northumbria University scheme.

"The grant I received from the ideas fund has been a magnificent help in getting our business off the ground and into exposure to our potential customers," she said. "I have used the money to create a new website which is currently under development, which will be our key way of communicating with schools, funding bodies, and partners."

The Agile Business Consortium has committed to providing a three-year package of support to the University with its dedicated entrepreneur hub as well as a new networking scheme.

In addition to supporting the hub, the not-for-profit consortium will also contribute £5,000 a year to Northumbria University's Enterprise Fund.

The fund will complement the University's new Enterprise Club, which aims to connect entrepreneurs with business leaders for mentoring, knowledge sharing and support.

Agile Business Consortium has also pledged £3,000 a year for the next three years to provide student prizes and scholarship support to budding entrepreneurs.

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