

Students master Human Resource conference

Scores of University of Bedfordshire Human Resources students were treated to a masterclass conference from industry experts.

The University's Careers and Employment Service, in partnership with the Marketing Society, organised the packed day of events that brought together professionals, academics and students.

The day was made up of interactive seminars, workshops and masterclass briefings from industry specialists, looking at a variety of current and emerging issues.

Professional guests included those from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), Pictons Solicitors LLP, Motivcom PLC, OrgDesign Limited and Plain Talking HR.

Hosted and opened by the University's Head of Strategy and Human Resource Management, Professor Stephen Perkins, the interactive conference and networking opportunity was held in Luton's new £34m Campus Centre.

Professor Paul Burns, Dean of the University's Business School said: *"This was an ideal opportunity for our students to learn from industry experts. They are taking the right steps to make themselves highly employable in a challenging graduate market."*

The busy Masterclass event looked at the use of online tools in launching a career in HR, a global approach to managing people, talent and transnational operations, motivation techniques, the challenges and opportunities of HR practice and UK government policy.



Natarajan Sundar, Director of OrgDesign Limited, talking about people and performance in transnational operations



Industry experts and staff at the Masterclass conference

Irina Bucsa from the Marketing Society, said: *"Around three quarters of the University's HR students from all years of study attended the event, six of whom have been nominated by the guest speakers to receive a special prize."*

"We thank the Students' Union for sponsoring us and Ciaran O'Brian, Student Activities Manager, for helping organise this event. We're also grateful for Ajaz Hussain's help from the Careers Service."

"We are delighted the conference was a success. Feedback was great and the Marketing Society is looking forward to organising similar events in the future."

Other sessions addressed local and global Human Resource challenges and opportunities.

Alexandru Tolan, final year Human Resource Management student said: *"I think the Masterclass has been a great opportunity to get in touch with Human Resource practitioners and to hear their views on some HR issues."*



Prof Stephen J. Perkins gives a session on leadership

"We also had the chance to find out how the graduate labour market has evolved in recent times and how to make ourselves more employable. Overall the session was fun, helpful and provided great information."



The Marketing Society who organised the Masterclass, with Careers Advisor Ajaz Hussain (centre)

Work placement? Yes, please!

Read about the work placement experience in an interview with a BSc (Hons) Human Resource Management student Matthew Tuffnell.

What company have you done your placement in and what was your role?

My placement was with Cawleys, a waste management and recycling company based in Luton, with the role of Business Development Assistant.

How did you find out about it?

There were various announcements on BREO (Bedfordshire Resources for Education Online) and we were also encouraged to apply by our year one Business Pod tutors. Advertisements for the placement and accompanying scholarship were placed in locations around the Business School so I didn't have to look too far.

What was the selection process?

Applicants had to write a short (400-600 word) essay titled '*Why a year's placement with Cawleys would appeal to me*'. Shortlisted candidates were then invited to interview and luckily I got the job!

How long was the placement?

One year. Like many placements, it was sandwiched between the second and third years of my course. I started in August 2009 and I'm still at Cawleys, currently part-time during the final stage of my undergraduate degree programme.

What were your duties?

Tasks undertaken were wide and varied and grew as the placement progressed. These included everything from

administration to larger projects including market and competitor research, data analysis and even financial modelling.

What was most enjoyable?

It was a fairly relaxed atmosphere whilst still challenging. This environment made it easy to get a feel for the industry, ask questions and learn new skills whilst developing and utilising those learnt during the first two years of the undergraduate programme.

What was the biggest challenge?

On reflection it was probably being selected for the placement – being noticed and standing out against other candidates.

Your best memory from doing the placement?

More of an opportunity than a memory, but the offer of a full-time graduate position and sponsorship for a Master's degree.

Advice for prospective students...

If prospective students get the opportunity, I would recommend taking a placement. It will help you synthesise theory and practice, a definite help when you return to your studies in your final year. It also enables networking and looks good on CV, both important in a competitive labour market. Finally, should you have ambitions to complete a Master's degree, a year of relevant work experience really enhances your application!

And finally, your ambitions for the future...

To complete a Master's degree and see where that takes me.



“...enables networking and looks good on CV, both important in a competitive labour market”

What else students say...

An interview with Katie Marsh, final year BSc (Hons) Human Resource Management student

Why did you choose the University of Bedfordshire?

I live locally to the university so that was one of the reasons to choose the University of Bedfordshire, but also when I had a look around before I started, I just had a really good feeling about it and liked what I saw.

What made you choose your course?

My interest in Human Resources started when I was at college. I researched the HRM degree at UoB and really liked the content of the course and the fact that it covered both practical aspects and theory.

So what are the best aspects of the course?

There are several...first is the content – it's both interesting and practical in preparing you for a working life in Human Resources. Secondly, the people you meet on the course; you make some good friends throughout the three years you are studying. And finally it's the lecturers on the course who are all really supportive through your studies.

What is the greatest challenge?

The greatest challenge for me was probably becoming more organised. Although I am already an organised person, I found that organisation skills are really important to have at university as they help you to be able to manage your time effectively, do your work well and meet deadlines.

How well do you think your course is preparing you for a job after graduation?

I think the course prepares you very well for your work life mainly because of its practical side of Human Resource Management. It looks a lot at related theory and also has the general business units which are really good in preparing and giving you an insight into the business world.

Your advice to those thinking of coming to UoB...

If you are interested in Human Resources and learning how to get the best out of people this degree is definitely for you. It enables you to become a specialist in Human Resources and prepares you for the business world. As long as you are motivated and put a 100% into the course you will gain a lot from it! You will not only get a degree, but you will evolve into a true Human Resource professional.

Three words to sum up University of Bedfordshire...

Dedicated, Supportive and Enjoyable...



“ ...it's both interesting and practical in preparing you for a working life in Human Resources ”