

Midlothian and East Lothian Chamber of Commerce E zine article

Companies across Scotland are reaping the benefits of having a student work with them over the summer. Bringing enthusiasm, talent and new ideas, these students are able to offer businesses a fresh perspective and help move forward projects where there is possibly not the time or in-house resources to do so.

The Step and Environmental Placement Programmes run by The Business Partnership offer companies the chance to take on a student for 8 weeks over the summer to work on a specific project with identifiable business outcomes. These placements can be anything from Environmental Management Systems, Carbon Foot-printing and Energy Efficiency to Marketing, Website and New Product Development.

Macsween of Edinburgh is one Midlothian business that have taken advantage of the Environmental Placement Programme taking on students in a range of projects to help progress the company in it's environmental performance. In 2009, they took on 2 students; Callum to research the feasibility of rainwater harvesting at the Midlothian site and Rowena, to improve their environmental management. The outcomes of both their placements were very positive for both the company and the students who took part.

Rowina, an Environmental Geoscience student, and Callum a Structural Engineering and Architecture student both from the University of Edinburgh were placed with Macsweens to maintain the high level of environmental policy/standard at this famous haggis producing site.

Rowina helped Macsween in registering and applying for environmental business awards as well as helping advance the environmental management system they currently had in place. She also completed a feasibility study into a biomass burner system. Callum was placed at Macsweens to investigate the feasibility of rainwater harvesting. A 7038kg carbon saving was identified as a result of Callums' placement with the company.

The achievement of these students will also enable Macsweens to show they work to a high environmental quality standard when tendering for new business and will hopefully help them bring new clients on board.

James Macsween who is the director at Macsweens said 'Callum has worked hard to try and find a solution to the task set for him' and the programme is 'a good scheme that provides great experience for students in a business world while also giving the opportunity to students to complete a demanding project on their own'.

The cost to the business is between £230 and £270 per week depending on the size of the company. The Business Partnership pay the students directly and so there is no cost for Tax or NI and the students don't have to go on the company payroll. Placements typically start in June or July and both the Step and EPP are excellent opportunities for businesses to tap into the talented students from Scottish Universities.

If you would like to find out more about either programme or talk to us about taking on a student over the summer, please contact Barbara on 0845 129 4846/ Barbara@thebep.org.uk or Louise on 0131 561 6305/ Louise.Evison@met.org.uk

This year's Environmental Placement Programme is sponsored by the Scottish Government. If you are interested in hosting a regional Awards Ceremony, or contributing financially to either programme then please get in touch to find out the options.