

••• Belfast Metropolitan College

Belfast Metropolitan College is the largest provider of further and higher education training in Northern Ireland. This new super college was formed as a result of the merger on 1 August 2007 of Belfast Institute with Castlereagh College.

The college is currently entering a new and exciting phase of development.

It provides a complete programme of high quality learning and training opportunities for the people of Belfast and its wider communities.

Through a wide range of provision from entry level to degree and professional qualifications, the college plays a major role in supplying highly skilled and educated people for the Northern Ireland workforce. Each year approximately 50,000 people join courses at the college and of these 1,500 take full-time higher education courses. Courses are nationally accredited and delivered by a committed and highly qualified team of lecturers.

The college plays an important role in generating wealth for the city of Belfast. It has a turnover of over £50 million and employs 1,700 people in both academic and support roles across six main campuses and 100 community learning venues.

The college is currently entering a new and exciting phase of development. It has a programme of capital development which includes a £67 million project which will provide a modern and up-to-date campus at the city's new Titanic Quarter and an innovative £14 million economic development campus at Springfield Road. Scheduled to open from 2010, these new campuses will make Belfast Metropolitan College one of the

most modern and highly equipped professional and technical educational institutions in the UK.

The college places a particular emphasis on enhancing the employability of all its students and provides excellent learning facilities supported by a gigabit ring connected to the internet.

Belfast Metropolitan College is recognised as a quality organisation with a clear commitment to continuous improvement. As it moves forward in the 21st century the college is strategically committed to develop and enhance its services to help build the economic development and social coherence of Northern Ireland.

Economic Development

The Workforce and Economic Development Department is the specialist unit within the college that spearheads the college's economic development, student employability and entrepreneurship activity. Led by Michelle McCaughley, the department is dedicated to innovation: "We're not bound by curriculum or semester dates. I like that we have freedom to think outside the box!" says Michelle. "We support local businesses by supplying people and delivering training. Companies can access training, tailor made to their specific needs delivered in house or at the college. ►



Belfast Metropolitan College's Millfield Building

► Belfast Metropolitan College continued...

Supplying People

Belfast Metropolitan College is a major supplier of educated and skilled workers to the Northern Ireland marketplace. With over 53,000 enrolments annually, many of whom are making their first move into the job market, the College is in a strong position to provide employees with the skills and expertise required by local employers.

Expert academic tuition is complemented by a College Employer Engagement team who work to equip students with the kind of employability skills required by employers in the global marketplace.

Opportunities exist for companies to participate in short-term partnership programmes, provide specific project work for existing students or utilise graduate talent via longer-term programmes such as Collaborate. Collaborate places graduates with local businesses to work on specific projects. The companies get access to skills and knowledge of some of the college's best graduates and the graduate has the opportunity to experience a work role they may not have considered in the past.

Students on Higher Education courses also have the opportunity to undertake work placements. An essential part of Higher National Diplomas and Foundation Degrees, placements are key to improving students' future employability. Employers can benefit from the students' knowledge by engaging them in a short-term project such as market research, designing websites or financial reporting.

The department also offers employers an opportunity to advertise job vacancies free of charge, and attend

recruitment events targeted at relevant students. Students access Job Club information on their section of the website and apply directly to the company concerned. With levels of unemployment historically low in Northern Ireland and clear skill gaps in the local economy this is a valuable service to local businesses.

Delivering Training

Belfast Metropolitan College also provides high quality, cost effective training and consultancy solutions to a range of business clients across a variety of industry sectors. The Workforce and Economic Development department provides tailored programmes and solutions to suit each client's needs. These services cover a broad spectrum of business and professional training that reflect current demand for training and consultancy in a range of specialist areas.

New Developments

A key initiative for Belfast Metropolitan College is its new economic development campus, E3, scheduled to open in 2010. E3 stands for Education, Employability and Entrepreneurship and these are the three key strands of activity that will be developed at the campus. This exciting new campus will complement the existing college facilities by providing an innovative learning space and advanced facilities that will more closely resemble a modern 21st century workspace than a traditional classroom environment.

Through E3, students on Higher Education programmes at the college will be supported to deliver real industry led projects. Learners will provide innovative solutions to practical and technical projects devised and driven by local business.



Belfast City Hall



The College Square East Building

The students will experience the challenge of working in industry within a supportive learning environment. Working closely with local businesses will ensure that the college has a good understanding of business needs and that the programmes are both relevant and useful to students.

The new campus will also be the main delivery centre for developing and delivering entrepreneurship training for a range of target audiences including Belfast Metropolitan College students,

school pupils and community and voluntary agencies and groups.

The campus will also offer partner secondary schools an introduction to project based learning which will engage pupils in professional and technical learning and facilitate progression to higher level and specialist training after the age of 16.

Students will be encouraged to use their learning and project experiences to identify new business opportunities and will

be supported to progress into on-site business incubators. These fledgling businesses will be able to fully utilise the campus equipment and talents of students to help grow their businesses.

The campus will partner with key economic development agencies in the city to provide a customised training service for SMEs, which will aim to support the growth and development of small businesses and extend their use and access to new technologies. The campus will provide business and community representatives access to the full range of technical facilities and to the talents and skills of students and staff.

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