

New awards programme equips students with fundamental business skills

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A new awards programme which equips students with a forward-thinking and enterprising business skillset, has launched across Scotland.

Created by Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE), the Scottish Innovative Student Award scheme (SISA) will be delivered in modules that support regular university degree programmes. Designed in conjunction with three of Scotland's Innovation Centres (Data Lab, Digital Health and Care Institute and CENSIS) the modules are specifically designed to encourage students to embrace the challenges and opportunities facing the country as a result of the so-called 'fourth industrial revolution'.

Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen is one of the first universities to be involved and a number of courses will feature SISA in January next year.

Professor Rita Marcella, one of five RGU academics accredited said: "SISA will play a huge role in narrowing the gap between industry and academia, and will equip RGU students with the skills to make them stand out in the workplace.

"Employers are increasingly looking for flexible workers who can operate over multidisciplinary groups, with a rich mix of skills which will help those businesses thrive in a constantly changing global environment. Being able to teach students the right business skills alongside their traditional academic studies, will therefore be crucial in sustaining growth in Scotland."

The new programme was celebrated as part of a parliamentary reception at Holyrood on Tuesday 22 October. Sponsored by Gillian Martin MSP and with a speech from Minister for Trade, Investment and Innovation, Ivan McKee, a range of businesses, students, academics and political representatives attended.

Minister for trade, investment and innovation Ivan McKee said:

"Through Scotland CAN DO we are committed to maximising the potential of Scotland's people and becoming a world-leading entrepreneurial and innovative nation. The Scottish Institute for Enterprise (SIE) is an important partner in delivering this vision through our higher education institutes.

"The businesses that exhibited at the reception are testament to the entrepreneurial talents of our young people and the quality of the support provided by SIE."

SIE has a long history of working with universities – delivering workshops and competitions such as the Young Innovators Challenge and Fresh Ideas which have seen alumni such as Chris McCann of Snap 40, the team behind Mind Mate, and Victoria Hamilton who founded Recoil Kneepads. The SISA programme marks a natural evolution for the organisation and provides a national platform that provides opportunities for students of all disciplines to enhance their innovation skills.

Fiona Godsman, Chief Executive of SIE, said: "Our new SISA programme will benefit students, academics and industry throughout Scotland.

"We add value to undergraduate degree course by encouraging forward thinking and, crucially, by creating awareness of the challenges and opportunities facing key industries in

Scotland. Our collaboration with Robert Gordon University is the first of many and we look forward to supporting them as the first cohort of students undertakes the modules.

“Going forward, we expect the SISA programme will play an important role in what SIE does as an organisation, and we will continue building relationships with higher education institutes to support the design of courses which teach students the fundamental skills required to thrive in today’s workplace.”

The SISA programme has three levels. Level one, ‘future thinkers’, provides the opportunity for students to recognise the innovation skills they have developed within their curriculum. Level two, ‘Innovation catalysts’, further builds on the skills of level one by applying them to societal challenges in multidisciplinary teams. Level three, ‘Innovation Champions’, allows students to demonstrate an intent to innovate and take action.

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