

Case Study



Client: Edinburgh Napier University Business School

Project: BA Business and Enterprise
2007 - current

Background: Historically there has always been a difference between the esteem in which vocational and academic education is held. Students on vocational pathways who may have aspired to higher education have often felt that this route is not easily available to them.

The establishment of the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) in 2001 provided a major boost for such students. Its goals, supported by Scottish Government, are to raise participation and widen access to learning, develop a unified system and make Scottish education and training internationally compatible and more responsive to economic needs.

The challenge: Our joint ambition, with Edinburgh Napier, was to break through this glass ceiling, enabling vocational/vocationally related management qualification holders to gain 'advanced entry' to a degree, rather than starting at levels lower than their vocational achievement. In addition, we wanted to develop an approach that would create tangible organisational impacts for sponsoring employers.

What happened: The planned impacts were to:

- develop and prove the pathway from SVQs/appropriate SCQF qualifications to a business degree
- provide measurable impacts for sponsoring organisations.

The target students were managers in public or private sector organisations, who already held an SCQF level 8 / SVQ Level 4 qualification, or an SVQ Level 3. Potential numbers were very large – research suggested over 70,000 potential students in Scotland alone.

An initial group of fifteen students was targeted drawn from the public and private sectors in East Central Scotland.

SVQ Level 3 holders were brought to SCQF level 8 through a bridging process designed and delivered by Motherwell College.

The degree itself was designed to have four modules, with a central role for workbased learning. In a radical departure for university education, this accounted for 50% of the total learning. Participants also delivered a project that created impacts for themselves and their employers. While doing so, they completed assignment work around a number of themes.

For support and monitoring, students submitted monthly reflective diaries, supported by one to one sessions with tutors.

A total of 22 students started in November 2007, completing in December 2008. They came from a wide variety of backgrounds including food and drink, government agencies and further education.

Case Study



Results: A completion rate of 90% was achieved (20 students).
11 students gained distinctions, powerful evidence of individual success.

The following personal and organisational benefits were reported by students:

- embedding of project outputs in organisational systems
- challenging and re-aligning internal processes and procedures
- more time effective working practices
- enhanced organisational sustainability
- development of strategic relationships, including funders
- job promotion
- progression to Masters Level study
- improved organisational efficiency

An overall business benefits analysis indicated total organisational impact of £21,500 per person or ROI of 10:1.

BABE reached the Scottish regional finals of the National Training Awards in 2009.

For more information on the BA Business and Enterprise, please contact John Parker at info@ibpacademy.com or on 01475 676116.