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RGU News Article

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Call for companies to benefit from project management expertise

Robert Gordon University's Aberdeen Business School of is looking to attract the support of companies who are interested in facilitating research into project management.

Every year, students on the MSc Project Management programme produce a research proposal as part of their dissertation, highlighting real issues within a real business context. These proposals, considered to be of exceptional quality by assessors, are focused on desk research and will remain at proposal stage without the support of companies to facilitate field research.

This year, students undertook research on project management areas including governance, risk management, leadership and the project management office, and produced work synthesising most of the research already undertaken in these areas. Grades were all in the 80% plus range. Companies are now required to support the application of these proposals by facilitating case studies or other applied research and, where appropriate, providing some contribution to funding.

Senga Briggs, Programme Leader for the course, explained: "Academic research informs the practice of project management and the real-world application of its results sparks further research. This is an opportunity for companies to gain feedback on their project management practice in specific areas and for students to gain first hand experience of the realities of project management."

The strength of this year's proposals was highlighted with the top three students taking the Balmoral Offshore Engineering Annual Prize, worth £5,000. The winning paper by Sara Kavanagh (26), from Co Wicklow in Ireland, centres on investigating the correlations between companies who have a focus on corporate governance and those that enjoy project success. Other proposals include outlining risk analysis techniques for project management and how strategic leadership could be enhanced by using a project management model.

Alan Archibald, Contracts/QS Manager at Balmoral Offshore Engineering, who took part in assessing the students' work, explained: "The winning paper was the best I have ever read and the subject matter so relevant to business. Industry can be at a huge disadvantage in terms of gaining up-to-the-minute thinking and knowledge in an academic sense, and we are really pleased with how the collaboration with the students has benefitted us."

Any company interested in helping take these proposals forward should contact Senga Briggs on 01224 263832 or via s.briggs@rgu.ac.uk.

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