

Heriot Watt offers 250 places on MBA course – in Africa

Edinburgh Business School is launching a massive scholarship scheme across Africa, giving 250 people the opportunity to study its flagship Master of Business Administration (MBA) programme.

The African Scholarship Programme is being endorsed by Graça Machel, the renowned international advocate for women and children's rights and wife of Nelson Mandela, who attended the launch event in Johannesburg on September 15.

This is believed to be the largest scholarship scheme ever offered by a UK university in Africa, giving 50 full scholarships each year for five years for the Edinburgh Business School distance learning MBA programme.

It will enable disadvantaged applicants to gain advanced management skills and expertise, helping them to effect change in their organisations and communities. The flexibility of the distance learning MBA enables students to continue working while they learn, implementing their new knowledge and skills in the workplace immediately.

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Professor Keith Lumsden, Director of Edinburgh Business School, says the reason for the scholarship scheme is simple: "Edinburgh Business School has a singular vision: to help our students fulfil their talents and reap the career rewards they deserve.

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“Africa needs assistance to help develop its full potential, and with these scholarships we are offering 250 individuals the chance to make a difference – not only to their own lives but to the wider communities around them.”

The first 38 scholarship students from 14 Africa countries recently began their studies and the scheme, which is being run in conjunction with the Canon Collins Trust. The African Scholarship Programme was formally launched at a celebration evening in Johannesburg on September 15, attended by Graça Machel.

A number of women scholarship students will also receive mentoring under the Graça Machel Mentoring Programme.

Graça Machel says: “I would like to thank Edinburgh Business School for its support for women’s education and leadership in Africa. These scholarships provide inspirational rural women with transformative educational opportunities, enabling them to gain specialist skills in their chosen field and multiply their impact.

“By providing access to distance learning MBAs, Edinburgh Business School is contributing to the development of entrepreneurialism at local level, something which is vital to the economic health of our continent.”

One scholarship student who will be mentored under the Graça Machel Mentoring Programme is 35-year-old Martha Sambani, an Administrative Officer at the University of Malawi’s Polytechnic. Martha hopes her MBA will help her to improve the institution’s systems in order to offer a better educational experience to students. She also plans to use the MBA to develop the University of Malawi’s move from state to

commercial funding.

“Our university lacks proper administrative and financial management skills due to lack of qualified personnel. Above all, I want to see a change in terms of university financial performance and accountability and this will be my greatest and first assignment to accomplish as soon as I qualify,” she says.

Martha is 35 and the eldest of 8 children. She is responsible for looking after her siblings and paying to keep them in school so the Edinburgh Business School Distance Learning MBA is the perfect option for her. It is the most flexible distance learning programme in the world, allowing students to start whenever it suits them. Exams are held twice a year (in June and December) at more than 350 centres around the world, and at any one time, those taking MBA courses are part of a world community of 8,500 students.