

#makeyourmark at University of Edinburgh Business School

University of Edinburgh Business School is for the first time hosting a two-day event aimed at developing business solutions to some of today's most pressing social issues and challenges.



Until tomorrow, more than 100 entrepreneurial undergraduates will compete in **#makeyourmark** to develop innovative business ideas which tackle real social challenges, ranging from fuel poverty and loneliness in old age, to financial literacy and gender equality.

Teams of students will take part in hands-on workshops and receive mentoring from some of Scotland's leading business minds, as they develop their own solutions to a range of social issues.

Each team will then present their business idea to a panel of esteemed judges on the final day, for a chance to secure some valuable work experience and internship at some of Scotland's leading socially-focused businesses and social enterprises.

#makeyourmark was opened by Deputy First Minister and social enterprise champion, John Swinney, followed by a keynote speech from Ian Marchant, Chair of Wood Group, former CEO of SSE and one of Scotland's leading social investors.

[#MakeYourMark](#) event [@uoebusiness](#) seeks innovative ideas to solve problems like fuel poverty and homelessness Dean Wendy Loretto explains... pic.twitter.com/g4BcDcHNd8

– Edinburgh Reporter (@EdinReporter) [February 22, 2017](#)

To get the creative juices flowing, students also took part in a panel discussion around the topic of 'matching profit with purpose', featuring Alastair Davis, Chief Executive, Social Investment Scotland, Josh Littlejohn, Founder, Social Bite, Debra Riddell, Owner, Breadshare and Liz Turner, Head of Corporate Responsibility, BT Scotland. The panel will be chaired by Tom Levitt, Editor of the Guardian's Sustainable Business.

Wendy Loretto, Dean of the University of Edinburgh Business School said: "#makeyourmark is a fantastic opportunity for the Business School to take a leading role in helping to develop and nurture the social conscience of tomorrow's business leaders. It builds on our wider work to instil the value of responsible leadership in our students, including the introduction of a dedicated course on Global Challenges, to address the key issues in the contemporary business environments. Importantly, our undergraduates are increasingly looking towards careers that will allow them to give something back to local, national and international communities.

"This event will provide them with the tools to make their own mark on society and business and help shape their own career choices. As young graduates entering the workplace for the first time, their world view, experience and opinion will be invaluable in helping to shape the future direction of business in society.

"With inspiration and mentoring from some of Scotland's leading social entrepreneurs and business minds, I'm looking forward to seeing what ideas our students come up with. I've no doubt that some if not all of these ideas will have some practical benefit for Scotland's business and social enterprise community."

Deputy First Minister John Swinney: "Scotland's social enterprises are the perfect illustration of how the Scottish Government's aim of inclusive growth can bring about economic

benefits alongside social or environmental gains.

“As part of our 10-year approach to strengthening the sector, we want to encourage the social entrepreneurs of the future. Scotland’s universities and colleges are absolutely central to that ambition. The Edinburgh University #makeyourmark initiative is a fantastic example of an innovative approach, with undergraduates given the support of some of Scotland’s best social entrepreneurs and business leaders to develop commercial ideas that also tackle some of the most pressing issues in our society.

“Across our whole education system it is crucial that our young people are given the help and encouragement they need to flourish and reach their full potential. At the same time we must harness their fresh thinking, new ideas and energy to ensure Scotland’s economy is equipped to continue to compete in a changing world.

“Ventures such as #makeyourmark will help us realise those aims, and I wish all of the participants well as they take part in this exciting project.”