

Edinburgh Napier students get work experience at the races

Edinburgh Napier University student Maiti Stirling applied for a work placement with Musselburgh Racecourse, but her request was initially turned down. The racecourse in common with other businesses gets many such requests and cannot fulfil them all.

But Ms Stirling's father Colin owns Foulrice Park Racing in Yorkshire. He came up with a three year sponsorship deal to help, not only his daughter, but also other undergrads so that all can benefit from work experience at Musselburgh.



Maiti Stirling, left, with Rebecca Morrison, Musselburgh Racecourse

Now third year events management student Rebecca Morrison has just completed a six month placement during which she was involved in the day to day operations. Catriona Kendall will begin her stint very soon.

Musselburgh Racecourse senior operations and commercial manager, Sarah Montgomery, said she hoped other businesses would support similar sponsorships to enable student to take up placements.

She said: "We get approached all the time from university students desperately looking for opportunities but for most businesses it is unrealistic to expect them to fund 6-12 month placements. Colin Stirling's initiative was most welcome and allowed us to take on Maiti and then Rebecca, and both have been invaluable in helping with the day-to-day running of the racecourse.

“It would be excellent if other businesses followed Foulrice Park Racing’s lead, not just in the racing industry but across all sectors, and this would help undergraduates complete this important part of their degree course.”

Edinburgh Napier University manages the application process and each appointment is made based on interviews and suitability. The racecourse is flexible about the type of roles each student fulfils and tries to match a workflow which suits individual interests, strengthen their CVs and assist with applying for jobs on graduation.

Sarah Montgomery added: “Both Maiti and Rebecca made a huge impact and we are grateful for their contribution. They worked with us through our really busy planning period in the lead up to our most successful race days, the Edinburgh Gin Edinburgh Cup and our sell-out Stobo Castle Ladies Day.

“We are now delighted that Maiti has joined us in a full-time permanent role and to welcome on board Catriona as our third Napier University placement. We hope with continued support from Foulrice Park or other businesses that this will be a programme we can support for many years to come.”

Colin Stirling of Foulrice Park Racing, said: “From both my observations as an employer and the direct experience with both my children, I am a huge advocate of the benefits of meaningful work placements as part of a student’s education. It helps both the personal development of the individual and significantly improves their attractiveness to employers when they graduate.

“It is evident that universities which offer placements as part of their courses often struggle to gain the involvement of employers to deliver the programmes. We were therefore delighted to work together with the team at Musselburgh Racecourse to come up with a plan to jointly fund the 3-year scheme to support Edinburgh Napier’s Business School.

“The two placements completed so far have greatly benefitted both Rebecca and Maiti and the racecourse and I hope this success will inspire other employers to consider similar support to Napier or other universities in their locality.”

Lynn Waterston, the lecturer at Edinburgh Napier’s Business School with responsibility for marketing, hospitality and events undergraduate placements, said:

“Degree courses with a work placement element require a lot of commitment from employers, so it is fantastic to see a sponsorship initiative like this succeed not only in giving students valuable experience, but also in terms of the benefits that our placement students can bring to our partner organisations.”