THE PLACEMENT

On Miss Rose Devlin’s application to become involved in the EU Peace II, Proteus project, ‘Enabling Lecturers to Learn from Business’, she stated:

“As a lecturer in business studies I would welcome an opportunity to experience the practical application of the theory in areas of business, such as, market research, International marketing, development of management information systems. Placement with companies involved in European affairs or operating in International markets would be very beneficial and enrich my teaching.”

In order to provide the breadth of experience requested it was arranged that Rose would spend a period of placement with three different organisations, namely, Invest Northern Ireland, British Telecom plc, and Rocwell Irish Mineral Water. Each of these organisations, in recognition of Rose’s background in business theory, facilitated an opportunity for her to shadow the work of a relevant team/department or senior manager.

Invest NI is Northern Ireland’s main economic development organisation. Working in partnership with public and private sector organisations their main focus is on helping build a more vibrant private economy. Rose was placed with the Invest NI Enterprise Development Team which is managed by Mr Paul Brush. The intensive schedule prepared by Paul involved Rose meeting with each of the team members and becoming familiar with their roles and responsibilities. Thereafter, Rose became a guest at a series of senior level meetings and conferences which facilitated extensive learning and opportunities to network.

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Invest NI facilitated many other opportunities for Rose including first hand contact with key departments and personnel, such as, Invest NI Press Office, the new business ‘Go for It’ initiative, Business Information Centre, Global Enterprise Monitor Group (GEM) etc.

Rocwell Irish Mineral Water Company was established in 1989 and was the first company in Northern Ireland to achieve Natural Mineral Water Statue in 1992. The production plan is located in Pomeroy, Co Tyrone. Distribution depots include Pomeroy, Belfast, Derry, Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick.

After spending her term of placement with Ms Caoimhe O’Neill, General Manager at Rocwell. Apart from the valuable overview of the company, the current attention to ‘product development’ and efforts to penetrate the American market were of particular interest.

On returning to college Rose stated: “The three organisations, I was with, could not have been more helpful. Though very busy people, they went out of their way to give me the maximum amount of support to ensure that I could gain as much from
the experience as possible. Nothing was too much trouble. I have the highest regard for them all."

KEY LEARNING POINTS ON BUSINESS

- A wealth of examples of business theory in practice relevant to future teaching in areas such as, business planning, production, human resource management, marketing and corporate social responsibility.

- New learning about aspects of engineering, science, technology and design, public relations, the media and the graphics industry.

POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE BA (Hons) LIBERAL ARTS DEGREE PROGRAMME OF THE UNIVERSITY

Most potential is in the area of ‘Enterprise’. Invest NI personnel would welcome the opportunity to speak to students about all aspects of business and enterprise. Other contacts include key personnel from Queen’s University, Belfast and Ulster University, Coleraine. BTNI have a superb educational website and many educational resources which they are more than happy to make available to support student learning. The company is also willing to provide speakers on any aspect of their business.

Invest NI offer programmes such as, ‘Women in Enterprise’, and directly encourage developments in social enterprise, enterprise in education, the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and the growth of North/South enterprise and intertrade initiatives.

BTNI support ‘Young Enterprise NI’, SENITUS and the ‘Prince’s Trust’ initiatives, all of which actively bring young people from all sections of the community together.

Further contact with Ms Marnie O’Neill, having secured a one year secondment from BTNI to work with Co-operation Ireland as Communications Director and also her elected Presidency of the Linenhall Library will become a priority. The college has secured student placements with Co-operation Ireland and the Linenhall Library in the past and will seek a renewed association with these organisations during Marnie’s term of secondment.

Rocwell Irish Mineral Water sponsor many sporting events and support a number of charities and educational initiatives in their local community.

PERSONAL LEARNING

Rose stated: "Placement was a superb experience. It will bring a new life to my lecturing. It gave me the opportunity to get out there and see what is really happening in the business world. I feel confident now that I am very up-to-date with the World of Work and this will help me to understand what we are preparing our students for. I now feel I have a wealth of new information, knowledge and skills to pass on. I feel a new energy, impetus and enthusiasm for my work. It has also given me a great comfort to know that most of my courses are very relevant and suitable to what is required in the business world."