

**IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council Press Release**  
**For immediate release: Monday, 7 December 2009**

**Cross-border postgraduate scholarship scheme boosts collaboration**

The IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council and Universities Ireland today presented four students with masters scholarships, worth €15,000 each, at an awards ceremony in the Stormont hotel, Belfast. The scholarships will assist students who are crossing the border to undertake postgraduate studies in the other part of the island.

This unique scheme is a joint initiative by the IBEC-CBI Joint Business Council, which promotes North-South business co-operation and Universities Ireland, which promotes collaboration between Northern and Southern universities. It aims to improve collaboration between the business and higher education sectors on the island.

Congratulating the students on their success, CBI Deputy Chairman, Brian Ambrose said: "An important priority for business is the availability of an educated, well-trained and adaptable workforce that will enable companies to compete on the world stage. Education and training at all levels of progression have an essential role to play in putting our two economies back on a growth path. This postgraduate scholarship scheme aims to support this by promoting collaboration across the island."

Outlining the Joint Business Council's proposal to expand the scheme to incorporate a graduate placement opportunity to be managed by the Export Orientation Programme (EOP), Brian Ambrose said:

"The extension of the current scholarship scheme format to include a graduate placement opportunity will improve the pool of skilled labour on the island of Ireland by supporting the higher education of graduates and providing positive work experience to graduates that allows them to gain an appreciation of working in a company", he said.

Business scholarships were presented to the following students:

- Mairéad Cantwell, a graduate of Trinity College Dublin, doing an MSc in Spatial Regeneration at Queen's University Belfast. This scholarship was part-funded by RPS.
- Anna Magee, a graduate of University of Ulster, doing an MSc in Energy Management at Dublin Institute of Technology. This scholarship was part-funded by Dublin Port.

Universities Ireland North-South Masters scholarships were also presented to:

- Bryan Mukandi, a graduate of National University of Ireland Galway, doing a Masters in Political Philosophy at Queen's University Belfast.
- Deirdre McKenna, a graduate of Queen's University Belfast, doing a PhD in Architecture at University College Dublin.

## ENDS

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## Note to Editors:

The Export Orientation Programme (EOP) is the Republic of Ireland's longest-running and most successful graduate placement programme. It provides recent graduates with a valuable introduction to exporting and international business and to develop practical skills and to gain hands-on experience in a fast-moving business environment. Since 1983 more than 1800 graduates have successfully completed the EOP programme, and with retention rates in excess of 86%, EOP's have used their experience to launch highly successful careers across all sectors of industry and sponsor companies have experienced an exponential rise in their export revenues.