

EDUCATION

gaining a global perspective

Nottingham University Business School's postgraduate programmes on CSR promote participation by many different nationalities, widening understanding of responsible business

Abraham Lincoln once said: 'give me six hours to chop down a tree and I will spend the first four sharpening the axe'. In the global field of corporate responsibility there is still plenty of axe sharpening to be done, and Nottingham University Business School is all too aware of that. The school's International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility (ICCSR), founded in 2002 with the aim of bringing CSR education into mainstream business teaching, now offers MBAs, MA/MScs and PhDs in responsible business, and not just to students from its home base in the UK.

According to the centre's database, over the past five years its MBA in CSR has been taken by 27 different nationalities, including alumni from Bangladesh, Chad, Costa Rica, Malawi, Peru and Swaziland. ICCSR director Jeremy Moon says this reflects the broader strategy of the centre as a global hub for research and teaching, a quality mirrored in the composition of its academic team and postgraduate students. 'The international backgrounds of all these cohorts enhance the student experience, because they bring such a range of perspectives to classroom debate', he says. 'Students are attracted to the university for a range of reasons, but its international connections and the fact that we also have campuses in China and Malaysia definitely helps.'

Jonathan Moreno, a student from the Philippines who has been studying at the ICCSR on a Chevening Fellowship programme, funded by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office, says the range of backgrounds he has encountered has been one of the highlights, allowing him to pick the brains of people with very diverse experiences of corporate responsibility. 'One thing the course impressed on me

is that addressing the challenges of responsible business requires a constant exchange of new ideas and best practice', he says. 'ICCSR, in this respect, is a reservoir of responsible business knowledge.'

There are also benefits to the ICCSR itself, as Moon points out. 'Getting an international range of perspectives is invaluable for our research,' he says. 'Through this interaction we all gain a better appreciation of the global context for CSR.'

Maggie Royston, ICCSR's business development and centre manager, adds that there is a pay-off for UK

businesses too, as many of the students spend time on placement with British companies, bringing with them their local knowledge. 'Increasingly UK businesses are benefiting from the plethora of perspectives that our students bring', she says. 'We sometimes receive requests for a student with a particular background to provide support to an organization, which may be exploring CSR in China or Turkey, for example.'

Moreno, for one, believes that this promotes valuable cross-fertilization. 'What has really impressed me is the way my course has seeded the environment with people who are committed to promoting and implementing responsible business practice in their respective countries', he says. 'That can only be good for the development of corporate responsibility.'

Further information: www.nottingham.ac.uk/business/ICCSR

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■ ICCSR director Jeremy Moon and Filipino student Jonathan Moreno, who is part of a truly international cohort at Nottingham University Business School



The programmes of study at the International Centre for Corporate Social Responsibility can be commended for establishing corporate responsibility as a mainstream subject within a British business school.

The quality of student experience and the breadth of the teaching approaches have enabled it to enjoy a world class reputation.

Students have won prizes in the IBE business ethics essay competition for five consecutive years.

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