FLUX for Maths, Computing & Languages

What did/do you do?

FLUX event for Mathematics & Statistics, Modern Languages and Computing Science students

Who is involved?

Dr Phil Ansell (Maths & Stats), Jean-Christophe Penet (SML), Steve Riddle (Computing), Dawn Weatherston (Careers Service)
75 Stage 2 and Stage 3 students from Mathematics, Modern Languages and Computing Sciences

How do you do it?

We invited a group of 75 maths, modern languages and computer science students to take part in a FLUX business challenge. We made it specifically for them and advertised in lectures. The event was an evening and Wednesday afternoon/evening. We asked them to pay a small deposit to save a place. We asked GCHQ to set them a major societal challenge and we got new creative approaches to cyber security!

Why do you do it?

We felt that our students would benefit from working in teams with students from other subject areas in a field unfamiliar to them – conceiving and presenting a business idea. When GCHQ (major employers of languages, maths and computing graduates) heard about the event they immediately came on board and worked with the Rise Up team to construct a scenario that was unveiled at the start of the challenge.

Does it work?

The overall feedback from the event was excellent. For Dawn Weatherston, Entrepreneurial Development Officer with the Rise Up team, leading this event was a first: "Although I frequently work with mixed groups of students enterprise challenges I have never had the chance to run an event that brings together such a specific group of students that fit the profile of an organisation such as GCHQ".

The students rose to the challenge…

"All of a sudden I realised what I was actually doing – I was thinking about a real business idea!" (Computer Science student).

"This is one of the best things I have done at university – and will great to talk about at forthcoming interviews" (Modern Languages student).

"It was good to work with students from other degree programmes. They thought and worked differently to me" (Maths Student)

Charlie Wainwright from Newcastle Science City, acting as a 'business expert' for the event said: "The quality of ideas generated by the student teams in the short space of time available was exceptional".