



Sinead with general manager Michael Shepherd FIH MI outside the London Hilton on Park Lane, where she did a 'work placement' this summer

Sinead Scott FIH goes 'back to the floor'

Belfast lecturer returns to the workplace for the benefit of her students and her course delivery.

■ ENGAGEMENT

Last year, the Institute hosted a summit of leaders from academia and industry. The aim was to establish closer collaboration between educators and employers. One recommendation to come out of that meeting was that lecturers and teaching staff can benefit from 'work placements' just as much as students and the Institute is well-positioned to bring lecturers and practitioners together.

Therefore, we are delighted to have facilitated an eight-day 'stage' for Sinead Scott FIH, lecturer at Belfast Metropolitan University, who worked across departments at the London Hilton Park Lane this summer. This included experience of

banqueting and the hotel's restaurants: Galvin at Windows and Trader Vic's.

Sinead, why did you feel the need to return to industry in this way?

When the team at Belfast Met are planning the content of our Level 2, Level 3 and Foundation Degrees, it is imperative that we ensure the content we include is valid and fit for purpose for the hospitality industry, not just for today but also looking into the future when students complete their studies. The opportunity to go and work in such a well-established and prestigious property ensured that all delivery of service and food delivery would be of an outstanding high standard, exactly what we try to instil in our students while constantly ensuring we are providing industry with the highly trained professionals it requires.

What will you take back to your students?

The most recurring impression I had amongst all departments was the individual and team desire to excel in their duties, the aim to continually develop and improve themselves while ultimately ensuring that each

and every guest had an extraordinary, personal and fantastic experience. Our students will learn how this is only achieved through a great attitude, hard work, personal pride in your work and teamwork.

What has changed since you last worked in a hotel?

Thankfully I have only been out of industry three years and the College is always trying to make and maintain strong links with industry which has proven vital when sourcing work placements and future job opportunities for students. Factors such as sustainability, green practices, social media and e-business are at the fore now. At Belfast Met, we deliver all of these subjects which are imperative for the manpower of tomorrow. Attributes such as a great attitude, understanding the importance of teamwork, leadership that empowers your staff, delivery of a quality service and putting the guest at the centre of everything you do are strongly in evidence with Michael Shepherd and his outstanding team.

Michael, why were you happy to welcome Sinead in this way?

The speed of development and growth of global hospitality corporations is really incredible. This means that the variety of opportunities that lie ahead for students and hospitality graduates is growing. Quite often academic institutions focus on the technical and practical task requirements which themselves change with developing technology and customer expectations. There is huge value in lecturers keeping in touch with these industry developments. I applaud Sinead's initiative, which requires resilience and energy, both of which Sinead exudes in abundance.

How did your team react?

My team reacted most positively in accommodating Sinead as they recognised the value of employing graduates that are more in touch with industry and who have been given relevant and smart guidance, preparing them for the world of work. Supporting such an exercise helps employers to shorten the induction process and enjoy productive returns from employing well-guided and talented students.



Sinead with Shiran Fonseka, head chef of Trader Vic's, the global cuisine-themed restaurant at Hilton on Park Lane