

# European Challenge



Commenced: 2005

## What is it?

The European Challenge is an EU (Socrates) funded intensive programme which brings 80 students from 8 European Institutions together to work together in multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural teams on a complex consultancy project simulating the relocation of a 350 person financial services organisation to a new Headquarters building in Europe. Utilising a number of innovations, including role play and students becoming consultants for specified knowledge themes, it drives both employability and autonomy agendas. Fundamentally, a major part of a final year syllabus is taught without any formal teaching.

## What is involved?

In the first semester the students work autonomously in their home University teams researching one of eight knowledge themes which underpin the practical project. On the first formal day of the project they present their themes to the whole group, provide a briefing paper and upload key resources they have found to the Blackboard virtual learning environment. The students are then formed into multi-national, inter-professional teams acting as consultants to the client. The students become consultants to each other and experts in their knowledge themes. Consultancy hours facilitate student to student learning and support. Tutors only act as facilitators, providing guidance and support but no traditional teaching. The students produce a "strategic brief" detailing their clients needs based on written briefing materials and comprehensive role play interactions with tutors playing different members of their client's Board.

## Why is the project important to the CETL and the University?

The project is important because it has an international focus and develops both student autonomy and employability in a very creative and unique way. Part of the video diary produced about the project observes students downloading improved tools wirelessly from the Blackboard virtual learning environment as they were presented to the group by a student – true autonomy and student empowered learning in action?

The CETL input is significant because it provides funding to allow the project experience to be enjoyed by a large number of students through the creation of a virtual edition of the project.

## What do you hope the project will achieve?

The project should illustrate the important synergies that can be created when artificial boundaries between the University's CETLs, Learning Teaching and Assessment Fellowships and the Learning and Teaching Institute (LTI) are collapsed.

The project should also act as a catalyst for tutors in the Faculty of Development & Society to embrace features of the project to promote greater learner autonomy and to boost the employability of their students.

## What impact do you hope the project will have?

The project is designed to achieve a series of outcomes aligned to the work of both the Learner Autonomy and Employability CETLs :

- Provide a case study of inter-disciplinary, inter-cultural working.
- Provide a rich multi-media resource that can be deployed in real estate and business courses across the University and nationally through CEBE to promote autonomous student engagement.
- Encourage an autonomous approach within the Built Environment course teams at Sheffield Hallam University.
- Provide student reflection and a rich resource base for research and publication.
- Provide measurable employability benefits for our real estate students.



Sheffield  
Hallam University

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## Future Developments

Nick Nunnington is also the real estate co-ordinator for the Centre for Education in the Built Environment (CEBE) and through CEBE he will be visiting Universities across the UK and encouraging them to participate in a UK version of the Challenge, using the multi-media e-learning courseware that is being developed by the CETL and LTI team.

The multi-media version of the project will be used with both undergraduate and postgraduate students at Sheffield Hallam University and a number of European Universities including the Hanze Hogeschool in Groningen, The Netherlands and Dublin Institute of Technology.

## Links

The student perspective:

Click on the picture below to view the interactive video interview with Andy Pointon—one of the students from Sheffield Hallam who undertook the challenge:



The European Challenge is an ACBEE (Accelerating Change in Built Environment Education) Case Study.

Click the logo to find out more:



Read the full article on our experience in Berlin on the RICS web site:



This information can be made available in other formats.  
Please contact us for details.

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