

## **Bridge to Employment Case Study**

### **The Company - Mercer Consulting, Outsourcing, Investments.**

Mercer is a leading global provider of consulting, outsourcing and investment services, with more than 25,000 clients worldwide. Mercer's Retirement Service Centre (RSC) based in Belfast specialises in the production of actuarial valuations and calculations for their clients and they were keen to recruit local skilled people, offering permanent employment and development opportunities in the company.

### **The Challenge**

Mercer required additional 'Retirement Analysts' for their Belfast Retirement Service Centre to help cope with the increased demand for their valuation services within Europe. The Retirement Analysts role involved carrying out individual calculations associated with defined benefit pension schemes and was particularly suitable for graduates who had taken a degree in a numerical discipline. Mercer opened up the opportunity to graduates from non numerical disciplines provided they had experience in the financial services sector or a 2.1 honours degree.

There was scope for the successful trainees to ultimately develop into managers via a process of training and self development.

### **The Strategy**

Having heard about the Bridge to Employment programme Mercer contacted the Bridge to Employment Team to find out more. It became clear that a suitable training programme could be developed to identify highly skilled graduates and experienced financial services professionals to fulfil these roles in the company.

The Bridge to Employment team arranged the recruitment and selection of suitable trainees for the programme all at no cost to Mercer. They looked after the advertising, application process and then took an active role in the interviews alongside company representatives.

Suitable trainees were identified and a specific training course put together to provide the trainees with a sound understanding of the pensions industry and the role of a Retirement Analyst. The course topics included:

- Company pension schemes;
- The UK pensions industry;
- UK pension legislation;
- The calculation of member benefits;
- Company pension scheme valuations and associated calculations

The Bridge to Employment programme was ideal for Mercer who wanted to recruit staff quickly and with minimal costs to the company. From the outset the employer needs were established and the Bridge team worked to support the recruitment of suitably skilled graduates for the company. The turnaround period for the recruitment process right through to graduates becoming employed was 9 weeks.

## **Result**

After a 1 week intensive training course at Mercer's premises 8 clients were interviewed by Mercer all of which were offered permanent full-time positions. Within one year all 8 were promoted within the company which is testament to the calibre of graduates recruited through this programme. The success of this training programme saw Mercer undertake a second Bridge Programme which saw a further 8 graduates gaining full time permanent employment.

Bridge to Employment is available to inward investment companies and local companies who are taking on new staff. The programme helps with the advertising and all other recruitment services at no cost to the employer. The training programme is customised to suit the needs of an employer and gives potential employees the precise skills they need to be productive in a company from day one.

Bridge to Employment is a pre employment training programme aimed at helping the unemployed find work whatever their experience. For further information contact [bridgetoemployment@delni.gov.uk](mailto:bridgetoemployment@delni.gov.uk) or telephone 028 9090 5251.

## **Feedback from Company**

*"BTE provided Mercer with a unique opportunity to identify and select top performing local graduates with financial and mathematical degrees as well as excellent candidates from outside of these traditional academic backgrounds. They were on hand throughout the recruitment process, providing vital support for the training required to equip these graduates with the skills necessary to transition into the actuarial industry. Mercer has reaped benefits from using BTE and we hope to continue to do so."*