

PRESS RELEASE

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Winners announced of IBE Student Essay Competition in Business Ethics 2014

“The business leaders of tomorrow must have business ethics at the heart of their education,” says Tim Melville-Ross CBE, President of the IBE and Chairman of HEFCE

16th October 2014: The two winning essays of the IBE Student Essay Competition in Business Ethics focus on the diverse and topical subjects of the regulation of the banking sector and ‘ban the airbrush’.

The essay competition aims to encourage student interest in business ethics and the integration of discussions on corporate responsibility into the core curricula of business schools.

The Director of the Institute of Business Ethics, Philippa Foster Back CBE, said: *“These students have shown the impressive level of debate on these issues taking place in the UK’s Universities and Business Schools.”*

The **Postgraduate category was won by Gary D. Rubin from University of Leeds**, exploring the questions “Does the Fact the Financial Sector is Heavily Regulated Leave Any Place for Ethics?”

The **winner of the Undergraduate category was Babatunde Valentine Onabajo from Cardiff University** for the paper “The Moral Case for Ban the Airbrush”.

The winners were each awarded £1,000, thanks to a donation from the Gordon Cook Foundation.

Tim Melville-Ross, President of IBE and Chairman of HEFCE, congratulated all those that took part: *“With corporate scandals continuing to surface, it has never been more important for our students to develop ethical sensitivity. After all, they will be the business leaders of tomorrow, and so must have business ethics at the heart of their education.”*

The winning entries will be published after the ceremony at www.ibe.org.uk

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EDITOR'S NOTES

1. The **Institute of Business Ethics** is a registered charity which promotes high standards of business practice based on ethical values. We help organisations to strengthen their ethics culture through the dissemination of knowledge and good practice. www.ibe.org.uk

2. About the winners

Postgraduate winner: Gary D. Rubin, University of Leeds

Topic Addressed: “Does the Fact the Financial Sector is Heavily Regulated Leave Any Place for Ethics?”

Abstract

This paper begins by looking at the nature of regulation and ethics in financial firms and discussing how ethical behaviour leads to trust. It is through trust that society grants businesses their license to operate. The paper argues that this is why the purpose of business is to serve society by producing quality products and services rather than merely maximizing long-term owner value. The culture of the firm will be informed by the purpose of the organisation. The wrong purpose engenders wrong behaviour. The paper argues that regulations alone are no substitute for ethics and the ability to think critically through ethical dilemmas.

Undergraduate winner: Babatunde Valentine Onabajo

Topic Addressed: “The Moral Case for ‘Ban the Airbrush’”

Abstract

This essay examines the use of the airbrush tool in popular culture, and considers ways its use has contributed to anorexia and related anxieties, affecting teenage girls in particular. The paper considers that its reformation would boost self-esteem whilst still enabling people

to aspire to improve their appearance. The essay considers The Debenhams Test and a voluntary code of ethics would be the best path for the Ban the Airbrush movement. Advertisers and magazine should consider labelling all images graphically edited in addition to an open-mindedness to feature those classed as different from the norm

3. The **IBE Student Essay Competition in Business Ethics**

The competition is in two categories – Undergraduate and Postgraduate. Submissions must be current work from students who are based at Higher Education Institutions in the UK. Submissions may be up to 3,000 words. These can be either a piece of work submitted as an assignment, or an original essay or case study. Group submissions can be made

Essays are judged using the following criteria:

- Topicality – the extent to which the topic of the essay is subject to contemporary debate and relevance to ethical business practice
- Clarity of expression – the extent to which the essay is fluently written in accessible language, is coherently structured and uses a high standard of referencing
- Analysis - the extent to which the essay presents clear, well organised and well reasoned argument, judgment and opinion or conclusion, with relevant evidence, analysis, illustration, interpretation, evaluation, or application
- Use of theory and research – the extent to which the essay draws on appropriate academic literature and other data and relates it to the topic; and sets out and correctly employs relevant concepts
- Application to practice – the extent to which the essay addresses real-world challenges in business ethics and makes a contribution to the development of thinking and practice

The Lead Academic, Professor Geoff Moore, Professor of Business Ethics, Durham University co-ordinated the judging process, with first stage and final stage judges made up of academics, business leaders and competition sponsors.

Entries are now open for the 2015 competition (closing date 30 June 2015)

4. **The Gordon Cook Foundation** was established in 1974 to promote and develop values education in the British education systems. <http://www.gordoncook.org/>