

Enterprising pupils enter dragon's den with global business focus

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200 would-be entrepreneurs from seven local schools will pitch to leading business professionals this week as part of a unique business challenge to test their enterprising acumen.

Now in its fifth year, the Eureka-ROCKET Challenge 2013 was unveiled at the University of Birmingham Business School on 19 June to see over 200 Year 11 and 12 pupils take part in a three-week business event.

Pitching to a panel of esteemed business professionals, including Dr Steve Walker OBE, Chief Executive Aston Reinvestment Trust and Graham Handy, Director, NatWest Commercial Banking, on Wednesday 10 July, pupils will be encouraged to demonstrate enterprise knowledge, skills and capabilities to compete for a £250 prize.

Organised by the Women's Business Development Agency (WBDA) West Midlands Enterprise Laboratory – a specialist hub launched to support high-growth women's enterprise and academic and practitioner based research on Women's Enterprise – the competition aims to enthuse teenagers about business.

This year's challenge will focus on global business and ask participants how to market new ideas and products in different countries. Pupils will consider the increasing demands placed on businesses and individuals because of globalization and the implications for business and enterprise. Previous winners have developed ideas ranging from Hamleys Toys, to an Education Company to Ice Cream, a community workshop project.

[Professor Simon Collinson \(/staff/profiles/business/collinson-simon.aspx\)](/staff/profiles/business/collinson-simon.aspx), Dean of Birmingham Business School said; 'The Eureka challenge shows that there is a huge amount of interest in innovation, entrepreneurship and new business development in schools across the region. We are keen to nurture the enthusiasm and develop the talent for enterprise in students of all ages. It is particularly appropriate to focus this year on the international dimensions of business, as today's student will need to cope with an increasingly global competitive environment when they enter the workplace.'

This year's pupils will have three weeks to devise a solution and prepare a presentation for a judging panel, which includes Dr Steve Walker OBE, Chief Executive Aston Reinvestment Trust, Mr Graham Handy, Director, NatWest Commercial Banking, Mr David Rowe, Chair West Midlands Enterprise Forum, Sally Arkley, Director, Women's Business Development Agency, Mr Simon Owen, Director, Deloitte LLP, Mr Stuart Kneller, Chair, Edexcel Exams and Prof Prue Huddleston, Warwick University.

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