

GCU celebrates a decade-long training relationship with South African rail partnership

October 7, 2022



A graduation ceremony marked a decade-long training relationship between [Glasgow Caledonian University \(GCU\)](#) and Africa's largest freight rail company [Transnet](#).

The University hosted the ceremony in South Africa, which celebrated the latest cohort of employees to achieved awards from GCU as part of a unique work-based education programme delivered in partnership with the University of Johannesburg and the [Chartered Institution of Railway Operators \(CIRO\)](#).

The ceremony, attended by 1,000 people and held at the Transnet Esselenpark campus, recognised the hard work and dedication shown by students in attaining the industry-specific suite of qualifications, which have been designed to build knowledge and skills in how to operate and understand the railway. As well as being a huge step for those receiving their awards, it was also a wonderful opportunity for partners and graduates to meet for the first time since early 2020.

A procession was led by Pamela Gillies CBE, GCU principal and vice-chancellor at GCU with guest Professor Daneel Van Lill, executive dean of the University of Johannesburg.

The anniversary was also marked with a special video message of congratulations from GCU Chancellor, activist and philanthropist, Dr Annie Lennox OBE.

As Scotland's largest provider of graduate apprenticeships, GCU deliver nine industry programmes, ranging from cyber security, data science and software development to engineering design manufacture. These are delivered to over 300 employers in Scotland and more than 700 graduate apprentices.

Fiona Stewart-Knight, assistant vice-principal business partnerships at GCU, said: "Our Transnet graduates deserve huge congratulations for their academic achievements after such a challenging combination of work and study during the last two years of COVID restrictions.

"As the operator of South Africa's freight rail network, these graduates are a key part of the workforce that kept goods and the economy moving during lockdown while switching to remote working and studying online.

"As this 10-year partnership continues to innovate and grow, we look forward with enthusiasm to the next chapter of this collaboration."

To date, 1,145 Transnet employees have graduated with Masters and Undergraduate awards in Railway Operations Management, as a consequence of substantial investment by Transnet in the education and mobilisation of its workforce. A further 600 Transnet employees are continuing their studies.

Sizakele Mzimela, chief executive of Transnet Freight Rail said: "Those graduating today are commended for taking advantage of this unique opportunity to improve their skills, for their perseverance and dedication. I implore them to share their new-found knowledge and skills with their fellow colleagues. This will help us build a collective knowledge base to support growth, innovation, and collaboration."