

IT IS a sport where the likes of Ferrari measure their annual budget in the hundreds of millions of dollars but a group of Dundee University students have shown that you can have fun in Formula One for just a few thousand pounds.

They have just returned from competing in the Formula Student contest, held at Silverstone in Northamptonshire.

Armed only with their engineering skills and the kind of money that would probably buy no more than a nut on Lewis Hamilton's McLaren, they designed and built a racing car in their spare time.

Against competition from other universities, they came third in their class and won the cost section.

Team leader Gareth Davies said, "Silverstone was a fantastic experience.

"We were entered in class 2 this year, for which you have to design and build a chassis and start to show you have the basics of the car.

"We have a rolling chassis at the moment and the judges were really

Students have winning formula

impressed by what we've done, especially given how small a budget we have had to work with.

"This has just been our first year on this and our budget has been just a few thousand pounds, whereas some of the competition who have been doing this for years are spending way more."

Their success has earned the team tickets to the Belgian grand prix at the Spa track in September, with access to the pits over the race weekend.

Formula Student is run by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and lets students test what they have learned on their courses.

A spokesperson said, "It teaches them all about

team working, under pressure and to tight timescales.

"It demands total commitment, lots of late nights and many frustrations and challenges along the way but the net result is the development of highly talented young engineers.

"The benefit to students is immense and is good experience for newly-qualified engineers preparing to enter a career in motor sport, the automotive industry or many other areas of high performance engineering."

Mike Barker, the Dundee team's chief designer, said, "This has been a great project to be involved with in terms of a learning experience.

"We have been really hands-on with designing parts and building the car in the workshop, really getting our hands dirty.

"It is a huge challenge to build a racing car from scratch, but I think we've done really well so far.

"The big challenge is moving up a class next year and really starting to put the car into shape, to the point where we have a fully-tested, driveable car."

