

# Students with a winning formula

## The young engineers aiming to design, build and race an F1 car in four days

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FIVE students from the University of Ulster will race a Formula One style racing car against other students from across Europe in the prestigious Formula Student competition this week.

The university has combined with engineering company Schrader Electronics to support the group of students in their quest to become the 2008 Formula Student Champions.

The competition, run in the UK by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers, challenges students to design, build and race a Formula One model car in a four-day contest for a chance to win the coveted title. Formula Student is a worldwide contest, widely regarded as the number one engineering competition currently aimed at students.

Forming the 2008 team, from the engineering department of

# 11%

The decline in the number of people studying engineering at Ulster universities since 2001

the University of Ulster, are Chris Robb from Nutts Corner, Brian Matthews from Crossgar, Ronan Lavery from Glenavy, Andrew Boyd from Coleraine and Sean Connolly from Newry.

During the competition, the students will participate in a number of challenging and demanding events, both static and dynamic, and must use all they have learnt in the construction of the car to present and drive their model in front of the judges.

The HR development manager from Schrader Electronics commented on the impressive nature

of the task and its importance in preparing engineering students for the successful transition from academia to industry. "It is encouraging to see that these are the calibre of students available for industry in the future," he said.

Unfortunately, the number of students choosing to study engineering at Northern Ireland universities is decreasing, with a decline since 2001 of up to 11%.

Experts agree that this decline accentuates the need for initiatives like Formula Student, which offer students the opportunity to advance their academic study through solving real-life problems and finding inspiring solutions.

Dr Justin Quinn, lecturer in the School of Electrical and Mechanical

Engineering at the University of Ulster, has emphasised the need for this interaction between industry and universities, which he says "will help to enhance the learning experience, resulting in a more industry-ready student with practical as well as theoretical experience".

The uni team recently returned from the Silverstone leg of the competition and are now in Hockenheim, home of the German Grand Prix, for the four-day final which ends on August 10.

Team captain Ronan Lavery said: "We are proud to be representing both the university and Northern Ireland in Germany and look forward to competing against world class engineers."