SIT grads land jobs through internships

69 out of 82 accountancy students on work-study scheme get offers upon graduation

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Work internships are paying off in the form of permanent job offers for Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) students.

The university, which requires its students to take up eight-month to year-long internships, reported that of the first batch of 82 accountancy students who went on internships, 69 received job offers upon graduation at the end of last year.

Two graduates who interned with Ernst & Young were even offered positions that were one level higher than those generally offered to fresh graduates.

Associate professor Ivan Lee, who oversees the Integrated Work Study Programme, said the university reaffirmed that the work attachments have translated into job offers for several students.

SIT, which opened in 2009 to offer degrees to polytechnic graduates in partnership with overseas universities, aims to nurture “best-in-class specialists” who graduate with deep knowledge and skills.

Three years ago, it launched its own degree and made the eight- to 12-month internships a requirement for its students.

Prof Lee said the programme is designed to be more in-depth and structured than a traditional industrial attachment. “Not only are the internships for a longer period; we impress on students to treat it as real work. To begin with, we do not find them the internships. They have to apply for the positions, as they would for any job,” he said.

He added that SIT also has a team that monitors the students’ progress week on week.

By the end of the internship, which is undertaken in the second or third year, students are encouraged to identify a problem in the companies that they can use as a case study for their final-year project. They will have to come up with solutions to the problem.

He said another 70 SIT students – from engineering and computer science – are currently on year-long work attachments. It remains to be seen if those also turn into job offers, but Prof Lee expects the outcome to be good.

He said that although some students initially complained about the “long attachment”, they have come to see the value of the scheme. He added: “They realise that the programme has given them the opportunity to try on different jobs and companies.”

SIT accountancy graduates Amanda Teo and Sean Ng, who did their internships at Ernst & Young for six months, were offered eight-month jobs at Deloitte and PwC respectively.

Mr Teo, 23, who is an audit assistant with Ernst & Young, is glad to have landed a job with a reputed accounting firm, especially in these times. “At the back of my mind, I had been worried about the slowdown in the economy,” he said. “The internship made it possible for me to land a good position.”

Mr Ng, 23, a senior audit assistant at PwC Singapore, said the integrated work-study scheme is a “win-win” for both students and firms like PwC.

She said SIT students were a great help as the work attachment programme was aligned with the firm’s sixth-month period. “It allowed me to assess students on the job and identify them for different roles,” he said.

If students are looking for a career in audit, this is one way to get identified for potential graduate opportunities in PwC.”

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Mr Suen Ooi, who will be joining PwC Singapore as an audit associate, had earlier spent eight months with the company under SIT’s integrated Work Study Programmes.

SIT opened in 2009 to offer degrees to polytechnic graduates in partnership with overseas universities and internships are a requirement for its students.

PHOTO: SIT