SIT grads benefit from substantive, longer internships

They get good job offers and higher salaries, many from companies where they had stints

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SIT, which requires its seniors to take up eight-month to year-long internships, opportuned the career journey of its graduates, who now have over 800 internship placements. SIT graduates, who did internships with accounting firm Ernst & Young were even offered positions (level) higher than those generally offered to freshgrads.

Of the 150 hospitality students who graduated this May, 78 per cent secured job offers upon completing their work placements. Internships generally last six months for university students and three months for polytechnic students.

SIT president Tan Tianbo has reiterated that the work, which he described as substantive, is real work. He said the university's work-based programme is aimed at a unique and distinct way for each degree programme, catering to the specific needs of the industry.

Students are asked to treat it as real work. They have to apply for the positions, as they would for any job. SIT also has a team that monitors the students' progress weekly.

And the gains? The students are encouraged to identify a problem in their companies which they can use as a case study for their final-year projects and come-up-with solutions.

Professor Tan said, "The real work undertaken through our programme has enabled our students to understand the challenges faced in the current fast-changing industry. They are better equipped to adaptability, creativity and innovation. It is also the potential to lead to full-time employment after graduation, as evidenced by the SIT graduating cohorts."

Accountancy graduate Olivia Chen Jiewen, 23, who landed a job at Ernst & Young, said she was assigned tasks similar to those of regular staff during her internship. "It was interesting to see how my learned skills and knowledge can be applied, and there is also a chance to develop soft skills such as teamwork, communication skills, and, importantly, how to work in teams."

She was pleasantly surprised to be offered a higher position than her peers and said the extended internship allowed her to be job-ready and "out the ground running".

Hospitality business graduate Edelweiss Lim, 24, who did an internship at Moselle Berlin, one of the world's top luxury wine importers, said her role was to understand and learn about the wine business. "I was immediately thrown into the job, which was a great learning experience. After the internship, I joined the company on a part-time basis before the work placement ended."

Now is a permanent position in assistant project manager at Moselle Berlin, he said: "I would not have landed a job with such a prestigious company if not for the work-study programme. I feel I know much more than the average one who has completed a full-time degree."

Moselle Berlin (Singapore) executive director Kayley Long said the firm strongly believes in integrating students involved in the different parts of organizing a large-scale international events such as IBW Asia.

Mr Christopher Wong, head of assurance at Ernst & Young Singapore, said it is good that students get the opportunity to intern longer, but there is still a need for students to balance their studies and work, and to gain an understanding of the industry.

"This programme allows Ernst & Young to introduce and promote the programme more comprehensively, and we have the opportunity to reach out to and host promising interns. If it is a win-win arrangement for SIT, the multinational, we said."

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