

# 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.

SIT associate professor Ivan Lee, who oversees the Integrated Work Study Programme, said the university is heartened 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” – graduates with deep knowledge and skills. Three years ago, it launched its own degrees 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 170 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 outcomes to be good.

He said that although some students initially complained about the “long attachments”, they have come to see the value of these. He added: “They realise that the programme prepares them well for work and gives them the opportunity to try out different jobs and companies.”

SIT accountancy graduates Amanda Teo and Sean Ooi agree on the value of the eight-month-long stints, which landed them jobs with Big Four accounting firms.

Said Mr Ooi, 25, who will be joining PwC Singapore as an audit associate: “It was challenging, but it gave me a good feel of what the job entails. I also picked up soft skills, such as how to work in a team, how to communicate effectively and handle clients.”

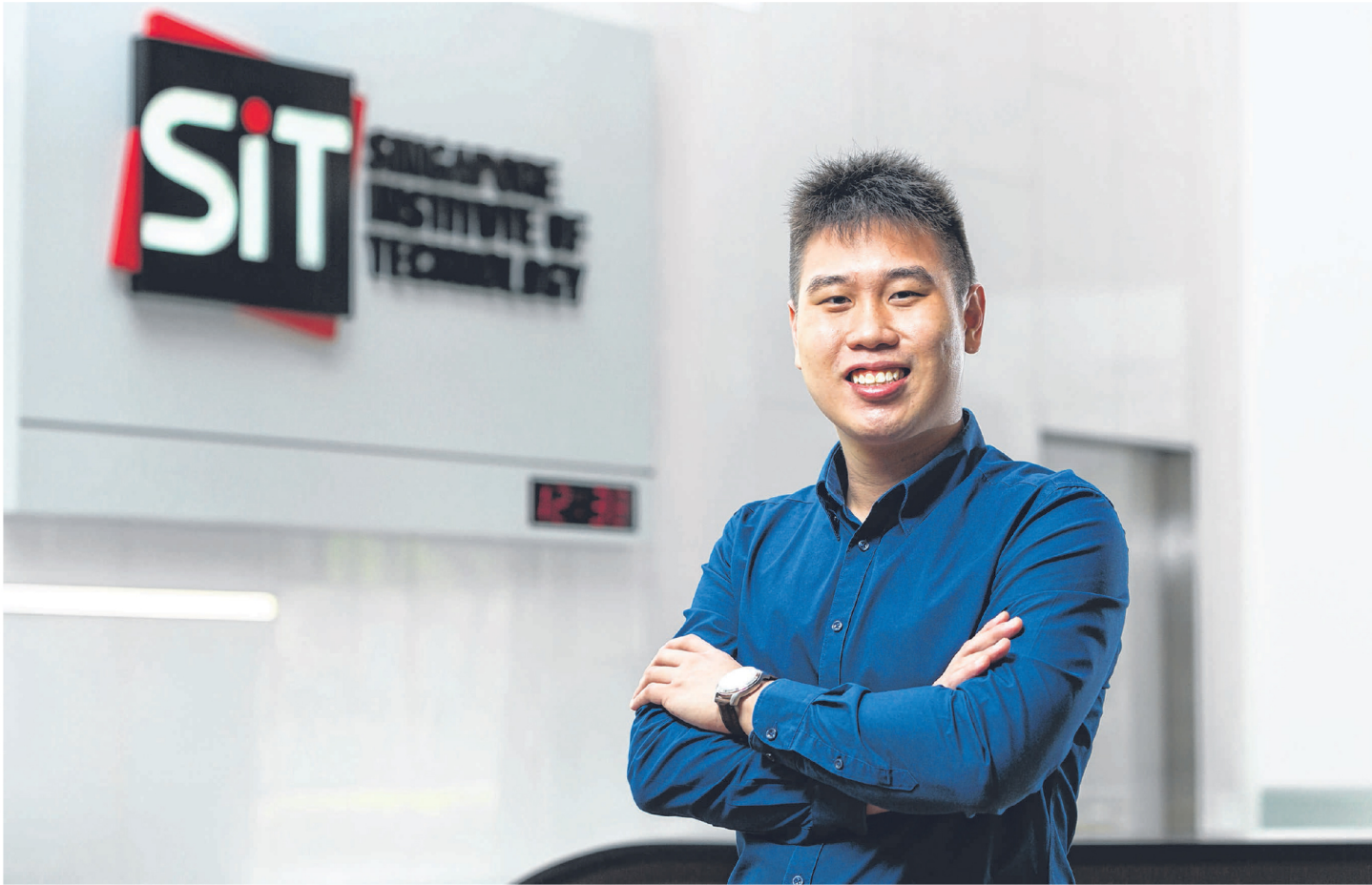
Ms Teo, 23, who is an audit assistant with Ernst & Young, is glad to have landed a job with a reputed accounting firm, especially in these times. “At the back of my mind, I had been worried about the slowdown in the economy,” she said. “The internship made it possible for me to land a good position.”

Ms Trillion So, human capital leader 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 to the firm’s audit peak period. She added: “It allows us to assess students on the job and identify talent who have the right attributes in areas such as leadership and business acumen.

“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 Sean 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 Programme. 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

SCOUTING TALENT

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MS TRILLION SO, human capital leader at PwC Singapore, on the work-study scheme.