
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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Longer and more substantive work attachments have paid off for Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) graduates, with students getting good job offers and higher salaries.



Ms Olivia Chan and Mr Edwin See work at firms where they did internships.

The university, which requires its students to take up eight-month to year-long internships, reported that out of its second batch of 96 accountancy students who graduated this month, 83 received job offers from the companies that they did internships with for eight months.

Six graduates who did internships with accounting firm Ernst & Young were even offered positions a level higher than those generally offered to fresh graduates.

Of the 19 hospitality students who took on jobs for eight months in the tourism industry and event management companies, 12 received job offers upon completing their work attachments.

Internships generally last six months for university students and three months for polytechnic students.

SIT president Tan Thiam Soon is heartened that the work attachments have translated into job offers. He said the university's work-study programme is structured in 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.

By the end of their internships, 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 economy, and develop skills of adaptability, creativity and innovation. It also has the potential to lead to full-time employment after graduation, as evidenced by the SIT graduating cohorts."

Accountancy graduate Olivia Chan Jiawen, 23, who landed a job at Ernst & Young, said she was assigned tasks similar to those of regular staff during her internship. "It was challenging, but I picked up valuable skills – such as how to communicate with clients and, more importantly, how to work in a team."

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 "hit the ground running".

Hospitality business graduate Edwin See, 24, who did an internship at Messe Berlin, one of the world's 10 leading trade fair companies, found his stint so valuable that he continued working with the company on a part-time basis after his work attachment ended.

Now in a permanent position as assistant project manager at Messe 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 learnt so much during the attachment, especially being involved in ITB Asia, the biggest travel trade show for this region."

Messe Berlin (Singapore) executive director Katrina Leung said the firm strongly believes in getting students involved in the different parts of organising a large-scale international event such as ITB Asia.

Mr Christopher Wong, head of assurance at Ernst & Young Singapore, said it is good that students have substantive on-the-job training over a longer period of time, so that they have the opportunity to observe and work through an entire audit cycle.

"The programme allows Ernst & Young to introduce and promote the profession more convincingly, and we have the opportunity to reach out to and hire promising interns. It is a win-win arrangement for SIT, the students and us," he said.

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Number of SIT accountancy students – out of 96 who graduated this month – who got job offers from the firms they did internships with for eight months.