



創新科技署
Innovation and
Technology Commission

STEM Internship Scheme

enriches university students with I&T work experience

The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) launched the first-ever STEM Internship Scheme this summer, offering relief to both students and employers in an all-important summer work window.

This year, the coronavirus pandemic presents a compromised outlook for university students' internship and job opportunities.

Launched in June, the first-ever STEM Internship Scheme offered much needed assistance and resources to companies/organisations willing to provide innovation and technology (I&T)-related work experience to STEM students from the city's public universities. Under the Scheme, eligible students would receive monthly allowance of \$10,500, capped at three months for each academic year.

Now, with the majority of university STEM students back to their 'new normal' of studying, the Scheme has proved its worth - being highly praised by students, employers and university administration alike.

Confident students met with exciting start-up

When summer was drawing near, Jaspreet Dhaliwal Singh was aware of a diminished internship offer. "There was a drastic reduction. Some companies did not feel that they would like to have virtual internship for the summer," he noted.

Along with fellow students Umer Shehzad Khan and Monesh Govind Lalwani, Jaspreet is a third-year Computer Engineering student at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). The three confident and articulate students were offered internship places by local tech start-up FutureNow Data Technology Limited immediately following the release of the Scheme, with each given a specific task during the two-month internship. They believe the internship truly offered them a glimpse into the real world.

Jaspreet, for example, was tasked to work at the security and structure of the company's knowledge sharing platform, an instantaneous platform with short video content developed and uploaded by the global community. His technical knowledge including server set-up, data migration and other related technical issues came handy in the job. Monesh, meanwhile, was responsible for the development of the company's website, working closely with the team's creative designer.

Umer was given the opportunity to get involved in the digital marketing side of the company's business. He was glad for the experience, offering him the first-ever taste of the commercial side of a business. Now he is getting more interested in the information technology side of a bank.

Monesh used to think a successful business venture is all about offering a tech-based solution. After working in the real business world, he realised "one needs a strong foundation from



Umer (second left), Jaspreet (second right) and Monesh (centre) working in tech start-up FutureNow are pictured with its Founder, Raymond Yeung (first right), and Creative Designer, Annise Hui (first left), in co-work space in Cyberport.

both technology and business sides to be commercially viable." He cherishes the network he built from his internship.

Chemistry student gets a taste in laboratory

Olivia Fung Wing-sze, a third-year Chemistry student at the Hong Kong Baptist University decided to look for an internship opportunity, the first time in her life, in order to learn about real-life work experience in relation to her study. She understood the odds were against her especially at these challenging times.

Government's financial subsidy certainly represented added opportunities for students like Olivia. "The Scheme encourages the would-be employers to offer internship opportunities for STEM students. I can only imagine getting to work as an intern in a relevant testing organisation would be much more difficult if not for the Scheme," she added.

Olivia undertook an internship of four weeks at Wellab, an enterprise specialised in consulting, testing and research services

to a wide range of customers. She was involved in getting various testing apparatus prepared and sterilised before a testing procedure, to the industry's and the company's high standards.

It was a proper glimpse into an industry for Olivia. The industry will be a reliable source of good career opportunities for Chemistry students upon graduation.

Added flexibility for start-up recruiters

Offering three internship places to the HKUST students Jaspreet, Umer and Monesh, tech-focused entrepreneur Raymond Yeung of FutureNow was quick to point out that if not for the Scheme, he would surely not have offered as many opportunities this year. "I was sure to work with students," he said. "But without the Scheme's resources, it would have been difficult for our start-up to offer the needed incentive for three students." Raymond also praised the speedy processes involved with the ITC and the HKUST in the first-ever Scheme.

On the way to bring out the best of the young interns, Raymond stressed the importance of two-way communication. He believed, "It's important that the company's decision makers will learn from the young generation as well, apart from playing a mentor role."

HKUST: Scheme very well received

The HKUST Career Centre has seen encouraging signs deriving from the technology sector; small companies' active participation, for example, accounted for around 80 per cent of the internship places offered. "We've received from 290 organisations, and more than 300 students were given an offer to work as an intern in the summer," said Head of the HKUST Career Centre, Cheryl Lee, who added that students across years, including over 50 students graduating after summer were all benefited.

Lee was particularly impressed by the diversity of the companies involved, as well as the internship opportunities offered to students from different major subjects. Participating companies came from various technology fields, including hydroponics and sophisticated acoustic systems. She added that many opportunities represented good prospects for students doing pure science major.

In a show of support to students perhaps less academically gifted, some participating companies, such as data processing and analytics company DataFarm, made it clear that they would embrace students not with superior GPAs.

Karen Chua, Assistant Head of the Career Centre, credited the ITC for the Scheme's good intent. "Only weeks into the Covid-19 outbreak, there were signs pointing to a weakened economy and we expected a decrease in the offering of internship places. Then came June and the Scheme debuted, and the immediate positive impact on the year's internship landscape. The Scheme was so well received by companies and students alike that we had to stop the application mere weeks after the launch of the Scheme."

The Scheme fulfils its objective to foster students' interest in pursuing a career in the I&T space after graduation, and help enlarge the local I&T talent pool.

ITC: Flexible scheme covering various business sectors

The ITC designed the Scheme to be flexible. Individual universities may supplement further requirements and make specific arrangements to suit their own circumstances. An internship place will be regarded as I&T-related as long as its actual work contains I&T elements, for instance technology-related intellectual property work, digital marketing and data analysis for the manufacturing industry. Companies of various business nature can join the Scheme. Participating employers may pay the student interns an honorarium on top of the allowance under the Scheme with reference to their company policies, industry benchmarks or market rates to employ their desired talents.

STEM Internship Scheme website:
[www.itf.gov.hk/en/funding-programmes/
nurturing-talent/stem-internship-scheme](http://www.itf.gov.hk/en/funding-programmes/nurturing-talent/stem-internship-scheme)

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