

# PREPARING FOR TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE

How universities in the UAE are providing career paths and not just degrees for students

DUBAI

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**E**nabling students to find their career path is not just a goal, it is in the here and now. UAE universities in the past few years have placed more emphasis on preparing students for the workforce. This is done through various initiatives such as internships, industry visits, and career guidance programs. The focus is on providing students with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the workforce.

One of the key initiatives is the introduction of internships. Many universities now offer internships to their students, providing them with hands-on experience in their chosen field. This helps them to understand the industry better and to develop the skills they need for their future careers.

Another initiative is the introduction of industry visits. Universities are now organizing regular visits to various industries, giving students a chance to see how their studies are being applied in the real world. This helps them to gain a better understanding of the industry and to make more informed decisions about their future careers.

try relations, and the culture and dedication of the hosting employer, including the coaching and mentorship the direct line managers offer."

## WHY GRADUATE PLACEMENTS ARE IMPORTANT

The UAE, says Urban, places a higher focus upon graduate placements and measuring them, which is a great advancement.

"After all, higher education is not just about earning a degree, but being enriched with the knowledge, experience, innovation and creativity to succeed in the global job market. This all starts with internships and job market immersion of the forthcoming generations," he says.

Professor Mohammad Salem Wollongong in Dubai, says students see higher education as an investment in their future.

The major shift, says Salem, is an emphasis on [finding the right] career path, rather than just earning degrees, "in this context, internships are only one



## BIG TRANSITION

UAE students visit a career fair. Most universities in the UAE require their students to undergo internships.

Photo: Gulf News Archives

77%

placement in jobs for graduates by University of Wollongong in Dubai

85%

job placement for post-graduates by University of Wollongong in Dubai

piece of the puzzle. We start at the very beginning with our students to ensure that the degree they choose has a demand from industry."

## INTERNSHIP IS A SERIOUS RESPONSIBILITY

The internship prep of a student is a serious responsibility, say these educators. It is the precursor to sending them out in the world fully prepared to engage with it.

"Dubai places a high emphasis

on experiential learning," says Urban.

"And part of this student journey at RIT is a 3-12 months extensive, full-time internship, the Cooperative Education programme. Throughout this extensive work experience, students are exposed to different positions and work environments for the successful transition from university to full-time careers."

The career preparation course is mandatory for every second year student at RIT Dubai, he

adds. "The curriculum of this course is co-designed with the help of industry. Students are exposed to the traditional CV writing and interview skills and the course also allows them to understand the importance of professionalism, ethics, design thinking and growth mindset."

The duration of the extensive internship depends on the [subject] major, explains Urban. For example, "organising students are required to complete one year, computing and computing

security students six months and business students three months of full-time, relevant work experience. Preparation starts at second year, which is an ideal time students still have some time until third year when the internship cycles start."

## JOB PLACEMENTS FOR GRADUATES

At the University of Wollongong Dubai, with its [job] placement rates for undergraduates at 77 per cent and post-graduates at

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