

FROM THE COVER 3

CAREER GUIDANCE

“We prepare them with a career map and give them access to employability workshops as soon as they enrol.”

Prof Mohammad Salem | President, University of Wollongong in Dubai

“Dubai places a high emphasis on experiential learning, and part of this student journey at RIT is ... [an] internship.”

Oral Urban | Manager, Career Services and Cooperative Education, Rochester Institute of Technology, Dubai

85 per cent, within six months of graduation, students are integrated into workshops at the beginning of their programme.

“We prepare them with a career map and give them access to employability workshops as soon as they enrol,” says Salem.

“We provide access to an exclusive online recruitment website and our dedicated Career Development Centre has sent out over 11,000 CVs to date. In 2019, 55 companies established at the UOWD annual Career Fair, with more than 460 companies advertising positions with UOWD this year,” he says.

Many of their degree programmes, he says, have been formally recognised by international professional organisations. “This means that students are following a curriculum that is driven towards employment.”

HITS AND MISSES

While a high rate of intern conversion to employees is a foundational ambition for a university, there are misses.

“Just as with any job placement, internships are about humans interacting with each other. It is very rare, but it happens.”



STEPPING STONES TO SUCCESS: INTERNS

Mukesh Kumar Bhaskaran

24, Indian, Master of Engineering Management, University of Wollongong in Dubai, Supply Chain & Logistics Intern, with Transnexus Overseas Incorporated S.A.



“Preparing for my first internship wasn't easy because I didn't have any real-world experience. I was lucky enough to get support from fellow intern,” says Bhaskaran.

His rooming, he says, has helped him gain deeper insights into the FMCG industry. “I have developed a better understanding of the career path of a Supply Chain Manager, helping me make an informed career decision,” he says.

One of the most challenging aspects of his internship was the minimal input and lack of regular analysis. “Then I began to self-assess myself, which prompted me to evaluate and develop my skills on a regular basis,” he says.

Ahira Jelta

22, Indonesian, Studying Mechanical Engineering at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), interned at Siemens



Should an intern go prepared or learn on the job? “A little bit of both,” says Jelta. “The idea of an internship includes interactive learning. However, a certain level of competence, leading to your duties, should be achieved before you begin working.”

The most challenging aspect of being an intern is not knowing what to expect, she says. “As for the transformation, university learning provides you with a template to which you can add the internship experiences.”

How did she prepare for her internship? “I received a lot of guidance from my parents, as well as support from my university, which helped me to tackle the challenges in the workforce. I have also adapted myself while at work, and we are very much encouraged to do so.”

What career path is she contemplating? “I've been exposed to the aviation industry that led to my father. He's been a pilot for more than 30 years. Eggo, I've always felt comfortable with it, and I would definitely like to branch into the aviation industry,” she says.

INTERNS WHO BECAME EMPLOYEES

Harshana Badhani

27, Indian, Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing), from Wollongong University in Dubai, interned with Mastercard Dubai, Works with Mastercard New York as Communications Specialist, North America, Mastercard.



Soon after her Marketing internship with Mastercard Dubai concluded, Badhani was offered a role within the team as a contractor. Her degree at the university and the various projects she undertook during the duration of the study helped her gain an understanding of the real business world, she says.

“In addition, the annual career fair and the period leading to it was always a good learning opportunity,” she says. She worked at three different companies

Yousuf Sami Seman

Lebanese, 22, Bachelor's degree in Business Marketing with a Minor in Psychology from RIT, Works with Lift Mart Elevators and Escalators LLC, Dubai



He worked for Lift Mart for around eight weeks at first. “It was during my CO-OP programme, I started as a marketing trainee, but towards the end of my internship, I took on many more responsibilities. To grow and stand out in an organisation, it's of utmost importance to be open to the idea of handling tasks from different departments,” he says. This attitude also helps you understand the organisation's systems, he believes. “It was tough in the beginning, but I adapted and made sure that information flow would never be held back from my position.”

His university years, he says, taught him many valuable lessons. “But the one that stuck with me was that no matter how much

during university. A uniform courtesy, a local bank and at Mastercard. “Each internship made me learn so much about myself and what I wanted and did not want to do in the future.”

The challenges included adapting to different work cultures and balancing university and internship workload.

5 Best practices for interns:

- Take up new opportunities and roles that pique your interest. It is helpful in finalising your career path.
- Work hard, work sincerely.
- Ask a lot of questions.
- Network, network, network.
- People first, everything else after (this is something my mentor told me, and that I live by). Work can get crazy and things get out of control. Be kind and care for those you work with, at the end of the day it is what truly matters.

you think you know about a topic, that can all change overnight. With today's technology and accessibility of information on the internet, new and improved studies are being published at such a fast pace that you can learn something new nearly every day. To say my university cemented the idea of research in my mind.

His idea of a career, thankfully, is in alignment with what he had realised at university. “I had wonderful professors who put in a lot of time to equip me with the necessary tools to use in a business environment — whether it be writing up a good report or discussing a new strategy with my superior.”

5 best practices:

- Give every task you have 200 per cent.
- Think before you speak, do not jump to conclusions.
- Don't assume, do the research and ask.
- Always surround yourself with people who are well-educated and can teach you a thing or two. Expose yourself to as many different fields of work as you can to broaden your knowledge.