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**Employment: Choose your career path**

By : [MICHAEL SUN](#)

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Students should think about their careers from a young age — not when they are undergraduates, writes MICHAEL SUN.

SOME universities in Malaysia are providing career services to students to compensate for their level of maturity. Students are induced to consider career issues at the earliest orientation and accept job opportunities well in advance.

"A lot of universities are now providing career services for students to change their mindset; to induce them to think about career issues at the earliest and grab opportunities well before they need a job," says Sharon Ang Shen Mei, a cooperative education and career services assistant manager with UCSI Communications Sdn Bhd.

There is no formalised transition from being a student to becoming a job seeker. "Students graduate one day and the next day they wake up as job seekers rummaging for the right clothes and shoes to wear," she adds.

"It is time for the young to shift their focus from being just exam-orientated to a purposeful career-minded application. It all depends on the mindset of students and that mindset has to start at a young age, before they enter university," says UCSI corporate communications director Stephen Ng. Being culturally mollycoddled, many students in Malaysia are drifters and not seekers. Corporate staff inform students of the "carrots" to attract them but most local students are not making enquiries.

"They should be more inquisitive and career focused. By contrast, students in Australia are more independent and hence, it all boils down to maturity," adds Ng, who graduated from Australia.

"We have to provide the mind set. We have to motivate them by telling them that there are a whole lot of things to be exposed to.

"They need to be more career-minded and the main issue is to start them right from a

very young age," says Ng.

Since international and local graduates in Malaysia lack the transition awareness, University College Sedaya International (UCSI) has been providing an awareness and an opportunity for students to make the transition.

"Only a minority of students are focused as to what they wish to pursue in their careers. Most are unaware until they become job seekers and that is when they become frantic," says Ang.

"That's why at UCSI we have an internship programme to enable graduates to prepare for graduate employment by heightening an awareness of their employability profile," she adds.

Speaking at the recent two-day in-house UCSI Career Fair organised in collaboration with Capital Network Resources Sdn Bhd, she adds: "This event is to get students thinking about their careers. We brought in Capital Network Resources which has contacts with potential employers."

The latter had set up career stalls at the UCSI Heights campus in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur. Some of the 17 corporate exhibitors at the fair included OYL, Omron, EON bank, HSBC bank, Genting Bhd, TMnet, ING, Life Code Resources, Maxis and Hong Leong Bhd.

The recent fair was aimed at inducing a change in the mindset of students. Even if they did not indicate interest by visiting the career booths, they would have been made aware of corporate opportunities, submitted their resumes and be considered for future employment .

"We have tried to provide all the opportunities. But one can only bring the horse to the water. It cannot be forced to drink," she explains.

"Our undergraduate students in their first year and subsequently would be made aware of employment opportunities such as those at Genting, Maxis and FedEx.

"These students may collect respective company cards as future referrals for an internship programme and secure subsequent employment before graduation. That is what our department endeavours to do.

"My department prepared students for this through briefings on how to write a curriculum vitae cover letter, on grooming skills and on conduct at an interview.

"UCSI conducts this recruitment fair twice yearly. "We had one earlier in the year."

Capital Network Resources managing director Aisha Ridzuan says: "We are launching this career awareness fair for the benefit of UCSI fresh graduates. The participating companies are seeking to recruit fresh graduates as management trainees and executives.

"We chose the USCI Heights Cheras campus as the venue because of the general fluency in English and the hive of activity. The response to this career awareness campaign has been quite good."

The career awareness campaign was set up to address USCI Heights' 5,000 students.

"Students have been filling up application forms of participating companies to make career enquiries. This morning, there were about 70 students and we are expecting a crowd later in the afternoon," she added on the first day of the fair.

Two days of career talks were provided respectively by HSBC bank, EON Bank, Life Code Resources, Genting Bhd and NTA Monitor.

Information pertaining to careers were distributed in brochures and fliers, and free gifts were handed out to attract the USCI campus crowd's attention.

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**Employment: Undergrads can opt for internship**

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RESORTS World Bhd and companies in the Genting group are looking to offer employment.

But fresh graduates must be versatile and articulate, and they need to have the desired personality for management trainee positions in the group's current expansion plans.

Internship programmes are also available for undergraduates while part-time employment is available to those currently undertaking higher degree programmes in Malaysia.

"We need a constant supply of people coming in because we are growing so fast and Genting Bhd is expanding to Singapore," says Lily Chang, Resorts World human resource department assistant vice-president.

"We have a lot of positions — not only for internship, but career opportunities for

graduates and for weekend and public holiday part-timers who may wish to pursue further studies.

"We are looking towards the future, are keen to take in new blood and are looking for good people. But numbers are not so critical as we have no specified numbers.

"As long as we can find good prospective employees, we don't mind them coming on board to join us at various positions in the many locations within Resorts World.

"We give very competitive benefits. Not only do we provide jobs but career opportunities too," Chang added in a Press interview at the recent UCSI Career Fair held at UCSI Heights campus in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.

"We have many different activities so staff may be transferred around for exposure to get a feel of the organisation. We take care of our staff's career opportunities when we do their career mapping," she adds.

"We are into training and multi-tasking for selected employees so that they may perceive their own career advancement," explains Resorts World human resources department executive Amanda Ang Mei Lan.

Resorts World has various activities in different divisions — hotel, casino, theme park and administrative staff divisions. And within the Genting group, there are both local and international companies requiring staff.

Overall, the group has about 40,000 employees. At the Genting Highlands resort alone, there are 2,500 employees.

Sociology students pursuing a psychology major may join human resources at Genting. There are also other job openings with non-specific requirements such as for the casino operations and in the hotel services, Chang adds.

On the quality of the graduates she met, Chang says: "The English language competency of some 30 psychology students was unexpectedly good.

"They had asked relevant and logical questions, so they may be considered suitable as candidates for Resorts World."

"There were engineering students who were interested in opportunities at Genting Highlands and the resort's accessibility from UCSI.

"They wanted to know more about the company, which is a good start. You need to know the company before you actually make an application and they have probing minds at the very least."

Students interested in internship programmes may call Chang at 03-6105-2078 or e-mail [lily.chang@genting.com](mailto:lily.chang@genting.com).

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**Employment: Know themselves better**

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ONG Weng Hoong, a dealer at ING-Barings financial products, is looking for **10** management trainees to fill future managerial positions in each of the five major divisions of a company to be set up.

"We are satisfied with the response of more than 60 names collected. From these candidates we will later recruit management trainees," he said in a Press interview at the recent UCSI Career Fair held at the UCSI Heights campus in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.

"We are looking for 10 managers for each of the five major divisions — loan mortgage, unit trust, insurance, risk management and estate **planning**.

"And we encourage commission-based rather than salaried prospective candidates who should be self-motivated and career-minded. They will be selected at the seminars which will be conducted later.

"Our main focus is for candidates in life insurance and for the loan mortgage division." Although no interviews were conducted, Ong ran a battery of psychological tests in Mandarin and English to help students know themselves better in their selective choices.

"We conducted tests for dominance, influence, steadiness and conscientiousness (DISC tests). But we have not analysed these yet and will conduct another career seminar to discuss these results with our candidates."

Sought after are students with at least a diploma. "They must be able to take on challenges like managers."

They are later expected to manage a team as assistant managers within a six-month period and to perform as managers within two years.

On his general impression of the students he says: "Some students have problems with the English language but we also communicate in Mandarin.

"There are those who appear to have qualities which we are looking for. They were outspoken and presentable — projecting the right outlook and image."

No significant differences between the sexes were noticed. "But in general terms girls are better at concluding sales whereas guys are steadier in their performances."

Successful candidates would be located in Kuala Lumpur or at USJ, Petaling Jaya.