

More employers at SIM's career fair

Public agencies and private firms offer 139 internships and 440 jobs to its students and graduates

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At a time when there are concerns over the employability of private school students, Singapore's largest private school is pulling out all the stops to boost the job prospects of its students.

Singapore Institute of Management's private school arm had 129 employers take part in its career fair held on Friday – almost double the number last year.

They included public agencies such as the National Parks Board and private firms like the global consulting firm Accenture, IT and business services firm Cognizant and accounting firm Ernst & Young.

All in, they offered 139 internships and 440 jobs to SIM students and graduates.

SIM has 20,000 students, including 16,500 Singaporeans, enrolled in some 60 degree courses offered by its 10 overseas university partners, including the University of London and RMIT University from Melbourne, Australia.

Mr Lee Kwok Cheong, who heads SIM's private education arm, said his school aims to boost the employability of its graduates.

"With the slowdown in the economy, there is growing anxiety over graduates finding jobs, but the employability of our graduates has always been a priority for SIM.

"Over the years, we have put in place many measures to prepare our students for work and help them find good jobs. We have a dedicated career-development office which, besides offering career counselling, organises internships, mentorships, industry and employer networking sessions as well as job fairs."

SIM's latest graduate employment survey of its students who graduated in 2015 and last year has shown



that 70 per cent of its graduates had full-time jobs within six months. More than half – 60 per cent – had two or more job offers. The average gross monthly pay was \$2,800 for graduates with full-time jobs – about 15 to 20 per cent less than students from the public universities.

Last year, 83 per cent of graduates from public universities found full-time jobs within six months.

Mr Lee said over the years, some companies that have found SIM graduates to be a good fit have come back to recruit more of them.

One of them is Cognizant, which has hired several of SIM's psychology and IT graduates. Its Asia-Pacific head Jayajyoti Sengupta said the firm "greatly values" them for their attitude, analytical skills and ability to effectively apply their knowledge to practical situations.

Mr Lee said his school sees the value of internships, just as public universities do.

"Our numbers are small compared to the public universities, but over the years, we have been encouraging more of our students to

go on internships.

"Besides acquiring job skills, it is a good way for students to try out a job they are interested in. They also get to find out more about the industry they are heading to and the kind of jobs available."

Accounting and finance student Leow Guo Fang, 22, who has been on two three-month internships, agreed that she has learnt much from the work stints.

"I picked up valuable work and people skills, and I do believe the internships will give me an edge over

other students when I go out into the job market in the middle of this year."

Last year, the job prospects of those who take the private school route came under the spotlight after a survey by the Committee for Private Education, which regulates the industry, showed that private school graduates find it harder to land jobs and receive lower salaries than their peers from public universities.

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SIM's private school arm had 129 employers take part in its career fair held on Friday – almost double the number last year. ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR