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EDITORIAL

Following recent discussions on employability, internships and young professionals, the Human Resource (HR) Committee of the European Chamber of Commerce (EuroCham) decided to set up a working group to analyse the situation of internships in companies in Singapore. The result of this work is in your hands: “The Internship Imperative”.

Firstly, I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to our HR Committee, in particular the internship Working Group and the interviewees for the production of this publication. This paper would not have been made possible without their dedication and commitment. The assembly of business professionals imparting their invaluable input has substantiated the content of this paper.

The findings of this study underline the importance of practical experience for students. One cannot discount the value of an internship. Through internships, students are able to practically apply their classroom knowledge, gain confidence and become familiar with the demands of the employment landscape. Moreover, benefits are not one directional. Employers too can immensely benefit from hiring interns. The angles from which interns view issues are different and hence, they are able to bring fresh ideas to the table. They also provide foundational assistance and contribute to the talent pool of the company.

An internship completes the academic dimension for students and can be the pinnacle of a student's academic life. This paper aims to shed some light on the potential benefits internships can bring to the Singaporean landscape. The introduction of new, innovative and potent HR strategies will enable Singapore to continue its reputation as a premier education and workforce hub as well as allow European and international businesses to prosper.

I encourage readers of this white paper to consider it as a contribution of European companies and higher education institutions in Singapore to support the Singapore government's ongoing efforts to maintain its leadership position in human capital development.

Matteo Vezzosi

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EuroCham HR Committee Meeting with Singapore Ministry of Manpower, 30 November 2012

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GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

In this white paper we shall use the term internship as a generic term covering all types of programs where education and on-the-job learning are part of a system, whether it be called internship or apprenticeship or professional attachment, the expression used in Singapore.

INTERNSHIP: A short and temporary on-the-job learning program required for college or university students to complete their degree. Interns may be paid or unpaid for their work. In Singapore, an internship is usually called professional attachment. In this white paper, the word “internship” is used also as a generic term that includes student apprenticeships, traineeships and internships.

APPRENTICESHIP: An education program that combines an alternation of on-the-job training and academic courses leading to a degree. In Germany, the Dual System has made apprenticeship into a form of education followed by two-thirds of students in higher education. Apprenticeships usually last one to three years and in many countries employers are required to pay apprentices for their work.

TRAINEESHIP: Short-term program for professional or technical learning not leading to a degree. Traineeships are usually paid and may be organized as an introductory period of employment.

ACADEMIC RECOGNITION OF INTERNSHIP: higher education institutions confer academic credit for internships by making requirement for internships as a condition to earning a degree. Alternatively academic courses attribute points, assessments or certifications to internships as part of a program of studies.

STUDENT PASS (SP): All full-time matriculated students in a Singapore approved school must have a Student Pass. With this pass, students can work 16 hours per week during the time of their courses and full time during the holiday period or at the end of the courses. It does not allow students to do a full-time internship during their stay in Singapore. A Student Pass is not extendable.

WORK HOLIDAY PASS (WHP): provided by the Singapore government and limited to students up to 25 years old. It is very flexible as students can apply directly without a company being involved. It allows students to live and work for up to 6 months in Singapore. Students can apply without having found an internship and have up to 3 months following the agreement by the Local Authorities to “activate” the pass. It is valid for 6 months and valid for 8 countries. In recent years the Singapore government had limited access to students enrolled in universities ranked among the top 200 universities but in 2014 access was opened to institutions of Higher Education Institution recognized by the government of the home country.

TRAINING EMPLOYMENT PASS (TEP): provided by the Singapore government upon application by the company hosting the intern. The duration of internship is officially limited to 3 months. The internship must be part of the degree program from a Singapore-ranked “acceptable” institution or comparable and equivalent in standards and earn a fix monthly salary of at least SGD 3,000.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The HR Committee of the European Chamber of Commerce in Singapore has taken the initiative to produce a white paper to analyse the internship situation in Singapore.

The white paper's immediate purpose is to elaborate on the significance and benefits of internship for Singapore based on the long experience of the system in European countries, and to discuss which aspects may contribute to the Singapore government's efforts to improve its own internship system in maintaining its leadership in human capital development.

The white paper summarizes Europe's unique experience in inventing internship systems which has evolved over a thousand year history leading to the modern partnership between business and higher education to prepare students for success in a global workplace. The paper shows why internship is a win for students, a win for companies and a win for higher education.

Beyond a summary of the European experience, the white paper takes up concrete questions on internship by illustrating the views of thirteen HR professionals who head internship programs in European companies in Singapore. Leaders of corporate internship programs shared their experience on the quality of interns, preparation of students by schools, ease of obtaining permits for foreign students and the duration of internships. We also consulted European and Singaporean institutions of higher education for their views. The "internship imperative" is described by these professionals in terms of benefits for their companies but also as essential for the quality of higher education. The benefits for Singapore are identified and areas for continuing improvement are suggested.

The white paper recognizes efforts made by the Singapore government to include internship in its human capital strategy and concludes with a message of support by the HR professionals of European companies and higher educational institutions operating in Singapore. Specific areas of discussion between EuroCham and the Singapore government are identified as:

1. length of internships and multiple internships
2. preparation for internship before working in the company
3. international internships
4. access to internship in Singapore for European students

The EuroCham HR committee concluded with an initiative to develop internship exchanges between Singaporean and European students that would be supported by EuroCham member companies.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

This white paper was written on the initiative of the Singapore EuroCham HR Committee after exchanges among members revealed that internships were becoming a growing area of importance for European companies in Singapore. The HR Committee members felt that a white paper would be helpful in clarifying the position of European companies but also, since internship was invented in Europe, would share their experience and best practice as a contribution to Singapore's efforts in human capital development.

With that purpose in mind, an Internship committee was formed composed of members representing corporate HR, business schools and experts in human capital development to formulate the European assessment of the internship situation in Singapore. The following objectives for the white paper were formulated:

1. Define the position of European companies and institutions of higher education operating in Singapore on issues relating to internships.
2. Describe their experience in comparing Singaporean and European interns.
3. Survey and analyse the different internship programs organized by European companies and identify best practice.
4. Identify areas of improvement by specifically addressing the areas of satisfaction and concern of the EuroCham members and drawing together recent research on internship and the feedback from talent professionals in European companies to provide a picture of an optimal internship system in Singapore.
5. Explore initiatives to enhance the exchange of students between Europe and Singapore.

Beyond the immediate objective of ensuring fair access for European interns in Singapore, the EuroCham HR Committee believes that sharing our European experience of internships would further enhance the development of human capital for Singaporeans.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The EuroCham HR Committee wanted to capture the experience and viewpoint of its members to understand why internships are so highly valued in European higher education and in companies as an essential component of their human capital development strategies.

The research methodology began with gathering information from documents and research on European internship systems. We organised meetings with business schools running internship programs in Singapore: the French ESSEC business school, the German Institute of Science and Technology TUM and Singapore Management University, as well as conducting a search of documents on internship. We then conducted structured interviews with 13 HR professionals who manage internships in major European companies operating in Singapore.

Qualitative interviews allowed us to capture the views of member companies and identify areas of dialogue with the Singapore government.

Our interviews were designed in such a way as to provide information at two levels:

1. What is the current situation in Singapore with Singapore and International Interns in your company and what are your best practices?
2. What is your satisfaction with interns and internship practices in Singapore and what are your ideas for improvement?

INTERNSHIP: FROM EUROPEAN INVENTION TO GLOBAL IMPERATIVE

The European experience of internships is the result of a long experience that has changed fundamentally according to the kind of skills needed for the European economy and the evolution of European education. A brief summary of the evolution of internship from the European middle ages to today's global talent needs can be divided into three stages.

1. The origins of internship in Europe
2. The renewal of internship with the industrial revolution
3. The globalisation of internship as a human capital imperative

EUROPE'S THOUSAND-YEAR EXPERIENCE OF INTERNSHIP

The European internship system has deep roots, going back to the guild system in the Middle Ages.¹ The guilds trained craftsmen in the specific skills of their trade such as butchers, bricklayers and bakers, but also high level professionals including doctors, lawyers and metallurgists. The medieval guilds preserved the exclusive right of members to exercise a trade; town charters specified that no-one from a neighbouring village would be allowed to compete in their jurisdiction. Nor could the candlestick maker do a little butchering or baking on the side to supplement his income. The apprenticeship system was part and parcel to feudalism: beyond teaching skills to young workers, it was the means of regulating the professions and protecting them from competition — including competition from their own apprentices!

Starting in the 11th century, which was the time when Europe created its first universities, young European workers began revolting against the guild system and formed “companies” traveling around Europe to improve their skills, notably migrating to new workplaces such as the sites where a new cathedral was being built.

This phenomenon of companies, fellowships and brotherhoods contributed significantly to the evolution of education. As a system of human capital development, the traditional guilds' attempt to monopolise markets and skills came to be despised by Europe's new educational thinkers. Renaissance humanists and the Modern Age champions of the scientific method promoted public education for all and fought against any limitation to the spread of knowledge. The traditional apprenticeship system which was based on a bonded relationship between the worker and the employer was banned in France at the

The European internship system has deep roots going back to the medieval guilds. The long term development philosophy of European companies is strongly linked to how we manage internships.

¹ Summarized from a passage *Working Wisdom* by Bob Aubrey and Paul Cohen, published by Jossey Bass 1995.

French Revolution and largely rejected in the American colonies as many of the American colonists had broken their bonds to start a new life in America. Industrial jobs represented the freedom of workers to move where they wanted.

The rise of industrialization in Europe brought about an explosion of new techniques for making things cheaply on a mass scale and this was the death blow for the guild system which was undermined by unskilled workers who were trained in the factories.

EUROPE'S REINVENTION OF INTERNSHIP IN THE MODERN WORLD

Skills, technology and applied research became an integrated system having a profound influence on education, but which was systematised differently in countries across Europe. In Germany and other Northern European countries, higher education integrated applied science and practical exposure to the factory, the mine or the field of war to create high level professionals as well as technical supervisors and skilled experts. For example, in the early 1800s the industrialist August Borsig invented what he called a "Lehring System" where young workers could be alternatively trained in practical skills on the factory floor and instructed in technical principles in a classroom.

Thus began a tradition of long-term human capital development specific to Northern Europe where industry and education went hand in hand. In today's Germany more than two-thirds of German youth opt for time-sharing apprenticeships, which allow them to learn any of 374 professions while they finish secondary school. Interestingly, many students who have completed the entry exam for university prefer to do an apprenticeship before starting higher education at university.

The modern internship system was integrated with education simultaneously in several northern European countries (Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia). The length of these educational internships explains why European companies have a tradition of stable and long-term human capital development, while in America the experience of immigration combined with the success of industries based on disruptive technologies such as media and high tech have created a culture of worker mobility and short-term training.²

The industrial revolution provided the basis for renewal of internships which became part of higher education in some European countries (Germany, Switzerland, and Scandinavia). The success of the system did not impact the UK and southern European universities until the late 20th century.

2 This contrast between America and Europe should not be overgeneralised: other factors such as the structure of the university system and even the experience of two world wars have played their part. In any case, Asian countries have benefited from both continuity of European long-term training and the efficiency of short-term and massive training systems.

Internship is an integral part of the German university system. It is estimated that around 600,000 students are doing an internship every year, either during their academic studies or directly after their academic course. Around half of those students find their first employment with the employer where they did an internship.³ German internships are not all compulsory: of the roughly half of university students who do not choose to do a formal internship, one study estimated that a third of them (29%) were working students.

Manufacturing employs student interns in Germany (17%), in second place is the education sector (14%), followed by the health sector and public and private administration. Of all interns in the study, 77% appraised their practical experience as "useful and insightful"⁴. The willingness of German employers to maintain their partnership with higher education through internship is estimated to have been a major factor in Germany's avoidance of massive youth unemployment experienced in Europe after the 2008 banking crisis.

A dimension of the European internship experience as a plus for elite higher education took root in France in the 1970s with the creation — or more precisely a creative adaptation of the German model — by the French Grandes Ecoles. These schools specialise in business and engineering and are not directly managed by the university system: the business schools are managed by Chambers of Commerce in the city where they are located and the engineering schools are managed by their respective ministries according to industrial sector. In the past thirty years, internships at these Grandes Ecoles evolved into best practice for postgraduate education. A report by the French Conseil Economique et Social on internships in 2005 showed that Grande Ecole students complete no less than three internships during their studies and 50% of them had done more than three.⁵ At least one of these internships is international and some schools require two international internships. Undergraduate degrees at these Grandes Ecoles also require international internships. By contrast the same study showed that the majority of students enrolled in general studies programs at French universities had never done an internship.

The Grande Ecole practice of internship underlines its educational value in higher level skills and the importance of international exposure. The value of internship is demon-

The German development of apprenticeship has made it the preferred option for higher education for two-thirds of German students. The German system is being adapted for professional education by other European countries as Brazil and South Korea.

³ Employment through internship accounted for 300,000 jobs according to a 2007 study by the Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung der Bundesagentur für Arbeit. ul Cohen, published by Jossey Bass 1995.

⁴ HISBUS Blitzumfrage – Kurzbericht Nr 13, 2006).

⁵ Walter, J.L. L'insertion professionnelle des jeunes issus de l'enseignement supérieur. Avis et rapports du Conseil Economique et Social, 2005. The report can be downloaded at this site : <http://www.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/rapports-publics/054000664/index.shtml>

strated in educational rankings. For example the French Grande Ecole Master degrees⁶ dominate the top tier of the Financial Times worldwide ranking for the Master degree in Management. In the 2013 ranking half the top ten schools were French or had one of their campuses in France, and 40% of the top twenty were French. What is really remarkable about this success in rankings is that up to half of the learning time is in internships and international exchanges.

INTERNSHIP BECOMES A GLOBAL IMPERATIVE

Internship as an educational dimension is now being integrated into higher education systems around the world which traditionally resisted a practice that was seen as alien to the educational goal of the university⁷. In Singapore, internship seems to have recently attained the status of imperative in higher education.

It would not be fair to say that Singapore does not recognise the importance of internship. At SMU internship is an integral part of our business education curriculum. We run 3200 internships per year and 60% of students who do an internship add a second one before graduating. We are expanding our international internship program as well. We have strong links to business and the SMU career centre invites each year four or five professionals from industry to give counselling to students. – Arnoud de Meyer, President Singapore Management University.

Apprenticeships, internships and traineeships have taken centre stage in higher education reforms in countries where it was less developed by introducing regulation of training and apprenticeship contracts

The French Grandes Ecoles have developed a system of high quality internship in their top schools of business and engineering, where students devote up to half of their learning time in companies and international exchange programs.

⁶ Internship is a contributing factor but not the only reason why the French schools punch above their weight in global rankings. Another factor is their selection of the best students. Also their elite status tends to give students higher salaries which plays an important part in the FT weighting for the rankings.

⁷ One of the early statements of the humanist approach to the modern university project was articulated in 1852 by John Henry Newman, *Idea of a University*: "If then a practical end must be assigned to a University course, I say it is that of training good members of society. Its art is the art of social life, and its end is fitness for the world. (...) Nor is it content on the other hand with forming the critic or the experimentalist, the economist or the engineer, though such too it includes within its scope. But a University training is the great ordinary means to a great but ordinary end; it aims at raising the intellectual tone of society, at cultivating the public mind, at purifying the national taste, at supplying true principles to popular enthusiasm and fixed aims to popular aspiration, at giving enlargement and sobriety to the ideas of the age, at facilitating the exercise of political power, and refining the intercourse of private life. It is the education which gives a man a clear conscious view of his own opinions and judgments, a truth in developing them, an eloquence in expressing them, and a force in urging them."

(Spain), redefining the terms of apprenticeships and how enterprises use them (Italy), providing financial incentives to firms (Canada, France, Italy and the United Kingdom) and strengthening coordination between firms and higher education providers (Mexico and the Republic of Korea). Mentoring from managers is promoted as part of internship to give feedback, support and orientation of career aspirations (the Ausbildungspakt in Germany, the United Kingdom and Australia).

With an eye to the 1.2 billion youth unemployed worldwide, the International Labour Organisation has created a definition of employability:⁸

Employability is defined as the skills, knowledge and competencies that enhance a worker's ability to secure and retain a job, progress at work and cope with change, secure another job if he/she so wishes or has been laid off and enter more easily into the labour market at different periods of the life cycle. Individuals are most employable when they have broad-based education and training, basic and portable high-level skills, including teamwork, problem solving, information and communications technology (ICT) and communication and language skills. This combination of skills enables them to adapt to changes in the world of work.

The OECD has been particularly active in researching education where its PISA country rankings have become a standard. Less well-known are studies on benefits of internships defined at the meeting of the OECD Council at Ministerial Level in 2011.⁹

1. **The Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS)** explores students' learning environments and teachers' working conditions.
2. **The Assessment of Higher Education Learning Outcomes (AHELO)** is a test of what students in higher education know and can do upon graduation with data on the relevance and quality of teaching and learning in higher education.
3. **The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC)** assesses the level and distribution of adult skills across countries. The survey focuses on key cognitive and workplace skills that are required for successful participation in today's economies and societies.
4. **Learning for Jobs, a review of upper secondary vocational education and training (VET) and Skills beyond School**, provides an ongoing review on post-secondary/tertiary VET, with recommendations on how to design quality VET systems.

⁸ "Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How?" by Laura Brewer, International Labour Office; Department of Skills and Employability, ILO publication 2013. http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_213452.pdf

⁹ Towards and OECD Skills Strategy, report on the OECD Council at Ministerial Level in May 2011

It should be noted that internship can be corrupted as a form of unpaid or underpaid work even in countries with developed internship systems. Unpaid internships by unscrupulous employers can actually be a disadvantage for students: the practice has grown in the OECD countries where youth unemployment jumped from 13% in 2007 to 17% in 2011. Especially vulnerable were youth in European countries where apprenticeships and internships did not serve as a cushion for students (Ireland, Greece, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and Spain) while in Germany and Austria youth unemployment actually dropped during the same period.

Development of fair practices and quality for internship has now become part of the internship imperative often led by student groups. The European Students' Convention in 2012 demanded that internships, apprenticeships and traineeships should be paid. European governments have accelerated legislation against internship abuse and European

Internships are a win-win-win partnership for students, education and companies.

businesses and employer organisations, as well as multinational companies like Nestle and Siemens, have signed a pledge for quality internships.¹⁰ Similar initiatives to prevent abuse of internships took place in the USA: in June 2013 a federal court ruled that private employers should pay a minimum wage while the US Department of Labour provided guidelines for companies using interns that included the principles that internship work has to be "for the benefit of the intern" and that the company "derives no immediate advantage" from the work of interns.¹¹

The European Union is set to launch the European Alliance for Apprenticeships to increase the quality and supply of apprenticeships. Apprenticeship inspired from the German system in Brazil with the creation of a Professional Apprenticeships Plan that calls on all large and medium-sized enterprises to hire apprentices to a minimum of 5 per cent of the workforce.¹²

From the beginning, the European Union has actively promoted internship. In fact the EU Commission celebrated its 50th anniversary marking a total of 40,000 students taking part in EU traineeships – the longest running traineeship programme of its kind and the biggest in the world in terms of the numbers annually recruited.¹³

10 ¹⁰"Students Want Quality Internships" The European Students' Union publication, September 2013. The ESU is an umbrella organisation of 47 national unions of students from 39 European countries representing the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level. www.esu-online.org

11 ¹¹"Is the Unpaid Internship Dead?" by Susan Adams Forbes 14 June 2013

12 2013 G20 Task Force on Employment Addressing Employment, Labour Market and Social Protection challenges in G20 countries: report on Key measures since 2010

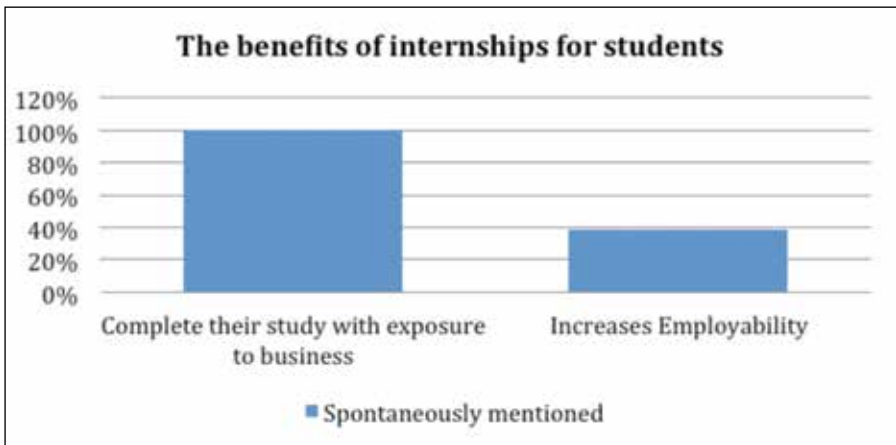
13 The Big Stage : report on the 50th anniversary of the Commission's traineeship programme European Commission http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/news2609_en.htm.

Traditionally, internship tended to be seen as a specialist area for vocational schools and labour ministries but today it has become central to human capital strategy. The EuroCham HR Committee undertook a qualitative survey of its members in terms of advantages for stakeholders. The results of the survey show that internship benefits students, companies and higher education as a sort of win-win-win partnership.

1. Win for Students
2. Win for Companies
3. Win for Higher Education Institutions

WIN FOR STUDENTS

In the interviews, a major benefit for students spontaneously mentioned by HR managers was that internships complete academic learning by giving students exposure to business. The role of internship as a real-world learning experience was mentioned by all the HR professionals interviewed, while less than half reported on benefit for employability.



In some cases, an internship allows a student to reorient his or her career.

Internships allow students to gain real experience and exposure to society and business. Personally, I have been an intern. I graduated in accounting and interned in an auditing firm and discovered that it was really not for me. This professional experience allowed me to switch into a very different career in HR. -- Amanda Chua, HR Director, South East Asia, Thales

The role of the internship manager is much more than that of a supervisor for learning technical skills; the mentoring dimension often has an important impact on the student's learning experience.

My internship experience was incredible. I learnt about the technologies used in the day-to-day semiconductor industry in the area of verification. I feel that my manager made a huge contribution during my internship due to his consistent support. - Pratyaksha Navaklar, TUM student majoring in Integrated Circuit Design, intern at STMicroelectronics Asia Pacific.

Another reason why internships are a win for students is as an opportunity for exposure outside one's home country. As we have seen, many European schools require an international internship as a condition for fulfilling the degree. Their presence in Singapore allows Singaporean interns to learn how to work closely with people from a different culture.

In a multi-cultural environment, within a global company, interns increase their cultural awareness. They also improve their understanding of new markets when they are interning abroad. More particularly regarding interns from overseas institutions who come to work in Singapore, they learn to appreciate the benefits of Singapore as a gateway to Asia. – Chris Fuggle, Mazars.

Asia is the growth engine for higher education graduates in the world's workplace. It is urgent that in the coming decades, the hundreds of millions of Asian students seeking jobs have had access to quality internships.

When Singaporean students obtain an internship in a European company outside Singapore, the experience can change their mindset and understanding of the subject they are studying.

My internship was based at BASF in Ludwigshafen, Germany. My research involved catalytic polymerisation of carbon dioxide and epoxides. I definitely enjoyed myself during my internship. I got to know many friendly scientists and technicians and also improved on my laboratory skills. BASF really taught me what it means to be resourceful and how to do science in a creative manner.”- Ivy Lim , TUM student in Industrial Chemistry, intern at BASF in Germany.

Internship allows students test the best match of their career aspirations with a real company and helps to avoid a false start in choosing where to work after studies.

We encourage our hotels to hire interns as we believe that they can become a part of our future once they graduate. They already know our organization and culture, so when we make job offers, we always share the information with our trainees and ex-trainees. If they are interested, we will give them the priority to be considered for the position. – Karn Lertpenmaetha, Junior graduates and mobility coordinator for Asia, Accor

WIN FOR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Higher Education is continually evolving and the reliance on classroom training is being replaced by new methods. These include exposure to the workplace, development of competencies and focus on personal development -- all of which are enhanced by internships. The International Labour Organisation has provided a statement of how internships change the traditional approach to higher education:¹⁴

This requires a dynamic process for developing curricula that is not predetermined but, rather, evolves through continuous dialogue with employers to align the training programme with business needs and local realities. A project-based learning approach that simulates the workplace so that youth gain real-world, hands-on skills is important. Combining specialist equipment and facilities with contemporary teaching and learning practice, training workplaces simulate or replicate a 'real-world' work environment to help develop students' skills and knowledge, and provide an accurate environment for assessment.

As we have seen, internships are a growing part of university education even in countries where they were not seen as significantly different from student employment. In the USA, for example, a recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that 55% of American students now have experience of internship.¹⁵

In Asia the number of young graduates has literally exploded and will continue growing faster than anywhere else in the next few decades in the world. A recent study¹⁶ published by the United Nations and McKinsey estimates that India and China will account for 57% of the world's growth of tertiary educated workers – that's 184 million graduates –by the year 2030. If you add to this number the students coming from Southeast Asia, it means that hundreds of millions of educated workers will compete in employability. The problem is that the Asian students leaving school do not have systematic access to internship to prepare them for the workplace and to orient their careers. Internship has become a key tool for national governments and universities in Asia as they seek to prepare students for the global workplace.

¹⁴ *Enhancing youth employability: What? Why? and How?"* by Laura Brewer, International Labour Office; Department of Skills and Employability, ILO publication 2013

¹⁵ *The sixth annual Student Survey published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, June 2012.* <http://www.naceweb.org/about-us/press/class-of-2013-internships-co-ops.aspx>

¹⁶ McKinsey Global Institute, *The World at Work*, June 2012

Internships can really improve the quality of the schools and the quality of students: the real value and success story of a university depends not only on the quality of education but also on the 'employability' of the students. Study integrated internships can only help to increase the experience and thereby employability of the students-- Elmira Moham-madi-Nia, General HR Manager, Singapore, Daimler

Even in countries with high graduate employment and top academic education like Singapore, internships make the difference when companies consider hiring a graduate or offering a key position to someone with work experience.

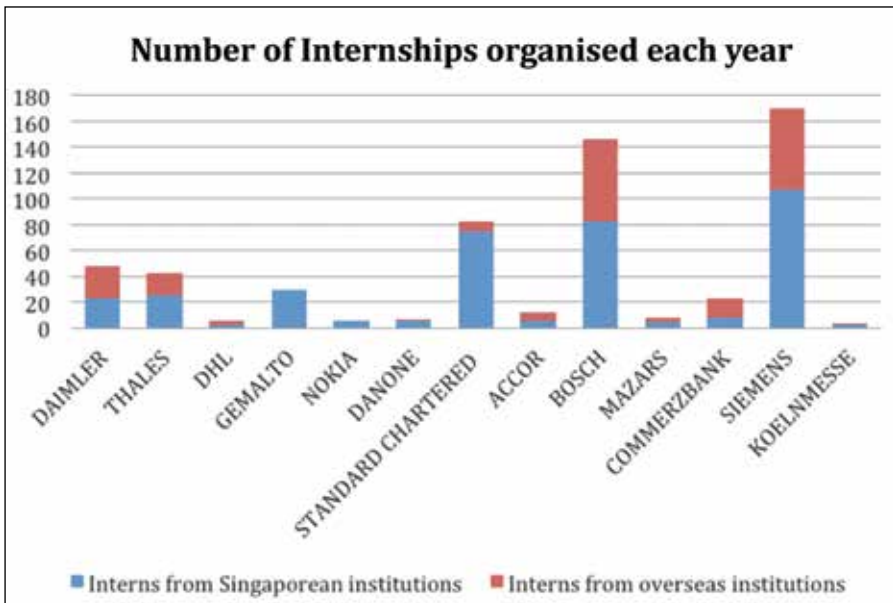
Throughout Asia we find that there is no solid internship system. In China there are 6 million university students graduating each year. A study from McKinsey in 2009 found that there are only 70,000 qualified engineering students who fit our needs. To sift through the millions of graduates at university graduate level is a lengthy and costly process so managers target mainly proven professionals on the job market. This pool is small and has resulted in high salaries and attrition rates --Gonzalo Ruiz Calavera, Senior Executive VP of HR for Asia, Siemens.

Another major win for higher education is in applied research projects. Internship is a value creating process for universities where students participate in projects that provide the link between research and how companies use that research, building high level skills for applied research.

WIN FOR COMPANIES

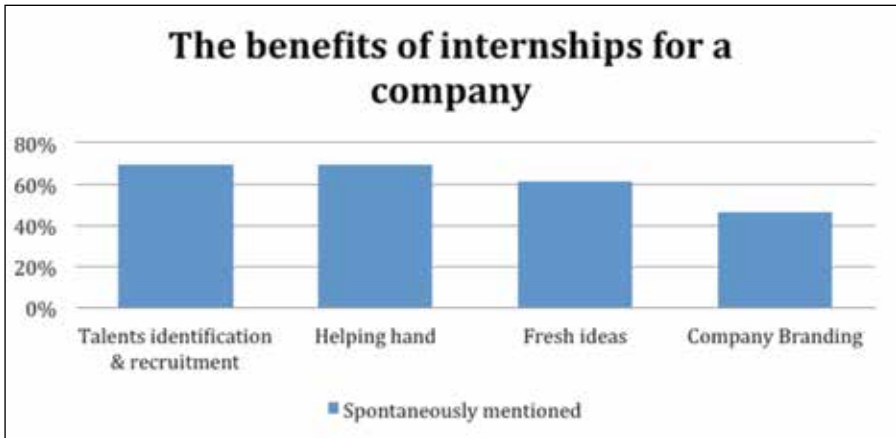
The European experience with internships allows companies to develop a large number of students not only in Europe but also in Singapore.

The following chart shows that the European companies in our survey provide more internships to Singaporean students than to European students and some companies manage more than a hundred interns every year.



These companies have drawn conclusions about the benefits of internship for their talent strategies in Asia (many of our interviewees manage internship systems in the Asian region). The major benefits for companies fall into four categories:

1. Talent identification and recruitment
2. A helping hand in the workplace
3. Injection of fresh ideas from students
4. Enhancement of the company's employer brand



We shall now examine each of these benefits in more detail.

BUILDING AN EARLY TALENT PIPELINE

For companies that are willing to invest in their interns, the payoff is a pipeline of graduates every year that they already know, and can match with their organizational development strategy.

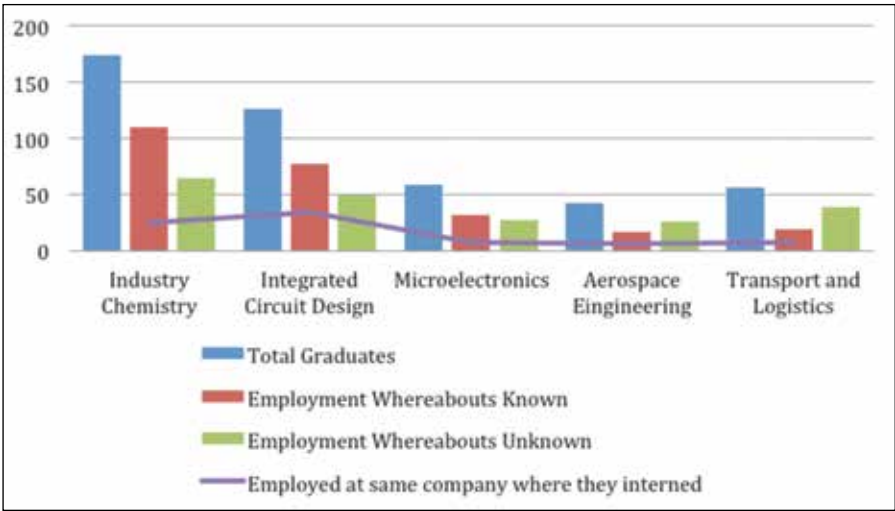
The number one benefit of internships for Standard Chartered is that it builds our pipeline for the Graduate Programmes. Internships enable us to assess people as well as be assessed by students because it doesn't work if there isn't a good match on both sides.-- Taitti Holmstrom, Senior Talent Acquisition Specialist Graduates and Internships, Standard Chartered Bank.

This is of course a win for students also as they benefit from the offer of a job before they graduate. Some companies systematically build their talent programs on internships, especially in applied sciences.

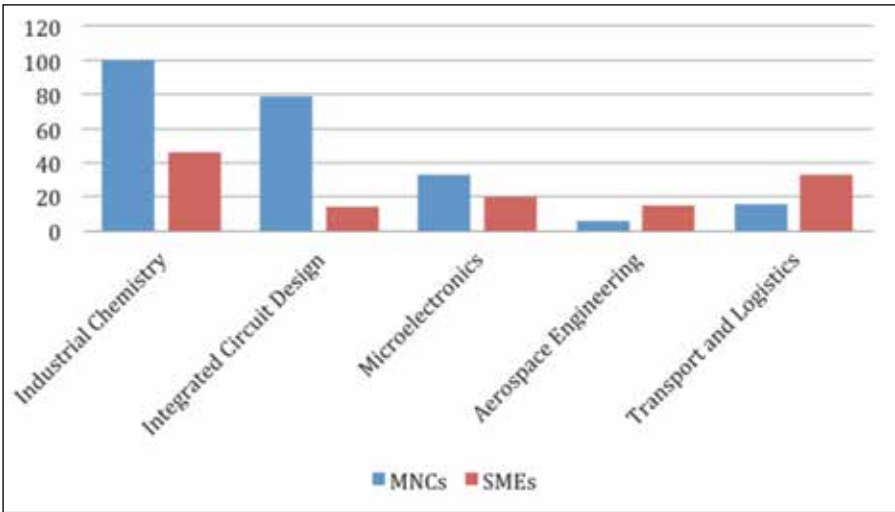
The eight month internship of engineering students provides us with great help in exploring or extending a new methodology, and a longer internship period is generally more helpful. Out of 7 current employees graduated from TUM Asia, 5 have done an internship with us. In 2010, all our 3 interns were hired directly as permanent IC Design Engineers. Their confirmation of employment was given before the end of their internship.”- STMicroelectronics Asia Pacific

The German Institute of Science and Technology, called TUM Asia, has tracked the place-

ment of students in Singapore according to industrial sector since its founding in 2002.



TUM Asia has also made efforts to place students in SMEs, based on its experience in Germany where the Mittlestand companies are strongly linked to universities to maintain their competitive advantage in specific technical areas.



Given studies that show that human capital is the number one concern of CEOs¹⁷, the advantage of internship in building a talent pipeline is a strong win for companies.

INTERNS PROVIDE A HELPING HAND

The second benefit most often mentioned spontaneously during the interviews is called “the helping hand”. This is not the “make coffee and do photocopies” type of internship.

Interns help us during peak periods of an exhibition when there are many additional tasks to do which the project team will not be able to handle without outside help. Interns may help with database, proof-reading, follow-up with order forms and invitations, online-research as well as administrative duties. All in all, most internships prove to be a win-win situation for the student and the company. – Lioba Mauch, HR Manager, Koelnmesse

In Singapore, the question sometimes arises over using interns as “helping hands”: is it not a substitute for jobs for Singaporeans? This question was asked in the interviews and the HR professionals replied that their companies offer positions to students who have special skills and higher education, and they may be hired for these positions later. Moreover, the HR professionals report, the company invests the time of their own skilled and experienced managers to train and coach these interns.

INTERNS BRING FRESH IDEAS

That companies must continually adapt to change is a fundamental axiom of business management. Not only do changes come from the environment, but also internally. Over half of our interviewees spontaneously mentioned that interns bring new ideas to the company.

We believe that interns are key assets, and a source of new and different perspectives and innovative ideas – pivotal to our company’s competitiveness. Jennifer Ong, Director, Human Resources for ASEAN, Robert Bosch

Not only do interns bring their own ideas; they transfer new knowledge and techniques from higher education to the workplace.

¹⁷ According to the 2013 CEO Survey by the Conference Board, Human Capital is the top concern. <http://www.conference-board.org/subsites/index.cfm?id=14514>

Interns are particularly important for companies that try and stay at the leading edge of new technologies. – Alexandre Gentot and Eng Sheng Yeo, HR Asia, Gemalto.

Interns bring new perspectives that make a company's culture more open and diverse—understanding differences between generations and, in the case of international interns, across cultures. Several HR professionals mentioned the importance of mixing Singapore interns with international interns as an enhancement of the firm's diversity of viewpoints and attitudes.

Internship enables Mazars to improve the cultural diversity of the firm. We benefit from cultural awareness in client services if the interns have the same nationality and culture as our clients and can speak their language. Chris Fuggle and Julia Poh, Mazars.

The EuroCham HR Committee welcomes European higher education institutions operating in Singapore as members. Two members representing the German and French internship systems, TUM and ESSEC, have provided case studies to this white paper illustrating in depth how these European internship systems are organised.

INTERNSHIP CASE STUDY: TUM ASIA

The German Institute of Science and Technology – TUM Asia (TUM Asia) began operations in Singapore in 2002 as an affiliate of the Technische Universität München (TUM). As the first German academic venture abroad, TUM Asia is supported by the Singaporean Government through the Economic Development Board (EDB), and by the German Government through the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and The German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD).

TUM's ground-breaking initiative took form as a partnership with Singapore's two leading universities, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU), to offer a series of post graduate programmes.

In 2009 TUM Asia partnered with Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) to provide graduate programmes to Polytechnic and A level students.

ACADEMIC COURSES AT TUM ASIA

1. Bachelor of Science

In collaboration with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), TUM Asia offers Bachelor of Science degree programmes in the following areas:

- BSc Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
- BSc Chemical Engineering

Degrees are conferred by the Technische Universität München (TUM Asia students receive a degree identical to those studying at the TUM home campus in Germany). These bachelor degree programmes aim to produce highly skilled graduates linked to industry. They are tailor-made to provide students with both a foundation in German expert knowledge and relevance to the need for specialists in Asia.

2. Master of Science

Currently, TUM Asia offers 5 Master of Science programmes:

- MSc Aerospace Engineering (TUM – NTU joint degree)
- MSc Industrial Chemistry (TUM – NUS joint degree)
- MSc Integrated Circuit Design (TUM – NTU joint degree)
- MSc Microelectronics (TUM – NTU joint degree)
- MSc Transport & Logistics (TUM degree)

These Master degree programs have the advantage of small class size (15-25 students) and international faculty coming from university and industry partners to ensure that students have the best access to scientific as well as practical knowledge.

The TUM Asia curriculum is highly practical with strong links to their respective industries with the aim of providing students a unique combination of theory and industry-relevant applications.

The close dialogue between companies and academia allows the professors and lecturers to re-adjust content industry and to share recent research. This strengthens both the businesses and the university.

INTERNSHIP SYSTEM AT TUM ASIA

All courses at TUM Asia have compulsory internships, for both the BSc and MSc.

MSc students have the opportunity to write their master thesis during the eight to nine months of their internship in a company. In many cases, these internships lead to careers with their companies after finishing their degrees.

The experience shows that these compulsory internships develop skills and knowledge for students that cannot be gained in the classroom -Dr Markus Waechter, TUM Asia Director

What makes the TUM Asia internship programmes remarkable is the fact that they are integrated into the Singaporean university system through TUM Asia's partnerships with NUS, NTU and SIT.

Another remarkable feature is that internships are organised with SMEs (Mittelstand) operating in Singapore as well as large multinationals. Some of these SMEs approach the university directly to request interns.

My internship is very interesting. At Pan Asia Logistics I am involved in the implementation project for a new customer. The scope of learning is vast: my work includes training on SAP software, the preparation and equipping of the dedicated warehouse space, arrangement of shipments and the designing and improvement of processes. This is an excellent company for interns to see what a logistics service provider looks like." - Christian Tost (M.Sc Transport and Logistics, intern at Pan Asia Logistics)

Feedback from internship industry partners is that the quality of the students with practical experience is much higher than for students coming from universities without prior

internship experience. In many cases, the professors recommend specific companies to students for their internship or even for employment. Orientation applies to international as well as Singaporean students and the system is designed to promote diversity and internationalisation.

The quality of TUM Asia interns is excellent. TUM Asia provides an international environment for students to gain valuable experience: you have students who are born in other countries who come to Singapore to study and then go to Munich for internship or research. It makes the students even more sensitive to internationalisation and that is an additional advantage for BASF. I am very proud to see that some of our TUM interns are making their careers in BASF. – BASF Professor Dieter Jahn

TUM Asia's partnership with Singapore can be called a success story since it has become Germany's number one university according to the "Shanghai Ranking". The elements of success can be summarised as follows:

1. International academic teaching staff drawing on the best of German academia
2. Industry relevant teaching through close co-operation between academia and industry
3. Compulsory practical exposure through internships.

INTERNSHIP CASE STUDY: ESSEC ASIA MASTER DEGREES

ESSEC Business School is known for its academic excellence, strong international exposure and constant interaction with the business world. By inaugurating its new ESSEC Asia Pacific Campus in Singapore in 2013, ESSEC provides a living case study of the effectiveness of the French Grande Ecole internship system developed over decades on its home campus in France.

In Singapore, ESSEC provides three Master degree programmes:

- 1 The MSc in Management ranked eighth worldwide for Master in Management by the Financial Times (September 2013)
- 2 The Advanced Master in Strategy and Management of International Business ranked number one worldwide for Global Masters in Management Placement Success by the Financial Times (2010)
- 3 The Advanced Master in Financial Techniques (Financial Engineering Asia Track) ranked by the Financial Times second worldwide for Master in Finance and number one in Asia (June 2013)

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MANAGEMENT

At ESSEC, Master of Science students are required to complete at least 18 months of professional experience in order to graduate. Students can alternate between academic studies and professional work. Internship provides the opportunity to apply and test in a professional environment the skills and knowledge they learn in their course work.

This programme allows students to create a personal learning and professional education path.

The required professional experience can take different forms: internship, apprenticeship, non-profit or humanitarian work, or working on one's own start-up project. Students not only can choose the length of their internships, but also decide on their schedules during the course of their MSc programme.

ADVANCED MASTER PROGRAMS: POST-GRADUATE DEGREE FOR STUDENTS LOOKING TO BECOME INDUSTRY EXPERTS

Advanced Masters are intensive 12-month postgraduate programs composed of 8 months coursework and 4 months internship. Applicants typically hold a Master in another non-business related discipline (e.g. engineering, mathematics, sciences and law). They

join ESSEC Advanced Master programs to become industry experts solidly relying on both their initial training and a business education in the field of finance, strategy, or international business (expertise listed for the two Advanced Masters taught at ESSEC Asia Pacific).

The internship and the professional thesis account for almost half of the credits necessary for a student to graduate from this program.

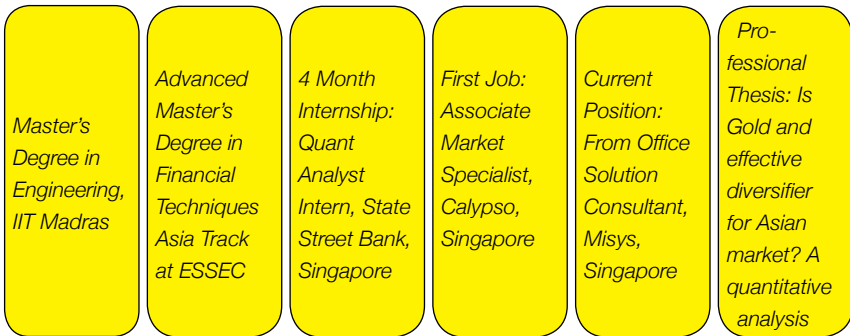
In order to graduate, students have to complete an internship in a company where they work in a position commensurate with their background and at a high level of expertise. This experience, also known as Field Project, is then used by the student to define a research topic that he/she will analyse in-depth and with academic rigor. The Professional Thesis is supervised by both an ESSEC faculty member in the field of expertise corresponding to the topic selected by the student, and his/her manager during the internship. Both faculty and professional managers are present at the student's defence of the professional thesis, which represents the final step in the process of the student's ability to officially graduate.

ADVANCED MASTER IN FINANCIAL TECHNIQUES

This program educates students for positions related to financial markets (trading, sales, structuring, risk management, asset management). Because of the strong match of education and a specific industry, student internships are adapted to recruitment schemes set up by the different banks around the world.

ESSEC students complete summer internships in financial centres worldwide including Singapore. The process is extremely competitive and its value is that it gives students real professional experience and ultimately a foot in the door for selection by the investment bank for the Graduate Program the following year.

Example of a student learning path: Advanced Master in Financial Techniques



In addition to summer internships, students may also apply to off-cycle internships, which are generally longer than summer internships (6 months on average).

The ESSEC emphasis on internships not only builds up the professional experience and understanding for students, it also improves the quality of academic education because students bring real-life experience to the classroom when they are back on campus. This alternation creates a virtuous circle where both the academic studies and professional work reinforce each other.

The ESSEC Internship Quality Grid

Internship learning quality is assessed using a grid defined by ESSEC. On a scale going from insufficient to excellent, students are graded by their managers (internship supervisors) on a wide range of abilities: facing complexity, learning to learn, achieving excellence in teams, developing leadership, managing processes, achieving analytical excellence, and understanding the societal context of business. Managers are asked to fill out an assessment grid and to assign a grade to the Field Project. The professional assessment of the field project by a manager is an integral part of the final assessment made by the ESSEC faculty member supervising the thesis.

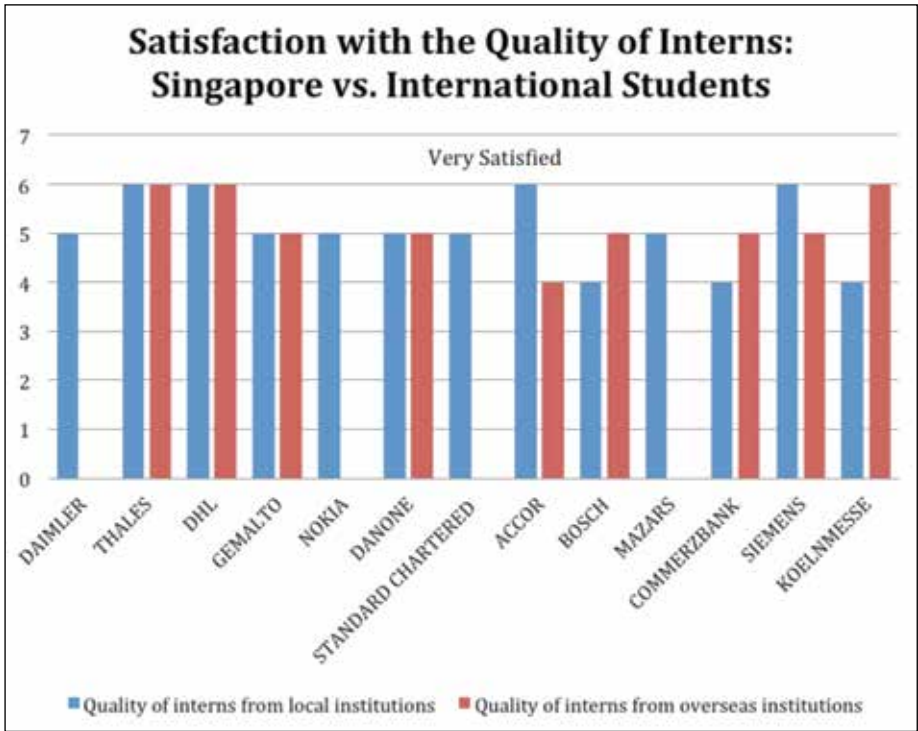
COMPARING SINGAPOREAN AND EUROPEAN INTERNSHIPS: FEEDBACK FROM HR PROFESSIONALS

Since its founding, the Singapore government has been exemplary in how it develops human capital and results of Singapore talent rankings have been consistently impressive. A recent example of this comes in the form of a new index comparing countries for competitiveness in developing talent (Global Talent Competitiveness Index),¹⁸ created in 2013 by INSEAD, HCLI and Adecco. In this first survey Singapore ranked second worldwide for competitiveness of talent development. Singapore ranked first for international student inflow (along with four other countries) and second for qualified labour inflow. Talent development for Singaporeans is also impressive in the areas of skills (second) and formal education (eighth). Unfortunately there is no direct assessment in this ranking for internships and apprenticeships. Therefore the quality of internship can only be indirectly suggested by some areas in the rankings, for example youth employment was fifty-seventh, growth opportunities was ranked thirtieth and employable skills was ranked twentieth. The fact that so many European countries with advanced internship systems take up more than half of the top twenty positions in the ranking (Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Finland, Iceland, Belgium, Austria, Germany and France) may suggest that an advanced internship system is a strong driver of human capital development. But we should keep in mind that correlation in a ranking is not causation.

Singapore's universities are not lacking in internships and apprenticeships: university students are required to carry out professional attachments which are short ten-week internships, usually during the summer break from mid-April to mid-August. And many carry out multiple internships. For example at SMU the average student completes 2 to 6 internships. Polytechnic institutions provide a variety of structured internship programs in both technical areas and services linking studies with their corresponding sector. At the university level also, technically related university programs have lengthened the internship period such as engineering programs at NTU which are on a par with the European five to six month duration of an internship.

What about the quality of students? In our interviews, one of the most promising and positive areas of feedback from HR professionals was a high level of satisfaction for both Singapo and European interns in terms of talent quality. The following chart shows that for the 13 companies interviewed, there is very little gap between Singaporean and European interns.

¹⁸ The Global Talent Competitiveness Index report. <http://global-indices.insead.edu/gtci/documents/gcti-report.pdf>2013



TWO AREAS OF CONCERN

In our survey of the 13 companies interviewed in 2013, talent professionals reported two areas of concern with the current organization of internships in Singapore.

1. The duration of internships for Singaporean students and the preparation of Singaporean interns for their learning experience in European companies.
2. Permits for European students. This also included concerns over the restricted list of eligible European schools which was resolved by the Singapore government.

1. CONCERNS ABOUT THE PREPARATION AND DURATION OF INTERNSHIPS OF SINGAPOREAN STUDENTS

For Singaporean interns, the main concern is the framework, and especially the preparation and length of internships. For most HR professionals interviewed, the Singapore internship is not of adequate duration as a meaningful work experience. Compared to the European six-month internship, a 10 week experience usually serves as an orientation only.

There's a big difference between overseas institutions and local institutions: in Singapore internship is very short. Six to twelve months of internship would be preferable. A longer period of internship should be streamlined across institutions. -- Esther Eng and Mayvis Lim, HR Asia Pacific, HERE Solutions

As we have seen from the two case studies of TUM and ESSEC, European students tend to have longer internships – five to six months. The consequence is that companies will typically invest less in training and evaluation of students who only stay for the short term, and offer less responsibility to the intern.

To the brevity of Singapore internships is added the poor preparation they may receive before their first exposure to the world of work. Singaporean students need to be well prepared for internships before they go into companies.

Compared to the Europeans, Singaporean graduates are typically younger and have little-to-no work experience, be it through internships or otherwise. Prior to entering the workforce, Singaporean students need to gain greater exposure to the real-world work environment – not just from textbooks, through longer durations of internships to remain competitive with international graduates. It is only through real, practical work experiences can one mature in one's attitude and behaviour. -- Jennifer Ong, Director, Human Resources for ASEAN, Bosch

Specifically, talent professionals in European companies in Singapore point out that students need preparation in the mindset of how they act and communicate in companies.

Singapore interns often lack initiative and have a strong focus on doing what they are told -- Carl Schelfhaut. Vice President Postal Relations & Policy, HR & Corporate Compliance, DHL.

The conclusion to draw therefore is not that Singapore students are lacking in quality but that the length and preparation for internships could be improved.

2. CONCERNS ABOUT THE ACCESS TO INTERNSHIPS IN SINGAPORE FOR EUROPEAN STUDENTS

The second major reason for concern is the difficulty for international interns to be currently accepted in Singapore.

Singapore has three different passes regulating the admission of international students for doing internships (see Glossary for a description of these passes):

- 1 Student Pass (SP)
- 2 Work Holiday Pass (WHP)
- 3 Training Employment Pass (TEP).

For each of the passes, the Singapore government specifies eligibility requirements and quotas. Our questionnaire to talent professionals of European companies revealed a concern by more than half of them with these eligibility requirements.

One area of concern is that only European students from France, Germany and the United Kingdom are eligible for the Work Holiday Pass, excluding all the other European countries.

A second area of concern was about exclusion of quality European schools that were not on the list of rankings used by the Singapore government for assessing schools whose students are eligible for internship. Typical comments were:

The problem with these rankings is that they do not represent an accurate assessment of the variety and quality of European Higher Education Institutions. Both the top French business and engineering schools in the Grande Ecole system as well as the German Universities of Applied Science, Fachhochschulen, are excluded.

We would like to organize more international internships in Singapore for students from top European engineering schools, but the schools we partner with in Europe are not on the "Shanghai List" which only lists universities.— Alexandre Gentot, VP HR for Asia, Gemalto

The EuroCham HR Committee members expressed in their interviews that this filtering

of European students for internships could easily be remedied by recognising the diversity of Europe's higher education system.

The Singapore government demonstrated sensitivity to this concern and agility in correcting the restricted list of eligible schools in early 2014 in a note sent to some EuroCham members. The Work Holiday Programme is open to only 3 European Countries (France, Germany and the United Kingdom) is now open to undergraduates and graduates aged 18 to 25 years old of all nationalities studying in, or who have graduated from, universities recognised by their respective governments. This confirms the belief of the EuroCham HR committee that the best way to resolve issues is through dialogue and work on pragmatic solutions.

The Working Group on the white paper spent a great deal of the discussion time in meetings on positive proposals for improving internship, which included a concrete initiative by EuroCham members to promote exchanges of European and Singaporean interns.

MOVING FORWARD: WHAT EUROCHAM CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TO DEVELOP A WORLD-LEADING INTERNSHIP SYSTEM

Europe is ranked second to Malaysia and ahead of the USA among Singapore's top trading partners and European companies represent ten thousand business institutions in Singapore, both large and small. European higher education has also developed a strong presence in Singapore. Together, European companies and institutions of higher education draw on considerable knowledge and expertise in human capital development.

The EuroCham HR Committee adopted as its mission not only to represent the interests of European companies in Singapore but also to be an active partner in the development of human capital in Singapore by promoting the interests of European institutions of higher education. One of the objectives of the white paper is to gather together current research on internships and feedback from EuroCham members in Singapore to provide a coherent picture of what constitutes an optimal internship system. As Singapore is a world leader in human capital, the HR Committee considered that an overall picture of internship could be of use in further developing this component of human capital to the level for which Singapore's other systems are already recognised.

The components of what constitutes a high quality national internship system were recently summarised by the G20 Task Force on Employment. We have adapted these recommendations as a good starting point.¹⁹

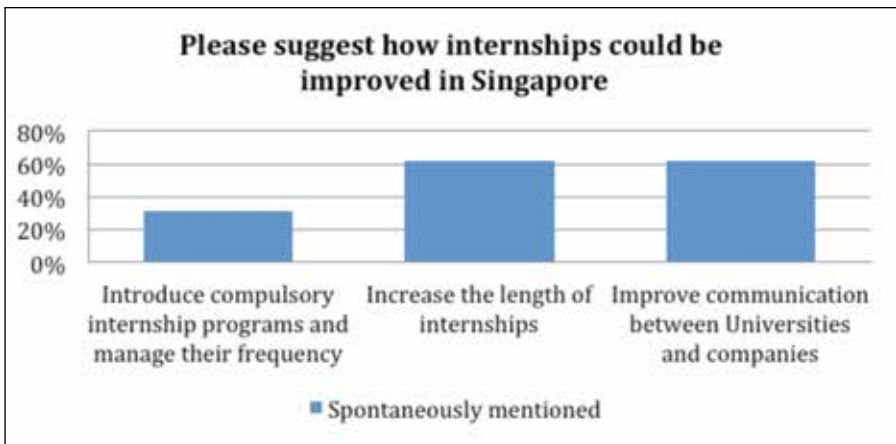
1. Promote active participation and support of key stakeholders. Stakeholders include employers, trade unions, training and education institutions, vocational schools, as well as national, regional and local governments.
2. Determine a legal framework to regulate internships and apprenticeships and respects the ILO fundamental principles of rights and decent work.
3. Promote specific contractual relationships between the firm and the intern that ensure learning benefits for the intern.
4. Facilitate labour market relevance of internship, apprenticeship and educational trainee programmes by working with employers to establish effective pathways for job entry into careers. Ensure mentoring and coaching by internship supervisors.
5. Establish good career guidance that provides information on the opportunities and benefits of lifelong learning and provides labour market information to assist interns to make informed decisions.

¹⁹ Adapted from the 2013 G20 Task Force on Employment Addressing Employment, Labour Market and Social Protection challenges in G20 countries: report on Key measures since 2010, page 23. We have retained the general recommendations to fit a larger scope than the apprenticeships addressed in the report.

- Promote the recognition and validation of internship that certify qualifications and competences.

The Singapore government has already implemented many of these recommendations in the existing system. The EuroCham HR committee underlines its support of initiatives by the Singapore government to develop the above areas in the management of internships in European companies.

In the interviews, HR professionals spontaneously mentioned three areas where the current way of organising internships for Singaporean students could be more robust.



More than half of our interviewees recommend better communication between universities and companies and longer internships for Singaporean students. The second most mentioned area concerns the duration of internship, which we have already discussed. The third concerns the obligation of internships for all Singaporean students.

Discussions among the Internship Working Committee concluded that it would be inappropriate for EuroCham to recommend the second and third spontaneously mentioned areas – it is up to the Singapore government to decide. Moreover, Europeans tend to avoid a “one best way” approach and it was pointed out that of the companies interviewed, we found thirteen different internship systems.

Discussion of the questionnaire results by the Internship Working Group led to the identification of areas where immediate development would have the most benefit for Singapore. In five areas for further development, EuroCham proposes cooperation with the Singapore government. They are:

1. Promote the positive value of internship for Singapore's university students
2. Explore appropriate time requirements for internships in Singapore's universities and technical schools
3. Develop international internships and require them when appropriate
4. Enhance quality requirements including proof of learning at the workplace.
5. Generalise professional management of interns

1. PROMOTE THE POSITIVE VALUE OF INTERNSHIP

The first step is to actively recognize and promote the need for professional exposure in higher education. This extends to Singaporean students but also to companies. Singapore's SMEs could benefit from interaction with European SMEs in Singapore to improve management of interns.

Promotion of internship should answer the question that many Singaporean families may pose: why spend time and money on internships rather than getting the degree as soon as possible? The message has to go beyond the basic employability argument that internships help students get a job, since Singaporean students find no difficulty getting jobs in a tight labour market. As Singapore has recently embarked on establishing a culture of internship, we believe that the best promotion is through the experience of those who have themselves benefited from internship.

European companies can share best practice but are not proposing a "one best way" approach to internship. Of thirteen companies interviewed, we found thirteen different internship systems.

I have been educated in Singapore and when I was a student there was no such a thing as internship. We started hiring Singaporean interns at Danone in 2011: we were not sure how local internships would work as we had never done that before in Singapore. But our first two interns did well and by 2012 we took on 8 interns! This year we have 6 local interns and 1 foreign student and they are working across several departments from marketing to R&D. -- Eunice Wong, HR Manager, Singapore Operations, Danone

The EuroCham HR Committee members can contribute to this initiative in several ways:

1. best practice by companies large and small
2. organising international internships
3. comparing European legislation on internships
4. promoting internship among Singaporean students

5. counteracting abuses of internships by companies that seek to use students' work as a form of cheap labour

2. EXPLORE APPROPRIATE TIME REQUIREMENTS: DURATION AND MULTIPLE INTERNSHIPS

The experience in Europe demonstrates the benefits of partnership in building internship systems between institutes of higher education and industry. We have seen one example for this type of co-operation in the long-standing relationship in Germany between Universities of Applied Science and specific industry sectors: together they assess the appropriate time required for a successful internship in a given field. In general, longer internship periods than the current professional attachment period of 10 weeks is preferred.

The experience of having TUM Asia interns has been positive and we find that 8 months is a good time frame for both the students and the company. The students get to settle down and do hands-on on projects and assignments as part of their learning exposure, as well as improving their learning abilities and performance. For the company, we get fresh ideas and practical support on specific projects, as well as a suitable timeframe to assess the students for future employment. - Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)

While the Internship Working Group recognises changes in the time devoted to internships would mean a fundamental structural change in the higher education curriculum of Singaporean universities, the higher education and talent professionals agreed that, though difficult to implement, one internship experience does not generally prepare students for a diverse workplace.

The proposal of EuroCham HR Committee members is to contribute to the dialogue between higher education institutions, government and companies based on the experience of collaboration in Europe and internationally.

EuroCham will promote reciprocity exchanges for European and Singaporean students.

3. DEVELOP INTERNATIONAL EXPOSURE

Singaporean students are understandably focused on gaining professional experience first in their home country and then in Asia. But Singaporeans also need global skills and there is no better way than to provide them with exposure outside the country and even outside Asia. As Singapore's second most important trading partner, we believe that Singaporean students have a lot to gain by experiencing a quality internship in Europe and possibly

learning a European language.

As we have seen, European schools and universities require one or more international internships. The Internship Working Group agreed that with the economic growth of Asia and deepened cooperation within ASEAN countries, internships and international exchange programs like ERASMUS²⁰ in Europe are major vehicles for the international mobility of students.

More specifically, the Internship Working Group proposes to work with Singaporean Higher Education Institutions to build reciprocity exchanges between Singapore and Europe through internships. Singaporean students have a lot to gain by experiencing a quality internship in European companies, whether in Singapore or in other countries.

4. ENHANCE QUALITY REQUIREMENTS AND PROOF OF LEARNING

Students who take time to work in companies need to know that their learning has a value and that their experience is being recognized in the curriculum of studies. The Internship Working Group recognises that Singaporean institutions of higher education are further implementing integration of internship with classroom training.

In all our courses, SMU integrates the internship experience in the classroom as part of the requirements for the course and the degree, – Arnoud de Meyer, President of Singapore Management University.

Several European countries have devised specific frameworks for reporting and assessing learning in internships, and institutions of higher education have a multitude of best practices in how to integrate internship into the learning curriculum.

The EuroCham HR Committee can not only contribute examples of quality frameworks for internships, we can also transfer know-how to companies seeking to build quality in on-boarding students, training students and providing assessment and career advice to students during their internships.

5. GENERALISE PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT OF INTERNS

High quality management of interns requires not only the professionalization of internship services in the schools but also the professionalization of internship management in companies.

20 The Erasmus Programme (European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students[1]) is a European Union (EU) student exchange programme established in 1987. It forms a major part of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme 2007–2013.

Just as we have HR professionals in companies, Higher Education Institutions need trained development professionals for quality internships. This includes coordination with companies, career guidance, skills development and internship assessment professionals. In European schools, managing quality internships did not happen overnight; at the beginning a university staff member with no experience, training or passion was often given the job. It took years to build up an effective system in each school.

***We are the interface between the students and corporations. We provide information on companies, jobs and industry sectors and connect students with a network of multicultural professionals. We coach the students and we are building mentorship programs to offer good insights and tools to better define their career plans. At the same time we are working on campus promotion and research collaboration.”** Melanie Brouart, Career Services Manager, ESSEC Asia Pacific*

On the company side, professionalism means ensuring that managers of interns are coaches and mentors for the personal development of interns as well as being work supervisors and skills trainers.

Making students do filing doesn’t help them. Of course, they are extra hand for you and it is fine if sometimes they get administration work to do, but they also need to learn something. If companies could look at interns as a future for their recruitment, they think about contributing to developing them. Interns come here to gain exposure in the working world and to learn more. — Esther Chia. HR Director Southeast Asia, Commerzbank

Professionals are especially important for small and midsize companies if they want to attract talent.

European talent professionals can help Singapore to support companies large and small in internship management. Professionals are especially important for small and midsize companies that want to attract talented students.

CONCLUSION

The White Paper on the internship imperative was an opportunity for HR professionals in European companies and European higher education leaders to confront their points of view, compare their practices and consider what may be of use to Singapore.

The following findings were considered most relevant to those objectives.

- Internships are praised by local and international students as an important learning experience which helps them gain knowledge that cannot be obtained in a classroom. It also provides them with confidence that they are able to contribute to the workforce and take ownership of the imperative for lifelong learning.
- Companies and institutions of higher education also benefit hugely from internships. Companies benefit from new ideas and fresh perspectives. Institutions gain by integrating real world experience into their learning curricula. The close co-operation between companies and institutions of higher education through internships also stimulates joint research projects and lecturers from industry who can complement the theoretical teaching in universities.
- Although youth unemployment is not an issue in Singapore at present, internships have demonstrated their value for improving the match between studies and the needs of the global workplace.
- Promoting a diversity of internship systems as is the case in Europe, while at the same time developing international standards and best practice, may be an example for ASEAN in its human capital development.

The internship working group of EuroCham's HR Committee hopes that this contribution to internship will be the occasion for further dialogue with Singapore on improving internships as a long term human capital strategy. We believe Singapore has a unique role within Asia for setting an example and we fully support recent initiatives in this direction.

Beyond the white paper, EuroCham proposes to move to the next stage which could see concrete cooperation for promoting an exchange of interns between Singapore and Europe. This as well as other initiatives taken by member companies reflect the unique contributions that Singapore and Europe have made to each other in the past and will continue in the future.



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