Your career path is a lifelong conversation. It has to be constantly weighed, debated and evaluated. Some of you start off with a dream and cannot wait for it to take flight. Some of you start off with nothing and you are clueless as to what you will be doing after graduation. Regardless, your university education will help you acquire the ‘language’ in order to have an honest and meaningful ‘career conversation’ throughout your life – one that leads to ultimate fulfillment.

Within the covers of this publication are loads of tips and advice as to how to learn this ‘language’, but it comes down to ‘how’ you will be taking in all this information. Will you choose to follow those that seem easy enough or appealing at first sight? I hope the following three words will help you stretch your mindset and take full advantage of what this guide – and this university – has to offer.

**Abandon.** Yes, there is a lot you need to acquire but there is just as much you need to offload: bad habits, preconceptions about certain jobs, prejudices against certain people, and limiting thoughts about yourself. An open mind isn’t just about being receptive to something new; it’s also about freeing your mind from things and thoughts that tell you it is not possible.

**Examine.** In this digital age, we talk about efficiency and multitasking, but we often forget to dig deeper and look into the heart of things. You may join a gamut of activities to demonstrate your range of skills and interests, but how much of those experiences truly becomes your own? What you do in these few years is not for show and tell, it is to lead to what you are meant to become. So go deeper into everything you come across. You will be surprised by the treasure you find.

**Imagine.** University education is never meant to hand you a formula to making it big; in fact, we challenge you to envision your own idea of success. In this publication you will read stories of alumni who have taken a less traveled path. Be inspired, and know that you, too, can create your own future.

What HKUST offers you is a tool kit for life – one that you can always go back to as you carry out the ‘career conversation’ in years to come. I hope you will absorb everything with fresh eyes, an open mind, and the desire to really own it.

Prof Tony F CHAN
President
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Dear students,

Hi, I am Cheryl, Associate Director of the Career Center at the HKUST. It’s time of the year for the release of the Career Guide 2015 and I hope that each individual story in this booklet could somehow provide you with inspirations and insights on how to start off your career.

For those students who are under the new 4-year undergraduate program, I am sure you will spend the precious one more year to enjoy your university life and make the best out of the support university offers, including the Career Center services and programs.

Whether you decide to pursue your postgraduate education or move on with your career after graduation, just don’t forget we welcome your visit should you have any query at all. We are here to assist you along the way, professionally and effectively.

My team is proud of our roles as your Consultant, Trainer & Partner. Our missions are to help:

- **Expand**
  - your career opportunities through our vast and growing network with prospective employers in Hong Kong, Mainland China and worldwide.

- **Empower**
  - yourself with the knowledge on how to identify a career of your choice and meanwhile assist you on your career decision.

- **Equip**
  - yourself to be competitive in the job market and develop the important values to sustain a successful career.

I work very closely with a team of dedicated and experienced Career Advisors and pertinent colleagues to help you land on the road of success. We’re more than happy to listen to your needs and guide you the best way we know how. Therefore I urge each of you to gain maximum leverage from the abundant resources here at the Career Center. They are all thoughtfully designed and offered to you throughout your HKUST education.

Lastly, everyone from the Career Center wishes you a good year ahead and all the best in your endeavors.

Yours sincerely,

Cheryl LEE
Associate Director (Career Center)
Student Affairs Office
While in the process of knocking on doors for job interviews, there are a few key ethics one must observe carefully. Some people may get passed with unethical behavior but in time it will come back to haunt you and, at the very least, you will lose your credibility, if not your job.

**Prepare your portfolio:**
Be HONEST and never exaggerate the level of experience or education background

**During job search:**
Only apply and interview for jobs you are truly interested in

**Before an interview:**
Interview cancellation and no show management

**Handle multiple job offers:**
Accept a job offer in good faith
Lying is never fine, ever. If one falsifies the work experience and gets hired without being found out, sooner or later the person will be caught on the spot when he/she is asked to do some work but incapable of delivering it. In most organizations, lying on your employment application is grounds for immediate dismissal.

**Therefore never take a short cut by lying. Consult good CV writing guides or seek advice from our Career Advisor. Remember, “honesty is the best policy”**.

Should I go to an interview just to practice or earn experience? Understandably most fresh graduates get nervous at a job interview but that does not mean you should accept interviews for the sake of experience rather than being really interested in the job.

**You must understand the process involves interviewer’s time and money. More importantly, you are depriving a chance for another student who may have a strong interest in that job.** Should you have any doubt, go talk to our Career Advisor or try to talk with alumni for advice, but don’t abuse the job interview if you are not serious about it.

Whether you are being interviewed on or off campus, make absolutely sure you allow enough time to cancel prior because this is an important etiquette to observe and it reflects your sense of commitment and personality.

Another serious negative behavior is failing to attend a scheduled interview without bothering to notify the company and the Career Center for proper arrangement. It is considered very unprofessional and rude, not to mention it hurts the image of your own university and the people who helped set up the interview for you.

Is it fine to accept a job offer and withdraw later when a better offer comes along? The answer is definitely “no”. If you need time to think it over, most likely the company is happy to offer you a grace period to make decision.

The last thing either you or the company want is you stay for a short period and off for another company. Make sure the process is managed in a professional fashion so that you don’t leave the company with a bad impression.
On-Campus Recruitment Calendar

As a bridge between HKUST and employers, the Career Center brings recruiters from different industries to our campus so that you can meet them face to face.

Government Recruitment

Government recruitment follows a set timeline each year and requires standardized assessment procedures. If you are interested in working for the government, the following schedule can help you plan your job search and internship activities for the coming year.

On-campus Recruitment

Here is a general and tentative timeline of on-campus recruitment events for the year. Mark your calendar and register in advance at the Career Center website (http://career.ust.hk → “Event Registration”).

Government Recruitment Schedule (tentative)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Term</th>
<th>Aug</th>
<th>Register for Common Recruitment Exam (CRE) and Basic Law Test (BLT) in October</th>
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</table>
|           | Sep | AO/EO: Attend Administration Officer (AO)/Executive Officer (EO) recruitment talks on campus  
AO/EO: Submit applications online |
|           | Oct | Attend Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) and Basic Law Test (BLT)  
Attend Career Mosaic and meet representatives from different government units  
Auxiliary Police (Undergraduates) Scheme (AUS) and Police Mentoring Program (PMP): Submit applications and attend fitness training workshops |
|           | Nov | AO Summer Internships: Submit applications via Career Center and attend preliminary selection interviews |
|           | Dec | Attend Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) and Basic Law Test (BLT) outside Hong Kong (for those who have not taken it in October) |

| Spring Term | Jan | AO Summer Internships: Attend final selection interviews  
Auxiliary Police (Undergraduates) Scheme (AUS) and Police Mentoring Program (PMP): Attend selection interviews |
|-------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | Apr | AO Summer Internship: Offers announcements  
AO (graduate positions): Offers announcements  
Police Mentorship Program (PMP): Inauguration Ceremony  
Register for Common Recruitment Exam (CRE) and Basic Law Test (BLT) in June  
Submit applications for Post-Secondary Student Summer Internship Program (PSSSIP) at various departments |
|             | May | Auxiliary Police (Undergraduates) Scheme (AUS): Offers announcements |

| Summer Term | Jun | Attend Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) and Basic Law Test (BLT)  
Auxiliary Police (Undergraduate) Scheme (AUS): training at Auxiliary Police Headquarters |
|-------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             | Jun – Aug | Post-Secondary Student Summer Internship Program (PSSSIP)  
AO Summer Internship  
Police Mentorship Program (PMP): Job attachment  
Auxiliary Police (Undergraduate) Scheme (AUS): training at Auxiliary Police Headquarters |
**On-Campus Recruitment Schedule – by Industry**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Fall Term</th>
<th>Spring Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airlines/Transports/Logistics</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Mosaic-Job Fairs</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Banks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conglomerates</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Construction/Engineering Consultancy</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education &amp; Research</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast Moving Consumer Goods</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial Services/Investment</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food and Beverage</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Government Related Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insurance</td>
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</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Fall Term</th>
<th>Spring Term</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>IT</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Management Consulting</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing &amp; Market Research</td>
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<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media/Advertising/PR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmaceuticals</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Development &amp; Real Estate</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Utilities</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recruitment Agencies</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retail/Trading</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telecom/Communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Testing Services</td>
<td>✓</td>
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**Other Resources**

**Online Job Vacancy Information**

- **JIIJS (Joint Institutions Job Information System)** – All full-time university students can visit www.jiijs.org.hk to look for full-time, part-time, temporary and summer jobs. First-time users need to register before logging in. For enquiries, please email support@jiijs.org.hk.

- “Finding a Job” on HKUST Career Center website - Some employers have graduate jobs and internships specifically targeted HKUST students. These jobs are posted on the Career Center website: http://career.ust.hk → “Finding a Job”.

**General Career Information**

- The Career Center subscribes to the Vault Online Career Library at http://career.ust.hk/vault.html. All HKUST students and staff have FREE access to these useful and updated resources for job search, career exploration and industry updates.

- **Reading materials** on career planning, industries, company information, professional qualifications and business strategies etc. are available at the Career Center Resource Corner (Rm 4001, Academic Building via Lift 4). Do drop by and take a look.

- Additional job-hunting resources can be found at the HKUST Library website: http://library.ust.hk/guides/jobs/jobs.html.
KNOW YOURSELF
Find out about your personal qualities, what you like, what you care about, what you're good at, what excites you etc. The Career Center offers workshops that help you to understand your personality types through different psychological assessments like MBTI and Self-Directed Search (SDS). Make good use of these workshops and get ready to know yourself and what you stand for.

GET INVOLVED
Once you set a foot on campus, you will be presented with a kaleidoscope of extracurricular activities: interest clubs, student societies, sports teams, enrichment programs etc. Try to strike a balance in what you participate in.

THINK AHEAD
Use your extra time and summer vacation to give your resume a boost. Find a summer job, get into voluntary work, join an exchange program, or take part in a study tour. Take a leadership role in these activities, and try to brush up your language skills. The Center for Language Education is a great source to advance your language abilities.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS
Get off the couch and look for ways to identify your career interests. Gain some real work experience by joining the Internship Network (iNet) offered by the Career Center is a good choice. What's more is to attend job fairs, recruitment events, alumni sharing sessions and company visits to know more about different industries.

GET EQUIPPED
Visit Career Center website and sign up for workshops on CV Writing, Interview Skills, Presentation Skills and Group Discussion Skills, and a Mock Aptitude Test Session. Soft skills such as Business Etiquette, Personal Grooming and Work Ethics are also part of the package.

Take the Career Building Course, a one-credit general education free elective offered by the Career Center, for more structured job search skills training.

PLAN AHEAD
Give yourself an honest assessment of what you have done and what still needs to be done. If all seems too much to handle, you can always make an appointment with one of the Career Advisors. Through professional coaching and discussion, they can help you prioritize and focus on what's urgent and important.
BUILD YOUR NETWORK

Be creative in your job search. Expand your network through family members, relatives, friends, classmates, ex-colleagues, acquaintances, alumni and other sources. Effective channels include joining a professional organization as a student member through which you can build resourceful connections.

GET READY

Early birds always catch the worm. Make yourself available to meet up with employers at recruitment talks and Career Mosaic. Make sure you have at least a set of presentable resume and cover letter on hand, and customize them according to individual needs. Polish your interview skills by getting real interview experience. Keep abreast of current affairs, the economic situation and industry trends by media. If you would like to go through a more structured job search skills training, taking the Career Building Course offered by the Career Center will be a good choice.

LOOK AHEAD

No one can predict how good or bad the economic environment will be when you graduate. The time may be hard. Remember, this is only the first phase of your entire career path. You will continue to equip yourself and whatever experience you will have gathered in your first job will not be in vain. If you can’t find a job that you love yet, love the job you can get! A positive attitude makes a world of difference. Take charge of your career development journey and build up your credentials along the way.
During my last year of PhD study at HKUST, I recall I did not have a clear idea as to what I wanted to do but I always knew science was my most favorite subject. Therefore the first thing that came to my mind was the pharmaceutical industry because it’s a part of medical science and good drugs can save millions of lives, just simple as that. But in the meantime I also tried to explore a few career possibilities including working in academic sector.

Homegrown medical expert Dr. Eddy Wu shares his road to success with the interviewer:

Why did you choose corporate environment over academia?

“Whilst I was going through the search for job opportunities, I joined an international biotechnology training workshop (BioCamp) where I had a chance to talk to people from the pharmaceutical industry. After that I got very interested in it, so I decided to write a letter to Novartis to introduce myself. I guess because of my strong science
academic background, I only waited for a little while before I was offered an entry grade position in Novartis Pharmaceutical Company as a Medical Associate in their medical department. It was the first step of my health career journey,” Eddy says firmly.

Novartis is a global pharmaceutical company which puts lots of resources on research and development. Eddy is very happy that he can work for such a well-known company that develops many new drugs to save millions of lives around the world, and he has lots of opportunities to learn how diseases are developed and how they can be cured with suitable drugs.

**Please explain why you believe staying calm and keep learning are part of reasons in doing your job well?**

“I am now the Medical Director at Novartis covering Asia-Pacific, Middle East and African markets and most of my counterparts are quite influential figures in medical field. They include international well-respected physicians, health policy makers, or patient-group advocates. To communicate with these high profile professionals effectively I need to be calm and be very knowledgeable in my own field, therefore I have to keep learning to stay on top with medical findings, otherwise I will not be looked upon by my peers and most importantly I represent the company.” Eddy says earnestly.

“New drugs are through extended period of research and development, and approved by the health authority before they are launched in the market. Being a medical expert in a pharmaceutical company, there are a lot of responsibilities in terms of certifying the safety and efficacy of new drugs.” Eddy continues.

**Dream job or no dream job is all about how you see it.**

“In my years of career in the medical field, I feel I am really blessed to be able to work with prominent figures around the world and the products produced by my company can help bring back good health to sick people.

Every job has its ups and downs. Just don’t be complacent if everything you do is well and smooth; equally do not feel depressed if you encounter problems because there’s always a solution to resolve them. I would be lying to you if I said I didn’t have any problems at work. But I always hold a positive attitude of believing in my own ability and I would discuss with my colleagues on finding the best solution. After all, you are not alone and, remember, success comes from teamwork.”

Eddy says globalization is definitely the trend and fresh graduates are expected to stay tuned with global news all the time, and he further reminds that the job market will only be more competitive. Having said that, the information technology today certainly offers tremendous help for us to access information speedily and there’s no reason for anyone of us to stay behind with the latest news. He also stresses that opportunities only await for those who are well prepared. Finally Eddy would like to wish everyone a happy and bright future.
I am always interested in working for products manufacturing company, as our daily necessities are dependent on clothes, food, electronic devices etc. That’s why I chose manufacturing industry as my long term career. I am now working in Kunshan, a place located between Shanghai and Suzhou. I have been asked many times for why choosing such a remote area. My answer is that I feel Kunshan can offer me good career development.

As a Chinese from Hong Kong, you may wonder how I got the job in the eastern part of China. The trick was to keep looking and searching by visiting different job websites. My advice is to keep sending your CV to the company you are interested in and patiently wait for feedback. Also you should prepare yourself earlier in case you are invited for a job interview.
My company is a US-funded Electronic Manufacturing Services (EMS) enterprise, which has the same business model as Foxconn. EMS industry is not about sweatshop factory as far as I am concerned. Having a good attitude at work can help overcome many problems because workplace in China is very different comparing to Hong Kong. You must have a good emotional quotient (EQ) to stay calm.

I am quite lucky that I can work for this company. I always have good support from the top management about my planning and execution for what I am doing. It is interesting to participate in “lean implementation” projects whenever they arise, and that I need to be creative and economical to maximize profit as well as minimize wastage for the company. In my first year I was already sent to the factories in Malaysia and Mexico where I was able to learn how my counterparts run their business there. I must say it was quite an experience for me.

Geographic relocation seems to be the trend for seeking a job with good prospects at a global MNC. I believe this is a good opportunity for me to explore work outside of Hong Kong, and certainly I look forward to covering more areas in the mainland. The place I am in is pretty touristy and I can travel to the neighboring cities such as Nanjing, Suzhou, Shanghai, Hangzhou and Ningbo for my holidays.
Khyati Kapai is the founder and Principal Trainer of Yzer Solutions Pte Ltd. She has been teaching and training since 2001. Born in Hong Kong, she is currently based in Singapore. She specializes in Professional Communication and other soft skills topics. As a trained Results Coach, she also offers executive coaching. She graduated with a BBA in Finance (First Class Honors) from HKUST in 1998.

Like any Finance undergraduate, my career goal was to get a job in an investment bank. But I graduated during an economic recession, so I started off as a Staff Accountant with Deloitte & Touche and then switched to Equity Capital Markets in Citigroup when the job market improved.

I ended up leaving banking after just two years to pursue a long-time interest in education. My first introduction to teaching had been when I taught at Summerbridge Hong Kong in high school. Summerbridge is a non-profit collaboration that helps motivated, underprivileged students maintain an interest in learning. The key to its success is the students-teach-students model that offers older students the opportunity to teach younger students. Anybody who has ever been involved in the program would appreciate the irreversible value of learning it instills in you.

"Indeed we undermine what we can learn from each opportunity if we don’t stick to it long enough to see things through, not to mention losing credibility along the way. Every opportunity maximized becomes a nugget for the future."
After exploring numerous interests in education, I eventually started my career as a Corporate Trainer, initially training for other companies. I set up my own training business in 2009 and have finally sunk my feet into what I saw myself doing for a very long time. I say this because even though I had switched to a field I was passionate about, that didn’t give me occupational clarity in itself. For many years, even in education, I was pursuing one opportunity after another because I just didn’t know what I really wanted to do.

I don’t mean to encourage job-hopping though! Today all my experiences and professional relationships are a tremendous help to running my business. It really helps to remain curious along the way while being committed to whatever I am doing, and not get disappointed when things don’t turn out as expected.

Career talks, mentors and even internships give us lots of information, but we still have so little idea of what a career is really like. A career is a journey and making career decisions is difficult given all the choices. We are fearful of what we give up each time we make a choice. Even though I’m in a great place now, I sometimes still wonder: Should I have stayed long enough to get my CPA? Did I leave banking too early? But this is human nature. It comes down to the saying: “Find something you love and you won’t have to work a day.” I’m one of the fortunate few who can live by that.

I always thought it was the long hours and demanding expectations that put me off banking, but I’m probably putting in just as many hours into my business now and also constantly juggling the demanding expectations of multiple clients. But it doesn’t feel like work. Having said that, just because I run my own business doesn’t mean I have the luxury of doing only what I like. There is no ideal job!

The most challenging aspect of running your own business is getting clients when you’re starting up. Everybody wants to work with someone who has an established track record, so you’re in the catch-22 situation of needing the business to build a profile. I started off through collaborations with other training organizations until it became easier to service clients directly. Now my business can take so many directions that I sometimes get overwhelmed with all the opportunities out there.

Training, coaching and talent development is a very interesting and always relevant industry. It has many dimensions and if you have a sincere passion for learning and people, it’s the place for you. It’s also never too late to pursue it. In fact, some of the best trainers and coaches have many years of industry experience, which makes their input so much more enriching.

The best career (even life!) preparation is to cultivate two competencies: emotional intelligence and balance. Relationships are so precious. Being able to interact with people naturally and effectively would really take the bite out of every challenge that presents itself. In addition, especially at university, achieving a balance between academic, extra-curricular and social pursuits would enhance your time management abilities and give you a sense of fulfillment that remains helpful throughout life. The story below illustrates this concept very beautifully.

I enjoy the journey and all the best!
Anekdote zur Senkung der Arbeitsmoral ("Anecdote concerning the Lowering of Productivity" in Leila Vennewitz’ translation) is a famous short story by Heinrich Böll about an encounter between an enterprising tourist and a small fisherman, in which the tourist suggests how the fisherman can improve his life.

A businessman was standing at the pier of a small coastal Mexican village when a small boat with just one fisherman docked. Inside the small boat were several large yellow-fin tuna. The businessman complimented the Mexican on the quality of his fish.

“How long did it take you to catch them?” the businessman asked.

“Only a little while,” the Mexican replied.

“Why don’t you stay out longer and catch more fish?” the businessman asked.

“I have enough to support my family’s immediate needs,” the Mexican said.

“But,” the businessman then asked, “What do you do with the rest of your time?”

The Mexican fisherman said, “I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, take a siesta with my wife, and stroll into the village each evening where I play guitar with my amigos. I have a full and busy life, señor.”

The businessman scoffed, “I could help you. You should spend more time fishing and with the proceeds you can buy a bigger boat, and with the proceeds from the bigger boat you could buy several boats. Eventually you would have a fleet of fishing boats.”

The businessman continued, “Instead of selling your catch to a middleman you would sell directly to the consumers, eventually opening your own can factory. You would control the product, processing and distribution. You would need to leave this small coastal village and move to Mexico City and eventually New York where you will run your expanding enterprise.”

The Mexican fisherman asked, “But señor, how long will all of this take?”

The businessman replied, “15-20 years.”

“Then what, señor?”

The businessman laughed and said, “That’s the best part. When the time is right you would announce an IPO (Initial Public Offering) and sell your company stock to the public and become very rich. You will make millions.”

“Millions, señor? Then what?”

The businessman said slowly, “Then you would retire. You would move to a small coastal fishing village where you would sleep late, fish a little, play with your kids, take a siesta with your wife, and stroll into the village each evening where you could play your guitar with your amigos…”
Build Your People Network Now

Arlan THAYIB
Research Associate, Coleman Research, Hong Kong
BBA (Management of Organizations and Finance)

I come from Indonesia and my first job hunting experience in Hong Kong was a bit of a nightmare. I didn’t know what I wanted to do and I realized that my years at the university were not too productive. My major in finance didn’t quite suit my personality as I am not into numbers. But I know the financial industry in Hong Kong is one of the places in the world to earn money quite quickly, if doing it successfully. So I chose a niche industry within finance that could fully utilize my background and knowledge.

There are a lot of reasons why I joined Coleman Research. It fits my career ambition in finance and can fully utilize my multi-language abilities as I mainly oversee the Southeast Asia markets and the job does not involve finance investments. Although the company serves key financial institutions and work with products like prominent hedge funds and private equities, we only play as a broker and to find industry consultants who can help them with their investment studies.

I think the expert network industry is going to become a popular choice for fresh graduates in years to come. I suggest you find out more from companies such as Coleman Research, Cognolink, Alphasights and Gerson Lehrman for opportunities. I know they are currently expanding and recruiting candidates in Hong Kong, London and New York.

My advice to find a good job is to always keep your eyes and ears open for opportunities, be that through friends or career consultants. If you are comfortable in your current position but there’s no room for advancement within the organization, maybe it’s time for you to start looking for another job. I understand job hunting is not pleasant but it’s all worth it once you find your dream job and the company that can offer you good working environment and prospects.

One thing I missed out at the university was signing up for the student exchange program. I believe it provides valuable experience. Not only it helps to expand your horizon by being exposed the cultures of others; it’s also an excellent opportunity to meet new friends and build people network.

Editor’s note: Arlan just left Coleman and joined Mergemarket Group as Regulatory Reporter. In order to gather different types of information for his articles, he needs to attend regulatory conferences and interview high-level financial experts in Asia from time to time. This is considered to be his dream job as he loves writing, traveling and interacting with people.
With preparation comes greater possibility

The writer is an aspiring international undergraduate student at the HKUST Business School. Knowing these challenges from her own experience and those of her seniors, she hopes that fellow international students at HKUST can successfully pursue their careers in the cities they love.

As a prominent and thriving business center, Hong Kong is undoubtedly a great place for students to start their career. This is also true for many international students, who hope to succeed and settle in the city. However, international talents not only face common challenges experienced by many job seekers, but also encounter other difficulties because of their unique background and status.

Many employers and headhunters take into consideration the time and capital investments of hiring students, which are often higher in the case of international students. There are questions of whether the company needs to provide sponsorship for work permits, whether the student is really committed to the city and thus worth training, and problems of possible mismatches between the student’s language skills and the common languages of the city.

Because of these possible challenges, international students need to proactively plan and prepare. The earlier the better! You may start with the following:

1. Understand what you want.

Find out where your passion, strengths and weaknesses lie as soon as you can. This will help you find your potential career path and allocate time to hone the skills required. Find out also about the language skills needed in your dream job. Consider joining relevant societies, competitions, exchange programs, and regularly update yourself on news of the industry you are interested in.

2. Always have a Plan B.

Expand your job search, focusing on multiple job functions, probably within the industry you like. As the Hong Kong job market is competitive, it is good to increase your chance by exploring other opportunities, such as applying to jobs in other cities and countries.

3. Mitigate possible challenges brought by your student status.

Understand what it means to be having an international student visa status. Proactively seek opportunities to apply for a work permit independently. For example, many countries offer these permits as part of their schemes for attracting international talents. The more you are aware of these opportunities, the more attractive you are as a job seeker.
4. Visit the Career Center and learn from your Career Advisors.

As newcomers in the city, it is very useful for international students to seek insights from people in the industry. There are plenty of resources in the Career Center which can help including Career Advisors. You can discuss with them on any issues related to career development, job search or further studies.

5. Network and aim for internships.

Increased competition in the job market means that knowing more people in the industry and having internship experiences will be immensely useful in showing potential employers your commitment to the job, the industry, and the city. Needless to say, internships allow you to improve your soft and technical skills, as well as raise your awareness, particularly that of commercial trends in the region you work in.

6. Look beyond vacancies — focus on employers’ needs.

If you are truly interested in a specific industry or company, there is no need to wait until the company posts job advertisements. Put yourself out there and politely tell their Human Resources team that you are happy to be considered should there be a vacancy. By doing this you will get your foot in the door much earlier than the others.

7. Stay focused and confident.

This is, above all, the most important thing to remember. Many senior international students have gone through countless interviews, and some were unsuccessful. When that happens all you need to do is to remember your goal, be confident but humble, and try again!

All the best and enjoy the process!
Passion isn’t just a word

Soojeong AHN
Graduate Hire, Global Merchandising Group, NBA Asia, Hong Kong
BBA (Operations Management, minor in Humanities in History and Anthropology)

As a new employee of NBA, I’d consider myself to still be in the honeymoon. From the very first day, people have been very welcoming – especially when they showed me to the pantry. As a Korean working in Hong Kong, I felt like we were very much on the same wavelength. Even people not in my department invited me out for lunch, not only for perfunctory ‘meet and greets’ but because there’s a lot of cross-divisional work in the office. The atmosphere is always exciting, with all major NBA games playing on multiple screens during breaks (some call this extended work).

Due to various complications during the application process, I ended up having four rounds of interviews; a phone interview, a face-to-face one, another phone interview and yet another face-to-face one. Although it had been arduous, I was even more determined to get the job, and because of the frequent visits, I got to know people in the office better. I was fortunate to meet a very responsive group of people who put me in the loop during the whole hiring process, informing me of upcoming interviews, thereby managing my expectations. From the numerous interviews I’d had, I knew I could not take this communication for granted because a lot of companies do not provide much information, and interviewees are left to imagine.

I graduated earlier than the others by a term and had been going to interviews before and after my graduation, and the opportunity to work for NBA came towards the end of the searching process. Because of this transition of no longer being sheltered by the university, the process felt even longer to me. I also wondered if I’d wasted my energy on those unsuccessful interviews. It turned out that interviews, successful or not, build perseverance, strength and interview techniques, and I realized that I was able to land this job partly because of all the prior practices.

I organized the Arts a-Live event when I was a student at HKUST. To me arts and music are not something different from my studies. No matter what someone chooses to study, life and culture are there concurrently. I’ve always enjoyed performing in orchestras and choirs, and going to exhibitions with friends. Arts a-Live was my way of having balance in life, when many students seemed to be stuck in the library.

Also, I was lucky to have friends who studied outside of HKUST and had different majors. They helped me step out of my comfort zone by inviting me to off-campus events that I had wanted to be a part of. Still, when I was offered an internship with Asia Art Archive, an art research institution focused on modern and contemporary Asian arts, I was nervous because my academic background had nothing to do with fine arts. However, during my few months there I saw for myself the wider applications of the skills learned in my business degree. I also learned about art history and socio-political elements that acted as agents of recent art. Of course, attending Art Basel as part of the team was another unforgettable experience. The
experience opens my eyes to see that having a business degree does not mean getting a cubicle job in a windowless office; it actually opens doors to the industry of my choosing.

HKUST is a relatively new university that specializes in a few areas, and our alumni and jobs listed on the career website are mainly from a few industries such as IT and banking. For those who know me, neither of those interests me. For roles that interested me, there might be language requirements which as an international student I could not meet. Actually, at some point I applied for jobs that did not require Chinese regardless of the job nature or industry. Needless to say the very technical interviews I was invited to did not go well.

I’ve been given interview advice such as being prepared and confident, looking nice and doing your research etc. To me what matters ultimately is being self-aware, which entails honesty and acceptance. Really, try to figure out what your strengths and weaknesses are, and how to present these two sides of you in a way that is not at odds with who you really are. Be critical but don’t criticize, not just with yourself but the environment, and honestly evaluate the circumstances without biases. Finally, accept your qualities and use them to your advantage in everything you do. The journey may be rough, and people will give you tough times. You’ll be tempted to waver but at the very least be steady and keep going.

“Some international friends of mine benefited from the career website so I decided to check it regularly, and finally I found my current job with NBA. I had to scour for it and when the opportunity came, I took it up as fast as I could.”
“A successful career grows from a foundation of integrity, initiative and a commitment to learning.” (Eddy Rust, 2014)

Johannes ROTHE
Manager for Customer Service in a leading airline company in Shenzhen, China
BSc (Business Administration & Industrial Engineering)
MSc (Engineering Enterprise Management)

Johannes ‘Jackson’ Rothe completed his master’s in Engineering Enterprise Management in 2014, before he started his current position as Manager for Customer Service in a leading airline company in Shenzhen, China. He’s worked for a multinational automotive company in Germany and South Africa before his excitement about Chinese business culture led him to a firm in Guangzhou in 2012. As a German, Johannes is a strong communicator, evident in his position as Vice-President at the HKUST Toastmaster Club. He is also active in various associations and chambers, very approachable and well-connected with people in Asia.

My career path looks more like a gravel path than a highway. I have come to a lot of crossroads where I had to make decisions for new directions and opportunities. How can we know which road will lead to the job we are aiming at or striving for? I would like to share three valuable pieces of advice with you to improve your tactic and approach of actions.

Firstly, it is really helpful to find a mentor who can enable you to get your work done, inspire and motivate you, as well as help you grow. In fact, my career decisions have been much influenced by friends, advisors and strong leaders. “A single conversation across the table with a wise man is worth a month’s study of books.” You have to get yourself out there, reach out to people around you and start expanding your network.

Sometimes people see networking as a “backdoor” way of jumping in your career, but what is often neglected is the chance to listen to other people’s stories about their career path, job duties or how they strike work-life balance. Talk to career coaches, professors and alumni. When you are planning your career, don’t miss out on the sharing and advice from these wise leaders.

My second advice is that you have to ‘get your hands dirty’ through practical experience, which you will gain in internships, industry-cooperative projects or even associations such...
as Toastmasters or Rotaract. Education feeds you with laws, theories and models and introduces the right tools and their usage to you, but the application of these tools and the communication among departments in an integrated environment are part of your job life, and these only come with real experience.

The third point is the benefits of building cover letter writing skills, and I am speaking from my experience of applying for jobs. I have come to notice that there are tremendous differences in the amount of time needed in creating cover letters for different positions. Even when no cover letter was required, I found myself sitting at a desk with the job descriptions on my left and my personal capabilities on the right, in order to find a match and put down what I had found on paper. Don’t waste your precious time applying to jobs which you don’t think is a fit for you, or that you are not convinced you are one of the best candidates.

You might ask how I handle the frustration of not being able to identify with the job descriptions or of being rejected. First of all, as a “gweilo” (for those who don’t know: this is the local Cantonese language meaning “foreigner”), whether I can do the job is not the only concern but I also need knowledge of the local culture and language, a working visa, medical insurance, money for flights home and in Hong Kong, most importantly, money for all living expenses. In fact, after I got serious about working either in Hong Kong or South China, I suddenly felt lost because of dissatisfactory job postings and salary reports, and I missed the deadlines of some applications to multinational companies. Indeed the starting salary is truly an obstacle for westerners trying to get a job in this part of the world.

However, the main reason for my frustration, and what made me fall into a deep valley was the uncertainty regarding my future in Asia. I even had thoughts about returning to my home country. Fortunately I’d built a diverse advisor network consisting of wise friends in leading executive recruiting firms, the HKUST Career Center as well as Germans who had lived here in Hong Kong for more than 20 years; they helped me keep my head and provide me with a precise vision of the future of Asia in relation to that of Europe. A strong network may help you to land an interesting job and have a satisfying start after graduation.
I think my first job hunting experience is kind of different from that of the others. I was an Engineering MPhil student from China, trying hard to enter the financial industry, and ended up with an engineering job. In my first year at HKUST, I attended many workshops, seminars and events and fell in love with finance, especially investment banking. That’s rather interesting, isn’t it?

I began looking for a job in Hong Kong from September 2013. I attended almost every recruitment talk organized by our university and tried my best to network with people in the...
industry. After several modifications of my CV and passing the first round of online tests, I surprisingly got an interview with JP Morgan. Since I had no experience, it was not hard to imagine that I failed, but it was a really valuable experience.

Then, I had more interviews from companies of different industries, from investment banks to the Big Four, consulting to trading firms, multi-nature conglomerates to engineering companies. I wanted to explore different opportunities. At first, I never passed the first or second interview. I realized that there must be a problem. Then I asked a lot of people for help and found out that I failed mainly because of language and lack of experience, so I worked hard to improve them. Things then slowly became better and better.

In early June, I finally got an offer that I was happy with – Materials Engineer in ASM Pacific Technologies. You may ask, ‘you have tried so hard to get a job in finance, so why end up in engineering?’ I ask myself that question too and now my answer is: every opportunity is a learning experience; it’s not a waste of time. Some people may say I should focus on one industry, but for me, it’s important to try more than one thing. Also, this offer didn’t come easily; it took all the past failure, experience and hard work. Starting my career in engineering doesn’t mean that I can’t explore other industries in the future. Life is a long journey; it’s not a sprint but a marathon. What matters is to make the right decision at the right time.

I would like to say a bit more about my two big challenges: languages and interviews. My English was not that fluent. When I gave presentations, I became super nervous and my presentations were usually dull. I then got to know a few foreign friends, talked to them frequently and asked them to correct me when I made mistakes. It really worked! Interviews are a kind of conversation between people, so when I get used to speaking in English, I also perform better at interviews.

Besides, I had very few interview experiences. To compensate for this I attended many workshops organized by the Career Center, talked to friends who worked in that industry, searched the internet for information, and most importantly, practiced as much as I could. Accumulating experience certainly takes time, but we just need to take it one step at a time.

Finally, let me summarize my experience with the following advice:

**Be open to every opportunity.**

At first, I only wanted to go into investment banking. It’s when I started looking for a job that I realized that many things were quite different from what I had thought before. You can have your preferences, but don’t let them limit your choices.

**Don’t be shy to ask for help**

from your family, friends, teachers, career coaches and others. When I applied for a job I was not familiar with, I always turned to people for help, especially those who worked in that field. They can give you insights, advice, encouragement, and make you feel that you are not alone.

**Have a positive attitude and keep going.**

Actually, I applied for more than 60 jobs and this took a lot of patience and perseverance. For the majority of those applications, I didn’t get any replies from the companies. Don’t give up and try something new. Eventually, something good would turn up.
Learning Through Internships

The importance of internship programs just simply cannot be ignored or taken lightly. In the competitive job market we face today, good jobs are scarce and only candidates with good quality will be chosen. That said, universities with a good reputation are well connected with local and global corporations and they can help open doors for you to start off your career. While you are going through the years of study, you MUST NOT OVERLOOK the participation of INTERNSHIP PROGRAM because it empowers you to get ready with an impressive cover letter, a nice CV and all the necessary interpersonal skills that make you stand out from the rest.

HKUST Internship Network (iNET) iNET is a flagship internship program of the HKUST Career Center which provides a host of internship opportunities spanning across HK, Mainland China and overseas countries. Highlights of these programs include:
### Local Internships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-campus Internship Program</td>
<td>HKUST campus</td>
<td>Part-time or full time Duration: varies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Summer Jobs</td>
<td>HK</td>
<td>Varies from 6-12 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(100+ openings in different government departments; only for students who are permanent residents of HK)</td>
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<td></td>
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### Mainland Internships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOAR Beijing (30-40 students)</td>
<td>Beijing</td>
<td>6 weeks (early Jun – mid July)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOAR Shanghai (60 students)</td>
<td>Shanghai</td>
<td>6 weeks (early Jul – mid August)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myriads of mainland summer internship programs</td>
<td>Various mainland cities</td>
<td>4-6 weeks; depending on programs</td>
</tr>
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### Overseas Internships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN Internship Program</td>
<td>ASEAN countries</td>
<td>6 -10 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Career Launch Cross Cultural Internship Program</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>6 -12 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work and Travel USA Program</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Intern Group</td>
<td>Australia/London/ Columbia &amp; Madrid, other European countries</td>
<td>6-10 weeks; depending on programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bloom of Youth</td>
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### On-campus Internship Program

This program allows undergraduate students to acquire work experience within the University. Undergraduates from any disciplines, except exchange-in students, are eligible to apply. Internships can be curriculum-related or non-curriculum-related which come in two categories:

- Full-time internship during summer or winter break
- Part-time internship throughout the year (minimum 30 hours per intern)

Internship openings are usually advertised through the following channels throughout the year:

- Department/School websites or online job banks
Feedback from Students:

“I have developed good skills of conceiving new and creative ideas and I feel that I am now more confident to articulate my views on general issues than before, and discuss them with people openly.”

Year 3 (ENVR); Part-time Student Helper of Division of Environment; Fall 2013

“One of the key returns I gained from the internship program was about working with the supervisor over some planning and execution projects and I also learned the importance of teamwork. It helps me a lot in my current study as well as my career in future.”

Year 3 (BBA-GBUS); E-Learning Production Assistant of School Library; Fall 2013

“I am very excited to have the opportunity to work as a student helper in TTC. I have learned a lot from the biochemistry program. I am inspired to join research field and it’s a dream comes true.”

Year 1 (SCI-IRE); Student Helper of Technology Transfer Center; Fall 2013

Enquiry

Details of these internship programs are available from our website (http://career.ust.hk/inet.html). Announcements on info sessions or call for applications will be made via email and our website commencing Sept/Oct.
Feedback from Employers:

“實習生幫我們更新了CARGO系統缺失的大量數據；對我們VIP大客戶的資料做了大量的整理工作；更利用英語口語優勢開設了“英語角”，為提高我司同事英語口語水平提供了很好的平台。”

上海三盈國際物流有限公司

“實習生加班將客戶系統介面配置完成，取得了SOHO中國客戶的肯定，為公司贏單作出貢獻。他也學習到 Energy Operation 系統，為售前技術支持及系統執行人員進行培訓並形成PowerPoint，減少了員工的學習成本。”

北京施耐德電氣(中國)有限公司

“…Winnie has demonstrated strong communication and interpersonal skills during her internship. With a pleasant character, she adapted to office environment quickly and mixed well with police officers working in the Division. Winnie has a strong sense of responsibility; she took initiatives to take up extra responsibilities and finished the tasks in a professional manner...”

香港警務處
Be no afraid of failure, “Can Do” are the buzz words for success

Sophia LUK
Marketing Executive, Bling Communications, Hong Kong
BBA (Marketing and Economics)

“What makes you become a solid employee in the company is to keep learning from your seniors and peers around you and stay humble.”
The competition nowadays is really keen – my job search was not as smooth as I had expected it. I spent more than 3 months looking for a job until this present job came along. The process was tough but I managed to overcome all the hurdles.

I remember at the beginning I applied for jobs in which some might not be what I truly wanted but tried how my luck would take me. Of course it proved useless after all until my Career Advisor, Ms Grace Siu, who saw I had problems in finding a right job for myself. So she patiently spent time with me going over what type of job would suit my personality and that I would use the skills that I learned from the BBA program.

There’s something I would like to share with all of you about my past internship in Beijing through Internship Network (iNet), formerly known as Internship Learning Scheme (ILS). It was a very valuable experience, not only did I learn the culture of Beijing, the whole program offered excellent work experience and helped me understand how mainland enterprises would operate. I would like to thank Ms Janice Lau, Ms Winne Choy from the Career Center who offered me the kind assistance throughout my entire stay at the university.

The marketing agency I am now working at is quite fast-paced and challenging. The competition in the marketplace is keen and we always have to stay on top with first hand marketing news. Being a fresh graduate, just don’t be calculative on how much work you are assigned to do and work well with your peers and co-workers.

The marketing work I am doing now is fun and interesting because it requires a lot of creativity. I am on the frontline and I need to deal with people from all walks of life. I hope one day I can become an expert in this field and be able to contribute my expertise to the society.

In any company you work for, your boss would expect you to be self-motivated, willing to learn and have a good team spirit. If you don’t have these basic work attributes, I suggest you start realizing how important they are and how they can affect your career development. Don’t count on personal luck because it may just only happen once but not every time.

If you were to ask me how to find a dream job, my answer would be through trials and errors. Some people are lucky enough to find their dream job in one go but some may need to go through various jobs until they finally settle in. I used to think salary and status come first, but that’s not the case anymore – it is if the job can make you happy and you have room to grow within the organization.

I would like to wish every one of you a bright future in your endeavors and for those who are still studying at the university, enjoy your time there and make the best out of all the beautiful offers that can enhance your life.
My name is Vanessa Lau, a Year 3 Global China Studies student from the School of Humanities and Social Science of HKUST. I had the privilege to intern for one of America’s most fundamental government structures, the Congress. This academic opportunity was provided by my exchange university, The Catholic University of America, which is a fantastic hub for theology and history. I worked in Congressman Bobby L. Rush’s office in the House of Representatives, Washington D.C., from January to May in 2014. I am certain that my passion for public administration as well as international relations will only continue to flourish with time and experience.

“This experience encouraged me to learn every day and challenged what I previously knew. The topics I was exposed to were often beyond my knowledge.”

Vanessa LAU
Intern, Office of Congressman Bobby L. Rush, U.S. House of Representative, the U.S. Government
BSc (Global China Studies)
Being in the middle of hustling bills, lobbyist groups and politicians was certainly exciting. The National Defense Authorization Act, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on Appropriations and National Budgets were just a few among the many words frequently mentioned in the Congress. As an intern, I had the privilege to come into contact with them. Being at the heart of America’s politics was very memorable.

I was glad to have worked in Congressman Bobby L. Rush’s office and with his people. Representative Rush is a respectable African-American Democrat politician that represents the first district of Illinois State, which includes Chicago. His responsibility also includes the Congress’ Committee of Energy and Commerce and as a result I had the chance to experience a lot. There were several encounters and observations that I found to be very interesting and I would very much like to share them with you here.

Interest groups are formed when they would like their voices heard. I met all kinds of people sitting behind the front desk of the office. A congressional office in Washington D.C. receives different groups of people, and they mainly include district constituents (voters of the regions the Congressman is responsible for), professional and casual lobbyist groups, organization representatives, as well as friends and colleagues of the Congressman. I had the opportunity to receive them and help with their needs as the Front Desk Assistant. I learned how the congressional office functioned through building different relationships with the community. It’s important for me to understand what appointments the office clergies had during the day, and to offer assistance to individuals which the office members were not expecting to receive. Sometimes, people came in costumes to make a point. It was certainly unexpected, but it was at the same time fascinating to observe how American citizens interacted with their congressmen and government.

One of the most memorable experiences was when I received a group of blind people from Chicago, Illinois. They represented the National Federation of the Blind, and they came to D.C. with little help. I was struck by their strong will and energetic presence, especially given their physical limitations and possible traumas they had been through. They were there to have their voices heard and were determined to have the Representative understand their situation. I couldn’t be more affected by their willingness to make a difference for the minorities they represented, and on top of that, I was moved by their positive attitude and abilities. Throughout the whole appointment, I couldn’t help but wonder how they could succeed in demanding respect with such a strong presence when actually not being able to see. It’s simply overwhelming for a young learner like me. I was deeply affected and indeed educated by the way they lived their lives.

There are so many facets to a policy issue, as we live in a pluralist world today. Political regimes exist side by side and tensions are likely, and peace is therefore a very precious thing to have especially in certain countries. This is also why politics and international relations are such fascinating subjects. Not only do they open students’ eyes to how different countries operate, but they also encourage students to be in touch with current affairs around the globe. I had never been so closely in touch and interested in what’s happening in the world. For instance, the recent upsurge in tension due to the longstanding territorial dispute between Vietnam and China in the South China Sea reminds me of a policy course that I’ve done, in which we discussed the role of China as a regional player. Having done research on East Asia’s marine and territorial history allows me to see issues that I read about in the news in a new light. I find it incredibly helpful and stimulating.
Career Mosaic is a biannual campus-wide career fair organized by the Career Center, in October and March. More than 150 companies and organizations have participated every year. Career Mosaic offers a highly effective platform for employers to reach out to HKUST students on recruiting them for internship and graduate employment opportunities.
BENEFITS TO STUDENTS
✓ Identify graduate and internship opportunities in their areas of interest
✓ Meet with employers from different industries
✓ Submit applications directly to the employers at the event
✓ Obtain interviews from some employers on the spot

BENEFITS TO EMPLOYERS
✓ Reach out to your potential talent pool to fill your recruiting needs
✓ Build your brand on campus and increase awareness in the student community
✓ Meet with talents and perform selection on the spot to save recruiting costs
Persistence and persistence and believe in yourself

Kenneth WONG
Co-founder, Pathway Education
BBA (Operations Management and Information Systems)

After graduating from HKUST, I tried to find job opportunities online. I finally had 3 different job offers under the fields of logistics and information technology. I chose the job as an IT Officer because I loved that industry. Finding a job was not easy for me but persistence helped me through many hurdles.

My first job only lasted half a year only because I realized Hong Kong IT companies are mostly to protect their existing systems, not to further expand what they already have. In fact, most of their business developments are outsourced to Shanghai and Shenzhen. I later joined Dai Chong Trading company, but again I only worked there for a short period of time as I found that the retail business was shrinking due to globalization and online trading had become more and more popular among shoppers. I later joined a financial institution doing investment banking for 6 years. My role was mainly responsible for corporations financing and IPO matters. After the 2008 global financial crisis, I realized investment banks could only play a small part in the process. In 2009, I was preparing an education institution to be listed and, successfully as I did, I ended up joining the company and later established my own company called Pathway Education.

I think running my own business now is the most challenging time for me. I had tremendous pressure at the beginning of my newly set up company and I had thought of going back to be an employee just to save lots of hassles, but I am glad I didn’t. I am grateful for all the support I get from my friends and family. Now I have to oversee every operation for my own company to make sure things are on track and I often dream about work while sleeping. Having said that, I believe there’s nothing that cannot be resolved but just a matter of time. Furthermore, in order to keep good cash flow in running the company, I often fly and stay in budget airlines and hotels. I think I have finally come to a good situation after having been through those hard times.

To me, it’s personal persistence that keeps me going. Education is an industry that can always help people from all walks of life and it gives me lots of job satisfaction. Let me give you an example; I was once called “Wong Sir”, which I felt I was so well-respected, by a listed company president who thanked me for the help I provided to his daughter. That gives me all the more reason to work harder.

“I suppose no dream job can be found without trying out different jobs in the beginning. Also, talking to friends and participating in different career talks or seminars organized by the university helps a lot.”
Don't think too much and follow your heart

Priscilla LAI
Co-artistic director (education & community), Theatre de la feuille
Freelance actress, director, drama teacher and corporate trainer
BBA (Management of Organizations)
MA in Social Science (General Studies)

I never thought I could be an actress or work fulltime in the theater. When I left high school, where I got to know theater, I thought I was going to say goodbye to theater and pursue a career in marketing or human resources. During my second year in HKUST, I felt some kind of emptiness inside me. Even with the heavy workload from studies and active involvement in different extra-curricular activities, I felt that something’s missing. It’s theater. I missed acting.

That summer, I took a drama course with a well-known actor and director (who later became my mentor), and later joined the theater company he had just started. During those two years in the company, I met people who were also passionate about theater, and most of them had not been trained in a theater school.

The dramatic turning point
One day, we were discussing the direction of the company and what we really wanted to do, one of my friends asked me,

“So Priscilla, what do you really want to do?”
And I answered,
“1 want to be an actress!”

“Don’t let too many external factors affect your own values and decisions.”
That was a turning point of my life. It’s when I realized for the first time what I really wanted to be. When I was in university, I didn’t have a clear idea what I wanted to be. I was very sure I was not interested in anything related to accounting, finance or information systems, and I actually had a phobia with numbers. I liked to work with different people and I had little patience. Now that I look back, I realize that theater is the perfect job for me; as a theater practitioner, I am to surprise myself constantly in the creative work. But back then, I had no idea what being an actress entailed; it was a simple act of following my heart.

Go ? Go ! Goal !

Although I seemed to have found my dream job, I didn’t know how I could make a career out of it with business and social sciences degrees. After I had decided to become a fulltime actress, there was a lot of waiting and searching. I didn’t have any trouble finding my first acting job, but the hardest thing was what was next: No theater company would hire a fulltime actress without prior professional acting training. I therefore took up a part-time job at an art gallery. I also finally had the courage to call myself an actress. What I’ve learnt in my first few years in this industry is the importance of having the courage to make a decision that seems “wrong” in many people’s eyes.

One day, a friend asked me whether I wanted to teach drama in English. English? Yes I do speak English. But drama? I am still a baby. It turned out that there was a company which was starting to expand and was looking for people who could teach English through drama. I met their artistic director over a drink, together with my friend. One week later, I joined the company and worked there for a year, before I went to Europe for my professional theater training. It was the first time I was introduced to the concept of Drama Education. It’s more than just sharing one’s creative work with an audience; it’s applying theater to different contexts such as education, training and therapy.

Enjoy every flop

One of the biggest challenges, as a performer, is to face and even enjoy every flop. The work of an actor/actress is a process of constant self-discovery and everyone is unique. There are times when one has to face their weaknesses at work. It might be playing a character that is too difficult to handle, knowing that the ideas you have in mind don’t work, or feeling that you are nobody. In moments like these, it’s easy for me to choose “flight” instead of “fight”. The challenge is to accept our own weaknesses and turn them into something useful instead of covering them up. Once,
I took the step to try what I thought wouldn’t work. This inspired the director and things turned out even better.

There were times when I doubted whether I should be doing something else instead of theater, but I really could not think of anything that I would enjoy more than it. I have a need to create, to act, and to emerge myself in scripts, music and literature. It is also this urge that makes me want to share everything I have learnt with my students when I teach. Rehearsals, teaching and even struggling with different roles energize me more than anything else I do.

As a drama facilitator and actress, almost every job is a new challenge for me. It is never the same; even if I conduct the same class, the participants are different, and that would make the class very different. I could never anticipate what their reactions would be, but that’s precisely one of the things I love the most about my job. I remember that the first time I conducted a teachers’ workshop for the Education Bureau, I was very insecure as I knew the participants in the room had had much more teaching experience than I had, and they were probably not used to running around or lying on the floor in a class. However, once my session started, we had so much fun. Using the same theater game I had done with children, I discovered so much with this group of adults. I’ve come to realize that all I need to do is to focus on my goal and go for it, and this also reminds me that it’s the passion I have towards theater that keeps me going.

I guess it’s hard to say whether one has a successful career. It depends on what one focuses on. If one has achieved what they have planned or even more, perhaps we could say they have built a successful career. You could say yours is successful because of your achievements, awards, accomplishment etc. At the same time I think everyone knows in their own heart what success looks like and we all see it differently.

Live your life to the fullest

Fresh graduates have the privilege to ask about anything they don’t know. I don’t think any of us expects a fresh graduate to know a lot, but I do appreciate someone who is open in accepting new ideas and curious about things around them. This makes them a pleasant person to work with. Developing own sense of critical thinking is also very important. When I teach university students or adults, the factor that differentiates the outstanding ones from the rest is their critical thinking skills.

I don’t believe there’s a perfect job for everyone. Some might be very determined from the very beginning; others gradually discover their passion over the years. Yet I think it’s important to find one’s own pleasure and enjoyment at work. This is the biggest motivation to continue with what one is doing and to develop one’s skills to the fullest.

University is a place with a lot of resources and a good place for making connections. You never know what you’ll get from a visit to the Career Center, a mentorship program, joining a sports team or simply chatting to the person next to you before an interview. These were actually all situations in which I met people who are still playing an important role in my life now.
Shortly after graduating from HKUST, I joined Pacific Advantage, the company I am still working in today. It is an IT outsource company which has helped many overseas technology companies expand into the Asia-Pacific region.

I was fortunate enough to begin my career journey in this company – I started off as an Office Administration Assistant responsible for general office support and travel arrangement. The work environment in my company began to change when some sales and technical colleagues started traveling very frequently around the world.

My first impression of these colleagues was that they looked very sharp, and were knowledgeable and experienced. I started dreaming to become a very knowledgeable professional who would travel frequently to different places. I also told my senior that I was interested in marketing and that I wanted to have more opportunities to travel. A few years later, with more experience and knowledge in administration and marketing, I began to take care of different sales and marketing responsibilities.

“Life begins when you step out of your comfort zone.”

Maggie CHEUNG
Project Director, The Pacific Institute APAC, Hong Kong
BSc (Chemistry)

“It is also important to recognize your own values and contributions even when you are in more junior positions.”
events such as training and exhibitions for my company and our clients. I occasionally travelled to those events in Asia Pacific. I have been to China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam, and also the United States.

A few years ago, my company brought an educational program called The Pacific Institute (TPI) to Asia. TPI has provided tools and methods in Positive and Constructive thinking for schools, corporate and the social sector for more than 40 years. My work has been to promote the programs and facilitate them among children and teenagers in Hong Kong. This is also a turning point in my career as I have transformed from an office supporting staff to an enthusiastic educator and salesperson of our programs.

Changing my role was a difficult decision. It was even more difficult as I did not believe that I was the suitable person for the job. I had been told that I was quiet, that I was not outgoing or sociable enough to be a salesperson or teacher since I was a little kid.

Because of my strong desire to grow the company and to earn more money, I finally made the decision. The greatest challenge of every life choice is not finding the best ways to solve the problems but **overcome the fear of making the moves**.

Even now, I still think that there are a lot of areas waiting for me to explore and develop. Being open-minded and positive when looking at the world around you is the key. You will then see that every problem or challenge that seems to be a barrier could become an opportunity for learning. I also believe that opportunities are everywhere. **Of course you may choose to stay somewhere you feel comfortable; but when you have the courage to change, you can achieve something big – even bigger than what you have ever imagined.**

When I joined my company, I did not know what my interest was and what my career path would be like. As an admin staff, my work seemed trivial but I have actually streamlined a lot of sales and operation procedures, as well as helped my colleagues and customers travel safely.

“**Knowing that what I do make a difference** is my motivation and passion at work. I feel energized as I am now helping others become aware of their personal strengths and set goals for further improvement in different areas. This also applies to our studies, families and other activities, keeping the fire burning in our heart!
Career Development Programs

Students from all years and disciplines can benefit greatly from our extensive catalog of interesting and interactive programs to develop better self-understanding, industry knowledge and job search skills, as well as to gain useful connections, insights and inspirations.

Career Meetup – How does University Life help me plan my Future Career?

“The workshop exceeded my expectations. It covered a number of areas I wanted to learn and things I had not thought of previously. It was a good training and thank you so much!”

Workshop on Discovering My Passion and Personal Brand

“It was great to learn about different areas of personal branding and how to choose a career. I find the whole program very useful in helping me find a right career.”

How to Ace a Software Technical Interview, by William Chan (formerly worked in Google)

“…There were real case studies brought upon for the program. I learned a lot through group discussions and mock interviews. I am much better equipped now.”

Come Meet Our Pilots Seminar, by Nigel Leung (former pilot)

“…The speaker is an experienced pilot and the way he talked was very interesting and practical. Thanks for having had such a first class speaker!”

Fashion Styling, Skincare and Makeup Workshop

CV & Cover Letter Writing Workshop
Personal Management
• Knowing your MBTI Types
• Career Interest Exploration through Self Directed Search (SDS) and STRONG
• Discover Your Career Passion through Coaching

• Building Professional Relationship through Effective Networking
• Delivering a Powerful Self-Introduction
• Personal Branding and Networking Workshop
• The First 90 Days at the Workplace

• Fashion Styling, Skincare and Makeup Workshop
• Business Etiquette Workshop
• Professional Portraits Taking Session

Job Search Skills
• CV and Cover Letter Writing
• Interview Skills
• Mock Interview Practices
• Group Discussions Practices
• Mock Aptitude Tests
• Case Interview Preparation Workshop

• Strategies for Landing Internships
• How to Ace a Software Technical Interview
• How to Write a Professional Personal Statement
• Handling Multiple Job Offers
• Making a Successful Transition from Academic to Corporate

Other Signature Programs
• Overview of Mainland and Overseas Internship Opportunities
• Information Session for Non-Local Students Working in Hong Kong
• Experience Sharing from Non-Local Alumni Working in Hong Kong
• The 101s of Management Consulting – an Insider’s Perspective
• Overview of the Common Recruitment Examination (CRE) and Basic Law Test (BLT)
• Seminars on Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF), Employment Contract, and Employment Fraud
Cracking the Case Interview Workshop, by Jonathan Kwan (former management consultant)

“...The speaker is very knowledgeable and passionate. He also has a great sense of humor. The program guided me how to become a good consultant and it was overall very informative.”

Job Experience Sharing for International Students Interested in Working in Hong Kong

“...It was very interesting to learn from the young alumni who shared us their stories. I can really relate to that. Thanks so much for their sharing.”

Discover Your Career Passion through Coaching

Over 250 Recruitment Talks per year
Stay diligent at work and be ready for the right opportunity

Rick CHAN
Firestop Engineer, Hilti, Hong Kong
BEng (Mechanical Engineering)

I graduated at HKUST with a Bachelor degree in Mechanical Engineering in 2010. I then soon found a job in a construction company with good prospects. The construction industry in Hong Kong has always been doing well under a number of infrastructure developments and railway projects. It is quite a promising business industry for engineers.

My first job was an Assistant Engineer in a multi-national engineering consultancy firm. Since I did not have any work experience prior to graduation, so the first job was such an eye-opening experience for me and in there I could find my strengths and weaknesses. One year later I left the company and moved to a construction materials company.

A career transition
At the beginning I was a Design Engineer but after a short while I became a product specialist where I had to work with different people internally and externally, including customers, sales & marketing team as well as the management team of the company. My duties now are to provide technical advice on product applications and key selling process. I enjoy it very much because it allows me to apply my technical knowledge and learn good interpersonal skills.

Until recently, I was offered a chance to lead a product development team and be responsible for the deliverables. Being a young leader to take up such challenging role, I need to have an analytical mind and be always receptive to other people’s suggestions and learn from them. I understand it is not an easy task but I am so excited that it is full of challenges and, of course, good performance can lead to promotion too.

As for pursuing a dream job, as far as I am concerned, it consists of the following elements and, of course, it varies from one person to another:

- It offers a variety of work scope
- Free to express ideas
- Good corporate culture
- Ample room to advance within the organization

Being a fresh graduate, your first job is more likely not your life-long career. I would advise you to open up yourself to different types of work before making a decision as to which one should stay with you in the long run.

I wish you all with great success in the future.
Effective presentation and communications skills help open doors for you

Anthony WONG
Head of Human Resources, Nestle Hong Kong
BBA (Marketing)

My major was marketing and, honestly, at that time I didn't know too much about marketing except that I had to, as a team member within the class, do many projects and presentations which involved many case studies and brainstorming sessions, and I learned the importance of team work. In my final year I took a few Human Resources (HR) Management programs and got me really interested in this kind of work.

I didn't have any commercial experience prior to graduation, but I always knew I was very outgoing and enjoyed meeting people. I was lucky to be invited for a job interview for management trainee at Hutchison Whampoa. During the recruitment process I was engaged in a group discussion and panel interview. I remember I managed to convey my ideas clearly and precisely, thanks to the valuable experience I learned from being a part of the Students’ Union at HKUST. I guess I must have impressed the panel interviewers. I finally got the job amongst several hundreds of applicants.

I enjoy HR work because I can help develop people with good potential and bring them to the next level. It also helps the company to grow bigger by nurturing good talents. What also attracts me about HR work is that I hear different stories from the staff crew almost every day and how I may be able to resolve. Being a HR specialist in the company, I cannot avoid some rather difficult tasks such as dealing with the union, handling mass redundancies, restructuring the entire management system and transforming an HR department etc. They are not easy tasks but lots to learn from them.

I have faced many work challenges over the years at work. I remember when I was in my late 20s I was working as HR Officer in a local listed company. In one occasion I was asked to prepare a global HR budget and had the chance to join in a meeting with some board of directors. That night I worked until 4am and joined the meeting at 8am the next morning. During the meeting the CFO challenged the numbers I presented but I firmly believed I was correct. After having rationally explained my case, my numbers were finally approved and, more importantly, I made an impression with the senior management. Since then, my career development at the company has been quite smooth and I have also earned trust from my bosses.

“A dream job is how you perform and derive job satisfaction from it. Money should be secondary, because if one can deliver good performance, more responsibilities will be added and promotion can be expected.”
I picked up lots of valuable experiences over the years at work. It is important to always look at things from the big picture and not be let down by small failures. One should also have self-confidence and always be ready with facts to substantiate your arguments, because without which you can stumble easily. There are ups and downs at the workplace; just when you are about to give up, I have the following tips which may help you to re-boost yourself: –

1. **Do exercise.** Try to run 3 times a week with 10km each time. It helps to let go of the negative energy and revitalize yourself with positive energy which makes you feel great afterward.

2. **Take a few days to a week break just to strike a balance.** Do not check your business emails when you are on holidays. Stop thinking about work while you are having fun with friends so that you can fully recharge your battery.

3. **Talk to smart people.** They can motivate you and turn you from being negative to positive.

That is to say, no job is a dream job because along the way there’s always something that stands in the way and makes your life difficult, but as long as you have the confidence and determination to make it work, it’s only a matter of time before you realize success and satisfaction. Don’t forget life has ups and downs and so do jobs - but as long as one keeps being positive in doing whatever tasks – you can work happily notwithstanding.

HKUST provides a good platform for people of different backgrounds and grades to have a decent education, so that one day they can go on their own in this competitive job market and hopefully be successful in the long run. I see that the world is fair.

The more efforts we take on in our jobs, the more and better chances for success, and don’t just count on luck. Be always diligent and have self-initiatives.

Always remember not to just study hard. You should plan a balanced life. In other words, learn hard, work hard and play hard. **Get involved with extracurricular activities including students’ union work and voluntary work, sports and build people network within the campus.** Lastly, open up yourself to different ideas and be ready to adapt changes, also make sure to seek help from people whom you trust if necessary.
Women can do equally good job in a manly industry given a strong determination and full dedication

Yan LEUNG
Management Trainee, Kerry Logistics, Hong Kong
BEng(Industrial Engineering and Logistics Management)

I think a common problem among university students is to really know how to map out a right career path at the beginning – I can say it's all about trials and errors before finally coming to a well settled or a dream job. As for me, I opted for the job that is related to my study so I chose Management Trainee. It offers me an all-rounded experience at various departments within the organization and I can later decide what type of work interests me most.

I applied my first job in the fall term and it took a long process which involved an online test, a written test and a face to face interview. I must admit the entire process was tiring but I learned a lot from it. I also know finding a job in a well-established organization these days is not easy.
The challenge I encountered in this company was being assigned to a project just a few days after I came onboard. As every project had to go through a long process of preparation, so I worked from 8:30am till until 2am every day. Fortunately my personal will power helped me overcome the physical tiredness and, as a fresh graduate, I consider myself quite lucky for having had the opportunity to work with new projects.

During my 13-month management program, I worked in 3 different departments and learned a lot from different people and the various tasks. Being sincere and having a good attitude at work can put you in a very good position and that you become a very likable person in the company.

Furthermore, I think a well-groom appearance is also very important apart from being capable at what you are doing in your job. So you should always look presentable in proper business attire when you go to work, especially if your job requires that you need to meet clients or suppliers.

Lastly, academic results are important as they can help you open up a lot of doors. So make sure you find time to sign up for student exchange and internship programs because they can enrich your life experience as well as earning academic points.
“GNED2510 is the most rewarding course for me and my participation was 100%.”
Year 2, School of Business and Management

“SCIE1100 is both inspiring and meaningful. If I were to rate it, I would give it A++!”
Year 3, School of Science

“The program helps me to equip with valuable skills for preparing a good cover letter and a decent CV prior to an interview. I also learned a lot on how to search for an ideal job from different sources.”
Year 3, School of Engineering

“I’m so glad that I took SCIE1100. I should have taken it earlier! 😊😊😊😊😊 I know from now on I can apply what I learned in whatever work I do.”
Year 2, School of Science

“Before I took this program, I thought it would be something more or less I had already known. But it really changed my whole perspective of how to prepare for job interviews and differentiate myself from other candidates.”
Year 3, School of Humanities & Social Science
“GNED2510 changed my way of thinking and a new perspective towards seeing a beautiful life – it’s about who you are and how you want yourself to be!”

Year 2, Interdisciplinary Programs Office

Are you ready?

“You cannot imagine how it can enrich your thoughts unless you come to the class. Be prepared.”

The Career Building Courses are 1-credit general education free electives offered since Spring 2009 for undergraduate students in small class set-up. Led by well-experienced instructors with extensive expertise in career planning and recruitment, the courses cover the basics of career building, including:

- Self-exploration
- HR marking schemes on CV and cover letter
- Mock interview with real industry senior
- Job offer management

Most of the learning will take place through weekly lectures and interactive exercises in class, including group discussions, impromptu speech practice, role play, experience sharing from elite alumni and personalized feedback from the instructor.
Internship Network (iNET)
A flagship internship program which provides a host of internship opportunities in Hong Kong and beyond.

Understand your interests, navigate the world of work, and fine-tune your career toolkit to land on your dream job.

SOAR Mainland Internship
A six-week mainland summer internship program to help you gain work experience in the mainland and immerse in Chinese culture and language.

Career Building Course
A signature credit-bearing course taught by well-experienced instructors in HR field in a small class set-up.

Give you some insights on the career options of HKUST graduates.

Career Consultation
A 30-minute session to discuss your future plan, review CV, conduct mock interviews, and get solid advice from our career advisors.

Career Guide
A comprehensive reference on everything career-related to help you plan your journey at HKUST.

Career Development Programs
Understand your interests, navigate the world of work, and fine-tune your career toolkit to land on your dream job.

Grant of Employment Survey
On-campus recruitment talks, career fairs, interviews and job boards to connect you with prospective employers and job opportunities.

Career Development Module (PD module)
Part of the Professional Development Courses, specially designed to empower students to prepare for careers beyond academia.

Recruitment Services
On-campus recruitment talks, career fairs, interviews and job boards to connect you with prospective employers and job opportunities.

Graduate Employment Survey
Give you some insights on the career options of HKUST graduates.

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