

Boot camp prepares university students for the real world

LONDON, UK: British university students will be able to prepare for harsh realities of the real world when they enter summer boot camp with UK's top graduate employer.



- 54 university students develop employability skills;
- Five-day course climaxes in Dragons' Den style presentation;
- Applications rise 58% in a year.

As graduates face the harshest job market conditions in a decade, first year university students are set to get a taste of the real world of work this week at a summer boot camp for aspiring business people.

A five-day residential talent academy, organised by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), began yesterday Monday 5 July 2010, and aims to develop the employability skills of students early on in their degree.

It forms part of the firm's on-campus graduate recruitment campaign this year, focusing on how students can identify and develop their employability skills. There was a 58% increase in applications to the scheme since last year, meaning eight students applied for every individual place.

Fifty four students, mostly 19 years old and set to graduate in 2012/13 from universities across the UK, will participate. Alongside seminars for personal and professional development, students will team up to fill positions on the board of directors of a fictitious international transport business.

Confronting the harsh realities of the business world

In a test of character and commercial flair, the teams will confront some of the harsh realities of the business world as they navigate the company through rising oil prices, trade unions negotiations and supply chain disruption.

During their time at the academy, the students will be assessed by PwC's graduate recruitment team through both formal assessments and group exercises.

Sonja Stockton, director of talent resourcing, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, said: "Interest in our roles from students and graduates alike is increasing because they recognise that by joining PwC they are joining a university for business. The quality of training, investment and support we provide, as well as the level of work and the variety of career opportunities available, means that we're a breeding ground for talented business people.

"Typically, first-year university students don't make the most of valuable work experience opportunities in holiday time. But the academy creates a business environment where students work together on an assignment as they would do in the real world, and as a result they can develop business insight and the kind of employability skills we are looking for. It's also a chance for students to learn negotiation skills, building professional relationships and finding appropriate solutions, which are skills required for a successful business career."

High conversion rate to fulltime employment

The corporate challenge culminates in a series of group presentations, where a Dragons' Den style panel will review the performance and prospects of each company. Judges will include partners from PwC's alongside the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW).

Successful students from the academy will be offered a place on the firm's summer internship programme in 2011. From there, there is a high conversion rate for those attending PwC internships; they are then offered a fulltime job as 95% of second and third-year students are offered a fulltime job at the firm upon graduation.

The PwC Talent Academy has been developed and managed by the firm's in house Human Capital team, bringing together expertise in assessment, recruitment, team working and personal development. It forms part of the firm's wider student internship programme which has increased by 50% this year, and now offers places in management consultancy, advisory, assurance, tax and actuarial.

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