

STEM Internship Scheme well received by universities and business community

A spokesman for the Innovation and Technology Commission said today (March 25) that the pilot STEM Internship Scheme held last summer and winter had attracted over 1 600 university students and more than 1 000 companies or organisations. It was well received by both universities and the business community.

According to the findings of the surveys conducted by participating universities after the completion of the summer and winter internships (see Annex), most of the students (94 per cent) upon completion of their internship gained a better understanding of the innovation and technology (I&T) field. Eighty-eight per cent of the students would consider pursuing careers in I&T in the future. Furthermore, a vast majority of the participating employers (99 per cent) considered that the job performance of their interns had met or even exceeded their expectations. Ninety-six per cent of the employers planned to join the Scheme again.

The participating companies were mostly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) or start-ups. About half of them were from the information technology sector with the rest from various business sectors, including biotechnology, electrical and electronic engineering, professional services and environmental protection. The internship positions covered various I&T elements, such as programme coding, web design, big data analytics, machine learning, robotics, artificial intelligence, electronic engineering, digital marketing, biotechnology and food technology.

Participating universities said that the Scheme had encouraged employers to create more I&T-related internship places, offering students the opportunity to apply their STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) knowledge in the workplace and understand the I&T work environment and culture at an early stage. In addition, some employers, mainly from SMEs, considered that the subsidy of the Scheme had alleviated the impact on their industries brought about by the relatively weak economic environment last year, enabling them to recruit interns to help develop business as usual.

"In view of the enthusiastic response from universities and the business community, the Financial Secretary announced the regularisation of the STEM Internship Scheme in the 2021-22 Budget. We are discussing with universities on various enhancement measures to attract more students and employers," the spokesman for the Commission said.

The STEM Internship Scheme aims to encourage students to experience I&T-related work and foster their interest in an I&T career in the future. It provides students with internship opportunities and assists enterprises in recruiting suitable I&T talents. It supports the nurturing of new blood in

I&T, thereby enlarging the local I&T talent pool. The universities that will continue to participate in the Scheme this year are the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the City University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Baptist University and the Education University of Hong Kong. Interested students and employers may contact the relevant universities. Details are available at the website of the Innovation and Technology

Fund (www.itf.gov.hk/en/funding-programmes/nurturing-talent/stem-internship-scheme).