

My Internship Experience 我的實習體驗



Media Internship with Commercial Radio

Hui Kin Lam, Irene BA 3

Last Christmas, I worked as an unpaid Programme Assistant Intern on the current affairs programme *Teacup in the Storm* (風波裡的茶杯). The internship was arranged by the HKU Journalism and Media Studies Centre, which was a challenging - yet interesting - experience.

Why was I interested in being a Programme Assistant Intern? What have I learned?

I aspire to develop a career in the HK and Mainland media upon graduation. So I grasp every opportunity to work in different media in my undergraduate years. Since I am a regular listener to Albert Cheng's programme *Teacup in the Storm*, I want to learn more about the operation of this programme.

Besides, *Teacup of the Storm* has a very large audience in Hong Kong, and some people even call Albert Cheng the "Chief Executive before 10 am". I thought it would be interesting to know more about his colourful life and the reasons why he is so popular and controversial (in the sense that people listen to his programme AND complain about it).

What did I do as a Programme Assistant Intern?

I handled incoming telephone calls and screened the relevant calls to the hosts Albert Cheng and Peter Lam during the programme. I needed to record the personal information of the callers and summarise their opinions or complaints for other programme assistants to follow up after the programme.

The number of calls varied, depending on the topic of the day. For example, we received about 180 calls after an arson attack on an MTR train. Many listeners called our hotline to break the news. We also received calls from some passengers who were on that train to share their experience the day after. Another exciting day was when the Chief Secretary for Administration Donald Tsang explained on air the work of Constitutional Review Task Force. We received about 200 calls that day.

- **Punctuality!** The programme starts at 7am, and we had to have the materials ready before then.
- **Get it right.** We had to work very efficiently in chaotic situations (for example, the MTR arson attack). Accuracy is crucial in news reporting because the public relies on our information. Thorough research and careful fact-checking are essential, both before and during the programme.
- **Take good notes.** We need to make phone calls to gather relevant information for the hosts. Taking clear and concise notes helps producers and other programme assistants with their follow up actions.
- **Good telephone manners.** We had to handle many phone calls (including complaints) during the three-hour programme. Patience and politeness are the key to getting as much information as possible. Sometimes we needed to comfort listeners who got emotional.
- **Keep abreast of both local and international scenes.** After the internship, I learned more about the political issues in Hong Kong. And I, with my partner and another HKU student, were invited to be guest speakers on Audrey Eu's radio programme (發言人志) to share our views on youth and political issues.
- **Be proactive and communicate with all levels of people.** You can learn a lot from everyone in the radio station: producers, hosts, programme assistants, technicians and even callers!



Create your own internship

Ho Chung Kwun, BA 2003

I graduated from the Faculty of Arts in Psychology and Philosophy last year. Since secondary school days I have longed to be a film director and took steps to create my own internship to help me get into the field.

This "internship" consisted of organising a discussion forum and various activities for the HKUSU Film Society (as its Education Secretary). Since 2001, I wrote regularly and published film critiques as an active member of the Hong Kong Film Critics Association. After graduation, I took two courses at the Hong Kong Film Academy - the Diploma of Basic Film/TV Production and the Diploma of Scriptwriting for Film/TV.

This "internship" was the deciding factor, I reckon, in securing the position of production officer at Cable TV. I believe, therefore, that students should be the directors of their own career. I recommend that you create internship opportunities for yourselves!



My days as a summer intern with Swire Properties

Kit Tse, BSc 3

I got the chance to apply the skills I learned in the surveying programme by working as an intern in the Development and Valuation Department of Swire Properties.

In the first few days, I was taken to visit some properties and introduced to the various schemes operated by the Company. After the Orientation, I undertook four business projects.

For the first three projects, I mainly worked on my own. The first project was on hotels. I was asked to find out how many developers had applied to the Town Planning Board for change of use with a view to building a hotel. The second one was on retail business. I studied what retailers in the neighbourhood of our properties were offering and made suggestions as to how our property might gain leverage on the current business environment. The third task was to find out from past sales figures what size of flat and design of rooms was most popular with buyers.

The fourth project was different from the previous three. While I still had to collect figures, analyse the situation and make comments, the three earlier assignments were essentially a straightforward reporting task. With the fourth report, I had to create an innovative idea after analysing the figures. For this project, I worked with a partner and another intern. Our ideas had to be professional and workable. This was a challenge as we were asked to present our ideas to the General Manager of the Company.

I learned many things from my supervisor's feedback on my work. One of the important messages for me was that research is very important to the business of property developers. They need to conduct research whether or not the findings are of immediate use. They also need to know what their competitors are doing.

Home internship for international students

Matt Nurse, University of Nottingham, UK
Exchange student at HKU from Sept 03 - Jan 04

Matt reckons that his experience in Hong Kong helped him secure an internship position back home at HSBC Investment Banking and Markets, London (Summer 2004).

Undertaking an international exchange, I believe, enhanced my chances with HSBC greatly since working with HSBC will certainly require international travel and working.

This is quite evident from the questions that employers asked me on the phone and at interviews. What they were interested in were personal qualities, skills, enthusiasm and positive attitude.

Specific to my own experience, I was asked to describe myself in five words. Teams work best if each individual knows their personality and how best to utilise their skills within a teamwork situation. However, the bottom line is, of course, to show commercial interest in one's specific business stream.



When tackling these questions, I found my experience in Hong Kong, such as overcoming cultural differences and working with a team of people who have a different background from me, a rich pool of evidence with which I could illustrate my ability to nurture cross cultural interrelationships. This ability is vital in a global business, I reckon.

In addition, I was also asked many difficult questions by various employers. These I am very happy to share with students who are preparing for interviews. For those who are preparing for selection tests, I have listed a number of books that I found particularly useful. Please check the website of the Careers Education and Placement Centre <www.hku.hk/cep>. The story also contains my experience in locating internship positions in the UK.

Wishing all of you every success with your internship hunting.