Solving business problems with IT

ISS' practitioner-oriented Graduate Diploma in Systems Analysis prepares its students to apply technical knowledge to real-life issues

Douglas Chew

MS ONG Lay Hoe's interest in information technology (IT) led her to sign up for the Institute for Systems Study’s (ISS) Graduate Diploma in Systems Analysis. ISS is a specialist education institute of the National University of Singapore and provides IT graduate education and professional development courses.

MS Ong is now working in a role that draws on her knowledge of information technology, as a systems analyst at Accenture, a leading management consulting, technology and outsourcing company. She previously worked as an operations executive at IT Logistics for five years.

"Coming from a mathematics background, she found systems analysis challenging but rewarding and at times stressful, but her desire to advance her career motivated her," she says.

"I am confident that professionals can also benefit from the graduate diploma course," she adds.

MR Rully Kurniawan was an IT graduate and worked as a software system analyst before signing up for the course.

"I have learnt a lot, not merely about theories, but also about executing theory into real implementation, enterprise design and project management," he says.

"We were taught to be more professional through training on presentation delivery, writing good resumes and tackling interviews. All the things I learnt in ISS have made me a better IT professional," he says.

The graduate diploma curriculum is practitioner-oriented. Lectures are augmented by workshops, laboratory sessions and group projects, culminating in a project proposal delivered at the end of the 13-month full-time programme.

MR Loh Min Choon, director of ISS, says: "The ISS is a very important part of the curriculum as the students need to adapt quickly to companies’ working environments, pick up new technical skills and acquire knowledge, formulate solutions to problems and define the solutions to the satisfaction of their clients."

MR Kurniawan’s five-month internship at the Land Transport Authority allowed him to translate what he had learnt into real-world projects, helping him to clinch Accenture’s best Industrial Attachment Prize for his work in developing a new ticketing system.

He is now working as an information architect as a senior consultant at Accenture.

Accenture has been giving out these awards to the Graduate Diploma in Systems Analysis students since 1998, where the winning project gets a cash prize and a plaque.

MR Ng Swee Wai, Accenture’s managing director and head of public service line in Singapore, says: "The award is a testament to our students’ dedication in the last few years, and it’s evident in the kind of projects that each batch of students got involved in.

"These tend to be digital-driven, from mobility to e-commerce, and the students get to solve real-world issues and contribute directly to the business."

"A judge for the award, Mr Ng looks for well-rounded graduates who display initiative, resourcefulness and unflinching commitment to their work and projects."

"My belief is that technology is most relevant when applied to the context of a business problem. So my advice to IT students would be, besides developing IT skills, they also need to develop business acumen, so that they can work as a bridge between business and technology," he adds.

The course helped MS Ong, who has a mathematics background, to advance her career as an IT professional.

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January 5, 2014

the answer times