

Publication: Today Online

Date: 31 Jan 2019

Headline: SMU students get head start in data analytics career with Google tie-up

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Mr Tan Kiat How, Chief Executive Officer of Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), with Ms Stephanie Davis (centre), Country Director of Google Singapore, and SMU President Professor Lily Kong (right).

SINGAPORE — Fresh out of university in 2016, business graduate Tao Yi Jun decided to forgo a career in business operations for one in data analytics by enrolling in Google's Squared Data and Analytics programme.

From there, her new-found knowledge "opened doors" for her. Today, the 25-year-old is a product data analyst at online marketplace Carousell. She landed the job after a six-month internship there as part of the programme.

Since November last year, Ms Tao's juniors from the Singapore Management University (SMU) have been given that the same opportunity, as the programme is now only available to undergraduates from the university after SMU and Google officially inked a new partnership on Thursday (Jan 31).

The programme was previously available to Singaporean degree holders and early career professionals, but the SMU-Google tie-up will only be open to SMU's second year students and above and across all disciplines.

SMU president Lily Kong said that the aim of the programme is to "nurture future-ready analytics talent to meet industry demand".

Speaking at the launch at the SMU school of law, Mr Tan Kiat How, chief executive of the Infocommunications Media Development Authority (IMDA), said that "a skill in infocomm is a career in any industry".

There are currently about 25 students enrolled in the programme and they will begin their internship in May.

The students have to take two prerequisite courses in data analytics, including one that involves 12 weeks of seminars with Google professionals, SMU lecturers and other industry experts.

The six-month internship is part of the work-study programme in SMU, which means that the participants will have a four-day work week and a day of classes on campus.

Some of the tech and media companies involved in the internship programme include:

- Carousell
- Expedia
- Grab
- Dentsu Aegis Network
- Publicis
- Omnicom

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- IPG (The Interpublic Group of Companies)

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Google’s collaboration with IMDA on the programme began in 2014 with the aim of arming young professionals looking to enter the data and analytics sector with the skills required to gain a competitive edge.

More than 90 former trainees have since secured analytics-related roles after completing the programme.

For the new programme with SMU, IMDA will sponsor TechSkills Accelerator Awards for the top student of each class until 2021.

For Ms Tao, the best thing about the programme was the people she got to know there.

“We made a network of friends, and we still meet up, despite everyone being in different companies,” she said.

Mr Tan Peng Chong, 24, who is from the SMU-Google programme’s pioneer batch, said he will benefit from the flexibility of its work and study schedule.

“With the work-study programme, I won’t need to take an LOA (Leave of Absence) to do an extended internship,” said the School of Information Systems student. “It complements what I do in school as well.”

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