

# LEARNING from INTERNING

Internships are now seen by many LSE students as an essential element of their university experience. They can also greatly increase their chances of landing a job after graduation. **Peter Wilkinson** reports.



Last academic year LSE Careers advertised almost 1,400 internships to students. Jenny Owen, director of LSE Careers, is clear about the benefits of this increasingly popular route to employment. "There is growing evidence that gaining the vital work experience that an internship offers significantly increases the chances of landing a job," she argues. "Recent surveys have shown that interns are three times more likely to find employment after graduation."

Typically an internship is a structured period of work experience, lasting six to eight weeks, and usually in the summer of a student's penultimate year of study, or immediately after graduation.

A dedicated team within LSE Careers works with a wide range of businesses and organisations in the UK and abroad. Among the placements advertised by LSE, banking and finance feature strongly, as do economics, law and the international development and charity sectors. LSE Careers only advertise internship opportunities that comply with national minimum wage legislation.

LSE Careers have sought to be innovative in their approach. "Last year we forged a partnership with Santander to source and part-fund internships with small and medium enterprises (SMEs)," says Jenny Owen. "In this the first year of the scheme, 15 internships have

been created. They all have an entrepreneurial focus, and include wealth management, urban design and business intelligence. Building on the success of the pilot, the scheme will be expanded to 20 places in 2014."

Given the global reach of LSE, it is fitting that the School is also involved in international internships. The Tata International Social Entrepreneurship Scheme (ISES) is a unique partnership between Tata and leading universities – LSE, the University of Cambridge, UC Berkeley and UC Davis – that has been running since 2008. The ISES scheme offers LSE students the chance to undertake eight-week projects at the Tata Group in India. The primary objective of the scheme is to give students

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**Tata ISES community project**

the opportunity to work on social entrepreneurship, environmental development and corporate social responsibility (CSR) community-based projects. These initiatives give students a grassroots level exposure to India. In turn students will bring their perspectives and research skills to the company projects, and in so doing promote international understanding. Projects for 2013 covered a range of areas including climate change, enterprise, self-help for a women’s handicraft group, water conservation, CSR in the coffee and jewellery industries and sustainability.

LSE Careers also run some specific internship schemes, including a parliamentary programme. It was founded by LSE alumnus and governor Barry Sheerman MP in 1998, and more than 500 students have worked as interns at Westminster since its inception. The scheme has grown to an annual intake of about 50. It is aimed

at postgraduate students from any department within the School. Internships are available with MPs from all parties, peers and the House administration team. A typical internship can include: office support, research and briefing, monitoring, and drafting speeches and press releases, as well as constituency case-work support. These internships are part-time, and take place during the Michaelmas and Lent terms. Some interns have gone on to become policy advisers and heads of staff for MPs.

Equally successful is the School’s own Graduate Internship scheme. Launched in 2008, the scheme has gone from strength to strength, with 72 interns being placed since its inception. Interns are based in one department for up to 11 months, doing a variety of tasks, including project work. The roles have been many and varied, and have included working with the School’s chaplain to establish the new Faith Centre in the Saw Swee Hock building, as well as further develop interfaith relations. Another intern has been working with the Institute for Public Affairs in its ground-breaking programme to crowdsource a written constitution for the United Kingdom. Other departments that have benefited from the scheme include: Estates, Careers, Student Services, Information Management and Technology, and External Relations. ■



**Peter Wilkinson** is former head of Press and Information at LSE.

School governor and LSE alumnus **Cato Stonex** has run an intern programme at his London-based global equity investment firm for the past five years. Typically, LSE interns will spend up to four weeks with the firm. This includes shadowing partners and senior members of staff, and attending meetings. They also complete a project, which they then present to the firm. The scheme is open to all, including postgraduates. Interns have also included LSE Stonex PhD scholars from the departments of International Relations and International History.

Cato explained: “During their time with the firm they gain useful experience and learn new skills. We aim to help provide the foundation for

students wanting to pursue a career in the City, finance or business.”

The intern scheme is also beneficial for the firm, THS Partners: “Over the years we have greatly benefited from the perspectives that LSE interns have brought with them. They have a fresh generational approach, and are very knowledgeable about emerging trends among young people. Students are drawn from diverse backgrounds and from a wide range of countries and cultures and also bring local knowledge of international markets and trends.”

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LSE International History graduate **Sam Johnson** joined the External Relations Division in January 2013. He covered a range of projects during the time he spent working in Academic Partnerships. Sam played a

significant role helping to organise and promote the School’s first ever LSE-University of Cape Town July School, and was also closely involved in the Beijing Summer School.

Sam also worked in the Press and Information Office, and helped introduce a new media analysis system. He gained wide-ranging public relations experience, which included writing press releases, handling enquiries, drafting responses and compiling a comprehensive digest of the School’s media coverage. He also built up an excellent knowledge of the UK and international media. During the summer Sam fulfilled a career ambition and is now working full-time with a London-based public relations company.

Sam is originally from Tyneside, and attended the School from 2009 to 2012. He said: “The internship scheme was a fantastic opportunity and I am very grateful it exists. I genuinely believe that it made me more employable, as it provided me with an excellent introduction to the world of work. Most of my contemporaries found it hard to land a job, and either continued with their studies or worked for free in order to gain experience.

“During my time in External Relations I learnt new skills and gained invaluable experience, which has meant I have been able to embark on a full-time career in PR. I would strongly advise any final-year students or recent graduates to seriously consider applying for the scheme.”

If you are interested in advertising internships to current students and recent alumni please visit [www.lse.ac.uk/employers](http://www.lse.ac.uk/employers) or email [careers.employers@lse.ac.uk](mailto:careers.employers@lse.ac.uk)