

Introduction and Intern's Views from 2005

The internship program in 2005 gained further momentum and one of the highlights achieved was their excellent contribution to the Careers Fair. Their efforts along with the Careers and Employment team resulted in our Graduate Careers Fair being judged nationally as one of the best so far. Well done and many thanks to our 2005 interns: Bernadette, Stephanie, Leanne, Lisa, Zuzanna, Anita, Defne, Ben, Jeremy, Liza, Danette, Ika, Michele, Wendy, Claire, Amy, Wilson, Lara, Melanie, Alex, and Serlina.

Our 2005 interns get a chance to talk about their experiences as an intern and what they have achieved. They are able to give future interns an insight into highlights of being an intern and their time as a Monash University student.

Question 1. Tell us about the highlights of your course and the subjects you enjoyed?

Wendy: I have been undertaking Commerce/Law for nearly 2 years now and have enjoyed it as much as anyone could enjoy school. Some highlights include delving into the fascinating facets of the Criminal Law and finally being able to understand the Finance section of the news after taking Introductory Finance and Macroeconomics.

My favourite subjects so far would probably be Macroeconomics and Contract Law.

Ben: I feel that some of the indirect skills I have learnt through studying the B. Software Engineering such as: time management, working in team environment, analytical and problem solving will greatly benefit me in the work force.

I have enjoyed the social aspect to studying and I will leave the course having made many close friends.

Danette: I am taking a Master of Practising Accounting for one and a half years. It is well suited to non-accounting background students. Since my background is industrial engineering with a narrow knowledge about accounting, I find that this course broadens my view about accounting in the real world. It is much more exhilarating than just bookkeeping stuff. I enjoy subjects with more practical exercises such as Managerial Accounting, Quantitative Methods and Introduction to Financial Information System 2.

Lara: The highlights of my law degree to date have been the practical legal experience I have obtained through optional assessment within various subjects. The study of law is not just the theory learnt in the class room but the way that it is implemented in practice, when you have real live clients in front of you. This practical experience has been invaluable and has shaped my future career path.

To date my favourite subjects have been family law, criminal law and evidence. These subjects have been the most enjoyable for me as it is the area that I hope to practice in after my studies.

Amy: I am in my penultimate year of a Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Laws. I have really enjoyed both my degrees and have found having the two areas of study has made my degree more interesting. I have completed a major in politics and a minor in history for my Arts degree and I think my Arts subjects have complimented my law studies well. The highlights of my course would definitely be the interesting subjects I have undertaken and the friends I have made along the way, which have made my degree so much more enjoyable, particularly when you are all stressing about exams or assignments together!

Defne: Bachelor of Commerce, the good thing about my course is that a lot of different disciplines are involved. Mix of accounting, finance and management, which I have enjoyed.

Serlina: I am currently in 2nd year of my Commerce/Law degree- with an accounting major. The part of my course that I appreciate most is the integration of the Skills and Ethics module into our Law subjects. They provide an insight of moral dilemmas faced by lawyers and allow the students to think about these issues very early on in their degree. In first year for Legal Process, I had a very ethically orientated lecturer that has since inspired me to advance public interest in certain issues and reformulate my reasons for undertaking law.

Anita: I always love doing logical thinking and that's why I am studying Bachelor of Computer Science. I like programming and hosting my own website. The best thing doing a course that you have a passion is you will put lots of effort and work well. Taking part in the Software Engineering (CSE3302) was the most unforgettable experience. It gave me a chance to apply what I have learned throughout the course and develop software which is very useful. I am looking for a job in the IT industry and wish everyone finds out what you want in life.

Lisa: I am an international student from China. Before coming to Monash to do my current Graduate Diploma of Education, I completed a Master degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at Melbourne University. I have never taught in a formal school before, therefore I was always not sure whether I would make a good teacher. It may sound a bit weird because people with some knowledge about China may know that teaching is not a highly desirable job in that country, thus the set standard on the teaching profession is not very rigid and high. However, I have to take responsibility of my own life. If I've decided to pursue a future career in teaching, I wish to make clear whether it's what I am good at and then get sufficient preparation before entering the profession. So, that's why I'm now at Monash and working on this course.

I have just finished my 5-week teaching practicum in a local secondary school. And I reckon this should be the highlight of my course in Monash up to now. For the first time, I stood in front of a whole class of over 20 students and conducted a full lesson of 50 minutes. The first week is like a nightmare. Being educated in an Asian country for the majority of my schooling, I had no idea of what an Australian classroom would be like. Having no formal classroom teaching experience before, I had nothing practical to rely on either and had to start from the scratch. However, for me there's no way back.

Therefore, starting from the second week I seized every opportunity to observe different teaching styles, talked to different teachers, especially those whose style I believe suits me, adapted my classroom manner accordingly and worked harder to include more engaging tasks in my own lesson plan. And I could feel things were improving. Everyday, I found there was a lot to learn and reflect on. By the end of my teaching round, I gave the Y8 class I taught a small survey about students' attitude toward my teaching. When I read what they wrote for me such as "I like to learn things outside textbook from your lesson" , "I like the way you give us lots of practice" and "you are really nice to us and I hope you won't get frustrated since sometimes the class is noisy". I felt a sense of real self-worth.

Question 2: Tell us about the clubs and activities you have enjoyed as a student?

Wendy: As a new student at Monash, I was amazed by the sheer number of activities that were on offer. I joined many clubs during first year, including Debating and Amnesty International, but I regrettably let things slide after a few months as the school work began to mount up. Of course, this didn't prevent me from going to the many Balls which come up all throughout the year.

Currently, I enjoy a lot of the activities organised by the Law Student's Society and aside from the social events, I also participated in student Mooting last year which was a great experience.

Monash has fantastic sporting facilities and I have been taking advantage of my student discount to join the gym here. I usually try and make it at least twice a week in between my classes. I have also enjoyed other sports at Monash with friends, such as Squash, Tennis, Badminton and even a little bit of Soccer.

Ben: Although I was a member of several clubs I did not take a hugely active role. I did attend several BBQ's and social activities which were a great way to meet new people.

I was lucky enough to attend the Monyx Future Leaders course. The two day course really taught me a lot about team interactions, various leadership styles and personal development.

Danette: I joined Radio Kota Melbourne club, a newly established club at Caulfield campus. My first role in this club was organising a welcoming BBQ party together with the club's staff. It was such a valuable experience to learn how stressful it is to organise an event. I put a lot of effort in to meet the tight budget. From the theory that I have learnt it is now time to face reality and put it into practice. You will never learn this feeling without being involved in a social club.

I was also taking part this semester in Orientation Day. I found it was so thrilling. Throughout the day I was meeting new friends, cheering new students up, improving communication skills and helping others. That's what we can do without focussing too much on just our educational skills. This is what we need to balance our uni life..... so get involved in social events

Serlina: I am a member of the law student society and I enjoy all their barbecues and Society Balls ☺. I also enjoyed attending corporate career dinners for various commerce and law societies such as SICC and ILSA. They are a great way to get some first-hand information on what various industries or career paths are like.

Amy: I have been involved in the Law Students Society mooting competition for the past two years, which is a great way to get practical legal experience that is simply not available through most of the theoretically based law subjects. It is also a good introduction to the 'real world' of tight deadlines with participants given only a short time to research and prepare their case before they are at the mercy of the 'judge'. I have also attended the Arts and Law balls which have been really fun.

Lara: I have been a member of the Monash Law Student's Society (LSS) since my first year of my degree. The LSS offers many services to law students and I have taken advantage of many of them. In particular, the tutorials that they offer for students every semester, the law ball, the barbecues, the careers and articles guide, and the information sessions they provide on particular law firms. I also took part in the LSS work experience program which placed me with a barrister's clerk for one week during the summer holidays. Overall, being a member of the LSS has been invaluable. Every law student should take advantage of their services.

Anita: I have been a Vice President of HK student association, Treasurer of CSSE student club and 3rd Year Representative of MITS. Throughout the participation in student clubs, I met lots of friends and got to know more about Australian culture. Don't be afraid of spending some time in club activities, you will get a lot from these.

Question 3: What is your current career goal?

Wendy: My ultimate career goal is to get an article clerkship with a commercial law firm after completing my five year degree. Clerkships are not easy to come by and so I have a few stepping stones and alternative career paths to help me along the way. For instance, I would like to apply for vacation clerkships and internships in both the law and accounting areas when I reach my penultimate year.

I am juggling a retail job and an administration job at the moment, but always looking out for opportunities that will give me more experience.

Ben: My current career goal is to find a job where I can utilise the skills I have learnt through my studies. I would like to find a job that will allow me to develop my skills and move from software development into the business sector of IT. I am also very keen to continue studying with the possibility of starting masters on a part-time basis the ideal solution.

Danette: I want to work as an engineer with additional monetary skills. I dream of getting a position in a logistics department because it needs a combination of organising the technical matters and at the same time considering about money.

Serlina: My current career goal is to hopefully gain my articles in a law firm or to be at a top-tier accounting firm. I am looking at doing more university life orientated activities to make my time at university more worthwhile and am looking into some studies abroad in either Prato-Italy or in Toronto

Amy: My current career goal is to undertake my articles and practise law, however my course has allowed me to explore broader interests I have inside and outside law. I feel what I have studied will be useful in whatever career path I take.

Defne: My current career goal is to find a job that is related to my course to get experience in Australia while I will be applying for a permanent residency.

Lara: After my degree I hope to complete the Monash PDLP (the equivalent to articles) with the hope of then transferring to a Masters course. After my studies I am hoping to travel and work overseas, particularly in the UK, where I want to take advantage of my UK passport! Then I am hoping to begin my career in family law in a small or medium sized firm.

Anita: I want to be able to teach people what I learned from my experiences (IT / Maths / Music). It would also be good getting a chance to be part of a software development group. If possible I would love to own my business – that could be in private tuition.

Lisa: I want to find a teaching job in Australia after my Grad Dip-Ed course at Monash.

Question 4 What aspect of your time at Monash helped you prepare for your future career?

Wendy: Aside from the obvious technical and academic skills that Monash has given me, it has also taught me much about time management. Handling many tasks at once and the ability to assimilate information independently is essential in any future career. University has been a great place to learn how to do these things.

Ben: My studies at Monash have given me a good basis to start a career in the industry. The skills I have learnt from non-academic activities such as the Internship will help to make the transition to the work place much easier.

Danette: My time as a postgrad at Monash is very different from my life when I was pursuing my bachelor degree. At that time I did not have time to even engage in social events or internship activities. My focus was to finish my study as soon as possible. I now find that there are a lot opportunities at Monash. I believe that opportunities I take now will be my precious assets in my future life. For example, I thought that preparing a resume was an easy task, but it was not. Therefore, I went to see Monash University Careers and Employment staff and guess what I found, there are lots of people that can assist students like me to gain additional skills that I could not achieve just by studying.

Serlina: Getting involved in this careers internship has definitely opened my eyes to the amount of resources available for students to take advantage of in

advancing and planning their future career. I believe that the earlier students start thinking and planning for their career the more ready they are to embrace it when the time comes. But then again, people will still say to take each day as it comes.

Amy: I think a number of different aspects of my time at Monash have helped me prepare for my future career. The subjects I have studied and the course I have undertaken have obviously allowed me to determine where my interests lie. The many information sessions, careers fairs and online and hardcopy publications provided by Monash Careers and Employment and the Law Students Society have been great opportunities to find out information about different employers and career paths. I found the information sessions involving employers particularly useful when applying for clerkship positions as they give a great insight into the nature of the work, the culture of the employer and what the employer is looking for in a vacation or graduate employee. Employer careers sessions also provide a great opportunity to speak directly to representatives from companies you may potentially be interested in working for.

Lara: Apart from my studies I have found that the services offered by Careers and Employment to be very useful. Throughout my degree there have been numerous presentations by Careers and Employment to law students regarding alternatives to articles and how to prepare for a career in law. I have found the 'Enhance Your Employability' workshops to be particularly helpful, as they have raised my awareness of the characteristics that employers are looking for in graduate students.

Anita: Besides doing a degree at Monash University, I think taking part in student clubs and being an intern at Careers and Employment give me exposure to current work culture and industries.

Lisa: Many course related experiences such as the teaching rounds help me build up confidence in this professional area. And my volunteering work with the Graduate Careers Fair 2005 provided me with a sense of involvement at the University.

Question 5. What did you want to achieve from your time as an Intern and have you achieved it?

Wendy: I applied for this Internship because I wanted to know more about what opportunities were out there for me in terms of employment experience so I'd be more equipped for what was lurking at the end of my course and I also wanted to meet new people.

I feel that both of these goals were achieved during my time as an Intern. What I found particularly helpful was the Vacation Careers Fair that I assisted in setting up. This gave me the chance to really talk to employers about what they were looking for when recruiting graduates.

I have met a lot of great people during this Internship experience. Not only were the other Interns friendly, but the Careers & Employment staff have been lovely from day one.

Ben: My aim as an intern was to familiarise myself with the process of going from uni life to work life. The internship gave me a good insight to what kind of work is available, what the processes are in finding and applying for work, and what kind of companies I should target when looking for work.

Danette: I wanted a real work experience. I realised that I wanted to improve my communication skills and also my time management. Real work is not just experiencing the good and happy moments. Sometimes, I have to admit, that I had to put in extra effort in the middle of my busy study day in order to give time for this internship. This is a time management skill. I was involved in two surveys which of course needed communication skills. I believe that I have achieved an improvement through my experience. I was also able to find valuable information. Do not hesitate to ask everyone for more information. It might be asking about resume checking or experiencing an internship. Step by step getting closer to joining the real working world.

Serlina: I wanted to make a positive contribution to the university involvement and I did it through something I enjoyed which was my interest in thinking about careers. I wanted to tap into the hidden resources available to students at the careers department and I have definitely found it most valuable.

Amy: I was interested in finding out more about the options that existed in a number of career areas for graduates and for students in relation to vacation work. The internship has been a great opportunity to find this out and it has given me an insight into both careers paths which I had a previous interest in and others which I had previously very little knowledge of. This internship has also given me an overview of the opportunities that exist for graduates and the background required for these positions.

It has also been a great insight into the numerous services on offer by Monash University Careers and Employment to assist students in obtaining casual work, vacation work and graduate employment and in planning their future career direction. There is a huge amount of information on offer and the internship was a great chance to find out how and where this information can be accessed.

The program has also been a great opportunity to meet other students from a number of different courses and at different stages of their degrees that you may have been at uni with for one; two or four years but have never crossed paths.

As interns we assisted with the vacation employment fair and were able to gain a good understanding of the type of vacation work that was on offer for students and the disciplines that various employers are interested in.

Lara: Before commencing my time as an intern I had no idea of the range of services that Careers and Employment offer Monash students. Ultimately my aim was to familiarise myself with the services, tools and resources that are provided for students. After my time with the internship I can honestly say that I have achieved my primary aim. I only regret that I was not aware of their services before the internship.

Anita: To enhance job search skills and job application techniques, improve interview skills and develop relationships with the companies

Those are the areas that I wanted to explore, through meeting with the company representatives and Careers and Employment services staff. They are really helpful and supportive. I will never forget what it was like in Graduate Careers Fair. It was awesome.

Lisa: When I first came to Monash, I didn't know many people here. By working as an intern for Careers and Employment, I wanted to meet more students from different departments and make more friends. Also, as an international student, I wanted to get involved in more aspects of university life, not just academic studies. By participating in programs such as the Careers and Employment Internship, I hoped I could develop a sense of belonging and self-worth. Now reflecting on my work during the internship, I believe I have achieved the majority of what I had expected. The busy but well-organized experience of the Careers Fair 2005 is still deeply ingrained in my mind, since this is the first time I volunteered at Monash and cooperated with a group of fellow students to work towards a common goal. However, there are also some regrets in my intern experience. Since my course was pretty busy, sometimes I had to ask for leave from my intern work, which affects my commitment and contribution to the program. Therefore, I believe from this experience I realized that I should learn to be more efficient with time-management.

Question 6: What advice would you give to future interns?

Wendy: For future interns, the best advice I could give is to say 'keep an open mind'. There are so many opportunities to improve yourself if you are only willing to seek them. Monash University Careers and Employment is a treasure trove of information and, by working there each week, you are in a prime position to access it.

Ben: My advice would be make the most of opportunities such as the Careers and Employment Internship as they allow you to step outside your chosen path of study and learn skills that will be most beneficial in the work force. Assisting in the Careers Fair is a great way to find out what work is available and what companies are suitable for you.

Danette: I want to encourage students to get involved with this kind of internship as they will benefit by learning skills, experience and information that employers require. This opportunity is created to help students to prepare ourselves to join the work force. So... take action and feel the excitement!!

Serlina: I guess I would suggest that you enjoy yourselves, as this is definitely an invaluable learning and personal development experience. For me it has opened me up to many avenues in thinking about planning for your career.

Amy: I would advise future interns to make the most of the resources at their disposal during the internship to answer any queries they might have regarding employers, graduate or vacation positions or career paths. The careers fairs are also a great opportunity to speak to employers and find out more about what they are looking for and what kind of work they have on

offer. This is a great opportunity for all disciplines but is a particularly good resource for commerce students.

In general I would advise students, whether they think they are sure of the path they wish to take or not, to find out as much information as possible about employment areas, employers and recruitment processes to enable you to be well prepared when it comes to gaining vacation employment or graduate positions; and to ensure you are heading in the career direction that is best suited for you.

Defne: Future interns should make the time during the internship as useful as possible. There are a lot of very helpful people at the office who give you very good advice on the future and the necessary things to look at in order to take the first steps in achieving a successful career. It is a great opportunity.

Lara: Take advantage of everything that Monash offers students. There are so many services available and the more involved you are the more you will get out of your time at university.

Anita: Being an intern gives you good experience in how to do job search and get to know the companies in Australia. Throughout the internship, I learned how to get quick information about job opportunities and found out lots of useful websites that can help you to prepare better for job applications and interviews. Take your chance and join us, you will meet lots of friends and know more about how Careers and Employment helps you with your career.

Lisa: I would like to say to them it is how much you put into work that decides how much you get from it. Therefore, once you decide to be an intern, devote yourself to it and you'll find you learn a lot.