

INTERNSHIPS FOR CHINESE STUDENTS

*UK hotel chain offers internships

Macdonald Hotels, which has 40 properties in different locations around the UK, has teamed up with Swiss Education Group (SEG) to offer internship opportunities to students of four hotel management schools in Switzerland. The internship lasts for a minimum of 16-weeks and is a key element of a two-and-a-half year course at SEG undertaken by 1,600 students a year.

*US visas run out in one day

All of the 65,000 H-1B visas available for those with bachelor's degrees or above to work in the USA during the 2008 fiscal year were claimed in one day after the US Citizenship and Immigration Service received 150,000 applications. Applications for the visas were opened on April 2 and closed again on April 3, meaning that international students graduating from US universities this summer will not be able to work for a US employer this year.

*New internship destinations for agency

Cactus Language, based in the UK, has announced two new destinations for their internship students from 2007. Chile and Mexico have been added to the seven other Latin American destinations already available. Students study the language for between two and 12 weeks before their internship.

A project offering work experience opportunities to Chinese students in the UK recently undertook a promotional tour of the country. Organised by the British Council in Beijing, the 'Chinese Employability' tour visited eight UK cities, including London, Cardiff and Manchester.

Global Education Group (GEG), an investment and consultancy firm, joined forces with the British Council to promote their China-UK Internship Programme to Chinese students in the UK. The programme has the backing of the Chinese Embassy in the UK and the Ministry of Education.

Jean Dong, Chief Executive Officer of GEG, said that Chinese students who return home having studied abroad increasingly find it difficult to secure work in China. She added that a western education and no hands-on experience in the Chinese marketplace was a deterrent for some Chinese employers and the internship programme offered Chinese students relevant and practical work experience in the UK.

In addition to its internship programme, GEG offers advice and interview tips and helps to prepare Chinese students for social interaction within a UK-based organisation.

With visa regulations now allowing Chinese students to work when they are not studying, and changes to the rules regarding working after graduation (see News, page 7), many students will be able to take advantage of the new programme. And as more UK companies move into the Chinese market, graduates of the internship scheme are likely to be in high demand in the future.

Over 40 UK companies are said to be on board and Dong stressed that interns would be paid more than the minimum wage because, "the students [will] add value to [a] company", she said. ■

WORK PROVIDER TEAMS UP WITH UK INSTITUTIONS

A WORK PLACEMENT provider based in Wales has created an employer location and liaison service for international students, which is designed to appeal to universities and further education colleges in the UK.

The company, Work UK, hopes that universities and colleges will decide to outsource their internship and work placement services in the face of increased demand from international students wanting to improve their language skills and gain experience in the

workplace. The company also arranges homestay accommodation for students if required.

Bruce French, Work UK Managing Director, said that he had high expectations. "We have been in this market for over 10 years and have a good employer network across the British Isles," he said. "This service is especially useful for Erasmus or Leonardo students but I am confident that there are new markets emerging, notably internships for USA students on study abroad programmes." ■

PILOT PROJECT IN CANADA PROMOTES WORK OVERSEAS

IN CANADA, Ontario's Minister for Small Business and Entrepreneurship, Harinder Takhar, has announced a pilot project that will provide international work placements for students aged between 19 and 29 years.

The programme, called Global Edge, will send post-secondary students in Ontario to work in multinational corporations on placements of up to four months and is due to begin this year. Takhar said that the internship scheme would prepare students to enter the in-

ternational business world by providing valuable experience during the summer holidays. "Global Edge gives students the opportunity to gain exposure to the fundamental tools, experience and expertise that's needed to run a business on the world stage," he said.

The programme is available to Canadian citizens registered as full-time students in an Ontario post-secondary institution and who will be returning to school full-time in the September following the internship placement. ■

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