'Geosciences Industrial Project Placement Scholarship' Scheme

Executive Summary

GIPPS, the ‘Geosciences Industrial Project Placement Scholarship’ Scheme of the School of Geosciences of The University of Sydney, offers companies the opportunity to have highly motivated students studying in the Honours Year in Geosciences spend 6 months in industry undertaking high-level investigative projects.

The School of Geosciences makes this possible by clearing the whole first semester of that year for them.

The Scheme operates as follows:

- The students work full time in industry, generally from mid January to early July, at the Sponsor’s premises. The Scheme could also be implemented in the second semester, from July to December
- The selected project is a company project, conducted under the company’s direction. The Sponsor appoints the project supervisor, with the authority to make and enact project decisions
- Project selection and specification involve discussion between the Sponsor and the School, and is finalised by mutual agreement
- Study topics otherwise missed, the students cover by case studies. These can often be based on available company in-house courses or technical activities
- The Sponsor retains rights to the Intellectual Property created by the student in the course of conducting the project at the Sponsor’s premises
- A feature of the Scheme is that the School participates through sharing responsibilities, by appointing an academic as an associate supervisor. That person supports the students in their investigative task; monitors the student’s progress; and overall, helps to build professional and research bridges with the company. Thus the School becomes an active partner in the project
- If instances arise where input over and above that of supervision by the University academic staff is involved, including for example the provision of data or sample analysis, research and/or consultancy services by the University, a separate agreement will need to be negotiated
- Students are invited to apply and are selected based on academic and personal qualities demonstrated during the first three years of their studies. Company representatives are invited to participate in the interview process; however they do not directly select students. Where feasible, the School tries to match students to Sponsors and projects, based on students’ preferences and on the knowledge we have gained of them over the time they have been at the University
Minimum cost to sponsors for 2009 will be AUS$32,000, and may vary depending on matters such as the nature of the company, the project and its costs, and the work location. Of this, the students will receive $18,000 as a tax free scholarship so that no wages or other stipend is payable to them. The University treats their industry placement as ‘field work’, and the University will maintain public liability, professional indemnity and personal accident insurance cover for the student during the placement.

This type of Scheme has now run for a number of years within other Schools at the University. Further information on these is available if required.

Benefits to the Sponsor Company include:

- Significant projects, selected and controlled by the Sponsor, are carried out at Honours Year level and can be completed to an implementable, technically and economically worth-while conclusion;
- The Sponsor has access to an industry ready student who has selected to pursue Honours Year studies while undertaking real work in industry
- The cost for participating in such Scheme is very reasonable, and given the scholarship structure of the Scheme, the student is covered by The University in relation to insurance and other work related entitlements which would otherwise be the responsibility of the Company
- The Company oversees the work of a person whom it might wish to consider for recruitment to the Company at the end of the last six months of his/her Honours Year. This person will then have become familiar with the needs of the Company, and will have proven him/herself to the Company, thus requiring minimum induction effort when recruited.

Further important outcomes of the Scheme as we see them:

- We have built six months continuous full-time industrial experience into the Honours Year of studies, without extending the time of study required for the qualification. This extends our educational offerings, and places the School of Geosciences of the University of Sydney at the forefront in terms of industry cooperation. In effect, industry then has access to graduates with four years of study and intensive industry experience.
- The effective, expert support provided by the School develops collaboration with industry and builds research links;
- The scholarships are attractive to and reward high achieving students of the School. The University of Sydney is benchmarked among the world’s best, and the School of Geosciences has an established reputation for its high standard of research, cutting edge technology, and a long standing tradition of close collaboration with industry;
- We will use the scheme in our marketing of the degree to prospective students. Market research suggests that it is a consideration for the best students, because it: provides an opportunity to develop different skills, knowledge, and experience; allows for students to be recognised for their outstanding achievements; enables them to be financially rewarded whilst still at University.

Further information is available from:
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