



LEFT AND BELOW RIGHT: Students at work on the Executive Personal Diploma course. ABOVE RIGHT: Andrea Freeman, the Principal of Oxford Media and Business School

IS UNI THE ONLY ANSWER?

Welcome to the one year course that leads to a guaranteed career, says Penny Dash

With university fees set to rise above £6000 a year – in many cases sky-rocketing to £9000 – it is only right that parents should consider ‘whether three years reading a subject that their child is not wholly committed to is a good return,’ says Andrea Freeman, the charismatic Principal of the Oxford Media and Business School.

‘Will it get your child a job to pay off all that debt?’ asks Freeman, ‘and will they stay at the bottom of a big firm for years, earning little, because graduates are ten a penny. They may never see the CEO from one year to the next.’

Freeman has a simple solution. Enrol your post-A level or university graduate child on her one year Executive Personal Assistant Diploma and they will find a rewarding and decently paid (£20,000 per annum is average) job at the end of it – guaranteed. This is because Freeman will use her extensive little black book of contacts in the City, media, property, law and other professions, to help ‘place’ her graduates.

And they are much in demand. It is little wonder that places on the course are quickly snapped up. Freeman is talked about amongst the parents whose children she has propelled to success in the job market as ‘the career guru’.

The key thing to remember, she says, is that ‘the role of PA, or Executive Secretary, is much misunderstood. At the senior level, for which this course will prepare you, the job has more to do with management than it does with traditional typing. A true PA is the right hand of the senior executive they work for and therefore a powerful member of the management team in their own right.’ Freeman also adds, ‘There you are, at age 19, or at 22, for example, in the same office as the CEO of a multinational. This is your first job. Could you ever have a better showcase for senior management than that?’

The structure of the course is very broad. ‘Naturally, the course teaches core



skills such as IT and shorthand,’ she says, ‘but, more crucially, we also cover a range of key management skills such as how to deliver powerful presentations, and business reports.’ Some top graduates use the Diploma as a springboard to the prestigious US Mountbatten Internships – and it works.

The course lasts 9 months for the September trainees and 6 months for the January intake. They are all housed in OMBS accommodation in the very heart of the university city of Oxford – ensuring a true ‘collegiate’ experience.

Employers, students and parents cannot praise the Diploma course highly enough. Ailsa, now a Sales Negotiator with Douglas and Gordon, left in July 2010. She was immediately offered a City job ‘because the CEO’s PA had been an OMBS girl.’ However, Ailsa’s real passion was property. Turning that offer down, she acquired her current job ‘with ease.’

Simon Sole, an employing CEO from Executive Analysis Ltd, an intelligence company, recently wrote warmly to Freeman regarding his new PA, Sarah, an OMBS graduate. In his letter, he commented that ‘Sarah is a bright person who could do pretty much anything she wanted, but she has chosen to be a PA and luckily enough she is mine.’

Finally, a ‘happy parent’ wrote saying that ‘the world is now my daughter’s oyster because she is employed, purposeful, professional and optimistic.’ In these unstable and turbulent economic times, what parent could ask for more?

The Executive PA Diploma costs £7,700 in total plus around £1,870 per term for self-catering accommodation. For more information, please contact Andrea Freeman: at www.oxfordbusiness.co.uk, 01865 240963.