

Due to the ages of my children we will have seven consecutive years of public examinations; GCSE, AS and A2. Nothing gets me more riled than reading in the media about how standards have dropped and exams are easier. For the last four years I have watched my eldest two go through the system, and my youngest is just about to sit her GCSEs. Easy? I don't think so. The amount of homework, revision and self-study that is required is anything but easy. For those of you that received your results for the January exams last month, I hope that they were all that you wished for. As the revision season really kicks in I would like to wish everyone involved with exams this summer the very best of luck, students and teachers alike. *Angela Liddiard*



Harry Whittaker & Andrea Freeman (Principal OMBS)

Over half of our students listened to a fascinating talk last month by Harry Whittaker, an ex-student who works for a market leader in the global energy market. Our students are currently monitoring share prices as part of a term-long project and the energy market is a major factor in this. Harry spoke about the industry in general and the qualities needed to work within it – particularly the skills and qualities that a Team Leader would need.

Website of the month

<http://www.justgiving.com/Katie-Strube> We are often asked to assist students and ex-students who are raising funds for charity. If possible, we like to include details on the Latest News page of the website, bringing the event to a wider audience. Katie Strube, one of our current students is doing something quite, quite mad though, which deserves the title Website of the Month! On 27 June Katie, along with 1200 others, are swimming the 1.4 mile, Bournemouth Pier to Pier swim, to raise money for the British Heart Foundation. You can sponsor Katie by clicking on the link above.

This month's IT Tip

When working on a Word document you may want to know what formatting you have applied to each section. Obviously you could click into the section (or line, or word) and investigate the options on the **Home** tab, but there is a much easier way.

Click into where you wish the formatting to be revealed, then click **Shift + F1**. The **Reveal Formatting** pane will appear on the right hand side of the screen. You can now click around your document and it will show you all the formatting that has been applied.

Work Experience

No-one should underestimate the value of good work experience. Academic qualifications alone are simply not enough to secure a meaningful job; an applicant must be able to demonstrate that they have some business awareness gained through work experience.

Recently there have been worrying reports that this is being exploited by some dubious companies. People have been offered internships with the promise that they will be considered for a job at the end of the intern period. However, in some cases there is no job. Typically an internee is not paid, so they are left financially out of pocket and demoralised. All the more galling when the company offers a new internship to another applicant not long afterwards ... and the whole cycle starts all over again.

Internships are not a new concept; students have been gaining work experience through genuine, honest schemes for many years. The difference now is how competitive the recruitment market is.

Last month we reported encouraging news that the number of graduate job vacancies is set to increase significantly this year. However, the number of graduates who are still unemployed from 2008 means that competition for jobs is fierce. This has resulted in employers having a huge pool of talented applicants to choose from, and work experience is often the deciding factor.

How can young people find good work placements? At an auction, perhaps? A charity auction has recently been held for work experience places. Under the hammer were opportunities to gain experience at over 50 different companies such as Harvey Nichols, The Spectator and Accessorize. Some of the winning bids were over £2,500.

Work experience plays a big part in the final term of our Executive PA course. All of our students complete a week long placement. This is important for three reasons:

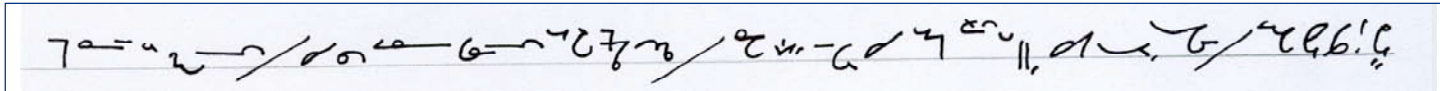
Like the rest of the employment pool, our graduates are competing for places in an aggressive environment. Like every other graduate, they need demonstrable proof that they can perform in the workplace.

Work experience often leads to employment. Last year four of our students secured a career through their work placements.

Experience has shown that work experience breeds confidence. We know that we have taught our students well, but they have nothing to measure themselves against. After a week of the 'real world' the students return brimming with self-belief.

If work experience places are being sold for thousands of pounds, how do we find places for our students? Every year we contact our network of past students and partner recruitment agencies, who all know that an OMBS student will be able to contribute significantly during the short period that they are with a company.

Work experience week for OMBS students is May 4-7. Many of our students have already secured interesting places. If you or your company feel that you could give one of our students a taste of the corporate world please contact Andrea Freeman, Principal on andrea@oxfordbusiness.co.uk



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