

# MEET THE CAREER GURU

*If you worry about where your A levels or degree might lead, look no further says Penny Dash*

If your child is wondering what to do after A levels or unable to make headway with job applications after passing a degree, you need Andrea Freeman, Principal of the Oxford Media and Business School, on speed dial *right now*.

This is because Freeman can get great executive jobs for her students – guaranteed.

The Oxford Media and Business School, based just a stone's throw from Christ Church College, Oxford, offers three qualifications: The

Executive PA Diploma (9 months with a September start and 6 months with a January start); the Graduate Post University Career Diploma (3 months, commencing January, April or September) and the 'earn after you learn' Gap Year Certificate (3 months commencing January, April and September).

The Executive PA Diploma is the most intensive course, and even an A level student with good grades or a degree student will find it demanding. Developed over the last 30 years, it does much more than preparing candidates for their first job. Indeed, according to Freeman, it provides them 'with the skills they need to rise to the very top of the Executive PA profession.'

The Diploma syllabus includes advanced level technology for the business world, including Microsoft Office skills in all packages. Training is given on the latest high power PCs, developing an excellent keyboarding speed and providing students with experience of networked environments. Students also learn how to produce business reports, presentations and spreadsheets as well as to develop databases effectively and to manage electronic diaries. Teeline shorthand is a separate module, backed by business communication in all its forms. These include: written, verbal and non-verbal communication, presentation skills, business correspondence, press releases, reports and meeting documentation.

Beyond key secretarial skills, the course extends to e-marketing, viral marketing, podcasts and web logs. Vitally, students are taught how to handle themselves in the office environment, including business and personal



LEFT: Andrea Freeman;  
ABOVE: Graduates receive their diplomas

presentation, travel planning, petty cash and budget control. Finally, students round off with a module on Management Information Systems.

Overall, it is a gold plated package and it is easy to see why, for example, it might provide a Philosophy First with the edge in job hunting – clearly it would give employers that bit of extra confidence in the practicality of the candidate.

Alternatively, for those children who are post A level and who are not enthused by the idea of taking a degree, or for those who drop out of university early, the course offers a real alternative. 'Your child may have academic strengths but they may not want to study any more. Where do they go?' says Andrea Freeman. 'We are filling an important gap.'

The Post University Career Diploma is a shorter course, but it offers an intense training in core executive and secretarial skills. Harry, who completed the course in January 2007, started working for the BG Group, a FTSE 100 energy company, after it. He had graduated from Durham, but 'would highly recommend OMBS to anyone who is not sure what the next steps are after uni. It gave me the confidence to take on the job market.' Finally, a 3 month Gap Year Certificate is a great way to make sure that children do something practical in their year off and it also allows them to earn money afterwards.

All students gain the benefit of Andrea Freeman's formidable little black book of contacts and, as a result, she says that 'many students gain job offers even before finishing their course.' Starter positions are usually in the £18-£24k range and the College can also arrange work experience. On the day that *School House* visited, two students were celebrating – one was heading for a big London Law firm, the other was thrilled to be starting as pop star Lily Allen's personal PA.

The courses are not cheap (£7,432 in total for the Executive PA Diploma with £1,790 plus per term for self-catering accommodation) but they do provide a Rolls Royce service and many ex Independent pupils sign up, from old Etonians to Cheltenham Ladies. 'Even the most academic of students may need a helping hand' says Freeman. 'If a student wants a job, we will get them a job.'

Please contact Andrea Freeman: at [www.oxfordbusiness.co.uk](http://www.oxfordbusiness.co.uk), 01865 240963.