

GETTING A FOOT IN THE DOOR: Former civil servant Thomas Tai is one of seven students, who have already been offered jobs by finance industry heavyweights before completing their degree programme at the Wealth Management Institute this June. Mr Tai credits this to strong industry support, including opportunities to interact with potential employers.



PHOTO: EDWIN KOO

Finance institute gets industry's thumbs-up

Students interact with veterans in class and during internships, which helps to nail jobs

By JOYCE HOOI

ANY worries that Mr Thomas Tai might have had when he quit his stable civil service job to concentrate full-time on a degree programme offered by the Wealth Management Institute (WMI) proved unfounded even before he had graduated.

Currently participating in the institute's Master of Science in Wealth Management programme, he will be joining Citigroup Private Bank's Wealth Management Associates Programme at the end of this month. He will continue to do the course as well.

To date, seven out of the 48 students in the institute's master's degree programme have been offered jobs by finance industry heavyweights even before their graduation this June.

The 12-month programme is offered by WMI in collaboration with the Singapore Management University and the Swiss Banking School.

According to Mr Tai, 30, the strong industry backing that the programme received from financial institutions was invaluable in enabling him to get his foot in the door with Citigroup Private Bank.

"Such support meant that WMI in turn became a logical choice for them to recruit future talent," he said.

He added that the internship attachments with financial institutions offered by WMI as part of the programme also appealed to prospective employers because the students' internships had given them realistic and practical industry experience.

Through such internships, students were able to interact with established finance practitioners and gain the perspectives of experts.

WMI's executive director and chief executive, Ms Annie Wee, also emphasised the relevance of the degree programme's internships for students planning to enter the industry of wealth management upon graduation.

"The internship gives the sponsoring company a chance to take a look at available potential new hires, in addition to providing students with valuable experience working in that particular company and industry that they aspire to enter.

"Of course, if the intern does a

good job and there is a suitable opening at the firm, that person will be the first to be hired," she said.

But quite often, employment opportunities come up during class discussions, since a number of industry insiders also lecture at WMI, and mention available jobs at their institutions.

That was how former student Niles Shah, who holds WMI's certificate in private banking programme, got his job as a relationship manager with DBS private banking.

"Students were interacting with potential employers during the classes. So it acted as a catalyst to an interview and a career opportunity," he said.

Beyond covering product knowledge, this course also focused on teaching soft skills that involved being able to determine a financial product's suitability for the client, not merely selling the product itself.

WMI's certificate in private banking programme boasts a faculty that includes well-known industry experts who have worked in companies like Citigroup, DBS Bank, JP Morgan and Temasek Holdings.

Applications for both programmes are now open. More information can be obtained from www.wmi.com.sg