

A degree is not enough

Introduction

A degree is not enough. This is a topic that the team at HRINC has been delivering to university students in a series of forums in Cambodia, though the message is relevant to university graduates throughout the region.

In a study published by the National Employment Agency in Cambodia in 2015, it was found that 4 out of the top 5 skills and competencies lacking among first time job seekers leaving Higher Education had little to do with their field of study. The top 5 listed were:

1. Lack of working world / life experience and maturity
2. Technical or job specific skills
3. Poor attitude / personality or lack of motivation
4. Foreign language skills
5. Communication skills

This is bad news for those people that have spent years studying to get good grades and focusing only on the technical skills and knowledge required for their studies.

To make the transition from student to employee, there is a far greater skill set required than just the knowledge you learn at university. An example of this is when an average student with strong English language skills is more likely to be hired by an international company than a top student with limited English language skills. Without effective communication there is little chance of success.

If you are simply studying for the knowledge, then study should be your focus. If you are like most people, and the purpose of studying at university to get a good job, then there are some other skills you should develop to ensure you are better prepared for the workforce.

Focus on developing skills and competencies

1. Try your best to **get internships, part-time work or even full-time work** (ideally in your field of study) during your study. It may impact your grades, though it will give you valuable experience in the workplace environment, exposing you to realities of the workplace and preparing you to take the next step in your career after graduation.
2. **Improve foreign language skills:** As mentioned previously, language skills can be a vital skill in gaining employment. Focus heavily on language skills through your study. Many interviews for professional jobs are in English. Many companies require strong English or other language skills. Even if you are a top student, without the ability to communicate and interview well, then you will not have the opportunities that others will have.
3. Read about, or attend courses on how to **improve motivation and create a positive attitude**. Employers are seeking those that are able to solve problems, focus on achieving a results, and are realistic in their expectations.
4. **Participate in group or project activities throughout your study.** These activities can help you develop your team work, communication and leadership skills.
5. **Take on leadership and community work.** Such activities will help you to engage more professionally, learn how to work with others and understanding them. They will also help to build your confidence.
6. **Be realistic about your career path and show maturity.** Be prepared to work your way up. Just because you have studied management, this does not make you a manager. Employers want employees that understand they have to work hard to prove themselves. The employee / employer relationship should be a win-win situation. Be prepared to give before you receive.

With the number of graduates and competition for the best jobs increasing, it is important that you make every effort to give yourself the edge over the other graduates by gaining the skills and experience that employers are seeking.

To encourage yourself to make the extra effort to gain the skills and experience listed, answer this question.

Answer this question....

Why am I really studying? Is it to...

1. get a degree OR
2. get a job

HRINC advice: Combine your studies with practical application and **get the skills that will give you the advantage over the thousands of students you will be competing with when you graduate.**

This article was written by our HRINC Recruitment team.

“A job isn’t just a job, it consumes more than a third of your day – make sure you enjoy what you do and challenge yourself to be creative and do things differently!” Contact hrinc@hrinc.asia for more information