

Logistics industry graduates are in heavy demand in the job market

As the only government-funded undergraduate programme specially designed for the maritime industry in Hong Kong, PolyU's ISTL course incubates young professionals that are sought after by many employers.



Dr T.L. Yip,
Programme Leader of ISTL

knowledge he acquired in ISTL, as they give him the edge in his career progression. "Many business students won't have a clue on what is considered seaworthy, how to handle shipping insurance, or how to solve arguments through maritime law," says Davin. "This makes the entrance requirement of this industry higher than other general business. ISTL is professional and irreplaceable."

"People working in this industry who are not our graduates can acquire the relevant knowledge from an ISTL master degree here to broaden the opportunities available to them," adds Dr. Yip.



Davin Chan, graduate of ISTL

Work-Integrated Education

In view of the importance of practical skills, on-site working experience is an integral part of the curriculum to give students a clearer picture of how the industry works. In addition to school lectures, students are mandated to complete at least 300 hours of placement in different organizations or activities for Work-Integrated Education (WIE). Thanks to government support and the strong links with industry (as many current practitioners are ISTL alumni), students often get to find great internship or training opportunities in major shipping and logistics companies, says Dr. Yip.

Davin worked in a container shipping company for his WIE attachment in a summer, and his duty was to assist in the compilation of an analytical efficiency report within two months. With a third party consultant, he visited all the offices of the company in Hong Kong to conduct staff interviews, observe working procedures, and analyse documents, in order to find ways to optimize efficiency. "WIE was a precious experience for me because I managed to figure out the complete working procedure of the company within a very short period of time," says Davin.

Amy is a fresh graduate of ISTL, currently working also in a ship-owning company as an assistant officer in the commercial and insurance department. She notes that WIE has helped her ascertain her choice of career path. Instead of getting laden with clerical support jobs like most other interns, Amy received a real challenge in the shipping field by assisting in the chartering, operation and insurance departments. She updated regular insurance records such as claims, H&M and P&I annual renewal records, contacted port agents from different countries to collect estimated Port Disbursements Account, and conducted market research on tonnage open, commercial analysis and chartering activities updates. "I knew then that this is precisely the job for me," says Amy.

Overseas Immersion

"Sensitivity to international issues is crucial to international shipping and logistics," emphasizes Dr. Yip. He points out, for example, an international business treaty signed by China and South Korea on the customs tariff of Korean cosmetics may sound trivial, but international logistics practitioners will sense a chance of lowering the cost of transporting cosmetics. Hence, the



Amy's exchange
experience in Vienna

faculty always encourages ISTL students to apply for study tour or exchange programmes.

In his undergraduate study, Davin joined the International Study Tour in Shipping and Logistics, an elective subject, and went on two site visits: one to Qingdao of China where he learned about shipbuilding first hand; and the other to England to learn about value-added services in a developed society. "Both were an eye-opening exercise," says Davin.

Not only did he broaden his horizons, but his role as chairman of the study tours helped hone his leadership skills. "In this course, we organized the whole trip by ourselves, starting from booking tickets to arranging site visits. I had to shoulder heavy responsibilities, but I learned a lot from the experience," adds Davin.

International Study
Tour to London

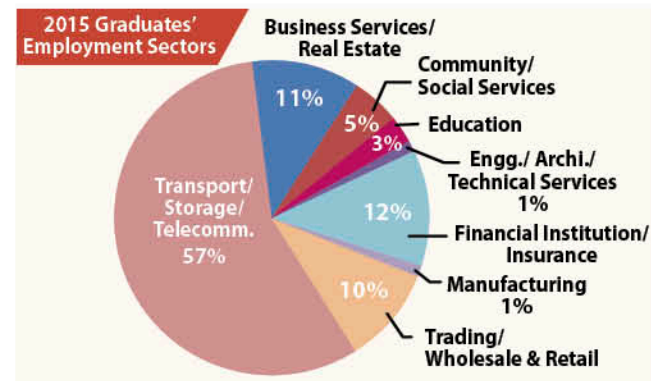


Professional Recognition and Graduates' Prospect

Receiving wide recognition, graduates of ISTL are granted full exemption from the Professional Qualifying Examination (PQE) (Logistics Stream) of The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT), and partial exemption from the qualifying examinations of The Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers (ICS). There is also remission of sea services for the purpose of attempting the Class 3 Certificate of Competency (Deck Office) examination of the Hong Kong Maritime Department.

The all-rounded curriculum means that ISTL graduates are not limited to logistics firms as a career, and have also a wide range of industry to opt for. In support of the industry, the government has earmarked \$100 million to establish the Maritime and Aviation Training Fund with a view to building up a vibrant, diversified and competitive pool of professionals and technical personnel.

ISTL graduates are eminently employable. In 2015, their employment rate is 89% (with the majority being employed within three months after graduation) while the rest continues to have further full-time study. In fact, according to a survey done by HKUPOP and education18.com, Poly U's graduates are ranked the second most employer-favored employee out of seven other government-funded universities in 2016.



Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours) in International Shipping and Transport Logistics

Study Duration: 4-year or 2-year Senior Year Curriculum

Fund Type: Government-funded

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The logistics and trading industry has long been an important pillar for Hong Kong's economy as it accounts for 3.7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creates more than 180,100 related job positions annually. With the commencement of China's 'Belt and Road' initiative and the conclusion of the Trans-Pacific Partnership in trade liberalization, both the government and industry recognize that there will be a rapidly increasing demand for graduates specialized in international shipping and logistics, not only in Hong Kong, but all over the world.

While it is estimated that 400 graduates of Logistics major are needed each year to support the development of the maritime logistics industry, the International Shipping and Transport Logistics (ISTL) programme of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) produces only 80 graduates a year, far below actual needs of the industry.

Dr T.L. Yip, Programme Leader of ISTL, points out that employers appreciate both the strong academic background and the positive attitude of the graduates. Due to its close connection with the industry, and its responsiveness to changes, the programme is highly regarded in the job market for the calibre of graduates it produces.

Unique and Professional Education

With the aim of providing a well-rounded business education with specialization in international shipping and logistics management, the ISTL programme is designed with a balance between general business knowledge and professional knowledge on international logistics. In addition to 18 compulsory common business courses relating to finance, accounting, marketing, business law and many more, students also gain sound knowledge of maritime transport and trade, as well as maritime organization and personnel management through a wide selection of specialist subjects.

"Our curriculum is designed for students to acquire practical skills at the management level that can be applied to their career," says Dr Yip. To name a few, courses such as Shipping Finance, Insurance in Shipping and Transport Logistics, Legal Aspects of e-Business in Logistics, Maritime Law, Maritime Risk Management, Advanced Navigation and Ship Handling are all covered in the specialist subjects, catering to all aspects of the industry.

Davin Chan, an operation officer in a ship-owning company, particularly values the practical training and professional