

Scholarships on offer: apply now

THIS AUGUST the ACS Foundation celebrates seven years of operation, and what a amazing period it has been. The brainchild of then ACS President, and now ACS Foundation Executive Director, John Ridge, the Foundation has continually exceeded all expectations.

"Over the past seven years, we have received corporate and government funding to the tune of well over \$14 million and distributed almost 800 ICT scholarships," said a delighted Ridge.

"We currently have around 60 unfilled scholarships on our books right now, with more coming in every week, and are keen to hear from students who believe they might qualify as a scholarship recipient."

Ridge said scholarships are available in every state and territory, with preference given to high performing students, those with disabilities or who are geographically disadvantaged, women and indigenous students.

"Unfilled scholarships are an unexpected and wonderful problem to have, and indicate the overwhelming support we have received not only from the profession and business community, but also from government," he said.

"We are actively building partnerships with industry, and they have been quick to recognise the important role the ACS Foundation plays in improving access to ICT studies and building connections between students and potential employers."

Since its establishment, more than 150 organisations have made financial donations including Agilent, Altiris, Compuware, Corporate Express IT Solutions, eCorner, eProgram, IBM, Microsoft, Motorola, Sun Microsystems and Wesfarmers.

In recent years, the ACS Foundation has also worked hard to develop closer relationships with state and territory governments, many of which have sponsored local scholarships or found other ways to support the organisation.

The West Australian Government in particular has been extremely encouraging. The WA Minister for Energy, Resources, Industry and Enterprise, Francis Logan, has not only publicly expressed his strong support for the Foundation, but he has also written to all his ministerial colleagues calling on them to fund scholarships for their own departments.

"We've been delighted with the way industry and government have really got behind the ACS Foundation, as well as the tremendous interest they show in our scholarship students, who are often offered full-time positions well before they graduate," said Ridge.

"This is the enormous value of our Work Integrated Learning (WIL) scholarship program, under

which students spend at least 12 months in the workforce involved in meaningful and relevant work that helps to ensure they are job ready. At least 80 per cent of our scholarships come under this program, and the benefits are reflected in the employment success of our graduates.

"Another significant benefit is that applicants who complete a WIL scholarship (or equivalent work placement program) have been found to stay an average of seven years in their first job, compared to just one year for other students. This is largely because they have developed a deeper understanding of the work environment and their own needs, and are bet-

ter able to find a job that suits their interests," he explained.

The ACS Foundation Web site (www.acsfoundation.com.au) lists a substantial number of scholarship opportunities at any given time, but if none is right for you, please complete an application form anyway, as we always have many other scholarships coming through, some of which never make it onto the Web site.

For the right candidate, the Foundation will also seek to create an appropriate scholarship by approaching one or more of our industry partners for funding.

Why not apply today?

Desperately seeking Susan ... or Jane ... or Eve ... or you?

Do you know any women interested in studying ICT ... or are you a woman who is currently enrolled or considering enrolling in an ICT degree course? If so, we want to hear from you.

At the moment, fewer than 10 percent of scholarship applications to the ACS Foundation come from women. Given that women currently comprise closer to 20 percent of the industry (and that's a figure we're looking to grow), we're keen to award more scholarships to female students. In the past we have awarded up to more than 35 percent to female candidates.

The need to encourage more women into this dynamic sector is a stated goal of the Foundation, and there are numerous organisations that are eager to sponsor women with scholarships and work placements.

This means that if you are a female candidate with a credit average or better, there is a very high chance you would qualify for a prestigious ACS Foundation scholarship.

Our Work Integrated Learning scholarships typically offer up to \$28,000 for a 12-month placement of work experience as part of an ICT degree program.

Not only do you get a substantial scholarship amount to help defray the costs of study, but you gain invaluable hands-on experience in the workplace and a clearer understanding of what it means to be an ICT professional, and a part of the ICT profession.

These placements are also an opportunity for leading employers to assess the capabilities of the Foundation's undergraduates, with many of the best performers offered full-time positions once they complete their studies.

So what are you waiting for?

Paid tuition, relevant and valuable work experience with a top ICT employer and a possible job at the end of it. It doesn't get much better than this!

All applications will receive our serious consideration.

