

Computer Science grads excel

Two-year degree program at UBC is aimed at people with undergraduate degrees in other disciplines. It has an co-op work portion

VANCOUVER SUN OCTOBER 16, 2012

The Bachelor of Computer Science (BCS) program at the University of British Columbia is a versatile two-year degree program for students who already hold an undergraduate degree in another field.

About half of these students have held jobs following graduation, they tend to be mature, responsible, and people-oriented - qualities that serve them well during the program and employers find attractive when recruiting.

About one-third of BCS students are women, and about 75 per cent of BCS students undertake the optional co-op work portion of the program. BCS co-op is especially beneficial for international students looking to gain Canadian work experience.

"Although co-op will postpone graduation (by eight months or more), the experience and industry connections gained during the process are priceless," says UBC Computer Science acting co-head Raymond Ng.

Starting salaries for UBC Computer Science graduates typically range from \$45,000 to \$55,000 and some are much higher. Despite this, the U.S.-based Computing Research Association predicts that the current shortage of qualified graduates for computer science jobs will continue for years to come. By integrating their previous degree with CS and taking the next step in advancing their careers, BCS students are poised to be competitive in this dynamic area of the marketplace.

Graduates of the program say the field has room for every kind of interest.

"You can pick a sub-discipline within computing that fits your personality and go with that," says Homa Javahery.

"There's so much you can do with it. You won't get bored! If you're a person who needs to think outside the box, if you need challenges, it's a wonderful field for you." Javahery strongly believes her degree has given her incredible opportunities for diverse career paths. Fellow BCS alumnus Katayoon Kasaian had a science background going into the program, and found the structure of her computer science studies stimulating and different.

"With biology, you sit by yourself and study alone, and maybe you do a lot of memorizing for a few days before a test," Kasaian says.

"The work for these classes was more constant and ongoing. Particularly for my algorithms and programming courses we sat together as a group and did a lot of brainstorming."

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