



Microsoft Traineeship Program

Advancing the future of IT Skills in Schools



Case Study: St John Paul II College

May 2019

Technology enthusiast Daniel Cunneen, graduate of St John Paul II College 2018, was employed by their IT department upon graduation. Keen to pursue further professional development opportunities, Daniel saw an exciting opportunity with the Microsoft Traineeship Program and quickly brought it to the school's attention to ensure his placement in the pilot program earlier this year.

Daniel was one of the first trainees accepted into the pilot program, and the only trainee that is currently placed within a school. Their experience is highly applicable to other schools and colleges looking to develop on-site IT talent.

"I believe that colleges are a great place to do an IT traineeship because of the wide range of IT in use. From the local network, communications gateway, data stores – there are a wide range of devices to support. It has nearly everything you need to learn about!" – Daniel Cunneen, Trainee at St John Paul II College

The Certificate IV in IT is being delivered by the Canberra Institute of Technology, who have moved very quickly to create this Traineeship opportunity for Canberrans interested in pursuing an IT career.

Strategic partners Microsoft and MEGT are actively meeting with other schools to discuss the program and seek future host partner opportunities for additional trainees like Daniel. To hear more about how St John Paul II got involved in the program, and how it's going three months in, read the interview with Keith Vardanega, Business Manager at St John Paul II College below.

Q: Can you tell us a bit about how the onboarding/recruitment process worked?

We were very fortunate to have Daniel bring this opportunity to our attention. Having recently graduated from the College in 2018 and completed a Certificate III Information Technology & Media, Daniel had been working casually for us in the IT department. He applied for the program, went through the interview process and then asked us if we would be interested in transferring his casual employment into this program as his host partner. We were recently down one full-time staff member at the time – so it was easy to make the business case to take on Daniel as a trainee.

The onboarding process was very smooth – we met with MEGT, the recruiting partner, the first week in February and had signed all of the necessary paperwork and flew up to Sydney to attend the trainee and host partner induction programs on 18 February. Given Daniel was already employed in an IT capacity at the school, we didn't need to alter his job description and it didn't affect any of the day-to-day responsibilities he was already fulfilling as a casual employee.

IT Network Manager **Andrew Soesman**
with Microsoft Trainee **Daniel Cunneen**



Q: Overall, what has your experience been with the traineeship program to date?

All has been positive so far – both working with MEGT and Microsoft. We haven't experienced any surprises or hiccups throughout the process. It worked out very well for us because we were in a bit of a pickle with one team member recently resigning. Daniel was a natural fit given he was already familiar with the College and our IT department/systems. The only difference from his previous employment is that he goes to CIT every Friday to take up the educational aspect of the program – which we obviously feel is very important.

Q: Is this the first traineeship program St. John Paul II has participated in? Would you consider taking on a trainee again if given the opportunity?

This is the first time we've taken on a trainee in any capacity (not just IT). This is also the first time we've employed a graduate in an IT role. However, we needed someone quickly, and we knew this young man, and his abilities from his time in the classroom. The benefits of employing a graduate [for any school] are that the applicant already has a relationship with and knowledge base of the organisation.

Our experience was a bit different than most other schools coming onboard as the opportunity was presented to us by our potential candidate. If given the opportunity again we would certainly consider this program as it's a great way to encourage early school leavers to pursue a career in IT – and an amazing opportunity for a school to invest in the IT skills of future generations coming up through the school system.

Q: If you could share any advice for others in the school system looking to get onboard with the program, what would you say to them?

If you have the opportunity to participate in the program, I'm all for it and would recommend it to any other schools considering it. For other schools, they'll likely have to make the business case of the commitment to pay the salary. That may be the most challenging piece to sort out – however MEGT were very helpful in sharing the industry rate card and having those conversations with us.

We've had a very positive experience and I'm happy to share our experience with other schools looking to get onboard and answer any questions they may have. On behalf of myself, Daniel's manager, our school head office and head of IT, we've all seen the benefits of this program and would recommend it to others.

If you're interested in finding out more, please reach out to us via email at MTP-AU@microsoft.com