Student mentorship programme a success: Citi

By BENJAMIN AW

A MENTORSHIP programme launched this year to connect university students with banking and finance professionals has proven to be a success, according to organiser Citi.

Some 140 students from local universities are taking part in the five-month programme that started in January this year.

They come from a range of academic disciplines and were selected based on factors such as academic achievements, interest in the financial industry and potential as future leaders.

The students were paired with mentors from Citi's staff based on their interests. The 123 mentors taking part in the programme have at least five years of experience and come from various business and support functions. All of them volunteered for the programme and underwent training for it.

"In terms of scale, this is the first of its kind here," said Evangeline Chua, head of talent at Citi Singapore.

The programme is part of the bank’s community outreach efforts, and aims to help young individuals "chart their future".

It is different from other student internships offered by banks as these students do not work at Citi during their mentorship but receive more advice and counselling in the process, said Ms Chua.

Said Ong Si Hao, an economics and business student at Singapore Management University (SMU): "Through this programme, I am discovering where I might fit into the industry and how to set defined career goals that I can strive towards."

While his mentor works in bancassurance, Mr Ong hopes to work in commodities trading when he graduates.

Although the programme is aimed at helping students find their footing in the workplace, mentors, too, say they have learnt from the experience.

"I have gained fresh perspectives into the dreams and struggles that the younger generation face today," said Cheryl Chen, head of corporate citizenship at Citi Singapore. She believes it will help her connect with her younger colleagues better.

Citi Singapore’s managing director Moira Lynam reckons it is "very likely" the programme will continue in the next two to three years.

Asked if Citi is looking at expanding the programme to include more students from other universities in the future, she said: "We are looking at how we could support the programme on a larger scale and will determine how to move forward from there."