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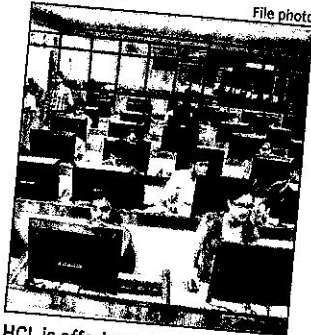
# HCL hiring kids straight out of high school

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**D**ecode this: HCL Technologies Ltd, India's fourth-largest software services exporter, is poaching young talent—and in the process looking to possibly pip competitors who offer college placements — by hiring students straight out of high school and training them to be IT professionals.

HCL (market cap Rs 1.23 lakh crore) is offering talented Class XII grads with a background in science a starting salary of Rs 1.8 lakh per annum and train them to develop and test apps for the firm.

The technology giant recently started a pilot programme in Madurai, in which it will recruit 100 students who passed Class XII and directly absorb them in the firm after training for one year on its Coimbatore



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campus. The criterion is simple enough: students have to score an average of 85% in their board exams (80% for CBSE students).

In a collaborative venture, it will also give students the option of pursuing a BSc degree from SSN Engineering College through a week-

## Scrap courses with few takers, IITs and other institutions told

**C**lose down centres and courses which have got few takers. That is the message conveyed to all centrally-funded technical institutions, including the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology by the ministry of human resource development. The ministry has asked these institution to close down branches and courses which have seen a decline in applicants in the past three years. The ministry has also asked the institutions to introduce new courses and disciplines after analysing market opportunity, employability and requirement of higher education. "All Centrally Funded Technical Institutions (CFTIs), which are participating in joint counsellings have been asked to review the position of vacant seats in the last three years and to revise the number of seats in each discipline," minister of state for HRD, Mahendra Nath Pandey said. **TNN**

end college programme.

Nine months of classroom training will give the students the foundation they need in engineering subjects followed by three months of training to acquaint them with a working environment.

"There is great emphasis on higher education in Tamil

Nadu, but the state also has many families that cannot afford an engineering education," HCL Technologies vice-president, diversity & sustainability, Srimathi Shivashankar, says. "The programme will give an opportunity to students who can't afford a regular course."

Though it is not a new idea to equip students with job skills from the school level, she points out, the programme can tap into the needs of students from rural areas who "could have early career aspirations".

Industry experts say the programme could be useful for students who don't have many options in hand.

"Students have always gone the extra mile for skill training and this will be no different. Undergraduate degrees can be obtained through distance courses too," a Nasscom official says.

But he warns against this becoming a larger trend.

"It is a good short-term initiative for students with fewer opportunities but if it becomes a trend and every IT company starts doing this, then the quality of engineers in the workforce will dip," the Nasscom official says.