

HCL turns 12th pass students into developers

TNN | Aug 3, 2022, 10.07 AM IST



Six years ago, HCL Technologies began an initiative to train students from tier-2 and 3 towns who have completed class 12 to become programmers, and deploy them on internal projects. That year, it was a batch of 80. Over the next few years, the company collected feedback from their business teams, customers, and the children themselves, and fine-tuned the programme. Now, such is the excitement among its own business leaders that HCL took in as many as 4,000 class-12 pass students into the programme last year, raised that to 8,000 this year, and is targeting 15,000 next year. The 8,000 this year is about a fifth of the company's planned net hiring in the year.

Apparao V V, head of HR at HCL Technologies, says they initially thought those coming out of the programme should be deployed in low-end work. "But today, they are turning into cloud engineers, digital engineers. All our business folks want this cohort. Because they are digital natives, there's no unlearning for them," he says. And in this hugely talent constrained market, it's providing HCL dedicated and stable talent, and it's bringing stability to the cost structure.

The programme, called TechBee, involves classroom training, and on-the-job training for six months each. Post this, they are deployed in projects, and simultaneously are enrolled in a graduate programme from institutes that HCL has built partnerships with – BITS Pilani, Sastra, Symbiosis, Amity, and IIM Nagpur. Classes are on weekends. HCL pays them Rs 10,000 a month during on-the-job training, Rs 2.5 lakh in the first year of work, and raises it to the average fresher salary (Rs 3.5 lakh) in the second year. It pays for the graduate programme, in return for which the candidates are obliged to work with HCL for two years after graduation.

Congratulations!

You have successfully cast your vote

[Login to view result](#)

The students, selected through an aptitude test that involves some English and maths, have to pay Rs 1 lakh initially for the programme. But a number of state governments have now endorsed the initiative and are bearing this cost fully or in part.

Apparao notes that if the industry depends only on engineering graduates, the relevant talent base for the industry would not be more than 250,000. “But if you look at 12th standard students, there are 1.2 crore. In that, even if only about 30% are those with maths background, we are talking about 36 lakh,” he says.