

Successful graduate

Early adopter

Gladys Ching has been focused on accountancy from a young age – and QP has proven to be the perfect gateway to her chosen career.

Finance focus

Some people take a long time to decide on their ideal career, trying out different professions before settling on the one that suits them. Not Gladys Ching. The assistant manager, internal audit for the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) knew she wanted to be an accountant from a young age. She started studying the subject in form four at school. "I found I was more interested in the commerce stream than in arts or science," she says. A talk at school from Professor Judy Tsui, who was the head of accountancy department of City University of Hong Kong, convinced her that accountancy was the career for her. "It was so professional, and I found that accounting was the language for business," she says.

It was another talk, this time from the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants when she was in her third year at university, that brought her great confidence in choosing QP because of its practical training philosophy and world-wide recognized qualification. Again, she was ahead of the game, taking the course straight after leaving university and passing the final examination of QP in 2003. At that time, she was working as an auditor for a Big Four firm, staying there for four years.

Ching's big career move to date was in 2006. She left her job in the practising sector and took up a position in the internal audit section of the HKTDC, which employs a total of about 1,000 people in the Hong Kong Head Office. Although the type of organization she is working for now is very different, she remarks that the nature of the work she does has some similarities – and her role at the HKTDC gives her a far wider remit. Ching finds QP's foundation training has sharpened her competitive edge in career advancement and helped her handle her career transition smoothly.

"In the internal audit department of HKTDC, we act as the partners of other departments here. We have key roles to play: understanding the operations and workflow of different departments; looking into their operational problems and giving them advice; carrying out risk assessment; and performing compliance assurance adhering to both internal and external guidelines. We aim to improve internal controls, and to improve efficiency and effectiveness for the Council. My previous working life broadened my horizons and was very valuable, but there my focus was much more on the financial part. The move to the HKTDC has given me a broader role in business and operations."



Graduate profile

Name	: Gladys Ching
QP graduation	: December 2003
Education	: Bachelor of business administration in accountancy and management information systems, City University of Hong Kong
Job title	: Assistant manager, internal audit
Company	: Hong Kong Trade Development Council
Past experience	: Senior associate, PricewaterhouseCoopers
Hobby	: Travelling

Practical problem-solving techniques

The big advantage of QP for Ching was the practical training it gave her through the interactive, group-focused nature of the learning plus the problem-solving tools and techniques. "QP is a practical and comprehensive training programme," she says. "There are lots of workshops and interactive learning opportunities. It provides a platform to share information and knowledge; communicate and present." The good morale and study atmosphere supports her throughout the study of QP.

"The open-book examinations are very different – they are good because they allow students to focus on the application in knowledge, not just memorising information. Through workshop discussion, you can get experience in doing presentations and knowledge sharing. Students are able to organize information in a systematic and logical manner. And you can develop critical thinking and finding practical solutions to real-life problems which are crucial in today's business world."

All of that has stood her in good stead in the workplace, she says. "Let's say that in real life there is almost no absolute answer in a particular case, especially those business and operation related issues. These days, there is information from everywhere. You have to learn how to analyse an issue from different perspectives, and consolidate relevant information to support your claim and arrive a practical solution, just like you do as a student when studying for QP".

Tips for QP students:

- Be open-minded and ready for change, and seize opportunities for meeting challenges.
- Strengthen technical knowledge by understanding the rationale behind the accounting standards before applying it.
- Stay positive and maintain a good work-life balance.



Interview and reporting by Richard Lord