

Successful graduate

Meeting challenges with QP

For QP graduate Alice Lau, a career at a Big Four firm has been both challenging and rewarding.

Gaining exposures

Two years since joining KPMG after leaving university, Alice Lau is still relishing the opportunities her role as an assistant manager at the Big Four firm gives her. "There are wide varieties of job assignments for me to work on including special projects," she says. Visiting a range of different clients is also something special for her. "I enjoy meeting different people, and my job gives me a lot of opportunities to do that. It is not only about accountancy knowledge; it has also been a big challenge to test my leadership and communication abilities as my clients have a very different culture or working style. It is fun to gain new exposure when working with these clients from various industries."

Lau says that she decided to become an accountant very early when she attended university. "It was because I worked with some accountancy professionals on an accountancy research; at that time I started to gain some insights into the profession, and I thought it was interesting."

She adds that the employment market when she left The Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2008 was not particularly good, especially for new graduates, and so she was delighted to receive a job offer from a prestigious audit firm. "It is quite challenging to be an auditor," she says, adding that she relishes the challenge of the hard work the job involves.

As well as her core auditing work, Lau is also involved in other projects with a wider scope, for instance providing business advisory services to clients in areas such as internal control and IPOs. "It is also a great chance for me to learn about the Hong Kong finance market. I feel excited to understand more about the broader business environment," she says.

Getting qualified

It was an easy decision for Lau to study for QP after she graduated from college. "I knew about QP when I was studying at university, and then, when I joined an audit firm, I realized that I needed an accountancy qualification," she says. One of the main attractions of QP for her was its local focus with international recognition. "QP is run by the Hong Kong Institute of CPAs. It is the only statutory licensing body to register and grant practising certificates to CPAs in Hong Kong. I strongly believe that



Graduate profile

Name	: Alice Lau
QP graduation	: December 2009
Education	: Bachelor of business administration in professional accountancy, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Job title	: Assistant manager
Company	: KPMG
Hobbies	: Travelling, hiking and swimming

QP with its world-class training is better than other qualifications. Also, it is a preferred qualification for most employers and prospective accountants.”

As well as its geographical relevance, Lau also felt that QP would help her equip with the skills she would need in the workplace. “I learned about QP before joining, and I was convinced that its interactive workshops which emphasize on knowledge application would be very helpful,” she says. “My firm also has in-house workshops, and it is great for me to interact with colleagues from other departments. As well as learning accounting standards and so on through QP, my communication, presentation and team-building skills are further trained-up; I also got a valuable chance to learn about research and analytical skills by attending the QP workshops.”

Lau says that she intends to stay with her existing employer for the foreseeable future because of the opportunities the firm provide to her for further ongoing professional development. “Two years is a very short time for an auditor. I understand that I still have many things to learn. The senior managers at my firm have given me very good coaching. With their help, I know I can learn a lot in the coming two or three years as an assistant manager.”

Tips for students to maximize their chances of QP success:

- Apply the knowledge you learned by understanding the rationales behind it.
- Practice makes perfect. Go through past examination papers and enhance your case-analytical skills and question-answering techniques.
- Keep update with current accounting issues, and link the QP examination materials and the soft skills you learned at the QP workshops to your daily work.



Interview and reporting by Richard Lord