

## Successful graduate

# Careering ahead

Cheran Lam enjoying an even more challenging career in the banking sector.

### Banking on success

Like a lot of young accountants, Cheran Lam started her career at a Big Four firm: in her case, in the auditing and tax consulting department of the firm. Many of those who start at one of the Big Four leave a few years later looking for a new challenge and, let's face it, a slightly less intense life in the commercial field. But when Lam departed, she decided to take on a job that she describes as even more hard-working and demanding: as an analyst in the global special situation group of Citigroup Global Markets Asia, part of the investment banking arm of the global financial services giant.

There, she focuses on private equity, mergers and acquisitions, and initial public offerings. "I think working for banking industry is very harsh and challenging with long working hours," she says. "It is even more challenging than working in a Big Four firm. I am sometimes overwhelmed by the amount of pressure, but the job satisfaction offsets it. There are a lot of very smart people working in banking."

Lam studied accountancy at City University of Hong Kong, but her decision to take up the profession as a career was cemented by her positive real-life job experiences. "When I was still studying in university, I joined a summer internship programme provided by my first employer," she says. "I was one of the seven students that they took over, and the programme was excellent. I thought that the people in the firm were very nice, and I learned a lot – I was exposed to different industries and clients and I learned from a lot of different people within a very short time. I think that only an audit firm could give me that amount of valuable experience. It makes you grow up quickly."

It was no surprise, then, that she got a job there right after leaving university. While working at the Big Four firm, she experienced working in the audit and tax department – something she found particularly valuable. "I liked it because I learned corporate communication in a very professional way," she says. "It was a valuable experience."

"In fact, the knowledge I gained as a tax consultant is still useful in my personal and professional life," she says. Although it can be somewhat burdensome, she jokes, when friends ask her to look at their tax affairs.



#### Graduate profile

Name	: Cheran Lam
QP graduation	: June 2007
Education	: - Master of Business Administration, The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology - Bachelor of business administration in accountancy, City University of Hong Kong
Job title	: Assistant vice president
Company	: Deutsche Bank, corporate finance
Past experience	: - Auditing and tax consulting, Ernst & Young - Assistant vice president, global special situation group, Citigroup Global Markets Asia
Hobbies	: Hiking, food and wine tasting

## Learning the language

Her decision to become an accountant, says Lam, was based partly on the profession's centrality to the modern-day business world. "Accountancy is the business language – it is spoken universally. It is really a language, not just numbers – everyone in business should know accountancy."

In line with that commitment, Lam began studying QP, upon graduation in 2008. One of the main reasons she decided to pursue the qualification, she says, was its local relevance, in particular the emphasis on mainland China tax. Plus, she says, QP is well-recognized worldwide.

She is also a fan of QP's practical and analytical learning approaches, largely because it emphasizes the most important real-life working skill of all: how to get on with other people. "I like the interactive QP workshops a lot," she says. "I made a few good friends through them. We studied together, we shared similar interests, and we became friends. QP is different from other qualifications; its practical training helps us develop good communication, analytical thinking and problem solving skills. It is also a very good platform for me to network with others."

### Tips for QP students:

- Participate actively during workshops and apply your knowledge in daily work.
- Form study groups with your peers to share knowledge and learning methods.
- Prepare your own study notes after digesting the learning materials.



Interview and reporting by Richard Lord