

MEETING OUR ALUMNI: Interview with Alumna SHANG KUAN KE XIN

February 2024

SIT Archives:

Hi Ke Xin, please introduce yourself.

Shang Kuan Ke Xin:

I am currently Assistant Manager, Fund Accounting at Vistra* where I focus on both fund accounting and fund administration.

I was previously an auditor, worked in one of the “Big Four”^ as well as small firms for five years.

Even though I switched from auditing to fund administration, I feel that whatever I have learnt and experienced, it has not gone to waste, but was a natural progression for me. I can safely say that I have been working in the field of Accountancy for more than 10 years.

* Vistra Alternative Investments (Singapore) is a fund administrator and corporate service provider, offering a range of trust and fiduciary services to clients in their Singapore office.

^ The “Big Four” refers to Deloitte & Touche, KPMG, Ernst & Young and PwC. Ke Xin worked for Deloitte & Touche previously.

SIT Archives:

How did you end up studying in SIT?

Shang Kuan Ke Xin:

I was looking at the Accountancy programmes offered by SUSS and SIT. I was more inclined towards SIT as I wanted to be a tax agent and SIT’s offering was more suitable than SUSS. I also noticed that SIT offered a rather extensive internship, unlike elsewhere where the attachment was only for a few weeks, a month at the most.

I was also attracted by the fact that I would be in the pioneer batch.

At the interview, the Professor could sense my passion as I was actively involved in several tax and accounting competitions during my Poly days at Ngee Ann. I also told my interviewer that I was attracted by the IWSP offered as part of the programme where I would be working like a junior staff rather than as an intern.

So with my interest then in taxation, I naturally chose SIT over SUSS.

SIT Archives:

Ke Xin, please share with us your IWSP experience.

Shang Kuan Ke Xin:

I did my IWSP at BDO* with five of my fellow students. We took Plan B where we served two four-month stints over two years from January to April. This is the peak period for auditing.

I was very fortunate as I had a very patient supervisor who knew that I had very little auditing experience. She explained to me the purpose of working papers and what needed to be done. With her guidance, I was able to produce working papers eventually on my own – I was able to do this because I was allowed to liaise directly with clients.

Oh, I should mention this - as a rule, the clients were not told that we were students doing our IWSP. It was only when I was about to complete my term with BDO, that we told our clients that we were leaving as we completed our term with the company. They couldn’t believe that we were students still studying for our degree.

“You don’t look like one because you behave like an associate who know your work....” That was what they told me. I was very happy to know that I excelled in my work. We had to handle more than 20 clients during my IWSP.

I learnt a lot during my time with BDO, and I was exposed to work that was comparable to what a full-time first year associate would handle.

* BDO is an international network of public accounting, tax and advisory firms that offer professional services under the banner of BDO. SIT signed an MOU with BDO LLP and 11 other accounting companies on 19 August 2014.

SIT Archives:

How different was it to learn during IWSP compared with learning in school?

Shang Kuan Ke Xin:

In school, it is about lessons and taking modules to complete my studies, but while working in a company... it is different. I had to understand my clients, look at things in depth, think out-of-the box at times... I had to learn about auditing from scratch, learn about risks and focus on the audit procedure.

SIT Archives:

How did your IWSP experience impact your career progression after graduation?

Shang Kuan Ke Xin:

I had initially wanted to be a tax agent doing compliance tasks. But because of my IWSP, I became interested in auditing. This is because as an auditor, I can get to understand more about companies and what they do. You don’t get that from just focusing on their company accounts and financial matters.

I also like the interaction in auditing where I get to know the accounting standard before the start of auditing work and to apply it.

SIT Archives:

Are you still involved with SIT after graduation?

Shang Kuan Ke Xin:

Yes, I was a mentor, did a few cycles of mentoring of SIT students. I feel that by sharing my working experiences with them, I can advise them on their pursuit of a career in accounting. Besides, I was very involved with Student Life* when I was studying and I can advise them to participate in school activities to be more rounded before they graduate and start their career.

I felt that back then in SIT, there was no such thing as mentorship – so when I was given a chance to mentor, I jumped into it.

* The Student Life (SL) Division was renamed Office of SITizen Experience (OSE) as of 1 January 2024.

SIT Archives:

I would like to talk about the SITizen DNA. What are your thoughts?

Shang Kuan Ke Xin:

Ah.... I am still carrying the SITizen DNA! Especially the one on “Learn, Unlearn, Relearn”. In school we learn to build our foundation but not everything we learn goes exactly as it was taught. At times I find I need to un-learn and to re-learn in order to improve in my work.

Another one.... “Grounded in Community”... So by joining the SIT Alumni Mentoring programme, I am able to give back ...