Ms Sharon Ho excels in consultancy and project management after completing an NUS-ISS graduate diploma

Mike Lee

As a consulting manager with Equaria Technologies, Ms Sharon Ho (above) deals with government agencies worldwide, providing e-Government consultancy and infrastructure solutions that power high-volume, mission-critical applications.

Part of her role involves managing and leading a team to design, develop, deploy and roll out their IT solutions in the Asia-Pacific region.

Systematic and well-structured curriculum in the real-world context. Through the programme, I have benefited from industry-relevant curriculum and experiential learning, which helped me to stay relevant and keep abreast of the latest IT developments.

She was also able to apply project management best practices and methodologies to achieve better results for her projects.

While the programme is designed primarily for non-IT graduates to switch to an IT career, recent years have seen many graduates join the programme too, notes Dr Leong Mun Kew, deputy director of ISS.

They do so to sharpen their IT skills to meet the needs of local industry. Currently, students can focus on mobile programming and web application development which are in strong demand.

The curriculum is practitioner-oriented, and lectures are augmented by workshops, laboratory sessions and group projects. These provide students with technical and professional grounding for the 20-week internship at the end of the programme.

Says Dr Leong: "The internship is a very important part of the curriculum as the students need to quickly adapt to companies' working environment, pick up new technical skills and domain knowledge, propose feasible IT solutions, and most of all, develop and deliver the solution to the satisfaction of their users."

Learning new skills

Dr Esther Tan, chief of the SA programme, says the ISS works closely with industries and companies who need IT solutions by providing them with student interns.

"Throughout the duration of the five-month internship, students gain real-life experience as an IT professional, and companies are able to prototype advanced technologies that they would like to explore," she adds.

For her internship, Ms Ho designed a web-based limousine management system as an application developer with CalendarOne.

She partnered a team member to design and develop a new client server, using various platforms such as ASP.NET and Crystal Reports. Working on a project team gave her valuable insights and real work experiences. She also picked up soft skills ranging from problem-solving and analytical, to teamwork and leadership.
team of developers, overseeing each phase of the System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) to ensure tasks and objectives are met.

Ms Ho, who worked previously in corporate information technology (IT) management, credits the NUS-ISS Graduate Diploma in Systems Analysis (SA) programme for helping to land her dream job shortly after completing the 13-month full-time curriculum earlier this year.

ISS, or the Institute of Systems Science, is a specialist education institution of the National University of Singapore (NUS). Its long-running SA programme has seen more than 2,000 students graduate over the past 33 years.

Says Ms Ho: “The SA programme was an intensive, comprehensive transfer of skills to my new role.”

For that matter, the one-month Application Development Project which took place before the internship was her favourite part of the course.

Besides plenty of learning opportunities, there was strong support from lecturers who often made visits to guide and advise students when necessary.

Ms Ho says she believes the SA programme’s practical approach will empower her to effectively apply what she would learn and succeed in her prospective career.

“I am delighted to have followed my heart, as the hands-on approach and committed teaching staff with global industry experience have helped me acquire cutting-edge IT knowledge and enabled a comprehensive transfer of skills to my new role.”