

Wired for success

NUS-ISS offers graduate programmes for professionals who want to make a career switch or enhance their IT knowledge

Rachel Chan

AN INTEREST in e-publishing, coupled with exposure to a few short courses related to information technology (IT), sparked Mr Adam Sia's interest in the IT industry.

This spurred him to pursue a Graduate Diploma in Systems Analysis (GDipSA) from Institute of Systems Science at the National University of Singapore (NUS-ISS) last year.

The skills he acquired in programming and project management, he believed, help to lay the foundation in his IT career and engage colleagues across different roles and functions.

Hands-on approach

With a hands-on approach, the programme offers more than theory to provide students with a strong foundation in systems analysis, programming and other soft skills critical for the workplace.

"The lecturers at NUS-ISS went beyond the syllabus by providing extra case studies and examples. They were approachable and willing to address any queries I had," says Mr Sia, 42.

While pursuing his graduate diploma, Mr Sia underwent a five-month internship at CrimsonLogic, a global eGovernment Solutions provider in Singapore.

Shortly before his graduation in February, he was offered a position in the company as a business process analyst and software engineer.

He manages client requirements and is responsible for engaging government agencies by assessing their eGovernment needs and recommending processes to enhance their business operations.

Mr Sia's supervisor Wong Chia Lee, senior lead software engineer for Solutions & Services, was impressed by his foundation in IT and ability to contribute even during the initial stage.

Says Mr Wong: "He interned at our organisation prior to coming on board, so he was already familiar with our corporate culture and way of doing things."

Adds Dr Esther Tan, chief of GDipSA Programme at NUS-ISS: "The GDipSA programme can help someone without IT knowledge to transit into the role of an IT professional in a very short period of time."

"Seven out of these 13 months are dedicated to very intensive training in terms of lectures, workshops and projects."

"ISS works closely with industries and companies that need IT solutions by providing them with student interns."

"Throughout the duration of the internship, students can gain real-life experience as an IT professional."

Relevant to industry needs

After working for 16 years as a solution architect at MavenWire, Mr Ian Lo, 40, decided to pursue a Master of Technology in Enterprise Business Analytics (MTech EBAC) from NUS-ISS.

As he had gone through the Microsoft .NET Professional Diploma at NUS-ISS previously, he was confident in the quality of the lecturers and comfortable with the delivery pace of the courses.

He also appreciated how the industry-based courses were relevant to the needs of the industry.

As the classes are conducted on Saturdays, this does not interfere with his job, which often requires him to lead conference calls and team discussions for overseas projects late into the night.

Mr Lo recalls: "One of the memorable guest lecturers was the Asia-Pacific head of data analytics, strategy and reporting at a large foreign bank who gave a lecture on the application of data analytics to financial products and insurance."

"It gave us insights into the practical application of data analytics in the finance industry."

"I enjoyed it as it provided a clear example of the use of data analytics to enable businesses to be successful as well as to benefit customers."

Dr Carol Hargreaves, chief of enterprise business analytics practice at NUS-ISS, says: "The course teaches our students to understand enterprise business challenges and gain insights into the relationship between business factors using only relevant data."

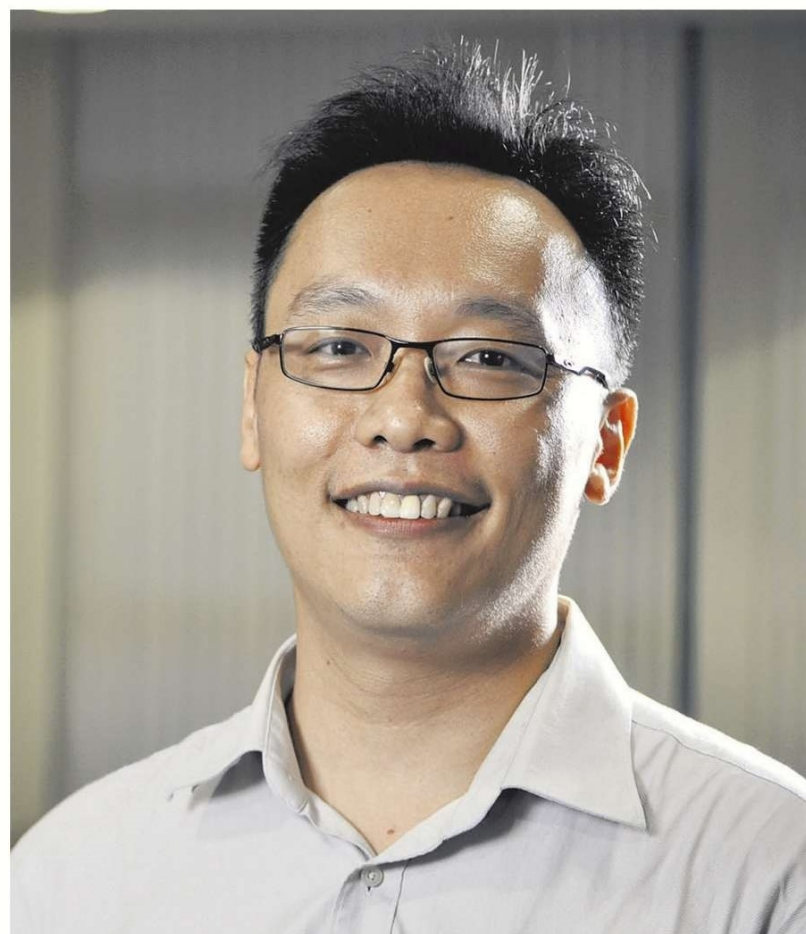
"From there, they will be able to enable and optimise predictions based on business goals and resources."

Mr Lo says: "With the data analytics knowledge and skills from the master's programme, I am better able to help my clients and customers make use of data and turn it into a competitive advantage for their organisations."

He adds that he has also gained global perspectives and expanded his network of industry contacts through the programme.

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— Mr Ian Lo (right)



PHOTOS: NUS-ISS



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