



Mr Tang is thankful that SGX prepared him for corporate life even before he graduated. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

## Hooked on history

Studying the subject hones SIA scholar Goh Siau Yin's attention to detail

by philip lee

UNLIKE many Singaporean students who prefer to study engineering or science in university, Ms Goh Siau Yin opted for history, a subject she had been hooked on from a young age.

She credits this avid interest to her history teachers in Raffles Girls School (Secondary) and Hwa Chong Junior College.

Ms Goh, 25, who earned her honours degree in history from the University of Cambridge in 2005 on a Singapore Airlines (SIA) Scholarship, says: "I was just very fortunate to have excellent history teachers

during my formative years.

"They made history really come alive and made me realise that there was much more to the subject than mere dates and events.

"It was easy to get hooked when you could see history beyond the pages of a book."

But how is history relevant to her current job as a market analyst at SIA?

She says: "Doing history at university level trains you to work through details and to synthesise large chunks of information.

"You also gain an awareness that not all sources of information are reliable or accurate; so you

learn to sieve out what is useful and what is not.

"It's important for a portfolio like this," she adds, referring to her job which sees her keep track of events and developments in the Americas and South West Pacific.

"This involves keeping up to date with current affairs, staying in contact with the sales offices so that they can give updates on what's happening on the ground, and looking at data to get an overall perspective."

She adds: "The fact that SIA allowed me to take a course that did not necessarily have direct relevance signalled to me that this is



Ms Goh's proficiency in history enables her to be thorough in collating data. PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

an employer that is not locked in to a rigid set of ideas about a person's potential and development.

"The academic content is not as important as the general writing and thinking skills that you will pick up in the course of your university studies."

On her SIA career, she says that job rotations to different depart-

ments once every few years expose officers to a broad spectrum of experiences and make work life much more interesting.

"My overall experience so far is that the SIA workplace has a supportive and nurturing environment. It is a family-oriented company and encourages a good work-life balance."

## Capital gains

SGX scholar Michael Tang wants to have a hand in shaping Singapore's financial market

by melissa heng

HE WAS a science student who accepted a scholarship from a financial institution to study law.

Some people may think the combination is a little unusual, but not Mr Michael Tang, a scholar with the Singapore Exchange (SGX).

The Raffles Junior College alumnus says: "I wanted a professional degree, and SGX made me an open offer. I chose law in part because it would teach me how to reason and think through things logically."

Now a management associate with his sponsor, Mr Tang, 27, feels that his choice of studies has stood him in good stead for his career.

He says: "I've been here seven months, and so far, my legal training has direct relevance to what I do here, which is dealing with SGX's regulatory policies."

Now serving his two-year bond with the company, he looks forward to being posted to the various business units under a scheme that aims to expose its management associates to a variety of working experiences within the organisation.

The opportunity to have a hand in shaping Singapore's capital market is a big draw for him.

He explains: "SGX has quite an open work culture, so we can indicate our preferences when rotation comes around. I would like to do a stint in one of their business units to get a feel of the markets."

"I hope to be able to contribute to Singapore's body of knowledge regarding regulations."

"For example, I'm doing research into the situations in other markets and their economic implications. Knowing what others are doing may benefit us."

His global outlook comes from spending a year overseas in Canada on an exchange programme, which SGX co-financed.

He credits his sponsor for preparing him for corporate life even before he graduated.

"Unlike most people fresh out of school, I didn't have any culture shock at work, mainly because I did three internships at SGX during my study years."

"During every long vacation, I would come to the office for a few weeks, and that experience really helped ease me into working life," he says.

"By the time I joined the company full time after my studies, I already knew quite a few people and had a ready network of friends and colleagues I could call on for support."

"That is very important because when things get rough, you know you're not alone," he adds.

He remains optimistic with his career choice, even if the financial industry isn't as rosy now.

He says: "Many people may not envy those in the financial sector right now, but that kind of sentiment won't last."

"This is still an exciting industry to be in, and the recession will go away sooner or later."

"I like it here and I'm not going anywhere at the moment."

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