



Career Story: Making the most of new experiences

Degree: Double degree in Commerce and Economics

Completion year: 2018

Years since graduation: 1

Career story themes: Keep an open mind, develop networks early, be proactive

Mayin's story

In 2018, Mayin completed a double degree in Commerce and Economics as part of the Monash University Business School Scholars program, majoring in Actuarial studies, Accounting, and Econometrics and Business Statistics. Mayin was born in Indonesia. Although he is of Chinese descent, his name is derived from Sanskrit. This is because his parents wanted him to develop and reflect a multicultural outlook on life.

Mayin secured a full-time graduate position by applying to a Chartered Accountants Achiever Program¹ for students undertaking tertiary studies in business or commerce in either Australia or New Zealand. In line with other programs around the world, the Achiever Program enables students to secure work experience over the long summer break. Mayin recalls that the selection process involved a range of online tests as well as an interview.

¹ <https://www.youunlimitedanz.com/get-connected/achiever-programme>

During his penultimate year, several accounting firms were actively recruiting students for vacation or graduate roles. However, Mayin was not overly concerned about finding a full-time position and chose to focus on applying for roles in which he was interested. As a result of his efforts, Mayin secured a vacation position with ShineWing and with PwC. Not long afterward, he was offered a full-time auditing role with ShineWing's assurance and advisory division. In order to make the most out of his work placements, Mayin recalls that he actively asked questions, attempted to complete a variety of tasks and generally remained open-minded.

Finding graduate work

Mayin developed an extensive network whilst at university and he took every opportunity to discuss his prospects and various ways of accessing full-time employment with prestigious organisations. Some of the alumni in Mayin's network had already secured consulting positions and they were willing to share their experiences with him.

The graduates assured Mayin that he should have no difficulty gaining work as long as he was proactive in his approach. Mayin heeded their advice. He spoke to potential recruiters as part of the annual recruitment program, he attended faculty networking events towards the end of his degree, and he became a mentee in the Business School's mentoring program. He found the mentoring relationship to be a particularly valuable experience. His mentor, who worked

with Accenture², also provided him with valuable advice in relation to the type of work to which he might be suited and how he might go about applying for multiple roles.

How to get ahead: Advice from a graduate

In order to develop a strong network within his university, Mayin made the effort to become fully immersed in extra- and co-curricular activities. These included a student leadership program, the Actuarial Students' Society, Non-Residential Colleges and the Indonesian Students Association. These experiences helped him to develop his employability, his transferrable skills and his professional networks. For example, Mayin's leadership role in the leadership program and the Actuarial Students' Society enabled him to learn the importance of negotiation, delegation, working with people from diverse backgrounds or viewpoints, organising events and prioritising activities. Mayin notes that these types of skills (often called "soft" or generic skills) are often overlooked by students transitioning into the workforce and yet they are highly valued by employers.

In addition, Mayin's extracurricular commitments enabled him to attend interstate and overseas conferences. He embraced opportunities to participate in leadership conferences in Canberra, New Zealand, Washington DC, New York, Los Angeles and Boston. During these occasions, he had the chance to listen to Australian parliamentarians, Harvard professors, and global business leaders, as they discussed topical social issues. He also had the opportunity to participate in case study competitions and social projects which aimed to support local charities and improve the wellbeing of the local community. These experiences broadened his perception of leadership and enhanced his overall university experience.

There is no doubt that quantitative capability in terms of data analytics, economics and

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accounting demonstrated a multidisciplinary strength which was really important to Mayin's ability to secure a position, going from a temporary vacation position to a full-time graduate role. Ultimately, however, Mayin believes that students should develop a balance of soft skills (professional capabilities) and strong technical knowledge. Mayin developed his quantitative capability through his multidisciplinary combination of majors in Actuarial science, Econometrics, and Accounting. Through his studies at university, Mayin gained insights into the application of business analytics in higher education research and the measurement of an organization's social impact through a balanced scorecard. He also learnt how to create a comprehensive business plan which included quantitative cash flow and budget projections. Most importantly, he developed an understanding of studying efficiently. Mayin believes that these skills were crucial to his ability to secure vacation and graduate positions. Mayin emphasises that his ability to demonstrate professional capabilities to his employer was the result of his engagement in extra- and co-curricular activities.

If he had the opportunity to embark on his undergraduate studies once more, Mayin would make sure that he included an international experience such as an exchange or study abroad program. He believes that this would have been very beneficial, both to complement his studies and to give him the experience of a new culture and language, and a more independent lifestyle

2 <https://www.accenture.com/au-en>

away from the support of his family. He explains:

It's great to travel overseas to improve your knowledge about how students from other countries learn and to understand different cultures. An immersive program for one, maybe three months, to learn the local culture and take you out of your comfort zone, is very beneficial. You have to deal with challenges, integrate with the local community and find your own way. This is very beneficial for when you're transitioning into the workplace.

Ultimately, Mayin recommends that graduates “keep an open mind. Take advantage of all the opportunities which university life offers”. He believes that “embracing all the opportunities that the university offers will hold you in good stead for the future” as these experiences go a long way to developing the support networks, confidence, self-awareness, learner identity and resilience on which graduates can draw as when establishing and negotiating their careers.

Further resources

The following resources will help you to understand how your own experiences can give you a head start in your career.

[Plot your preferences and strengths](#)

[Using informational interviews to develop career knowledge and networks](#)

[How much do you know already?](#)

Learning from biographies and career stories

What do you see when you meet a professional?

Most of the time, we see only the role someone holds now. It is likely, however, that the person has experienced a career with lots of twists and turns.

Get the most out of reading career stories or biographies by asking yourself some of the questions to the right.

1. What do you expect you will have to learn during your career?
2. What might you need to do in order to keep learning?
3. What differences, common issues, and links can you make to your own career journey?
4. Identify and reflect on key decision points in your personal and professional development, and then consider:
 - a. Who played a significant role at these times?
 - b. To whom did you go to for advice?
 - c. What can you put in place for the next time you face a major decision?
5. Biographical accounts raise a number of challenges and opportunities. These include innovative collaborations, work within other sectors, diverse locations, and different modes of work. Look for examples of these in your discipline and reflect on what might be of interest to you:
 - a. What interests you, and what can you do to make this a reality?
 - b. What challenges do you foresee, and how will you prepare for these?
6. Biographical accounts often tell us something about the interests, passions, and motivations of the people involved. Can you think of ways to combine your interests and your future work?
7. What would you like to achieve as a professional?

This career story was developed through a grant funded by the [Australian Business Deans Council](#). The Business Student Toolkit can be found [here](#).

This resource was developed by [Nell Kimberley](#) (Monash University) in collaboration with [Dawn Bennett](#) (Curtin University), 2019

Developing Employability is led by Professor Dawn Bennett, Curtin University, Australia.

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