



Alumna Wenjia Zhou
Subject MSc International Management
Graduated 2007
Place of Work Ernst and Young
Position Senior Auditor



Ernst and Young is one of the largest professional services firms in the world, and is ranked as one of the Big Four auditors alongside Deloitte, KPMG and PwC. Ernst and Young Global sets standards and oversees policy and consistency of service, with client work being performed by its member firms. E&Y employs around 140,000 professionals in 140 countries.

Wenjia graduated in 2007 with a degree in International Management. As a senior auditor she takes a leading role in co-ordinating a team on auditing projects, liaising with clients, and assisting on other projects in the department.

What were your main reasons for choosing Royal Holloway?

I studied for my undergraduate in China, so league tables helped me to make my decision about where to study in the UK. I knew that Royal Holloway was ranked in the top research-intensive universities. The association with the University of London also made me think that it would be a good choice. And I thought that the campus was really beautiful, especially Founders Building.

Why did you choose to study in the UK?

The postgraduate courses in the UK last for one year, compared with the two year American courses: two years was a bit too long for me, so I opted to take the shorter course. I really liked the culture in the UK and the scenery is beautiful. Whilst I was studying I also went on trips to Stonehenge, Scotland and other places in England. In addition, I took the opportunity to travel around North Europe; these places are near the UK but very far from China!

Why did you choose International Management?

My background is in nursing but I wanted to do something completely different for my Masters to prepare me for the business world. It's a very comprehensive course that includes all kinds of basic management knowledge, so I knew that it would be very useful for me in my future career. The breadth of modules in addition to all the group projects made the course quite pressured because there is so much to learn, much more so than on other majors, but it was definitely worth it.

Can you tell us about your Royal Holloway experience?

I made lots of friends from all over the world; we had fun together, and could also learn from each other whilst doing our group projects so it was a great experience. We shared our stories with each other about what we were doing before, what we learnt in our home countries. I'm good friends with many of the Chinese students from my course and still see them from time to time at alumni events.

Great minds go on to great places

Have your studies helped in your career?

Yes, the knowledge that I gained from the Accounting course in particular is essential for my job as an auditor. Auditing in the UK is very different to China, though, and in some ways it's easier. In China we are auditing for so many different types of companies from MNCs to SMEs; in SMEs the accounting knowledge is not so great so we often have to spend longer with these types of companies. Finally, the presentation and communication skills as well as English writing skills are all really useful now.

Tell us about your current role at Ernst and Young.

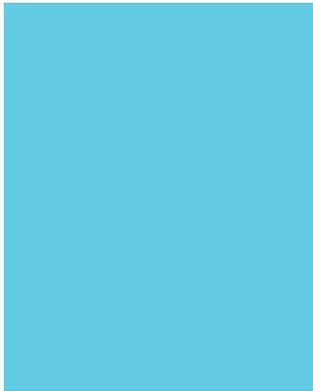
As a senior auditor I lead a team of colleagues to complete a project, which might involve coaching staff on how to complete a working paper, communicating with the clients to get the information that we need, or assisting my manager in the completion of an audit report. Our clients include Coca Cola, China Merchant Bank as well as many Chinese clients who have been or are working towards being publicly listed on the stock market. Ernst and Young is also supporting innovation and entrepreneurship through our 'Entrepreneur of the Year' initiative, which seeks to highlight the achievements of a new business, so it's a great place to be right now.



Royal Holloway
University of London

people *with* passion

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What has been your career path since graduating?

I returned to Shanghai after my degree in 2007 and started the application process for Ernst and Young. After I was offered a position, I took some time to travel in China as well as learning the specialist accounting knowledge that I needed for the job, before starting with the firm in September 2008. I've worked my way up since being here and am now a senior auditor.

Can you tell us about your current projects?

I am currently involved with initial public offering projects. When a company wants to list itself on the stock market they invite us to do the auditing, so we assist them in going to the stock market. These kinds of projects are very time consuming: normal auditing engagement is just about the annual report, but the IPO engagement is every quarter.

How do you stay connected with the College?

I think that it's really important to stay connected with the College. I attended the Shanghai Grand Alumni Event in May 2011 with the Principal and other representatives from Royal Holloway. I often receive Higher magazine from the university, as well as email communications from the Alumni Office and other friends from the College. In addition, I really appreciate the opportunity to be a Regional Alumni Ambassador for the Shanghai Chapter.

What would you say to students thinking about studying at Royal Holloway?

Royal Holloway is an excellent university and I hope that anyone who attends gets as much out of the experience as possible, to learn, have fun and make friends with a lot of different people and to properly enjoy your time at Royal Holloway. I would definitely recommend Royal Holloway to my friends.

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