



Alumna Subject Graduated Place of Work Position
Liya Ye
MSc Financial and Industrial Economics
2001
Ceocio China Magazine
Senior Editor



CEOCIO China is one of the top three Chinese financial magazines with an average circulation of 140,000 copies per issue. As a news orientated business and management publication, *CEOCIO China* has become a leading voice in China's business management communities, well known for its unique perspectives and profound insights. As Senior Editor, Liya is responsible for driving new projects in the Shanghai office, co-ordinating her team in order to deliver up-to-date reports on emerging business trends. She is also responsible for the operational strategy in the Shanghai office.

Great minds go on to great places

Why did you choose to study at Royal Holloway?

I was immediately drawn to the Founder's Building. It's just so beautiful! As far as the studying goes, the course confirmed that I made the right choice. My course mates were all smart and ready to help, the professors intelligent and inspiring, and the history of the College and its association with the University of London makes me proud. My undergraduate degree gave me a broad sense of western economic theories, and the Masters helped me to develop this area of interest in greater detail.

Did you enjoy studying in the UK?

Inside China everything has a unique philosophy, but sometimes you need to get out and live somewhere different to experience new things. I got a lot out of my time in the UK, the beautiful landscape, clear air, wet weather, London, Egham, and above all a broader and deeper view of the world. The studies are tough, but the time I spent in my flat kitchen with my friends helped me to relax in the evenings. That's the thing about studying at Royal Holloway: it opens your eyes and mind, inside and outside of the classroom.

What was the most difficult part of studying abroad?

The language. In China you mostly study writing, so there's not so much focus on oral, let alone regional dialects from Ireland, Scotland and the United States! There are different ways of speaking and different ways of expressing everything. I went straight into my masters, so I think it's probably better to do a three month English course before starting.

Why did you choose to study Economics?

That's a tricky question. My parents encouraged me to study the course, and since my undergraduate major was Public Finance, it seemed sensible to continue with this course of study. It turned out that this was exactly the type of thing that I wanted to do. The one thing I really cared about was the importance of learning economic theory scientifically, as opposed to the politico-metaphysical emphasis in China. I also wanted to learn more about the difference between East and West methodology.

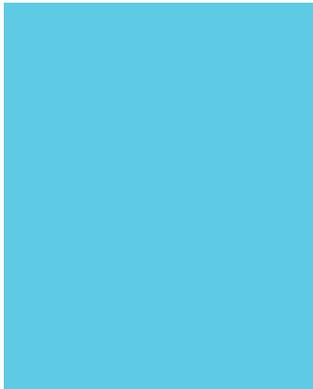
What were your expectations prior to starting the course?

When I first started I didn't have a specific expectation, just a desire for a general life experience, to go abroad and study. But everything impressed me, the class, the campus and particularly the professors. When I first arrived in the Economics department, a tutor said to me 'you didn't come for the maths course, your English isn't so good, and I don't think that you will pass this course, so for your benefit maybe you should look at switching to another degree'. I was so shocked! It's so different to the Chinese system, where just go to school and you never talk about choices, options and what's best for you. It's so different. But, I stuck with it. If someone says to me that I cannot do something I think, why not? And so I set out to prove that tutor wrong!

What were the best parts of the course?

Econometrics. It was the most difficult part, but also the most interesting. I still remember pinning down my flatmate's friend one day, asking him everything that I didn't know, getting him to teach me everything from the very basics. By the end of the evening our kitchen looked more like a classroom. I didn't pass that first exam, but the second exam was better and by my mid-term exam I passed with over 90%.





people with passion

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Have your studies helped you in your career?

My work is related to management, but my studies in the UK and my economics background gave me more confidence and more in-depth knowledge to deal with the topics that I am writing on. The first interview I did was whilst I was working at the first daily financial newspaper in China. I interviewed the UK and Europe president of Credit Lyonnais, which was pretty tough for a new journalist! I did so much research, but my international background and knowledge of finance and economics gave me some idea of how to go about doing the interview. I took the angle of comparing Shanghai to the European financial markets in a global macroeconomic sense. That was the start of my journalism work and since then I've carried out over 1,000 interviews with more than 100 CEOs of multinational corporations across the world.

Tell us about your current role at *CEOCIO China Magazine*.

We focus on reporting about new business models, new technology, and how these new technologies improve management efficiency and realise new business models. I am now the senior editor at

CEOCIO China, and my role involves proposing new stories, training and guiding my colleagues in researching and writing the stories, working as part of a team to prepare material for the interviews and organising the publication of articles. I am also head of the Shanghai office, so I take care of all daily operations in the office. I have flexible working hours, mostly working from home and going out to do interviews.

What are the best parts of your day?

We have to know everything that's happening around the world, before the other publications disclose it! That means we identify the trend, and we find this information out ourselves: no one tells you, you have to find it. My favourite project to date was last Easter. We ranked the top financial IT vendors, interviewing the directors of global and local financial IT vendors, setting the criteria and listing the top 20. The project had a big impact, especially in the IT industry.

What has been your career path since graduating?

I started as a translator and then editor of international news for a daily newspaper, and

then moved to *CEOCIO China* about eight years ago, starting as a reporter, then a journalist, editor and now I am the senior editor and head of the Shanghai office. I love economics, but for me it is too separate from the real world, too mathematical and theoretical. Journalism is the best compromise that I have found between work and real life.

How do you stay connected with the College?

I was previously co-ordinating with the British Council to hold events for alumni in Shanghai. I think that we would all like to have more regular events, to get together socially and share professional information. It's not always about your career, but we could share courses and lectures on the internet, to feel more connected with the College, and encourage further study for alumni.

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