



**Alumna** Ying Zhou  
**Subject** Economics  
**Graduated** 2007  
**Place of Work** NAFMII  
**Position** Foreign Affairs



NAFMII is a self-regulatory organization, positioned between the government and individual market participants. Composed of 2,000 members ranging from financial institutions to accountancy and legal intermediaries, NAFMII acts on their behalf in the bond market, opening up dialogue between the market players, and settling disputes in foreign countries.

Ying's role involves identifying the needs of NAFMII's members and those of foreign institutions breaking into the Chinese markets to find points of co-operation. She is also involved in translation, research and PR.

# Great minds *go on to* great places

## **Why did you choose to study at Royal Holloway?**

Royal Holloway offered a major/minor degree in Economics and Music, so I was able to keep up my hobby as well as studying Economics. I visited the College on an Open Day and fell in love with the campus. It's hard to find a campus like that in central London, but at Royal Holloway it's a real community. The location is great: Egham is perfect for quiet study, but close enough to London to get out when you want to.

## **Did you always want to study in the UK?**

From a young age I knew that I wanted to study abroad and, when the opportunity arose, the UK seemed like a good choice because it is in some ways similar to China – the history, culture, elegance and tradition. The UK higher education system also has a great reputation at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Studying in the UK exposes you to different cultures. You have friends from all over the world, and you understand how to deal with people from different backgrounds. This has been a great advantage for me and added to my degree.

## **Why did you choose to study Economics?**

My parents work in the finance industry and my mum encouraged me to study Economics as a first degree because it's a good foundation from which you can continue your studies. Different lecturers will give you a snapshot of each of their areas of specialism; studying family economics in second year prompted me to write my third year dissertation on that area. The professors are very helpful; in particular, my dissertation supervisor, Dan Anderburg, was very supportive whilst I was writing my final year project, as well as giving me advice about career options and postgraduate choices.

## **Did you do any internships?**

I tried different things to help me figure out what I wanted to do. Spending the summer of my second year as an accountant at Shell in China made me realize that accountancy was not for me. Nonetheless, the internship enabled me to develop key soft skills, such as communication, problem solving and independent thinking, alongside the academic skills that I gained through my degree. As an international student studying in a foreign country, your experience forces you to take on more responsibilities and to think for yourself, which will be very important when you enter the world of work.

## **Do you have an outstanding memory from your time at Royal Holloway?**

It's all based on studying. I especially enjoyed my last year; I was applying for postgraduate courses, handling a lot of projects and assignments. It was stressful but fantastic and after you go through it you feel like you have accomplished so much. My parents attended the graduation ceremony, and after three years of studying it was great to see all our efforts had come to fruition. Hardly any other universities can hold their graduation ceremonies in a chapel, so it's a very special feeling. A very happy day and a very happy ending.

## **Tell us about your current role at the NAFMII.**

My work involves establishing relationships and liaising with multiple organisations on different levels: the government, regulatory organisations, multinational institutions, accountancy firms and clearing bodies. Another aspect is dealing directly with the media, because we sometimes have to talk directly to news correspondents about what's going on in the markets. I am also involved in research. All of the people in my department speak good English, so we cover some international markets.





# people *with* passion

“Make the most of the opportunity:  
I’m really happy that I went abroad  
and followed my dream.”

My plan is to stay here for the immediate future. The organisation is still quite young and developing really fast, so we are moving into other areas. In the most recent five year plan, the government observed that the bond market should be developing fastest in order to support SMEs. Investors in the bond market have a different appetite for risk and are prepared to invest in start-up companies, which might be considered high risk if they were to apply to the bank for a loan. So there are lots of things going on and I’m trying to be a part of it to see what happens. I’m exploring what I like and what I’m good at so that I can specialise in a specific area in the future.

#### What are the best parts of your job?

In my current role there are a lot of things that aren’t really routine, such as overseas visits from government officials, and organizing itineraries for the Managing Director so that he can meet foreign partners. I have had the opportunity to meet high level officials, such as the Chairman of the City of London, the CEO of BNP Paribas, the FSA, which is great for networking. I have traveled to the States for training and had the chance to meet the MDs of Goldman Sachs and Citigroup. That’s the best part – meeting people from all over the world.

#### What projects are you currently involved in?

I’m arranging the secretary general’s trip to the States, as well as scheduling appointments for him. I’m involved in editing and checking department translations, and am also translating articles for a magazine that NAFMII publishes. My favourite project involved the organization and management of a conference with one of our partners, Euromoney. Over 1,000 delegates from around the world attended, councillors from foreign embassies, and the governor of the central China bank delivered a key note speech at the conference. It was a huge project, and a great networking opportunity.

#### Do you have any tips for students thinking about studying abroad?

Be sure of the reasons why you want to study abroad: if you don’t know, the combination of coming into a new environment and being away from your parents means that you can slack off. Be mentally prepared. International students have to be strong because it can sometimes be a lonely experience. You might overcome a lot of difficulties at first, but you will learn to cope with pressure. Make the most of the opportunity: I’m really happy that I went abroad and followed my dream.

#### Do you have any tips for students looking to break into the business world?

Figure out where you want to specialize, do your research, talk to people in that area, and develop your skill sets.

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