

STUDY OVERSEAS

SPECIAL | SPH CONTENT LAB

Enriched by his overseas experience

Mr Clement Chua returns to France to further his studies in management

AUDREY NG

AFTER more than 12 years in the civil service, Mr Clement Chua, 39, a deputy director in the Ops-Tech Group at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), decided to go back to school to enhance his management skills.

He applied successfully for a MHA scholarship for further studies and enrolled in the Advanced Master Strategy and Management of International Business programme offered by ESSEC Business School in September last year.

Mr Chua chose ESSEC not only for its reputation as a top global business school with campuses in Singapore and France, but also because he is familiar with the French education system.

He had spent three years in France for his engineering undergraduate studies at Telecom SudParis, graduating with a Diplôme d'Ingenieur — equivalent to a Master of Science in Engineering.

His current master's programme saw him taking his course at ESSEC's Cergy-Pontoise campus, 40 minutes from Paris.

"ESSEC's 'learning-by-doing' approach to lessons was also one of the reasons why I chose to pursue my postgraduate course there," he says.

In-depth learning

The programme structure comprises eight months of lessons. Students are then required to have four months of work experience and start work on a dissertation.



Studying overseas at a top business school not only provided Mr Chua with the management skills he desired, but also let him gain new perspectives in a different environment.

PHOTO: CHONG JUN LIANG

In the first term, students take core modules such as geopolitics, international business law, strategic management and competitive intelligence.

In the second term, they choose specialist courses from eight management tracks.

Mr Chua selected the Global Strategic Consulting track to learn best practices adopted by consultants on how to approach issues where solutions and problems are not well-defined.

The programme also includes a one-week overseas study trip for students to interact with professionals from companies.

Mr Chua headed to Dublin.

He also picked up practical frameworks and strategies that could be applied to a wide variety of real-life work scenarios.

For instance, his class worked with a start-up company to tackle a problem for their Consulting Soft Skills module.

"We had to discuss with the founders to better understand their challenges before developing our proposals," he says.

New perspectives

Apart from his pursuit of knowledge, Mr Chua enjoyed studying in a different environment.

"Being immersed in French culture allowed me to discover a very different way of viewing issues," he says.

As the only Singaporean in his chosen study track, Mr Chua also learnt to step out of his comfort zone and interact with students from different nationalities and backgrounds.

He got to experience a different sort of campus life too.

One of the highlights was Les Mardis de l'ESSEC, a series of dialogues with prominent figures invited to speak with students.

These included Prince Albert

II of Monaco, and Renault's chairman and chief executive officer Carlos Ghosn.

His biggest takeaway from this programme is a new perspective on how to approach complex issues as it provided a more structured framework and allowed him to apply these methods more systematically.

"This helps me continue to add value to my career when assigned with new tasks," he says.

Currently back in Singapore, Mr Chua is fulfilling the work experience portion of the

programme at MHA and is expected to graduate next year.

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