

YOUNG MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Athena Tsui CPA

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Senior Associate
at Deloitte



Photography by Anthony Tung



Athena Tsui CPA, a Senior Associate at Deloitte, is accustomed to the intricate and often demanding nature of audit engagements. She tells *A Plus* about the importance of building trust with clients, and how a career in auditing offers ample opportunities to develop one's technical and interpersonal skills

What is your current role and responsibilities? How is it going so far?

As a Senior Associate at Deloitte, I oversee all audit-related tasks. I manage a team and work closely with our clients to answer their questions concerning audit procedures. I also delegate tasks to my team members and provide them with either daily or weekly targets to meet. The role can be quite challenging when it comes to completing audits within a tight timeline and with limited manpower, especially during peak season.

What are the most rewarding and challenging aspects of your role, and why?

The most challenging thing about being an auditor is navigating client relationships. During each audit, we request a lot of files from our clients, and establishing a good working relationship with them from the start makes this task much easier and also builds trust. We need the right interpersonal and communication skills to make these requests without sounding too intrusive. Building trust and respect will also help facilitate each audit engagement and ensure everything goes smoothly. At the end of a project, there's a sense of achievement, particularly as some projects can last as long as three months. As a Senior Associate, I need to guide team members through certain processes such as how to handle daily requests and challenges from clients and managers. It's always great seeing members of my team improve and learn new skills during the whole process.

What inspired you to become an accountant?

I started studying accounting when I was in secondary school. I was interested in understanding how to present financial figures and understanding how businesses work, so I chose it as an elective. I enjoyed it, and decided to major in accounting at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. I've worked at Deloitte since graduating.

Where do you see yourself in the next five to 10 years in your career? Which field do you plan on specializing in, and why?

I'd be happy to continue working in audit. Working at a Big Four firm has given me the opportunity to work with large companies such as conglomerates and multinational corporations. The people I've met in Deloitte are very friendly. I've worked with very supportive managers and seniors, and I appreciate how instead of competing with each other, people help each other. The positive team spirit has also inspired and encouraged me to be an understanding leader. As an auditor, I enjoy the freedom of being able to manage my tasks and responsibilities in my own time, as well as getting to work and meet with different people and learn about different industries very quickly.

What are the biggest lessons you have learned so far from work experience or managers?

Leadership skills are important. It's about learning how to strike a balance between managing your team and letting them work on their own. If I'm working with a new associate, it's important that I set everything right from the start. There are times you have to check in on their progress to ensure they fully understand what they are doing. Having the right attitude is also important. Though some tasks may be tedious at the start, I feel that it's about how you view the task at hand. When I was a junior, my seniors would take the time to explain the reasons behind some tasks. Through this process, I got to understand why certain tasks exist. Try to fully grasp the nature and purpose of the job on your own first – you might realize some tasks are not as tedious as some may say.

How do you think the Qualification Programme (QP) has helped you in your career so far, or prepared you for your current role?

The financial reporting module of the QP dives deep into accounting standards, and knowledge in this area has proven to be very helpful in my role so far. Whenever clients have concerns about financial statements, I rely on my knowledge of accounting standards, and this helps me answer any questions. The workshops also help build our soft skills, as we often have to work with different people as teams to complete tasks. The facilitators are also very experienced in their own fields. In addition to their specialized knowledge, they also share their own personal experiences with us, which helps us relate what we learn to real-world scenarios.