



Ms Huang is grateful for the support her professors and friends have provided to aid her learning at SIT.

Eye on her goal

Singapore Institute of Technology scholar Debbie Huang does not let her disability prevent her from achieving academic success

ESTHER TEO

MS DEBBIE Huang has never let her disability get in the way of her dreams.

The 21-year-old, who is hearing impaired, decided to be an accountant while studying accounting in secondary school.

"When I feel passionate about something, a fire burns strongly within me, and eggs me on despite the obstacles," she says.

Ms Huang studied accounting and finance at Nanyang Polytechnic. When she graduated, she applied to the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), and was one of 13 freshmen to be awarded the SIT Scholarship last year.

The scholarship covers the tuition fees of her degree programme and is bond-free.

Against the odds

Family and friends were very supportive of her decision to pursue a Bachelor of Accountancy (Honours) at SIT.

"Although SIT is a new school, it is progressing very fast and has gained a significant number of accreditations from accounting bodies," she says.

So far, Ms Huang's learning experience has been both exciting and challenging.

The Financial Accounting module, one of the most complex modules of her first semester, was particularly testing.

The wide lecture hall and low microphone volume made it difficult for Ms Huang to hear the lecturers. Sometimes, she had to resort to lip-reading.

As a result, she missed out on important points and explanations presented during the lectures and did not do well for her first test.

Undaunted, she shared her

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MS DEBBIE HUANG
undergraduate
Singapore Institute of Technology

problems with her professors and peers, and consulted them after class to ensure that she was always up-to-date on course curriculum.

Gradually, she started coping better, and even began to enjoy the module.

"I find financial accounting so interesting because applying accounting standards and theoretical frameworks requires critical thinking and analysis.

"These are the essential traits of a good accountant and auditor," she says.

Ms Huang was filled with an immense sense of achievement when she managed to complete the module well.

"From the very start, my professors, programme director and coursemates have provided me with so much educational and emotional support. It is a great comfort to me," she says.

"SIT has inspired me, and made me believe that an individual's hard work and willingness to learn, coupled with reliable teaching, form the backbone of success," she adds.

Beyond the classroom

Besides academics, the SIT

scholarship has also given Ms Huang the opportunity to develop herself holistically.

She has also been involved in social work. In particular, she was moved by her experience volunteering at the "Light a Child's Heart" event at Club Rainbow during Children's Day.

Club Rainbow is a charity organisation that provides help to children with chronic illnesses as well as their families.

She says: "I could see the sadness and vulnerability in the children's eyes.

"It left a deep impression on me, and reminded me of the importance of cherishing our loved ones, being contented and appreciating what we have.

"I was glad that I could put a smile on the children's faces by organising a fun celebration for them."

Her programme includes an extended, eight-month internship component.

Real-world experience is especially important, as accounting cannot be mastered just by studying.

Employers in Singapore value not just credentials but experience as well, she says.

Due to graduate next year, Ms Huang is optimistic about the growth potential for accountants and auditors here.

She says: "The world is changing very fast and Singapore is focusing more on entrepreneurship.

"New companies will provide more employment opportunities for accountants and auditors, who will play increasingly significant roles.

"This is why it is important that everyone keeps up with the times and deepens their expertise, otherwise, we could risk falling behind."