



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

VISION 2020

 Actuarial Students' Society
The University of Melbourne

The University of Melbourne
Actuarial Students' Society

VISION

2020

Email

contact@melbourneactuary.com

Website

www.melbourneactuary.com

Credits

Design & Editing

Joseph Diao
William Ho
Oscar To
Phillip Guo

Contents

Editor's Address	2-3
President's Address	4-5
2020 Committee	6-7
Who We Are	8
2020 ASS Events Review	9-10
Student Experiences	
First Year Experience	11
Second Year Experience	12
Third Year Experience	13
Post Graduate Experience	14-15
International Student Experience	16-17
Committee Experience	18
Industry Introductions	
Data analytics	19
Banking and Finance	19
General insurance	19-20
Life insurance	20
Superannuation	20
Educational Sponsors	
Centre for Actuarial Studies	22-23
Gold Sponsors	
Actuaries Institute*	
Flow Traders	25
QBE*	
Silver Sponsors	
Finity	27-28
Mercer	29
Quantium	30-32
SKL	33
Taylor Fry	34-35
Bronze Sponsors	
AIA	37
am actuaries	38
Deloitte	39
EY	40
KPMG	41-42
Optiver	43
PwC	44
More Articles	
Introduction to Investing: The road to financial sustainability minus the Wall St	46-49
Quarantine activities	50

Editor's Address

Welcome to the 2020 edition of *Vision*!

As our society's flagship magazine, *Vision* exemplifies our vision to bridge the gap between students and the actuarial profession. Inside you will find glimpses into an Actuarial student's experiences, short summaries on the range of traditional and non-traditional actuarial industries you might find yourself looking into, a wealth of information about our sponsors and working life in the actuarial field, and even miscellaneous articles to tickle your fancy!

2020 definitely has not passed without leaving an impression on all of us. In a matter of weeks, we saw the world change at a relentless rate, reinforcing the words of our 2019 education officer: "*the importance of adaptability cannot be overstated*". Yet in the stormy waters of this year's pandemic, the Actuarial Students' Society rowed on and saw to new partnerships and initiatives.

With 2020 also came the newfound collaboration between 180 Degrees Consulting and the Actuarial Students' Society, which resulted in the *Consulting with Excellence* workshop. Our members learnt to apply the skills brought by our previous excel workshops to a new consulting environment. At the time of writing, our inaugural R workshop has yet to run, however we hope the addition of these two events to the society's calendar will continue to provide growth for our members years after their inception.

2020 also introduced the complete and transitioned curriculum of the new Foundation Program. With the introduction of ten new/rehashed undergraduate and postgraduate subjects, the actuarial program is now packed with more excruciatingly hard and interesting '*moments*' than ever before! We look forward to seeing how our colleagues fare against these new challenges in this year's *Subject Review*, set to be released later this year.

To our sponsors, thank you for your ongoing support of our society's initiatives and vision. The Actuarial Students' Society achievements are nothing short of extraordinary and we could not have reached this point without you.

To our beloved members, thank you for supporting us in our transition online. Although you might have missed out on some classic trivia questions, poker games, and our signature post-event sushi, we hope that the newly introduced workshops and returning information sessions provided both professional and technical insights that you can bring with you long after you graduate.

To the committee of 2020, your ability to adapt and deliver in these climates—although not without slight mishaps—has definitely made this year a year to remember. Thank you for your hard work this year and, whether it be grinding through practice exams for CS2, spending countless nights studying for those dreaded exemptions, or discovering your passions in or out of the actuarial profession, I wish you good luck and success in your journeys.

And to the committee of 2021, I wish you all the best in these turbulent times.

I will conclude with a joke of my own creation, which serves as the culmination of my four years studying Actuarial Science:

An infinite number of actuaries walked into \bar{a} .

The first actuary says, "I think I'll just have one beer over one glass."

The second actuary, "well I guess I will have one beer over 2!"

The third actuary, "I will have one over 3!"

"Say no more!", exclaimed the bartender, as he poured out his Euler's glass and joined the actuaries.

William Ho
Education Officer

President's Address

2020 has been a unique and tumultuous year. Amidst a horrifying bushfire crisis and the seemingly everlasting COVID-19 lockdown, we at the Actuarial Students' Society have taken on the difficult challenge of adapting to this foreign situation.

Without a doubt, all of us have heard enough about coronavirus these few months, but nothing says '2020' more than a global pandemic. We started the year wary but hopeful, having set up our stall at the annual University of Melbourne Student Union (UMSU) clubs festival, wielding freshly printed information booklets and our brightest commercial smiles. Already, it was possible to feel the effects of the early stages of COVID, as a significant proportion of our target audience (actuarial students) was stranded overseas, barred from entering our country lest they detour for 14 days in a third country. Sweating from both the profound heat of Australian summer and the doubts of my anxious heart, my proud committee and I stood strongly at our comparatively desolate stall. Nonetheless, there were eager students who came to talk to us and learn more about our society.

Take this as an exaggerated synecdoche of our year ahead. COVID had seemingly destroyed the delicate ecosystem that had held our society together. At the core of our society, we aim to guide students to paths that lead to the workforce and aim to connect students with lecturers, sponsor firms, and other students. After about three weeks into the teaching year, this ethos became... "connect students with people while socially distanced". Event after event was forcibly cancelled by stricter and stricter restrictions placed upon us, and shortly, all events had to be hosted on online platforms. Not only was it more difficult to connect students with each other, but COVID also made it difficult for our society to uphold our end of the bargain with sponsorship firms. To avoid symbiotic mutualism becoming parasitism, it was and is important that we try to achieve our original goals of building bridges despite the circumstances.

We reached out to our sponsors with an opportunity to showcase the benefits of their company with a "Day in the Life" series, featuring sponsorship representatives going through a day in their life, intertwining the ups and downs of their work, hobbies, and personal lives. This way, we could keep our society engaged with our dear sponsors, as well as enabling us to have some content to publish on our social media. This is a difficult time for all of us, and an especially harrowing time for connecting students with sponsors, so I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank each and every one of our precious sponsors for being patient with us and continuing to support our quintessential student society.

Our first online event was the Internship Information Session. With little notice to lecture bash (making announcements at lectures) and advertise online, our expected attendance was pitiful. I alongside our committee all swallowed our doubts and hosted our first online Zoom meeting. This event was astoundingly successful, with much positive feedback from our student members and thus, it became a turning point for our society and its events. We took it as an opportunity to learn how to hold events online and thus began brainstorming ways to convert everything from a face-to-face format to the online world.

This year saw us taking a different approach to our annual Excel Workshop series, where we extended it from a two-part skill-set building class to a three-part class with a new third joint event with 180 Degree Consulting, another club at the university. Students were faced with a beast of a case study relating to a market entry via a dating app for UniMelb students.

Our members were urged to apply their Excel skills to analyse a simulated dataset of survey entries to assess whether this venture was profitable or not, make educated decisions, and present their findings.

We expanded upon our Peer Mentoring program, introducing a new event called the Peer Mentoring Introduction Evening to better facilitate bonding between mentors and mentees. This event demonstrated to us that students in this isolated environment were looking for an excuse to bond with others online and will likely be an event that can be hosted even when the lockdown ends for future years.

Our society also prospectively (at the time of writing) introduced a new R workshop series, targeted at eager actuarial students who are looking to get an edge in piloting the programming software, featuring not only the basics of R but also some more advanced actuarial application.

Tempered by the throes of our capricious first semester, we learnt that our society has many aspects that can be improved upon. Our next big project was upgrading our outdated website. We collectively decided as a committee to use Squarespace as a new website builder, which would not only be an aesthetic improvement, but also allow for ease of access, new features, and more opportunities for sponsors to showcase their firms. This gave our annual Subject Review and Vision magazines a new home, as well as convenience for our members who may be looking for information on our website.

For some, this year may become a brief void in our memory, with our lives indefinitely suspended as if in limbo. To many of our students, this might be their toughest year, with online distant learning, and to our graduates, who have the misfortune of having to seek jobs despite this financial crisis, good luck! I hope our society made your uni lives just a little bit more pleasant, and that you have had a fulfilling year in your own idiosyncratic ways. To our sponsors, I hope we can continue to work together and empower actuarial students for a brighter future.

Phillip Guo
President

2020 Committee



Phillip Guo
President



Serina He
Vice-President



Shuet Yi Lee
Secretary



Oscar To
Treasurer



William Ho
Education Officer



Chan-Gyu Lee
Sponsorship Director



Angus Kennedy
Sponsorship Officer



Daniel Ou
Events Director

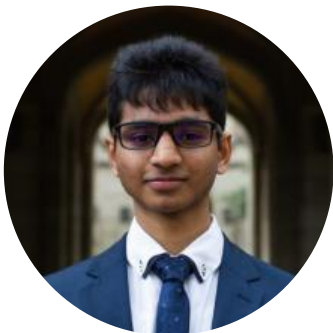
2020 Committee



Grace Siyue Yao
Media Officer



Sherry Sun
Student Engagement Director



Avishka Shashindra Jayakody
Student Engagement Officer



Bob Chu
First Year Representative



Gavin Zhang
First Year Representative



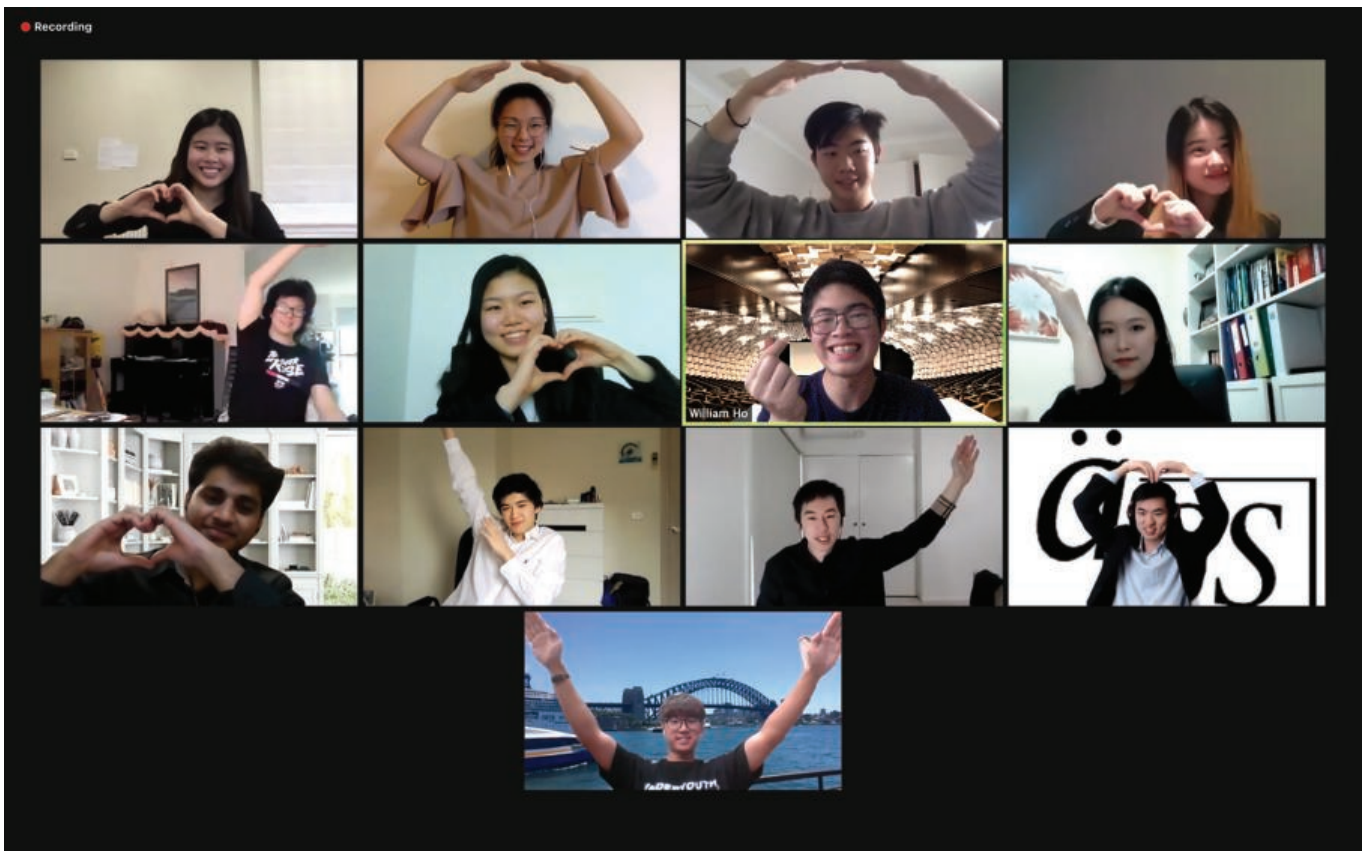
Jacqueline Liow
First Year Representative

Who We Are

The Actuarial Students' Society was formed in 1995 with the objective of enhancing the professional and social lives of our members. By forging relationships between employers and students, as well as between students themselves, we endeavour to provide a mix of educational, career-focused and fun experiences. With over three hundred members, the Society caters for all those studying the Actuarial Studies major of the Bachelor of Commerce degree at the University of Melbourne.

Throughout the year the Society provides members with valuable exposure to the industry through our annual Contact Night, 'Student vs. Sponsor' competitions and careers luncheons, in addition to an array of activities that allow them to interact in a social setting. Our members can therefore develop professional skills, learn about career pathways and achieve their long-term goals while having fun with fellow actuaries. Sponsors are given opportunities, not only to interact with some of the brightest minds in their field of study, but to also position themselves at the vanguard of their industry in the minds of our members.

Vision, the annual publication of the Society, has gradually evolved from the 'Vision Career Booklet', to a broader-based publication to reflect the Society's role in fostering not only the professional, but also the social development of its members.



Back row: Jacqui Liow, Serina He, Gavin Zhang, Grace Yao
Third row: Angus Kennedy, Michelle Lee, William Ho, Sherry Sun
Second row: Avishka Shashindra, Oscar To, Daniel Ou, Phillip Guo
First row: Chan-Gyu Lee

2020 ASS Events Review

Coming into the first semester of my master's degree, I felt quite optimistic about being the Events Director of ASS. I was looking forward to the opportunity of improving events and meeting different people. It turns out that no one could have predicted what was going to happen in 2020; the entire world was placed under lockdown due to COVID-19, and many events had to be cancelled. Despite the difficult circumstances, the committee was quick to adapt to the situation, and worked exceptionally hard to provide content and maintain interaction among sponsors, lecturers and members.

To begin the year, our education officer William hosted the first of the only two on-campus events – First Year Information Session, introducing the actuarial profession to many of our newer members. From the actuary's role in different practice areas, to the course structure and different course options, William was able to provide a clear picture how to qualify as an actuary, as well as illustrating the difficulties of completing the degree by showing declining trends of enrolment numbers. It was apparent that many students were not afraid of the challenges, however, as many stayed after the presentation to learn more about course or ask about study tips. Overall, it was certainly an insightful and informative session.

The second and final on-campus event this year was the Welcome Back BBQ. The weather was beautiful on the day, and a large number of students turned up for the delicious food and the opportunity to catch up with or meet new friends. With the help of all committee members, the event went rather smoothly. We even ran out of sausages and had to purchase extra quantities half-way through the event, only forgetting to buy extra sliced bread at the same time. Nevertheless, everyone was able to have a fun time. Looking back, it was probably more fitting to call it the 'Farewell BBQ', as it was the last chance where students got to interact in real life before lockdowns began.

With the new restrictions coming into place, the university had to transition into online delivery mode, and ASS had to follow suit. The first online event was the Internship Information Session, where we invited eight former and current students to share their experiences, covering various practice areas including risk management, actuarial pricing and institutional banking. Individual panellists not only talked about responsibilities of their roles and cultures of different companies, but also provided tips on the recruitment process, followed by a Q&A session afterwards. This event turned out to be a success, despite being our first attempt of using an online platform. It was a welcoming sight to see many students asking questions and receiving answers that would be useful in their future careers.

The next event was particularly useful for those looking to improve the aesthetics of their assignments – the LaTeX workshop. Conducted by our education officer, William, the workshop provided students a brief introduction on the different software available for LaTeX, and how mathematical equations can be incorporated into documents cleanly. Members were given a follow-along document where they were able to immediately apply and test the techniques taught. With their newly equipped skills, our members were able to take on any assignment in the future.

To conclude the first semester, Rui Jin from Finity Consulting, Ben Locke from Taylor Fry, Nitcha Tippinyu from Quantum, Keytan Hislop and Teresa Zhang from SKL Actuarial joined the Careers Q&A panel. They discussed their backgrounds and responsibilities at their respective firms. Our members were keen to find out about different companies, recruitment processes and impacts of COVID-19, and thanks to the patience of our panellists, an exceptionally high number of questions were answered in detail, providing members more insight towards their future careers.

Semester two commenced soon after even-stricter restrictions were put in place by the Victorian government, so sadly we could not return to holding events on or off-campus. The first event back was Peer Mentoring Trivia Night. Despite a low turnout, mentors and mentees that attended were able to bond and had a fun night together. We hoped to have held this event earlier but this could not be achieved this year due to difficult circumstances.

Following that, guest speakers Dr Zhuo Jin and Professor Shuangming Li hosted the Honours and Masters Information Session. Dr Zhuo Jin explained in detail the course structures, differences between different degrees and entry requirements, and responded to questions asked by our members alongside Professor Shuangming Li. With the comprehensive introduction to the different programs, our members can now make more informed decisions towards their post-graduate pathways.

The second part of technical workshops held this year was our Excel Workshop Series. We made some changes this year, partnering with 180-Degrees Consulting, and splitting the workshop into three sessions: basic, advance, and case-study. President Phil and education officer William hosted the first two sessions, covering the use of basic Excel operations and more advanced content such as VLOOKUP, index match, pivot tables and the solver function. The third session was co-hosted by Adon Ewing from 180-Degrees Consulting. Members were given a consulting case, where they looked into a dating survey dataset and had the opportunity to put techniques learnt from the previous sessions into work. Overall, it was a welcoming change to the structure of the workshop compare to previous years, and we hope to see more collaborations with other societies.

As of the time of writing, we still have one last event to be held – our final technical workshop on R, which has been newly introduced this year and one I am looking forward to. This also marks the end of my time as the Events Director of ASS. Looking back, this year certainly felt uncompleted in the sense that we were not able to hold any of our signature events – Poker Night, Contact Night and many more. Despite this, I am still proud of the events we were able to deliver, which could not have been done without the help of our sponsors, partnering societies, committee members, and most importantly, our members for continuing to attend and support our events. I sincerely hope that everyone has enjoyed their time attending our events, making the most out of a difficult situation. Looking forward to 2021, I have high hopes that everything will improve so stay tuned for more exciting events!

Daniel Ou
Events Director

First Year Experience

This year has been “unprecedented” to say the least! Thinking back to the start of the year, all the first years were full of excitement and ready to meet new people and enjoy new experiences. O-Week was full of the promise of studying with the best and brightest as well as experiencing the freedom that was not possible in high school. However, as we all know, the pandemic forced the university to put all their courses online. It’s fair to say that everyone was disappointed at the revoked opportunity but were still holding onto the idea that “we will be back on campus in semester 2”.

However, with these obvious disappointments of not being able to embrace university life in all its glory, there were some benefits of switching to a completely online format. For one, I had (naively) scheduled 9 am lectures in my original university timetable. So there was no more half-awake train journeys and bleary eyes trying to pay attention at an hour that hasn’t been seen since the start of this at home period. Another benefit is the ability to roll out of bed two minutes before the start of a tutorial and still making it on time. With tutors fighting the honourable and everlasting battle requesting that students turn on their cameras, tutorials have been the only contact with other students throughout this period (however faceless they are).

Finding a routine for getting through the semesters’ content and meeting all the assignment deadlines has been a challenge. Without any idea of how to learn in a normal university environment, let alone an online one, it took me a couple of weeks to settle into some kind of routine. This routine is constantly evolving, but as long as I don’t fall behind on lectures, whether watching as soon as they come out or binging them over a couple of days, everything else falls into place. With the pantry so close, and the internet so accessible, distractions have been rampant. Coupled with the seemingly endless time to complete uni work, Parkinson’s Law has been felt by all students!

The lack of community was sorely felt in this period. As an actuarial student, there is no specific class until the second semester, further pushing the social isolation. The cohort of commerce students is large, with many compulsory subjects required in first year. This has its merits, but prevents communities forming around certain majors especially during a time where first years are in an odd position of not knowing anyone from prior uni experience and no longer fully bonding with those from high school.

To try and remedy this, I formed a team and competed in a few case competitions out of curiosity. This has kept me somewhat connected to the university clubs and industry. The feeling of working towards a common goal with a team was sorely lacking in this year of uni. Group assignments have been just as painful as in person, lacking the same urgency brought about by a case competition.

This year, as “unprecedented” and isolating as it is, has encouraged reflection on how to work as well as tampered the constant urge to plan for the future in every action taken. Hopefully, we will be back on campus next year!

Jacqueline Liow
First Year Representative

Second Year Experience

Wow. 2020, what a year! Walking into a new decade with big hopes and dreams, I was eager to unfold an exciting journey ahead. Then, COVID-19 came. Like many other students, I struggled in the beginning.

COVID-19 has certainly brought many changes in my life. Dancing joyfully during my first K-pop performance in March, I would have never imagined us being under lockdown and studying online for more than half of the year. Personally, the toughest part of online studying came with the maths-based subjects. During the first two weeks of last semester, I missed attending on-campus Probability tutorials due to my extracurricular schedules and me falling sick. Flashback to my first online practical and lab classes for the subject, the breakout room that I was allocated to was in pin-drop silence, filled with black rectangles of names. Although I was guilty of having my camera off, everyone remained muted when I tried to initiate a discussion. To make it worse, the majority of them even left during lab classes. The lack of interaction prompted me to leave as well, resulting in my poor attendances for practicals and labs. This was reflected in my final results as I was lost in the maze of ideas and concepts that I could not link.

To move forward from the negative experience, I decided to call for a change in semester two – attending all online classes. I was determined to keep myself updated with the subject contents and actively participate in discussions. To my surprise, the tutorial engagement for semester two is way higher than the previous semester, which shows how everyone has changed and adapted themselves to the online studying mode! Besides, I also find it a lot easier to raise any questions I have in mind during the Zoom tutorials. Not only can we type out questions in the chat anytime without disrupting the class flow, the private message function also allows us to easily ask any personal questions in mind. Therefore, once we have adapted to it, studying online can certainly have its perks too!

Ever since classes moved online, most clubs and organisations have moved their events to Zoom and Discord in replacement of the physical activities. Apart from attending Actuarial Students' Society's online events, I also eagerly joined countless workshops and webinars hosted by other clubs and the University. Online events have certainly provided a lot more flexibility as I was able to join them back-to-back, without the need to physically move. A club that I am actively involved in uses Discord's voice channels to frequently play Among Us, an online multiplayer survival game that is trending recently! Personally, I find the online platforms a great way to meet others and stay connected during the dreadful lockdown period.

On another note, I decided to run for a position in this year's UMSU International's Annual General Elections, hoping to contribute back to the university community. I remember myself spending endless nights campaigning online, texting every single international friend I know to support me. Indirectly, this has also allowed me to reconnect with some of my friends who I have not talked to for a while. Picking up a new role and challenging myself to stay productive during this period has made my everyday life more fruitful.

Throughout the entire lockdown period of my second year, I have learnt to be more flexible and live in the present moment, since we will never be able to predict what will happen tomorrow. Due to the unexpected turn of events caused by the pandemic, it is normal for us to be gripped with fears and uncertainties. However, we can still try our best to manage these situations and do what that we can to alleviate the situation. Most importantly, the pandemic which has played such a huge part in my second-year experience has made me realise how important it is to get support and stay connected with families and friends.

Michelle Lee
Secretary

Third Year Experience

If you read the Vision in page order, I bet this is not the first time you read the term “COVID-19” and it certainly will not be the last one. Without a second thought, I believe this pandemic has somehow changed every aspect of our lives. Personally, I realised how special 2020 was going to be when I landed at Melbourne Airport after 14 days of self-quarantine in a third country before being permitted to enter Australia and being a week late for my third-year study. Surprisingly and unsurprisingly, this was not the end of the story, as about three weeks later, the university completely moved to a virtual campus...

I want to start talking about my third-year experience with an honest and touching paragraph quoted from an email sent by Professor Shuanming Li on the 19th of April to all students enrolled in Actuarial Modelling 1:

“This semester is the most challenging semester for actuarial students, not only due to online learning, but also the fact that it is the first time that you have to deal with 4 major actuarial subjects. It is also a challenge for lecturers as we need to write new lecture notes following the professional curriculum change and to get used to online teaching.”

Four core third-year actuarial subjects in one semester with two that are brand new? Yes, this exactly marked my first half of the third-year actuarial journey. If you are unaware, here are the major changes to the third-year actuarial curriculum alongside with my comments. Firstly, a general insurance subject — Actuarial Modelling 3 — and a data subject — Actuarial Analytics and Data — were added to the first semester. I was lucky enough to be in the first cohort who studied these two subjects which involved intensive learning and practice in R-Studio and tremendous new materials. I could not imagine how I would be able to absorb all this knowledge in one semester.

Secondly, a previous second-semester subject named Contingencies which was worth 25 points (i.e. two subjects) now becomes a single subject. One question that immediately came into my mind after knowing this change was — am I going to learn the same amount of content as prior years but in a structure of two one-hour lectures a week? To be honest, I have not figured this out at the time of writing, but we will see.

Notably, all subjects in my third year were and are currently being delivered remotely online, which adds an extra layer of difficulty in responding to those changes.

As all this sounds terrifying, you may wonder if I am going to blame COVID-19 for ruining my entire third year. The answer is NO. Here I will skim through the positive side brought by the new professional curriculum and COVID-19. As someone who has gone through the seemingly horrible first semester, with 100% confidence, I declare it was not that bad. From a technical perspective, the two newly added subjects helped me enormously in learning Actuarial Statistics in the second semester in terms of understanding knowledge and managing R-based assignments. From a personal perspective, when you were unintentionally given more time spending with yourself, that was the best time for you to reflect upon your previous life and to plan your future. You may ask is it too late to plan your future now? Future planning is a life journey. Thanks to the first semester, I embraced the feeling that I am majoring in Actuarial Studies as I was finally exposed to all insurance-related topics. They were challenging but most importantly, I found that it's the thing I am truly interested in. Now I'm fully confident about the goal I set three years ago — becoming a qualified actuary.

May you all discover something new for your life under this new normal.

Grace Yao
Media Officer

Postgraduate Experience

Having finished my undergraduate degree last year, I entered into the Master of Commerce (Actuarial Studies) degree hoping that I would have another one and a half year of university life filled with knowledge, friendship, laughter and many accomplishments. Then came Covid-19 and all (at least some) of my dreams were crushed.

Covid-19 has had a huge impact on all aspects of the university life. The university made all exams open-book, which is actually a perk for us actuarial students since we no longer need to memorize scary long proofs and complex formulas in subjects such as Risk Theory and Advanced Financial Mathematics. However, this also means that we are no longer able to sit in a classroom and listen to live lectures while interacting with other actuarial students. Hence, I often found myself being less productive than I was in my undergraduate years and could easily be distracted by my phone or the thought of what to eat for dinner while watching a two-hour lecture recording.

With regards to the subjects, in my opinion, one of the most interesting subjects in the postgraduate degree is Actuarial Practice and Control, which is a part 2 subject taught by working actuaries from the Institute. Unlike other typical actuarial subjects, it focuses more on industry knowledge rather than technical skills. It has been genuinely agreed that it is through studying this subject that me and my other actuarial friends finally understood what actuarial studies is all about and how theories are applied to real-life situations in different actuarial industries.

Another subject worth mentioning is the Actuarial Studies Projects – a subject that is very challenging yet extremely rewarding at the same time. This year-long subject is comprising of three different projects led by three different professors from the actuarial faculty. It offers no lectures, only fortnightly consultations with one of the professors to discuss any questions encountered while working on the project.

By the time I am writing this piece, I have already completed two of the projects. Both project topics resemble real-life problems faced by professional actuaries. The first one is based in Excel and involves exploring various investment strategies to help an insurance company mitigate interest rate risk. The second project is based in R and involves designing a longevity hedge for a life annuity provider using a chosen financial instrument. Each project took me about two months to complete and required a range of different skills that must be self-taught since there are no lectures. By the time I submitted the projects, I had already held countless study sessions with my actuarial friends and become an “expert” in writing loops in R.

I put a lot of effort into my study in the first semester to obtain the last two CTs for my Part 1 exemption, then came semester 2 and my life was much more relaxed. Since most postgraduate subjects do not have tutorials, the weekly contact hours shrunk a lot compared to when I was in third-year. I had around 13 contact hours in my first semester and around 10 in my second. Therefore, in my second semester, apart from meeting assignment deadlines, I spent a lot of time reading books, watching movies and exercising. It was great to take a break considering I had studied extremely hard for the past three and a half years. I also attend some online club activities. Apart from various fun and engaging A.S.S events such as the LaTeX workshop and peer-mentoring night, I am also an active member of a volunteering-teaching club. This club has annual volunteer programs where university students travel to rural areas in the world and teach English to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. I attended one of these programs last year and plan on going again this year.

Overall, despite all the chaos caused by Covid-19, my learning experience in the postgraduate degree is somewhat similar to my undergraduate degree.

My advice to future postgraduate students would be to acquire basic knowledge in coding languages and software such as R, Python, SAS or SQL beforehand since some of them are frequently used in postgraduate subjects and the ability to use them proficiently is highly valued not only in the degree but also within the actuarial industry in general.

Sherry Sun
Student Engagement Director

International Experience

What should I start off with? The weather? The university? The big city? The people? The cuisine? As an international student, everything was so new to my university experience. Studying abroad had been instilled in me since my early days of high school, particularly since I followed an international curriculum that is not recognised by state universities. But, studying abroad at home was something I had not seen coming.

Pre-COVID

Currently, I am a second-year international student, commencing my 4th semester. My first year in Melbourne was thrilling, exciting and completely new. Being away from family and other familiar settings in a foreign land was daunting, exhilarating and everything I had hoped for but nothing like what I had expected (in a good way of course). Every challenge I faced has only been an opportunity to mature and grow as an individual.

I had joined about 8 clubs during o-week, collected all the goodies that came with the \$5 membership fee and never participated in a single event run by 7 of the 8 clubs I had joined. Clearly, I overestimated my abilities to adapt to a new country, keep up with my academics and maintain a healthy social life while participating in the activities of 8 clubs. Nonetheless, I showed up to most if not all ASS events. In all honesty, it has been the best \$5 investment I have ever made simply because of all the free food of course.

Adapting to self-learning was tough. The only motivation to study and keep up with lectures are the assignments and MSEs. As an overly enthusiastic first year, I did however manage to settle into Melbourne and get accustomed to life as an undergraduate by the end of my first semester.

Having barely made it through AM1, I began to ponder if I am actually capable of making it through this major. I began to explore other opportunities and majors offered by university.

So, shortly into second semester I joined the committees of both the Actuarial Students' Society and the Finance Students' Association to experience what both majors had to offer.

Majority of the friends I had made by this time were international students from similar backgrounds, and these clubs opened me up to a lot of domestic students who later became my friends. I would definitely recommend trying to become committee members of clubs, as doing so opens you up to a lot of different people and has personally made my experiences at university worthwhile.

Post-COVID

When second year came about, I knew what to expect. I knew which aisle of Woollies my cereal was in and I knew that I had to leave my apartment exactly 15 minutes prior to class to get to Redmond Barry on time. Sadly, this certainty and routine I picked-up was short-lived. COVID-19 had just become an apparent issue in Melbourne. Luckily, on the Tuesday of week 3 in March, my parents had decided that it was best for me to fly back to my home country. So, I packed my luggage and flew out of Melbourne the following day back home. Thus, studying abroad at home began.

I was reluctant and sad to leave behind my friends, but deep down I knew that going home would be the best option for my wellbeing. By then the university had not made any announcements and were yet to transition completely online. Fortunately, and unfortunately, a few days after I landed, the university went completely online and the Australian government shut its borders for a minimum of 6 months.

It was honestly a very difficult period for me. Adjusting to Zoom tutorials and waking up at 3.30am for my tutorials was quite the struggle. Thankfully, I was able to shift my tutorial to a later time that did not require me waking up at odd times. It had been a while since I was home, so my visit felt more like a holiday.

It was nice to be back with my family, but it was definitely hard to keep up with university and adjust to online learning. Doing my semester-end exams in my room, beside my bed with an invigilator staring at me through my webcam was very awkward and odd. Nonetheless I think I managed to do my best given the circumstances.

Second semester rolled in pretty quickly, and I managed to create a timetable suited to my time zone. It was a bit disheartening to know that I wouldn't meet anyone new this semester, yet I managed to keep in-touch with my friends both in and out of Australia, which I found very important in helping me get through the current semester.

To those of us who are in isolation, I understand the difficulties and hope that this year hasn't negatively affected our university years. My message to you is to hold on for a bit longer. Hopefully, lockdown will end soon and we all will be able to go back to university.

In my first week at Melbourne, I met a third year who said, "try to live in the moment, and don't forget to look up." I wish to pass this message onto you.

Avishka Shashindra Jayakody
Student Engagement Officer

Committee Experience

“You never know what you can do till you try.” — William Cobbett

Having started my journey in 2019 as the Student Engagement Officer, I now graduate as the Vice President of the Actuarial Students’ Society. I would have to say that being involved in this committee was one of the most important decisions in my life so far, and it was a decision that I have never regretted.

I can still clearly recall the nervousness at that moment when I stood in front of the entire 2018 committee, of which one of them was my tutor. I remembered to internally calm myself down and presented the 2-minute speech while trying my best to smile at everyone in the audience. It was an unforgettable two minutes where every part of my body was shaking except for my voice, which successfully disguised my fear and made me stand out from the other 5 competitors. I then officially joined the ASS committee as the Student Engagement Officer of 2019.

My first task was to advertise for Trivia Night at the AM2 lecture. I admire those people who can simply start talking naturally in front of a crowd, and I was clearly not one of them. Prepared with a script, I got the chance to talk at the professor’s spot for the first time. People seemed so small and my friends were sitting right there smiling at me. But then I got those words out of my mouth and it felt kind of exciting, surprisingly.

Another of my duty as the Student Engagement Officer was to draft the ASS newsletters. English wasn’t one of my strongest strengths, but thankfully, our Vice President at the time always helped me out with the editing. I liked how she made those paragraphs sound so natural and engaging, and so she granted me the opportunity to always learn from her in her writings in the newsletters and posts. I am glad that I did that since it has made my life much easier this year when I become the VP myself to be in charge of these jobs.

The idea of running for Vice President was inspired by my friend when I talked to her about whether I should go for the role of Sponsorship Officer. She said “If I were you, I would take this chance to try something big. There aren’t many opportunities out there for you to lead a whole team and get to see the bigger picture you know.” Well, she got me.

So, I gave it a go and luckily succeeded. Right after the AGM, a friend who is the president of 180 Degrees Consulting came to me to ask if there would be any opportunity to host collaborative events this year. So, I talked with the team and decided to expand our traditional Excel workshops into a series with a combination of technical skills and applications in the consulting field, which I then introduced to our members. Even though the sessions themselves were not long, the meetings and messages regarding the negotiation of all the details were indeed a highly rewarding process for me. The process further enhanced my communication skills and meanwhile, it realised the real power of a team.

I have always been interested in consulting and from this collaboration, I learned about the not-for-profit that I eventually joined as a consultant. Do you see how it works? Once you step out your comfort zone to unlock a door, the room you entered is very likely to lead you to other rooms that you might have never discovered.

The ASS committee is my “room”. A room filled with friends who tolerate my imperfections and motivate me to grow. They let me know that I don’t have to be the smartest kid to be involved. They taught me so many things that I could never gain from textbooks or lectures, which shaped me into a person who is more responsible, confident and knows what type of person she wants to grow into.

Serina He
Vice President

Industry Introductions

Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence

Data Analytics is a continually evolving industry that provides a vast field of opportunity to upcoming actuaries to apply their statistical skillsets. From increasing conversions in e-commerce to reducing operating costs, analytics is a means to make precise and informed decisions in a variety of fields. As a result, actuaries with strong problem-solving and data-modelling skills are in a prime position to take advantage of the technologies which make this possible.

With the rise of big data collection in every corner of everyday life, actuaries in data analysis are called on to aggregate and interpret this data for practical use. And, with 2.5 quintillion bytes of data created each day and growing, actuaries are sure to be in high demand for this industry. Considering the rapid evolution of information such as the Internet of Things, the field of data analytics will be attractive for innovators and problem solvers across the globe.

As an extension of analytics, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) has proliferated the actuarial profession. From chatbots in claims resolution to analysing big data in the backend, AI is in a prime position to take over in a field with reliance on large datasets and model-building. However, AI can only learn from historical data and assumptions made in the past. As the world rapidly changes, these assumptions are thrown out and replaced. Consequently, the current AI systems still reliant on the actuaries that use them.

As our current models are still handled by actuaries and data scientists, the state of AI at the moment is still narrow in scope and ability — far away from the all-knowing ‘Skynet’. This growing technology will not replace actuaries but merely aid in repetitive tasks. Ultimately, the actuarial profession will need to adjust their skillsets to be more proficient with programming and data analysis to harness the potential of AI.

Banking and Finance

Actuaries working in the banking and finance industries mostly assess risk and return. These industries will mainly see actuaries working on managing risk on loan products or investigating potential profit or loss for an investment portfolio. To give advice, actuaries working in these fields are required to use complex models that account for a large variety of variables. By using the educated assumptions made by actuaries, these models provide a clear insight into market conditions, allowing firms to act and advise correctly on signals.

As parts of the world become more interrelated, and countries and firms become more dependent on each other, any change in the market can cause huge shifts in potential returns. Therefore, critical thinking and problem-solving skills will be required to drive the banking and finance industries, and actuaries are the cornerstone to aiding firms in making rational and profitable choices.

General Insurance

General Insurance is the branch of insurance covering all non-life events, and it plays a quintessential role in the overall sense of safety for many Australians. Actuaries provide a myriad of analyses and expertise to fuel this industry and, with the number of accredited actuaries working in this field increasing every year, will continue to serve as a foundational pillar for general insurance for the visible future,

The value actuaries bring to general insurance lies first in their skills to price insurance premiums. By analysing the volume and cost of claims, actuaries can calculate the amount of premium to charge to secure profits. Secondly, data of past claims also allows actuaries to determine the appropriate amount of cash to keep as reserves at a given point.

The devastating impacts of performing improper calculations for this were put on full display in cases such as the HIH insurance collapse, illustrating the tremendous importance of keeping sufficient reserves.

As the primary industry where actuaries are employed, it is certainly a field that will draw many future aspiring actuaries like yourselves.

Life Insurance

Life insurance exists to provide policyholders and their families with financial security in the case of death. Depending on the policies, life insurance comes in many forms. These include life cover, trauma insurance cover, and Total and Permanent Disability cover, all of which provide a lump sum of money to the policyholder or, in the case of death, to nominated beneficiaries.

Actuaries play a vital role in designing and determining price policies for individuals and families, by collecting and analysing information such as age, gender, weight, current health status, and lifestyle habits. Through this analysis, actuaries can estimate when claims will be made, creating valuable insights for insurance providers on the sizes of premiums to charge policyholders. This is so firms will still be able to pay out claims while maintaining profits.

According to the Actuaries Institute website, over 25% of actuaries currently work in the life insurance industry according to the. As there is no end to the life cycle, actuaries will be required to continue to analyse risk and uncertainty to price life insurance. Life insurance is an industry that is both mature and is a stable pathway that aspiring actuary can explore.

Superannuation

Australia is the fourth-largest holder of pension fund assets in the world. This shows that superannuation is an extensive though a confusing aspect of modern life. Every Australian will have a run-in with superannuation at some point during their working lives — putting away mandatory savings to fund their retirement. Approximately 7% of Australian actuaries are working in superannuation related work, from asset modelling to advisory roles. Traditional actuarial roles in defined benefit schemes — schemes pay a specified pension depending on the worker's historic wages and work tenure — have decreased, shifting actuarial work to venture beyond this into other areas.

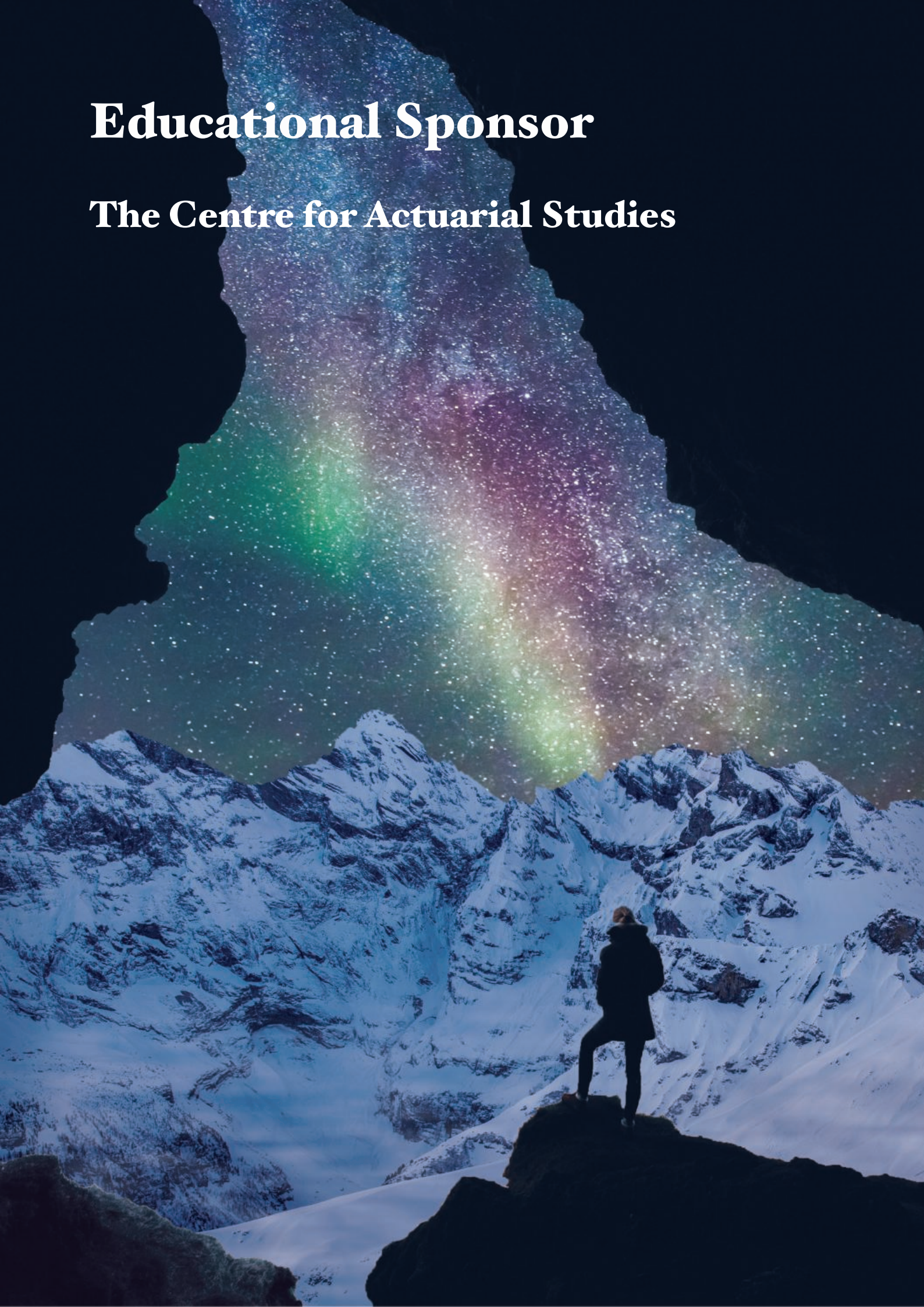
This shift to a different form of superannuation, defined contribution schemes, a system is based on wealth accumulation by depositing into an account regularly. This difference has shifted the investment risk from the organisation (defined benefit funds) to the individuals (defined contribution funds), thus reducing the work of actuaries for superannuation funds.

However, the complex nature of superannuation governed by the legislature is constantly changing. Just recently, the Australian Government has allowed eligible citizens to withdraw up to \$10,000 from their super due to the financial hardship of this period. This will have wide-ranging consequences in the future, ranging from a loss of revenue and depleted cash reserves for superannuation firms to a reduction of investment earnings on individuals.

Bob Chu, Gavin Zhang, Jacqui Liow
First Year Representatives

Educational Sponsor

The Centre for Actuarial Studies



The Centre for Actuarial Studies

The Centre for Actuarial Studies is a teaching and research unit located within the Department of Economics, Faculty of Business and Economics, the University of Melbourne. The Centre is the focal point for actuarial education in Victoria. It has the support of the actuarial profession in Australia and produces research of high quality. It also maintains strong international links and contributes to the local actuarial community. The Centre has nine full-time academic staff (4 fellows and 2 associates) and several part-time lecturers from the Melbourne actuarial community to teach Part II subjects. Members of the Centre are experts in their fields and are internationally recognised for their work in actuarial science, financial mathematics, probability and statistics. Centre staff publish in top journals, present their research at seminars and conferences in Australia and overseas, and act as referees, reviewers, associate editors and editors for actuarial journals.

In December 2015, the Society of Actuaries (SOA) named the University of Melbourne's actuarial studies program as an SOA Center of Actuarial Excellence (CAE). Actuarial science school programs must meet eight rigorous criteria and specific CAE requirements to qualify for the CAE designation. These criteria involve the degree, curriculum, graduate count, faculty composition, graduate quality, appropriate integration, and connection to industry and research/scholarships. Only 33 colleges and universities around the world have attained the CAE designation including 4 universities in Australia.

The Centre for Actuarial Studies provides undergraduates and graduates with the opportunity to study in the following programs:

- Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Actuarial Studies (3-year program);
- Bachelor of Commerce with Honours in Actuarial Studies (One additional year of specialised study in actuarial science);
- Master of Actuarial Science (1.5-year program, for students who have a first degree with strong background in mathematics, probability and statistics);
- Master of Actuarial Science (Extended) (2-year program, for students who have a first degree with strong background in mathematics, but without previously studying probability and statistics);
- Master of Actuarial Science (Enhanced) (2-year program, for students who have a first degree with strong background in mathematics, probability and statistics and who seek for accreditation from both New Part I and Part II subjects);
- Master of Commerce (Actuarial Science) (1.5-year program, for students who have a bachelor's degree in actuarial studies);
- Master of Commerce by Research (1-year program)
- Three-year research only PhD program in actuarial science.

The Centre attracts high achieving students; many of the faculty's participants in the prestigious Chancellor's Scholars Program (admission to which is based on university entrance score) are students majoring in actuarial studies.

The majority of undergraduate and Masters students study to become actuaries, but a number of our students find employment in the banking or investment sector. Our PhD students have research topics in risk theory, investment models, survival analysis, financial mathematics, derivative pricing and applied probability. Our PhD graduates have been working as academia, investment bankers and actuaries in traditional and untraditional areas.

Our past graduates have worked in a number of employment areas including

- Life insurance companies
- General insurance companies
- Health insurance companies
- Reinsurance companies
- Investment companies
- Superannuation funds
- Banks and other financial institutions
- Data Analytics
- InsureTech and FinTech
- Stockbrokers
- Sports betting firms
- Governments
- Consulting firms
- High schools and Universities



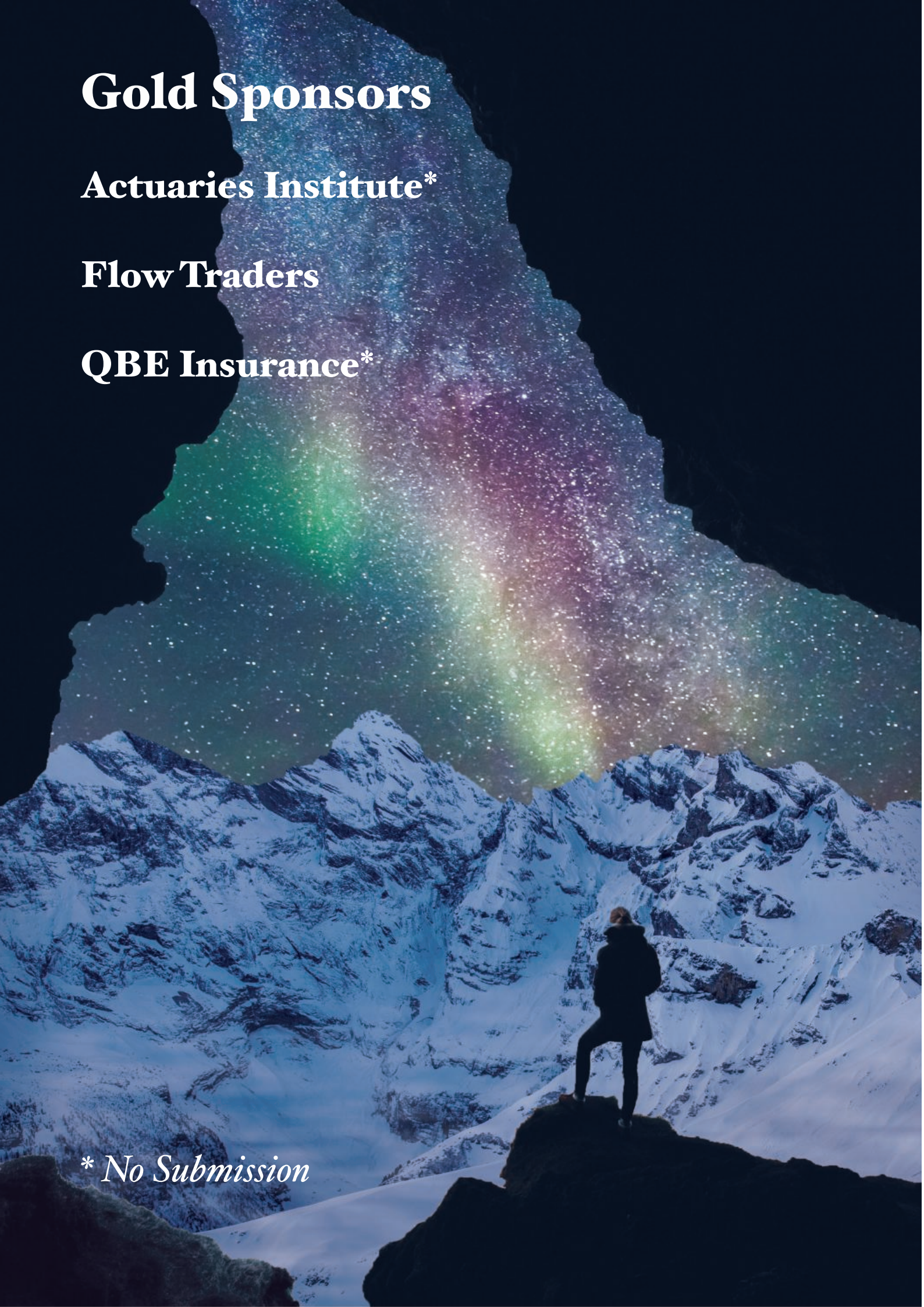
Gold Sponsors

Actuaries Institute*

Flow Traders

QBE Insurance*

** No Submission*



FLOW ■ TRADERS

WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A GRADUATE TRADER WITH US?



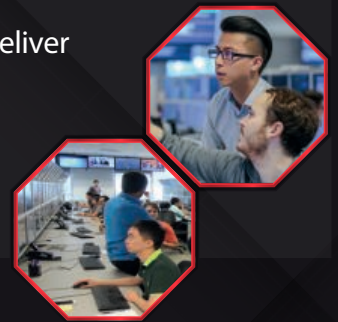
As a Graduate Trader, you will undergo an intensive 4 to 6 months in-house training program at our headquarters in Amsterdam where you will learn all the intricacies of our trading processes.

Upon successful completion, you will start in our Hong Kong office where you will be given the opportunity to manage a desk with a Senior Trader.

Soon enough, you will get to manage your own desk where you will then have to formulate your own strategies to both trade and monitor markets, focusing on a wide range of financial products.

WHO WE LOOK FOR

- Fresh graduates / final year students with a specialisation in Finance, Science, Mathematics, Physics, Economics, Engineering or a related field
- A demonstrable interest in global financial markets, and a keen interest in technology
- Excellent communication skills
- A distinct ability to spot arising opportunities and assertiveness to seize them
- The ability to decide and deliver under pressure
- Excellent numerical, analytical, and logical reasoning skills



WHAT WE OFFER

- 4 to 6 months of fully paid hands-on training
- Excellent performance-based rewards: We reserve a high percentage of our business results in our bonus pool
- Direct implementation of training ideas
- Broad market scope: Different asset classes and instruments
- Great perks: Medical insurance, catered meals, company trips, subsidised gym memberships and much much more!



Silver Sponsors

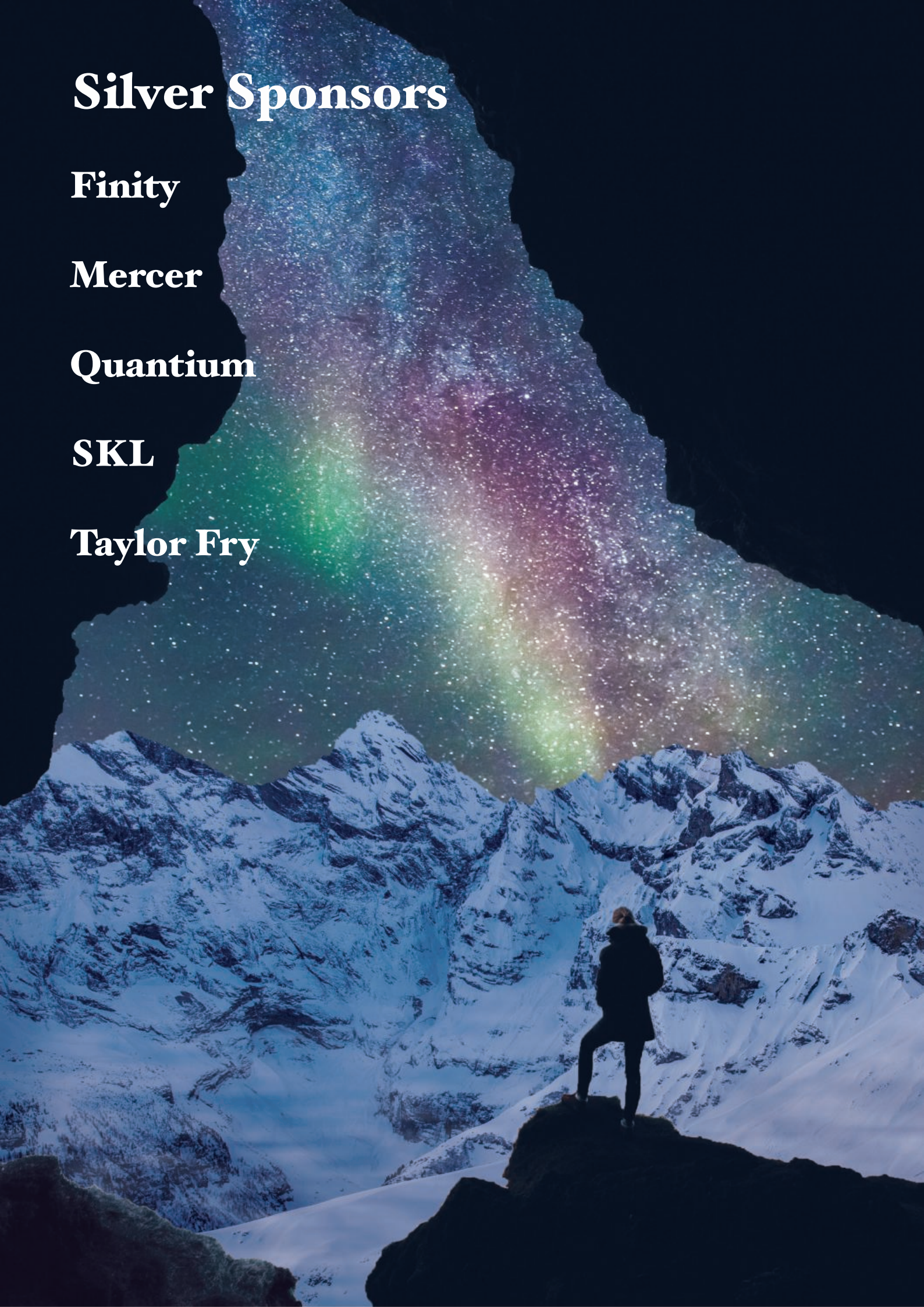
Finity

Mercer

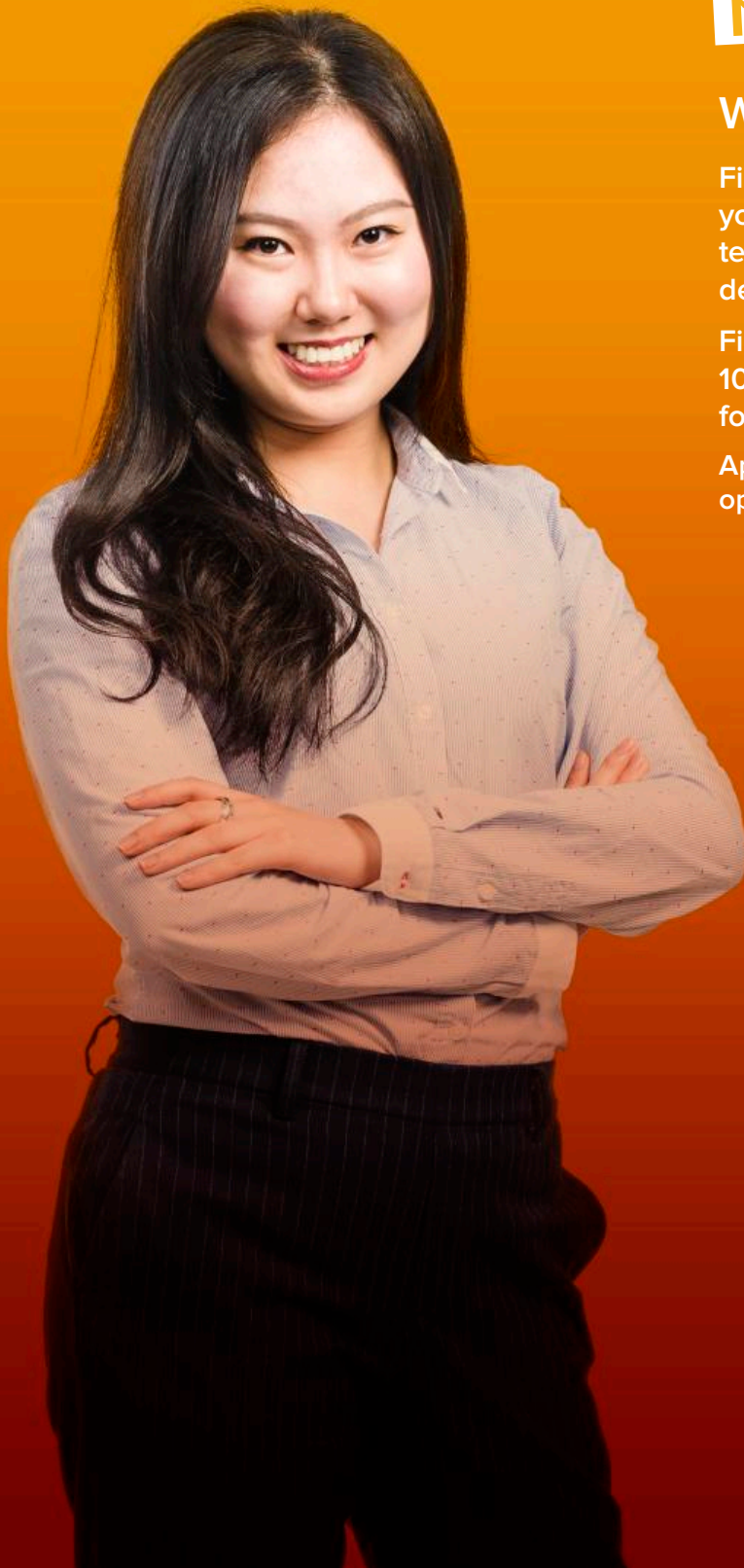
Quantum

SKL

Taylor Fry



See what's possible



What we offer students

Finity **graduate program** provides you with 12 months of industry-leading technical training and professional development.

Finity's **internship program** offers 10 week paid summer internships for penultimate year students.

Applications graduates and internships open February.



Connect
to find out
more



[finity.com.au](https://www.finity.com.au)
#loveactuary

Meet Finity Graduate, Jiani

Jiani joined Finity as a graduate in 2018. She completed her Bachelor of Commerce (with Honours), majoring in Actuarial Studies at the University of Melbourne. Finity is one of Australia's leading actuarial and analytics consulting firms. Here's what she told us about her first year.

Did you always want to be an actuary?

The answer depends. If we're including our aspirations since childhood, then the answer is definitely 'no'. Then as I grew up, I realised numbers were more my thing. In high school, we did this test called the "Morrisby Test" and it recommended a list of careers. Actuary was one of the top ones suggested, and after I researched what an actuary does, I thought "yeah, I think that's what I'll do!". And so the journey began...

Why Finity?

Throughout uni, I would hear older cohorts talk about their application preferences, and Finity's graduate program was always highly sought after. That got me curious, and after I researched and talked with various Finity people at events, I became even more interested in joining Finity. After my internship experiences, I learnt that I valued working with a smaller, tightly-knit team of people, but wanted the opportunities that larger firms presented. A hard to satisfy combination you may think, but Finity was the perfect fit – the Melbourne team was relatively small (back then), but include Sydney and NZ, and the firm was large, so the work opportunities I wanted were definitely available. I clicked "apply now", and was fortunate to join a team who also thought that I was a good fit for them!

What was the application process like?

Compared to some other firms, Finity's application process was super straightforward – resume, cover letter, and two interviews (one over Skype, and one in person). Yes, you read correctly - no assessment centres or brain teasers!

What was it like working at Finity?

In my first year, I worked on a variety of projects, ranging from valuation projects to pricing deconstruction work. One thing that stood out about Finity was how willing people were to share their knowledge with you, and to listen to any thoughts

that you had. In my second week of work, I remember being invited along to a client meeting. I wasn't expected to participate, but the project manager thought it would be a valuable learning opportunity for me to observe how we interacted with clients. Of course, other than work, we have plenty of social activities as well! Throughout the year, there are multiple firm wide events such as the Annual Conference, Finity Birthday, Analyst Conference and Christmas Party – and they're held in Sydney, so we Melbourne people get to fly up!

What are some tips for graduates applying for roles at Finity?

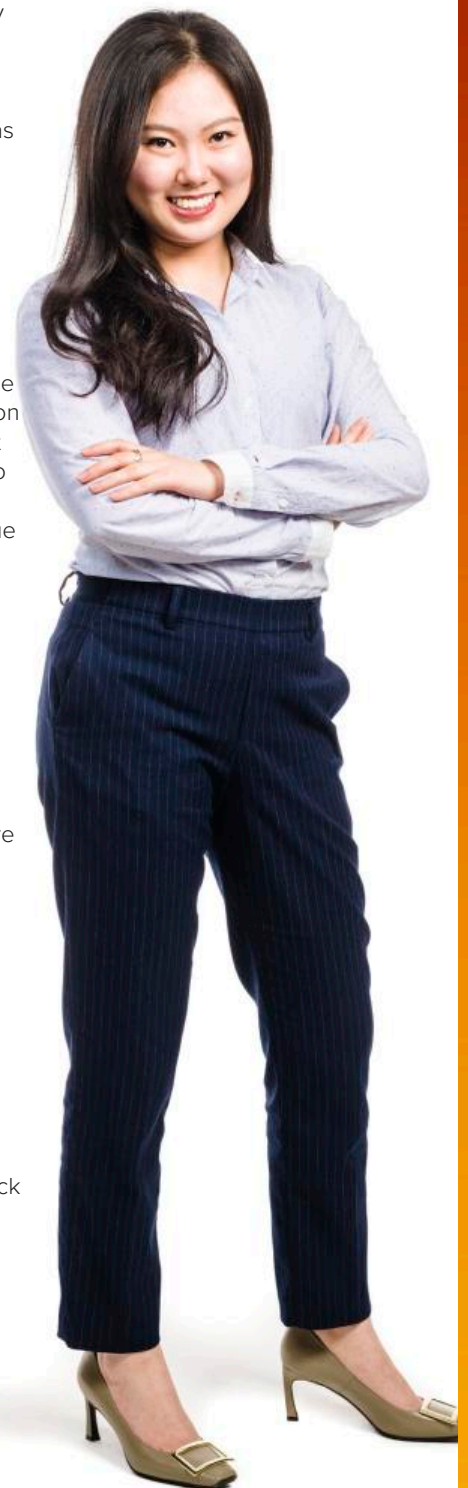
Research the firm, try to talk to Finity people at events (don't be shy!), and really reflect on why you want to work at Finity. Throughout your application process, also remember to share your experiences outside of uni and study. We're keen to hear about your unique experiences, and what you've learnt from those. WAM is important - but we're also looking for people we will work well with.

How does Finity support its graduate employees?

Finity's support for graduate employees is fantastic. Throughout your first year, multiple training sessions are held to ensure that you're prepared technically (training for R, SAS, general insurance actuarial techniques). For those taking study with the Institute, we have generous study leave policies and 'Guru Talks'. These are talks usually held by principals and senior consultants taking us through exam techniques, industry practice and trends relating to topics relevant for our exams. Outside of the formal support, everyone is willing to share their wisdom when you tap them on the shoulder and ask if you can pick their brain.

What would you say to graduates considering applying to Finity?

It never hurts to apply, and good luck!



2020 year in review

Imagine a future where the work we do together makes a difference in people's lives:

Mercer's investments and retirement consulting team worked on some exciting initiatives in 2020, including:

- Insurance in superannuation benchmarking,
- Insurance and investments asset & liability modelling,
- Defined Benefit scheme windups and benefit redesigns,
- Trustee support to meet new APRA SPS 515 Strategic Planning and Member Outcomes requirements, and
- The Mercer CFA Institute Global Pension Index.

We also had a lot of fun, despite lockdown!

- Virtual trivia and pizza lunches
- Quaren-tinis (virtual drinks)
- How to make a facemask tutorial
- And more...

Welcome to brighter.



Keep an eye out for your opportunity to join our investments & retirement consulting team as a **GRADUATE ANALYST** – applications open in March 2021 for a January 2022 start.

Finance - Actuarial – Economics – Engineering - Mathematics - Data Analytics

... whatever your area of study or interest, if you have a strong client focus, like to solve complex problems, have a keen eye for detail and have a passion for creating better lives, we need you to help Australia's largest superannuation funds and investors navigate some of the biggest challenges of our time!



Nishanta Dharmaseri

What is your role at Quantum?

I am currently an Associate Analyst here at Quantum in the Property and Consumer Services team and this is my second rotation as part of the graduate program. My first rotation was in the Banking and Wealth team and I was also a summer intern analyst in the FMCG (Fast Moving Consumer Goods) team.

What is your educational background? Do you see any similarities between your degree and your work? Is there a common background among your colleagues?

I majored in Actuarial Studies and Economics at The University of Melbourne. The common thing that me and my colleagues share is that most of us have a STEM background so that would comprise of people that studied courses such as Actuarial Studies, Engineering, Mathematics, Statistics, and Computer Science at various levels e.g. undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD. Even though I am not in a traditional actuarial role, I believe that there are some transferrable skills that I have gained in my degree such as problem-solving, teamwork and critical thinking skills that have helped me at work.

What did your standard day look like before COVID? What does it look like now?

My standard day before the outbreak of COVID-19 was getting to the office at 9 a.m. and completing some training modules that were aimed at developing my technical skills and to raise my awareness on any data privacy/compliance rules. I would also spend some time getting to know my

new colleagues through coffee catch ups or walks in the park nearby the office.

My standard day right now is pretty much the same except that everything is done from home and I am working and applying skills on various client projects and problems instead of doing training courses.

My day to day varies, which is why work at Quantum is so exciting to me, as I solve different problems regularly. However, my overall workday looks like this:

I leverage Quantum's data ecosystem to code up the analytics in SQL or PySpark, build slide decks in Microsoft PowerPoint and present this to clients to help them solve their business problems and deliver meaningful insights. In between these tasks, I and my team also have meetings with clients to help find the optimal solution for these business problems.

What impact has COVID-19 had on your industry and your role specifically? What do you think will be the long-term implications of this crisis (both positive and negative)?

COVID-19 has had an impact on the industry but since Quantum has a well-diversified blue-chip client base the impact hasn't been as severe. There were also no significant impacts on my role specifically except that I have been working from home since the start of the year.

Since I am originally based in Quantum's Melbourne office, I feel that one of the positive implications of this crisis is that I have been able to interact with my colleagues in other office locations e.g. Sydney more often as the whole of Quantum is mostly working from home right now. However, I think that the downside of working from home is that I am missing that real-life interaction between my colleagues which is so valuable, especially when starting a new role.

Other positive and important implications include flexible working hours and a greater focus on well-being and mental health. Both will undoubtedly benefit all employees at Quantum in terms of their mood, relationship with their family, friends, colleagues, and overall work productivity.

Do you have any advice for students looking for a job in consulting? Any points specific to actuarial/data science related consulting?

Students looking for a job in consulting should really aim to improve their top down communication skills as this is critical when communicating results of the analysis to clients. Moreover, I think that practicing case studies is great preparation for interviews with consulting firms. One of the best ways to do this is to participate in as many case study competitions held at university as you possibly can. Lastly, I believe that learning at least one programming language such as Python or R would be extremely beneficial as this would help ease the learning curve when starting work in actuarial / data science related consulting.

“ COVID has had an impact on the industry but since Quantum has a well-diversified blue-chip client base the impact hasn't been as severe. ”

What are the top 3 soft skills you feel are necessary in your line of work?

Communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.

Are there any complementary technical skills have you developed outside of your degree?

During my internship at Quantum, I developed my skills in SQL, Microsoft Excel, and big data technologies. I have also completed a computer programming course for one of my breadth subjects at university where I learned Python.

Do you have any non-work-related hobbies?

Yes, I love playing and watching sports such as bodybuilding, basketball, and soccer. Furthermore, I enjoy reading up on the latest macroeconomic news and doing some investing during my free time.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via LinkedIn if you have any questions or would like to discuss anything about the data analytics/actuarial consulting industry or work life here at Quantum!

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/nishanta-dharmaseri/>



Nitcha Tippinyu

What is your role at Quantum?

I'm currently an Associate Analyst at Quantum, in my first graduate rotation working in the FMCG consulting team although I also work as an analyst occasionally (FMCG stands for Fast Moving Consumer Goods and refers to the Woolworths suppliers sector). Before starting as a grad, I was an intern at Quantum in my penultimate year in the Banking & Wealth team.

What is your educational background? Do you see any similarities between your degree and your work? Is there a common background among your colleagues?

I graduated from the University of Melbourne in Actuarial Studies in 2019. Working in data analytics as a consultant is quite removed from the traditional actuarial role, however the discipline from studying actuarial lends itself to the analytical component of consulting.

Within the FMCG team I work in, my colleagues have a variety of backgrounds; there are those with commerce backgrounds or computer science degrees and even someone who did a PhD in physics. But beyond the background you have, everyone shares a deep expertise of the FMCG sector and strong business acumen from years of working within the FMCG industry.

What did your standard day look like before COVID? What does it look like now?

Well, I was only in office for 3 weeks busy with the usual training sessions and introductions before COVID-19 hit, blissfully unaware the next 6 months would be anything but ordinary, so there isn't much to compare to before COVID.

Currently my work varies from working directly with clients to determine how Quantum best supports their business objectives in the consulting aspect of my role, to programming code to query from our vast database in the analytics aspect. My day to day includes a repertoire of crafting PowerPoint decks and presenting them, building Excel dashboards, coding in SQL, Python, and VBA and of course, lots of emails and meetings.

“ This COVID time of need has highlighted the significance of wellness indeed, and it is undeniable this will benefit us all. ”

What impact has COVID-19 had on your industry and your role specifically? What do you think will be the long-term implications of this crisis (both positive and negative)?

Thankfully, Quantum transitioned smoothly and quickly to working from home when COVID-19 hit in March as we had the resources for everyone to work from home already.

Flexible working during these times has proven to be a viable option and some may even say the more productive option – so hopefully in the long-term businesses will take these learnings from WFH and apply them during the COVID normal and after.

FMCG has been fortunately an industry that has grown since COVID, with customer stockpiling and growth of online shopping. COVID has introduced a focus on how Woolworths customers shop differently now and if this change persists, so any long-term implications to the FMCG industry will be underpinned by changes in shopper behaviour.

Other than how commercial activities have been affected by COVID, businesses are also recognizing the importance of mental health – Quantum held resilience workshops for our team to promote open conversations about mental health. This time of need has highlighted the significance of wellness indeed, and it is undeniable this will benefit us all.

Do you have any advice for students looking for a job in consulting? Any points specific to actuarial/data science related consulting?

Communication has been instrumental in my journey as a consultant so far. Everyone knows communication is important but working as a consultant has taught me much more about all the nuances in communicating to others and absorbing what is being communicated to me. For example,

understanding a brief before working on the deliverable is not simply about the question. It involves understanding why the client is invested in the answer, how the insights may impact your client’s business objectives, how data limitations will impact the analysis, and more. Having a greater grasp on all that has been communicated from the client and analyst, and communicating as needed to each party makes the difference between a tricky brief and a straightforward one.

Actuarial studies is important in teaching you about not just the details about insurance or how to calculate an individual’s age, but in instilling discipline and rigour in analytical thinking, so you derive data driven insights instead of rooting them in your opinions and biases.

To actuarial students, I would say do not undervalue the rigour of the actuarial discipline, as it is a habit of excellence that will enable you to excel in areas beyond traditional actuarial roles. Also, learn as much as possible about improving your communication skills and participate in as many opportunities as you can to hone these skills (my team and I hold regular Toastmaster sessions).

What are the top 3 soft skills you feel are necessary in your line of work?

1. Communication (as stated above)
2. Critical thinking
3. Time management

Are there any complementary technical skills have you developed outside of your degree?

I learnt how to code as my breadth subject and also as part of my internship at Quantum, albeit not in the languages I use currently, but acquainting myself with programming and its logic has been invaluable to learning new languages since starting at Quantum.

Do you have any non-work-related hobbies?

I love to cook, and since lockdown I have been making my own pasta, dumplings, ramen, and more from scratch. My love of food as well as being curious about how different cultures cook similarly and differently has motivated me to cook throughout lockdown, though after 6 months I must admit I’ve experienced cooking fatigue (it’s real).

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions via LinkedIn!

Specialist Actuarial Recruitment

Our experienced consultants bring a depth of knowledge about the actuarial profession, the skills actuaries offer and the markets in which they work.

About SKL—What we do?

SKL is Australia's only recruitment consulting firm specialising solely in the Actuarial profession. We help individuals find positions and help companies find suitable candidates for their jobs. Our immediate focus is Australia, but we also operate in New Zealand and the Asia Pacific region. We have consultants who are Fellows of the Actuaries Institute as well as consultants with many years of experience recruiting actuaries.

- We recruit at all levels from Chief Actuary and Partner to Analyst
- We bring a deep knowledge of the market, including technical expertise
- We have strong networks within the profession and industry
- We bring a consultative approach and are committed to work in partnership with our candidates in an honest, ethical and professional manner

What can we do for Graduates?

SKL are unlikely to help you find your first role as most companies recruit directly from universities. Our main priority is to start building a relationship with you so that we can work with you and provide advice throughout your career once you have gained some experience. We suggest you visit our website and connect with us on Linked In and Facebook so that you can:

- Gain insights into current trends and future developments in Insurance, the Financial Services industry and opportunities for actuarial skills
- Develop your understanding of the market and access information about the currently active jobs
- Access information on interview and CV tips
- Keep up to date with news, events and conferences through the SKL Blog

Applying for jobs

- Your covering email says a lot about you - your resume and covering letter may be perfect but if your email is sloppy or has poor spelling and grammar the employer might not even look at the resume
- Follow the application instructions - if you are asked for transcripts then attach them
- Follow up if you have not heard back in a reasonable time - this shows interest.
- Remember the people you are applying to are busy - so make it easy for them
- Keep a record of who you have applied to and when.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

When should I start applying for jobs?

You need to start thinking about your resume and applications in the year before you finish because some companies start their application process early in the year eg March, so check deadlines in the year before you want to apply so that you don't miss out.

What if I don't get a graduate role before I finish?

Many companies do a couple of rounds of recruitment and then pick up graduates during the year so there are plenty more opportunities

If I am an international student how can I find work?

It is very difficult to be offered a graduate role if you don't have a visa which entitles you to work in Australia on a permanent basis. Any part-time or intern work you can get will be helpful but you usually need to wait until you have finished studying and can apply for permanent residence.

Many international students return home to work for a while, apply for a visa and it will then be easier to find a job in Australia.

How important is it to have work experience?

Any relevant work experience is useful. However, it is competitive to find actuarial work experience so experience where you are building other skills is also useful.

How important is it to get exemptions?

Employers look at grades as a first way of working out who to interview so it is important to do as well as you can. However other skills are important too - being able to communicate and having interests outside of your study.

If you have any questions or queries or would just like to touch base and start building a relationship with us please contact us on info@sklactuarial.com.au



info@sklactuarial.com.au



<https://www.facebook.com/sklactuarial>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/skl-executive/>

JOIN TAYLOR FRY

Who we are

We're an actuarial and analytics consultancy, covering traditional general insurance through to cutting-edge data analytics. A few years ago, Qantas liked the analytics work we did for them so much, they bought a 51% share in our company.

Graduate program

Our graduate program for 2022 opens for applications in February 2022. We'll be looking to fill positions in all three of our offices – Sydney, Melbourne and Wellington. We're happy to receive applicants who don't yet have their permanent residency.

As a grad, you'll ...

- 1. Develop consulting skills.** You'll collaborate with clients, present to stakeholders and learn to pitch for work.
- 2. Work side-by-side with clients.** You'll gain an insider's view into corporate and government organisations through our client placements.
- 3. Help out with R&D.** You'll have plenty of opportunities to pitch in with the development of new tools, processes and techniques.

Why join us?

- 1. You'll learn a LOT.** Our grads work with and are mentored by senior staff from day one. We make sure grads have a chance to work on lots of different projects across many industries.
- 2. You'll make a difference.** We like nothing better than to apply our expertise to projects that solve real-world problems and contribute to social good.
- 3. You'll enjoy yourself.** We're a friendly bunch and our environment is relaxed and welcoming – although our virtual boardgame nights can get feisty!

Get to know us

*Follow us on LinkedIn and
visit our website*

www.taylorfry.com.au



“At Taylor Fry, often the directors will be coding right along with the grads, and everyone is a valuable member of the team pretty much within a month. It doesn’t feel very hierarchical, which makes it much easier to ask a senior person a simple question.”

Aidan Robern

Bachelor of Economics, Masters in Public Policy



“I’ve been encouraged to ask questions and take on more responsibility step by step, which has created a very safe environment for me to build on my progress. Before you can take a step forward, you need recognition by people you respect. Their support and encouragement mean so much.”

Stacey Lin

Bachelor of Actuarial Studies (Hons)



“I love the flexible working hours. I didn’t really appreciate the flexibility early on when I began as an intern. I just turned up each day at 9am. But life becomes more complex, and now I do enjoy the benefits of that flexibility. If I sleep in, miss a train, have a doctor’s appointment or have to be home for the plumber, I know I won’t have to panic.”

Gemma Smith

Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Economics



“I was surprised by how many people came from diverse backgrounds – like me with commerce – although these were mainly in quantitative areas such as physics and chemistry. I was encouraged and inspired that these people were pursuing an actuarial career. I didn’t feel so alone, because there were people who had gone before me.”

Jason Cu

Bachelor of Actuarial Studies, Bachelor of Commerce

Bronze Sponsors

AIA

am actuaries

Deloitte

EY

KPMG

Optiver

PwC





Best in Life

AIA Careers

At AIA Australia and New Zealand, our purpose is to make a difference in people's lives through our customer value proposition centered on Life, Health and Wellness.

Our vision is to champion Australia and New Zealand to be the healthiest and most protected nations in the world.

We focus on career and people development and leadership capability, so that you'll be nurtured and have every opportunity to reach your full potential. We also support international students with sponsorship.

Each year we recruit interns and graduates to join our Actuarial Professional Family. To start having a conversation please reach out to us at au.aiacareers@aia.com

aia.com.au



HEALTHIER, LONGER,
BETTER LIVES

About Us

Established in 2003, *am actuaries* is an actuarial consulting firm specialising in general insurance within the Melbourne market, particularly in areas of workers compensation, medical indemnity, accident compensation and public liability. As a growing company, we aim to offer clients a personalised service and high quality advice for controlling their risks and optimising their returns.

Our team of actuaries advise private insurers, government departments and agencies, and large corporates on a broad range of areas including:-

- ∂ Financial modelling and analysis
- ∂ Pricing of general insurance, hospital services and premiums
- ∂ Evaluations of outstanding claims liabilities for insurers and self insurers
- ∂ Implementation of budget projections for general insurers
- ∂ Assessment of the financial impact of regulatory changes
- ∂ Expert evidence for court proceedings

Graduate Opportunities:

At *am actuaries* we search for motivated individuals who are constantly striving to excel in their career and willing to take on challenges. Our growing team of 4 actuaries and 3 analysts provides a promising stepping stone for students entering the workforce. Students are provided with the opportunity to complete a wide range of practical tasks, allowing them to experience the actuarial industry more comprehensively.

We are open to providing students with working opportunities during the summer vacation period although we do not offer a formal internship program as such.

What Do We Look For?

Candidates who are able to demonstrate the following attributes:

- ∂ Consistently high academic results
- ∂ Strong analytical, communication and problem solving skills
- ∂ Active team member and demonstrates initiative
- ∂ Open to discussion and challenge
- ∂ Familiarity with Microsoft Office suite and programming platforms such as SAS and Excel

Support Towards Actuarial Qualification

Should you become successful in gaining a full time employment opportunity with *am actuaries*, we assist our employees towards actuarial qualification by subsidising course fees for the first and successful attempts of the IAA actuarial education program. We also offer a competitive study leave policy and provide assistance and mentoring support for students completing actuarial exams.

Career Development

Successful candidates will commence their career at *am actuaries* as an actuarial analyst, working as part of a team under the supervision of senior analysts and/or actuaries. The ability to work alongside experienced actuaries provides employees with the guidance they need to enhance their professional development so they can become a valuable member of the *am actuaries'* team.

Candidates will advance their career through progression through actuarial exams and professional development which will lead them to senior analyst, actuary and ultimately consulting actuary.

Recruitment Contact

Bruce Harris
Consultant
am actuaries
Suite 8.05, 343 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
Tel: (03) 8641 6900
Email: bruce@amactuaries.com



Your future starts with us.

Who we are

Deloitte Actuaries & Consultants is the actuarial arm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu in Australia and a key component of Deloitte's global Actuarial Rewards & Analytics Group.

Our insightful strategies and technical analyses help clients build profitable growth in a range of disciplines, while our client service teams provide the specialised advice needed to create **more business value**.

We are able to differentiate ourselves from traditional actuarial firms through our ability to combine actuarial expertise with broader business and cross-service line advice from across Deloitte. As a global firm, we also work with Deloitte member firms around the world on international engagements.

What we do

Deloitte Actuaries & Consultants specialises in a broad range of both traditional and non-traditional actuarial work, such as:

- Life insurance (pricing, valuation, and model development)
- General insurance (reserving, monitoring, and capital management)
- Banking (credit risk modelling, pricing, and strategy)
- Mergers and acquisitions (valuation and integration support)
- Analytics (customer analytics)



"I joined Deloitte as a vacationer and returned this year as a graduate. I've since had exposure to a wide range of work from industries where actuarial skills can be applied – life and general insurance, banking, and superannuation.

Our team contains a wealth of knowledge and shares a high performing mindset. Being a part of this positive environment has really accelerated my growth in skills in the short time I've been here, and encourages me to bring my best to work every day!"

Kayley Loo
Deloitte Graduate Analyst 2019

What impact will you make?

Visit our student career pages on [deloitte.com.au](https://www.deloitte.com.au)

Deloitte refers to one or more of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited ("DTTL"), its global network of member firms, and their related entities. DTTL (also referred to as "Deloitte Global") and each of its member firms and their affiliated entities are legally separate and independent entities. DTTL does not provide services to clients. Please see www.deloitte.com/about to learn more.

Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation.

© 2019 Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu.



Do you know what it takes to build a better working world?

Share in our purpose and see the world through the lens of better.

Better defines the way we work and starts with asking questions like, what's next? You see, the biggest breakthroughs in the world happen by asking these two small but powerful words. With the world in the midst of a Transformative Age, we need to respond to rapidly changing circumstances. And that's what we're all about at EY.

We're looking to disrupt the way things are done; we're even disrupting ourselves and how we can future-proof our people and our business. While others may be braced for change, at EY we're embracing it. That's how we're able to inspire our people to harness new possibilities to build a better working world for themselves and those around them.

And we want you to be part of it. This is your opportunity to do something exceptional — something that matters to you, to us, to the world.

In any of our four business service lines, you'll gain invaluable skills, experience and lifetime contacts that will set you up for a successful career – no matter which path you choose.

Assurance

What's possible when art meets science?

Using market leading advanced data analytic tools, we look beyond the obvious to delve deeper into the underlying patterns and trends. With your advice, we're able to deliver powerful business insight to assist with defining a company's financial performance and position and drive business performance. You'll develop a deep understanding of the inner workings of business and draw on your accounting knowledge to help solve challenges.

bit.ly/EYAssurance

Tax

If tax laws are always changing, how can you stay one step ahead?

We develop strategies for our clients to help them work out the best way for them to run their business while they manage their tax position in a complex, global world. By helping our clients meet their obligations, we're helping them grow their business profitably but also supporting the government and the communities in which they operate. Surrounded by some of the best tax minds in the country, we'll develop you to be a global business advisor.

bit.ly/EYATax

Transactions

How do you turn one deal into a lifelong relationship?

Our Transaction Advisory Services teams help businesses and government bodies make big decisions on how best to raise, invest, optimise and preserve their capital. Do they need to buy a company or merge with a competitor? Should they sell an underperforming business? Do they have the most appropriate business model? You'll get involved in highly strategic projects, working end-to-end on a transaction, from strategy to execution.

bit.ly/EYATransactions

Advisory

How will you transform the way businesses make decisions?

In an unpredictable, uncertain business world of relentless disruption, clients demand innovative approaches to solve complicated issues and capitalise on opportunities. Your experiences will be wide and varied, as you help your clients transform their businesses by helping them respond to change, manage business risks, leverage technology and find smarter ways of operating.

bit.ly/EYAAdvisory

Opportunities for undergraduate/graduate students:

Our **Career Compass Program** offers you a unique learning experience that will help you make smart decisions about your professional career.

Our **Vacationer Program** is a great way to experience the working world during your summer (or winter) holidays. Show us what you're capable of and you may be invited to join us after graduation in a full-time position.

Our **Graduate Program** will put your knowledge to the test. Build your technical skills. Join us full-time as a graduate and you'll get early responsibility, support and training.



Experience the Difference



KPMG - one of the world's most respected and trusted professional services firms. We offer rewarding careers for outstanding professionals in our open and friendly culture.

KPMG Actuarial, the actuarial consulting division of KPMG, has over 130 staff working in life and general insurance, superannuation and data analytics as well as finance, funds management, credit and market risk management. Our clients include the leading insurers and financial services companies working in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region.

The unprecedented level of change sweeping the Financial Services industry continues to drive growth in our actuarial team. It is providing our staff in both Sydney and Melbourne with opportunities to work with our clients on engagements that will change the Financial Services industry in this region.

Recruitment

We recruit graduates into our team working on life insurance, general insurance and credit and market risk. We are recruiting graduates into all teams to start work in 2021. We also have positions in our vacationer programs which operate during the year.

The ideal candidate has a strong academic record, the desire to develop into a consultant, the maturity and self-confidence to take on a client facing role, and wants to actively contribute to our team.

"KPMG offers a career that takes you places, literally! I have worked on numerous client secondments across Sydney, and am currently working in Hong Kong for a project!

I love the variety of work here at KPMG and the ability to gain industry insights. Every day is different and the opportunities are endless!"

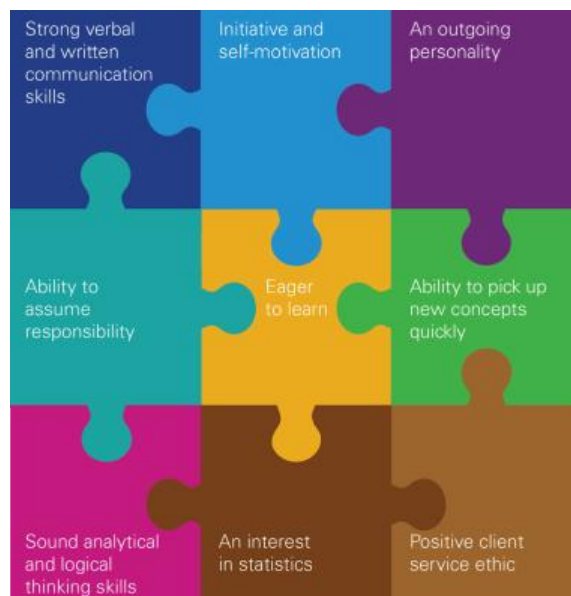
Matt Chan, Manager

"I feel very lucky to have worked at KPMG. With such a wide range of work and clients, the breadth of experience I've had is invaluable, and it's really kick-started my career. We also have a tremendously driven and talented team – they inspire me to challenge myself and push myself further every day!"

Sophie Byth, Senior Consultant



Attributes that we are looking for include:



"Working at KPMG has shown me how you can make a big impact in the lives of so many different clients. The variety of work has given me the opportunity to work across multiple industries, each project with its own challenging and interesting solutions. As a team, the support I've received from mentors and peers has helped me develop my skills to the next level and beyond."

Andries Schreuder, Senior Consultant

"When I began at KPMG I could not have imagined the breadth of work I would contribute to so early on, it makes every day exciting and has fast-tracked my development.

I have been supported the whole way through what is a big transition from student to full-time work and already feel like a key member of our dynamic team!"

Jordan Forrest, Senior Consultant

"Working closely with our clients has been an extremely rewarding and valuable experience for me. I've had the opportunity to see the value and the impact that our work brings to them, and has enabled me to establish a network built on confidence and trust."

Jess Lee, Senior Consultant

The journey  from graduate to leader...



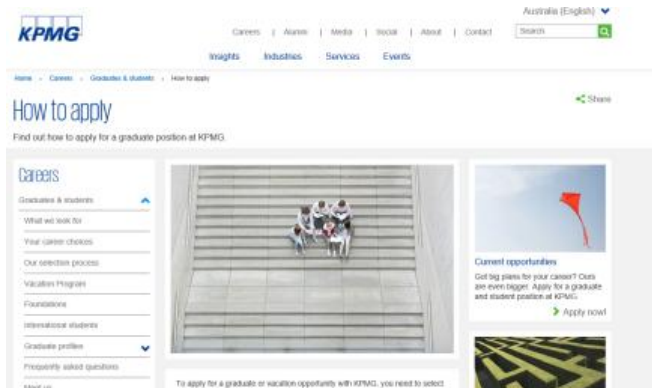
Pass rates **60%**
VS
40% for the industry

We invest in you and help you qualify

Next Steps

If you are looking for a fulfilling actuarial career that offers a variety of challenging work, with a company that rewards you for your contribution to the team, please submit your application online at the site below:

<http://www.kpmg.com/au/en/careers/graduates.html>



For more information contact:



Richard Yee
Partner
richardye@kpmg.com.au



Jenifer Walton
Director
jwalton1@kpmg.com.au



Danny Bechara
Associate Director
dbechara1@kpmg.com.au

You will receive a wide range of career benefits and many challenging professional experiences. You will work on a wide variety of projects across a broad cross-section of the Asia-Pacific market. You will enjoy working in a flat management structure and project based environment, where you quickly assume responsibility and take a front line role in client projects. You will be involved in whole projects, not just tasks, and have the opportunity to gain a broad understanding of actuarial and wider business issues. Over time, the right person can be expected to be involved in a range of life insurance, general insurance and finance consulting assignments, for example: product pricing, liability valuations, appointed actuary and broader advisory assignments.

We provide generous study leave and support, full payment of Actuaries Institute membership fees, exemption fees and exam costs, subject to satisfactory progression.

- We offer generous study leave and we make sure you take it!
- Each course you take will be assigned a course leader and course mentors to give you advice and answer your questions.

You will receive an attractive remuneration package.

Important Information

Applications for graduate and vacation positions will open 10 February 2020, closing 6 March 2020:

- Application phase – online
- Abilities assessments
- Video interview
- Final stage – info session and final interview

International students can also apply – more details on website

APPLY EARLY TO AVOID MISSING OUT!!

Interviews for graduate positions will be held from late **February**. Vacation position interviews are expected to start in late **March**.



WHERE TRADING AND TECHNOLOGY JOIN FORCES



OptiverAsiaPac

#optiverlife

optiver.com.au



Want to make an immediate impact in your career?

Optiver is a technology-driven trading firm. Developed entirely in-house, our trading system is the cornerstone of our success. We combine the power of cutting edge technology, trading expertise and analytical rigour to provide liquidity to the global financial markets. We work to improve the market, trading options and other financial instruments. We don't have clients. Or dress codes. We don't have a stifling organisational hierarchy. And we don't have the ego-driven culture you might be expecting from finance.

We hire talented students from STEM backgrounds who are driven to solve open-ended problems. With more than 1,000 people around the world working to improve the market, Optiver's a quiet powerhouse of creative problem solving and collaboration.

We expect the best from our people so it's only fair that we offer the best in return. From free breakfast and lunch, to weekly massages, gym membership and our top floor games area, you'll find there's something for everyone. Optiver also believes in getting better every day. Our internal learning and development programs are designed to help you get to the next level. With in-house experts, a structured learning program and plenty of opportunities to learn as you work, you're always developing new skills.

It doesn't matter if you know nothing about finance. All you need to bring is your sense of curiosity. We'll teach you everything you need to know. We have opportunities for Graduates and Interns in Software Development, Trading and Production Engineering. And with plenty of opportunities to upskill, cross-skill and move between our global offices, there's more to Optiver than just where you begin.

If you want a career that's built on innovation, fast feedback, constant improvement and collaboration, then join us.

Some of our perks include:

- Annual trip
- Free snacks
- Weekly massages
- Monthly social events
- Free gym membership
- Group training sessions
- Our famous Games Room
- On-site, free barista-made coffee
- Chef-prepared breakfast and lunch

To explore our culture and the way we do things, check out our social channels. To learn more and apply for our graduate or intern roles, visit optiver.com.au

Actuarial

pwc

Who we are

PwC Actuarial is one of the largest actuarial and financial risk consulting groups in the Asia-Pacific region, with over 50 qualified actuaries and 180 consultants located in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth, Auckland, Wellington and Shanghai. We are part of a strong global network of PwC actuaries with presence in North America, UK, France, and the Asia-Pacific.

What we offer you

- A greater **choice** of career opportunities, with **outstanding** career development opportunities
- **Varied** work experience, with **exposure** to real client work
- **Flexible** work practices
- Unrivalled **training** and development **support**
- Social and sporting **activities** and a great team **culture**

We offer a graduate program as well as a vacation internship program between December and February each year.

Where to now

Career Contact:

Kelly Lee
Phone: (03) 8603 0480
Email: kelly.a.lee@pwc.com

More about PwC Actuarial:

<https://www.pwc.com.au/actuarial.html>

Graduate & Vacation Applications

www.pwc.com.au/careers

Our work

PwC Actuarial specialises in the following areas:

General Insurance & Accident Compensation

- Integrated reserving, monitoring and pricing
- Risk and Capital Management
- Advice on the impacts of regulatory change
- Implementation of strategies for portfolio and claim management

Banking and Financial Services

- Wealth management / Unit pricing
- Credit and other risk management for banks
- Economic Capital
- Control failure investigations
- Life Insurance

Retirement Incomes and Investments

- Financial valuations and projections
- Traditional superannuation advice
- Strategic and investment advice
- Risk Management, Governance and Compliance

Health Actuarial

- Data analytics
- Policy, Governance and Regulatory Design
- Service and Capacity Planning
- Activity Based Funding

"Working at PwC means working with really great people with diverse backgrounds and experiences - all willing to teach, share and learn. It means actuarial analysis with riverside views - exploring and collaborating with high performers to solve important problems in our communities, cities and countries. It's a great place to find what you're passionate in, and a place to learn and try new things."



- Chris Chen
Graduate of the University of Melbourne, 2018

More Articles

Introduction to Investing:
The road to financial sustainability minus the Wall St

Quarantine activities



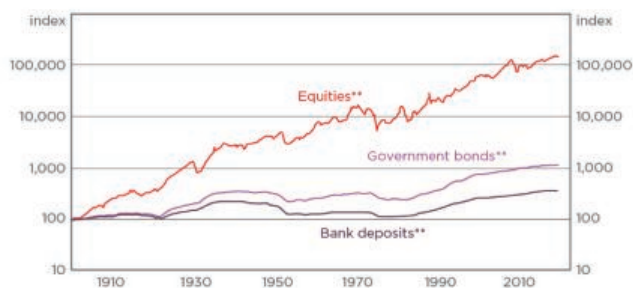
Introduction to Investing:

The road to financial sustainability minus the Wall St

The world of investing and trading can seem daunting at times. What asset class to choose? How much to put in? How to even get started? Particularly for young people, it can seem like a great big world of complexity and jargon. Through this article, I hope to offer some insights into foundational elements of investing so you can become more informed individuals on your respective journeys to financial self-sufficiency.

Firstly though, you may be asking the question: Why invest at all? This reason can be different for every individual as it depends on their personal financial goals, but a lot of it comes down to the idea of accumulating 'active' assets and generating a passive income. For many students, all of their savings will be sitting in a debit account, probably earning 0% interest per year, potentially 2% if you are particularly alert and have set up an incentive saver account. What the trends demonstrate however is that an index of equities in Australia has consistently outperformed other 'set and forget' style investments such as bank deposits and government bonds, albeit with significantly more volatility.

Cumulative Real Returns*
Log scale, 1 January 1900 = 100



* Annual inflation data interpolated prior to 1948

** Equities is market capitalisation-weighted portfolio of top 100 to 1979 spliced with All Ordinaries from 1980, bonds is total return on 10 year or closest available bond, bank deposit is 3 year term deposit or closest comparable rate

Source: ABS, ASX, Butlin, Hall & White (1971 & 1973), Foster (1996), Lamberton (1985), League of Nations Yearbooks, RBA, Refinitiv, Sydney Stock Exchange

Accordingly, getting started as early as possible in your investment journey is incredibly important to maximise these benefits – on the condition that you have the means and willingness to do so. To introduce you to the most important concepts, I have set out a checklist under various categories. Ultimately, however, no one can ever truly master the markets given its changing nature. Even Warren Buffet (one of the greatest value investors to ever live) has suffered recent losses after acquiring a stake in Delta Airlines in April. Perhaps a bit of an optimistic move!

Asset Classes

Equities:

Also known as shares or stocks, these are probably what you think of when someone mentions investing. These are traded on an **exchange** by a variety of buyers and sellers and entitle you to a stake in a company. As a shareholder, you will be entitled to a share of a company's profits (paid out in dividends). However, there is **no** obligation for the company to pay out dividends (Gordon Growth model for valuing companies looking a little bit questionable now!). You can also achieve gains through capital appreciations, where the share price is pushed up by supply-demand forces. These are very **liquid**.

Fixed Income:

Typical 'set-and-forget' assets over a fixed period of time. Government bonds, term deposits, these will pay a fixed interest (coupons) and you will receive your original principal back at expiry. These are often significantly less liquid compared to stocks.

As actuarial students and particularly having studied Principles of Finance, you would be more than aware of the power of compounding.

Derivatives:

These include options, futures, forwards, and swaps. These are effectively bets on the future behaviour of agreed-upon assets, without necessarily any willingness to take control of that underlying asset (For example, you may profit on a wheat options contract however you never had any intention of receiving 15 bales of hay). Depending on the time horizon of the contract, liquidity can fluctuate

Commodities:

Precious metals, materials, fuels. These typically serve as the underlying assets for derivative contracts; however, you may access the physical asset in special cases (Gold bullion).

Concepts

Value vs Growth investing:

The two schools of thought that inform investment theses. Value stocks are typically larger companies that are seen as underappreciated and hence undervalued by the market, while Growth stocks are typically smaller companies that are likely to experience rapid and exceptional increases in price.

Trading vs Investing:

Trading is typically extremely short-term positions that attempt to react and exploit daily fluctuations in price. Investing takes a more long-term focus of gradually acquiring wealth and enjoying the benefits of compounding.

Fundamental vs Quantitative analysis:

Fundamental analysis involves an in-depth analysis of financial statements and clear ideas about the industry they operate in, as well as catalysts for future growth. Typically, investors utilise fundamental analysis as they want to understand the true long-term value of opportunities. Quantitative analysis, as the name suggests looks solely at graphs, ratios, and inter-dependencies between different phenomena to identify short-term mispricing.

Bullish vs Bearish:

Bullish is the idea that markets will uptrend (optimism) while bearish implies that there is a belief that the market will experience a downturn (pessimism). This concept can be applied to the perception of fund managers or commentators on individual stocks.

Jargon

Dollar-cost averaging (DCA):

This plays into the idea of investing for the long term – instead of worrying about trying to time the market and purchase for the lowest price (trough), this idea recommends siphoning investment over a period of time. By doing so you will likely buy at both highs and low, ultimately purchasing at a reasonable average, assuming long-term holding and growth.

Retails vs Institutional (Wholesale) investors:

Retail investors, also known as ‘Mum and Dad’ investors, are typically individuals who are looking to accumulate wealth through their own investments. Institutional investors are typically larger funds that operate on a significantly larger scale.

Exchanges (ASX, NASDAQ, Dow Jones, FTSE):

Each country has its own stock market exchange that is responsible for matching prospective buyers with willing sellers. Previously, this was done by firms however in the current day and age it is all automated. The exchange will take orders from a broker and process any transaction requests.

Broker (Commsec, nabtrade, SelfWealth):

These are the firms responsible for going to the exchange and making purchases on your behalf. They are the middlemen between an investor/trader and the exchange.

Bid-ask spread:

Bid is the price you will pay to purchase at that moment, while ask is the price you will receive to sell at that moment. The more liquid a security is, the lower this will be as market makers can easily find both sides of the transaction and hence there is less risk for them. On higher spreads, this represents the premium for their services.

Resources

News sites (AFR, Livewire Market, Bloomberg):

Unsurprisingly, journalism is still strong in the world of finance and you should always keep an eye on market trends. Not only will this help you in job interviews and to sound smart around the dinner table, but it will also allow you to gain a better perception into what economic patterns are in place, what companies are doing (AFR Street Talk is great for this), as well as the strategies of the best investors (Livewire has a strong community of fund managers who consistently contribute)

Books (Rich Dad Poor Dad, The Intelligent Investor, any book by Michael Lewis):

There is a reason we always go back to the literature –timeless lessons have been shared and we see human nature repeating itself. Rich Dad Poor Dad is an amazing point of origin for any aspiring investor as it offers insights into the asset accumulation mentality, beyond just the stock market.

Podcasts (Equity Mates, The Rules of Investing, My Millennial Money, Freakonomics):

If reading is not your favourite past time, there are an array of different podcasts that can give both up to date reports and generalised tips. Equity Mates also have a 12-part “Get Started Investing” series that is great for covering a lot of the basics (and if it is too simple for you, just skip ahead!)

Social Media (Mandy Money, Yahoo Finance, Bloomberg):

The Mandy Money Instagram page is run by students of the University of Melbourne and offers sound insights into financial freedom and confidence. Their sound bites are great, and it is an easy way to start exposing yourself to easily digestible yet relevant content. On the other side of the spectrum, follow the socials of any big finance firm and you are likely to be exposed to a diverse range of analytical reports.

Broker reports:

When you sign up to a brokerage platform such as Commsec, you will get access to an array of reports prepared by their partner research firms (Goldman Sachs, UBS, Morningstar, Bell Potter). These will be quite in-depth and technical but their observations on current market trends and extraction of notable company metrics will be very valuable.

Warnings

1. Brokerage:

BEWARE, brokers will charge a commission (brokerage fee) whenever you place an order to buy or sell. Take this into account if you do decide to begin investing and keep an eye out for how to reduce these fees. For example, opening up a Commonwealth specific bank account may halve brokerage compared to if you were to withdraw funds from an external account.

2. Be ready to lose it all:

While equities have typically gone up, this is over a long-time frame. We have seen numerous shocks and it is often retail investors who suffer most from this. Accordingly, never make risky investments if it is money that you will need down the track (For example, 6 months away from making a mortgage deposit and looking to make some quick returns). If you are operating on a short-term time horizon, a sudden shock could be fatal.

3. Don't focus on daily deviations unless you are trading:

When you make your first investment, there will be a fixation on the daily movements and fluctuations. If you are of the mindset of long-term accumulation, you should not be worried about this! Equally, however, if a company starts going down and you see no possibility of recovery, do not hold onto a loser. But you have to remember why you made the purchase in the first place. Anyone who sold out and stayed out after the initial March 2020 crash would be kicking themselves. Ultimately, you are in this for the long term, play the game that way. (Don't believe me? Google 'CSL ASX' and have a look between 2005-2008).

4. Agendas:

Remember, every commentator has their own agenda. Perhaps they are spruiking the prospects of a stock so they can cash out after a price hit. Maybe they genuinely believe in the company, in which boosting interest does not hurt at all. Keep all of this in mind when you are looking at opportunities: Consider the viewpoints of 'professionals' but do not agree with them blindly. As Mark Cuban once said: "No one ever sold a share of stock thinking it was going to go up from there. Always ask yourself why someone is selling it to you"

Final notes

As alarming as that previous section may be, keep in mind that investing for the smaller players is becoming easier and easier. Something like an Exchange Traded Fund gives you wide exposure to a basket of stocks based on a common theme, removing volatility or luck involved in stock picking. Commsec Pocket is a great service if you are interested in this. Otherwise making early contributions to your superfunds could be an option if you would prefer a professional to handle any initial investments, without committing a huge amount of money upfront to a managed fund.

Ultimately, be careful, be confident and don't forget week one of Principle of Finance: There is always a trade-off between risk and reward. There are no free lunches (unless you invested in CSL).

Disclaimer: This is not advice and should not be used as such. All information is general in nature and does not take into consideration your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before making a decision please consider these and consult with your relevant financial advisor or industry professional.

Angus Kennedy
Sponsorship Officer

Quarantine Activities

It seemed almost like yesterday when we first heard of this video conferencing app named Zoom, a time where masks were worn only by medical professionals and a time where social gatherings weren't criminal offences. Yet here we are in October, almost towards the end of a rollercoaster calendar year, with many left feeling as if we should just forget about this whole year. Online learning is anything but ideal, working-from-home is often inconvenient, and catching up over video call just doesn't hit the same.

But there is one benefit to all of this. I'm sure many of us are guilty of waking up 2 minutes before our scheduled classes (or our scheduled work shifts for that matter). Lockdown has meant that travel is no longer a worry and has given us more time in our lives. If this is the way of life is to remain even for the next few months, -we should all try to make the most of this extra time. Here are a few activities that not only keep you occupied for a few hours or so but also leave you feeling productive and give you a sense of self-improvement:

1. Improve your typing speed

We're at the point of life where typing and working on computers forms literally our whole day. Improving your typing speed is actually a lot easier than you might think and could make the difference when you're trying to submit an assignment 10 minutes before it's due. This quarantine situation presents the perfect opportunity to finally learn how to type properly (apparently you're meant to use your thumb to press the space bar?) and hit that 100 WPM. Some great websites to get started are www.ratatype.com and www.keybr.com. For those who are more competitive, www.10fastfingers.com and www.typeracer.com let you put your skills to the test against others.

2. Learn a new language or revisit an old one

I think most of us can relate to learning a language in high school and then forgetting all about it when we're finished with the class.

Now is a great time to go revisit those lessons and pick up those textbooks again. For those who have never learnt a second language, there are plenty of resources online that help you get started, Duolingo is one that definitely comes to mind. Not only will this look good on your resume, but maybe you can also visit a country that speaks that language once this is all over.

3. Practice mindfulness

Meditation is one of the best things you can do right now to relieve stress and improve your well-being and is especially important at the moment during times of social isolation. As a beginner myself, an app that is great for those who are just starting is Aura. It guides you through meditation basics and is offering a free 3-month trial period, which is just enough time to get the basics down pat.

Of course, there's a lot more to do than the three activities I've listed above, but these are ones that I've found to be really beneficial. Remember to focus on yourself and hopefully, we all come out better on the other side of this.

**Oscar To
Treasurer**



Vision 2020 is proudly sponsored by



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Gold Sponsors



Actuaries
Institute

FLOW TRADERS



QBE

Silver Sponsors



finity



MERCER



quantium



TAYLOR FRY

Bronze Sponsors



AIA



am actuaries
BRIDGING THE GAP

Deloitte.



EY

Building a better
working world



KPMG

optiver 



pwc

The Actuarial Students' Society would like to thank them for their ongoing support, and look forward to sustaining and promoting a healthy relationship between our members and sponsors.