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## Graduation Isn't the Finish Line; Chart Your Own Course

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By

Elsie Yung

Founder and Lead Consultant

[elsie.yung@els-asia.com](mailto:elsie.yung@els-asia.com)

[www.els-asia.com](http://www.els-asia.com)



Each August, campuses grow unusually quiet. Seeing the sparse figures of students inevitably brings back memories of my own early days. Back then, I majored in Education and assumed becoming a teacher was the natural path after graduation. Yet one summer job completely changed the course of my career.

During that summer, I worked in the training department of an aviation conglomerate. The role required students with strong language skills to assist in compiling materials for internal training programmes. That experience introduced me to the world of Human Resources, sparking a deep interest that ultimately led me to pursue a career in talent development after graduation. Years later, as a consultant working with universities to enhance students' employability, I often share this story with students. Must accounting graduates necessarily become accountants? Students often believe that "your major determines your job."—a notion known in the workplace as "direct entry," meaning a job directly tied to one's degree or study. In reality, the career path is far from a straight runway. The roles that truly fit us are not dictated by our degree, but guided by our strengths, values, and interests.

Graduates frequently feel anxious when job hunting, sometimes even questioning whether they chose the wrong degree. I want to encourage you: careers can take unexpected turns, and every experience carries its value. Take the field of robotics, for example. Once considered the preserve of engineers, it now involves cross-disciplinary collaboration—project management, data interpretation, human-machine interaction design, and user experience. Employers seek individuals with diverse perspectives and practical skills. Whether your background is in design, languages, or social sciences, you can still find your entry point into this growing field.

If you have not yet secured your "dream graduate job," do not rush to define yourself or restrict your possibilities. Instead, ask yourself three questions:

1. What kind of work makes me feel most engaged?
2. In my studies or internships, what have I most often been praised for?
3. Which subjects or fields truly inspire me to get involved?

The answers may not come from your academic major. They could come from an internship, a part-time job, or even a volunteer experience—all of which might be important clues for exploring your career path. A career is not a single straight line but a journey of constant recalibration. Even if your first job does not directly match your



degree, it does not mean you have taken the wrong path. On the contrary, it may be the starting point for discovering the direction that truly suits you.

As a new graduate, you hold the most valuable resources of all—time and flexibility. Use them to explore, experiment, and adjust. Keep an open mind, embrace new challenges, and give yourself opportunities to step into different fields. You will gradually discover that work is not merely a means to earn a living, but a place where you can unleash your potential and realise your value.