



---

## Four Years of University: The Beginning of Your Roadmap

---

Job Market Magazine (19 September 2025)

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)



The recent bustle on university campuses marks the transition from structured to highly autonomous campus life, leaving freshers both exhilarated and bewildered. Though four years may seem lengthy, they pass in the blink of an eye. Without careful planning and utilisation, graduation will inevitably bring feelings of emptiness and regret.

Under the examination system, the pressure of ‘one decisive battle determining one's fate’ is inevitable. Failing to secure a place in one's desired subject does not equate to a lack of ability. The four years of university offer an opportunity to explore interests and strengths, gradually discovering oneself through lectures, societies, internships, and part-time work. As I mentioned in my previous article, being constrained by the notion that ‘what you study is what you do’ may cause one to miss their true calling. The freedom of university life is both a gift and a test. The true art of university lies in striking balance during these four years. Waiting until the third or fourth year to seek career guidance often reveals insufficient time, having missed the optimal preparation period. The job market demands competitiveness; the earlier you begin exploring, the greater your advantage. I recommend engaging with diverse opportunities during your first and second years: take on part-time work, undertake summer internships, or join volunteer programmes. These experiences will help you explore industries that suit you. Establish early connections with the Career Development Centre or academic advisors, and regularly review your direction. This doesn't mean locking in your path prematurely, but rather learning to adjust as you explore. Engage frequently with senior students and industry professionals to gain valuable insights into the sector.

Beyond knowledge, prioritise competencies: transferable skills valued by employers include:

1. Communication: articulating views clearly while listening and responding to others.
2. Problem-solving: maintaining composure under pressure to devise solutions.
3. Teamwork: collaborating effectively with diverse individuals in multifaceted environments.
4. Adaptability and learning agility: Continuously acquiring and applying new knowledge amid rapid technological evolution.



Classroom knowledge alone rarely secures an edge. Conversely, students who actively serve as student representatives, compete in competitions, or participate in exchange programmes often demonstrate more well-rounded capabilities during interviews. To guide students towards clearer direction, I frequently advise them to reflect on these questions:

1. Which tasks or activities engage me most deeply?
2. What aspects of my past studies or internships have drawn the most praise?
3. Which subjects or fields spark my enduring curiosity?
4. When facing challenges, which abilities have helped me overcome them?

These answers may not stem from textbooks, but rather from a part-time role, a competition, or a volunteering experience. University serves as a platform for exploration and experimentation, extending beyond the pursuit of academic grades. Embracing diverse roles—as a leader, organiser, participant, or volunteer—each experience becomes a valuable component of your CV. Soft skills and professional networks frequently exert a greater influence on career progression than academic performance.

### **Start Early, Make a Difference**

Your four university years can shape your outlook. Freedom does not equate to indulgence, but rather self-management. Seize the time to learn, experiment, fail, and grow. Upon graduation, you will possess not only a degree but also the confidence to face the future. Life is not a straight line, but a journey of exploration and adjustment. University is the ideal starting point.