



The well-balanced mix of in-depth theory and hands-on projects and assessments appeals to Mr Xu. PHOTOS: CHONG JUN LIANG

Gateway to a promising career

A master's degree from NUS-ISS opens up opportunities in the fields of analytics and intelligent systems for Mr Jinson Xu Guangzu

GOH HWEE KOON

WITH many established companies, especially technological ones, requiring postgraduate degrees for data scientists, Mr Jinson Xu Guangzu's Master of Technology in Knowledge Engineering (MTech KE) has certainly helped him get a foot in the door for job interviews.

Mr Xu, 33, pursued the part-time master's programme at the National University of Singapore's Institute of Systems Science (NUS-ISS) two years ago while working as an engineer at the Defence Science & Technology Agency (DSTA).

His work then involved database operations, business intelligence dashboarding, as well as advanced analytics modelling, solutioning and strategy.

Currently a data scientist at global professional services company Accenture, he specialises in research and development, as well as the delivery of data science and artificial intelligence-related digital assets.

He says: "The course helped to broaden and deepen my knowledge of analytics, especially in the areas of simulation and optimisation, for logistics and web, as well as in computer vision. These were useful in my work at DSTA and KPMG, and now at Accenture."

Enriching experience

Mr Xu attributes his positive learning experience at NUS-ISS to how the refreshed MTech KE syllabus — which includes the latest developments in analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) — is relevant to the needs of those industries.

Says deputy director of NUS-ISS, Dr Leong Mun Kew: "When the Institute develops curriculum, we make sure to engage IT leaders and experienced practitioners in the field to understand their pain-points, their problems and their issues."

Mr Xu also likes how the syllabus had a good mix of in-depth theory as well as hands-on projects and assessments.

"Some modules, in particular, are taught by industry practitioners who have rich implementation experience. The stories, pitfalls, tools and resources that they bring to our attention are very valuable," he adds.

Teaching the techniques and approaches in building knowledge-based systems — through the use of traditional expert systems or analytical models built from data — is the main objective of the MTech KE course. And this sets it apart from other similar programmes, he says.

Mr Xu notes that operationalised knowledge-based systems are the end products of analytics and AI-related projects, both of which are in high demand these days.

"Students of the MTech KE programme are among those who will be building AI-related systems and apps that will be one of the biggest disruptors in our society in the next two decades," he says.