



Second time's the charm

Besides acquiring hard skills and knowledge, the MTech programme also enabled Mr Cher to strike meaningful relationships with associates.

PHOTOS:
CHONG JUN LIANG

Mr Robin Cher's knowledge about information technology has been enhanced by his master's degree at NUS-ISS

ESTHER TEO

AFTER graduating with a Bachelor of Science (Information Systems) from the Singapore Management University, Mr Robin Cher landed a graduate trainee position at a local bank, working in the areas of project management and software engineering.

To widen his knowledge, he enrolled in the National University of Singapore-Institute of Systems Studies (NUS-ISS) Master of Technology (MTech) in Software Engineering programme.

Eye on the industry

NUS-ISS has four MTech degrees — the MTech in Software Engineering, Knowledge Engineering, Enterprise Business Analytics and its newest, Technology in IT Leadership.

Dr Leong Mun Kew, deputy director of NUS-ISS, explains: "MTech is a graduate programme for practitioners by practitioners.

"When NUS-ISS develops the curriculum, we make sure to engage information technology (IT) leaders and experienced practitioners in the field to understand their pain points and issues.

"We want to ensure that the curriculum or technologies that we teach our students cover what is needed to do the job from begin-

ning to end.

"Our staff are people who have had many years of experience in the industry and can share real work experiences.

"Also, we require all our students to go through an industry project — not a student toy project — with real deliverables and solving real pains in the industry."

Mr Cher's exposure to other domains like IT Law, Service Innovation and Business Process Management gave him deeper and wider insights into the technology industry and an understanding of how various facets are interlinked.

His project sponsor was Chlorocode, a start-up founded by two ex-ISS students.

His final year project was to build an food and beverage (F&B) content management system that fostered interaction between outlets owners, foodies and bloggers.

Features of the system included outlet management, analytical dashboard for outlet performance, blogging and review writing.

To be in line with the latest industry's requirements, they leveraged the latest technologies — such as Angular JS, AWS, Spring REST, CI/CD and MongoDB — to build the system.

A boost at work

Upon graduation from the part-time MTech SE programme, Mr Cher joined GovTech's government digital services team as an API (application program interface) engineer.

His responsibilities include architecting API solutions for partner agencies, engineering the API gateway with security and quality policies, and advocating good API practices and governance within the Government.

He says: "The opportunity to get my hands 'dirty' by doing development work helped me to understand the technology stack in my current workplace, and gave me a head start.

"The MTech SE programme also helped to enhance my architectural thinking and improve my technical chops, which are useful when designing APIs and architecture with partner agencies."

Beyond hard skills, learning and acquiring more knowledge during the programme also better equipped him to strike meaningful conversations with associates within the technology community.

He says: "I enjoyed interacting with the lecturers who are thought leaders in their respective domains, and acquiring valuable industry insights from them.

"NUS-ISS is not just a place for studying and acquiring knowledge, it is also a place to foster friendships. I made a few good friends here, and recently, we travelled overseas together for a holiday."