



Feature Interview  
By Caroline Biebuyck

## Practical Experience: Views from the Ground

### Baker Tilly Hong Kong Limited: Authorised Employer

As one of Hong Kong's well-established accounting practices, Baker Tilly Hong Kong finds the QP scheme particularly relevant to its operations. "We have a specific direction when it comes to educating students," says Audit Senior Manager Edmond Chan, who is the member-in-charge of this authorised employer. "QP's philosophy and mechanisms are very similar to our own and this is part of what makes the programme so pertinent to us. We're very happy with the way in which the QP system



merges with our own – in fact, given the minimal differences between QP and our own system, our adoption of QP was a very smooth process."

He appreciates the way the practical experience framework (PEF) sets out a clear direction that the students need to follow, serving as an important checklist for the firm's students to monitor their training and development.

But Baker Tilly Hong Kong considers QP to be just as important to its recruitment of experienced staff. "The first question we ask on recruitment is whether the applicant has been through QP," says Edmond Chan. "This is very important to us as we find staff who have been through QP to be highly motivated, mainly since their studies were so focused."

Baker Tilly Hong Kong, which will be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year, currently employs around 200 professional staff. Of these, 35 are QP registered students. A sure sign of how QP is taking off within the firm can be gauged from counsellor figures. While the firm currently has five registered counsellors, it has recently applied to register another 11.

Edmond Chan enjoys counselling within the guidelines of the PEF. "The framework provides a clear direction for staff training and enables our counsellors to see how students are developing the competencies required," he explains. "It's good to work within a scheme that focuses both on technical and generic skills."



Given the firm's size, Edmond Chan has reasonably regular contact with most of his QP students through their audit assignments. "I monitor their progress when we are at jobs, through their job appraisals and by reviewing their technical training," he says. "In this way I can help them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and focus on any improvements that need to be made. Our face-to-face meetings, which take place every six months, give the students a good opportunity to air any learning difficulties they are facing so we can take measures to provide the correct support."

His experience as a counsellor leads him to believe that the firm's QP staff are committed to their career development. "They know that they need to pay good attention to their work over the three-year training period to ensure they get the right mix of assignments and so forth to meet the PEF requirements. Because of this, I find the QP students to be highly committed to their jobs. In fact they often ask for new, challenging work."

Edmond Chan is delighted about this, as it means the firm is recruiting the kind of people it wants. "I firmly believe that success comes to the person who takes the initiative," he asserts. "One of the key features of QP is that students need to be fully proactive in their training process, seeking advice and asking for our help when they need it. In this way development issues can be resolved in a timely and appropriate manner."

His other advice to students is that it's essential for them to keep their training records up to date. "This will help them to monitor what they have achieved and so as to help them determine what they still need to do. Our firm has a large variety of jobs and our students can get a good mix of experience. By keeping up-to-date training records they can make the most of the opportunities available to them."

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