

Personal Statement

I am the applicant ZHOU Heng. I have completed my Accounting and Corporate Finance programme and obtained my bachelor's degree at the University of Adelaide in July 2019, and was approved to attend a Honours Degree programme of Bachelor of Commerce at the Adelaide Business School which only recruited five accounting Honours students in the academic year of 2020. During the period, I gained a score of 83.75/100, which is equal to the First Class Honours, allowing me to undertake a PhD program in Australia. Along with my study process, I found my keen interest in learning the language of business. From my perspective, the financial information not only serves for internal managers making decisions, but also provides useful information for outside investors making investment decisions, and I hope that I can acquire those initial quality to be a masterful manager in the future.

Recently, I have completed my final thesis named *Board of Directors, Audit Committee Characteristics and Real Earnings Management: Evidence from Australia*. Because of the COVID-19 outbreak, I studied at home offshore and was independently working on this research in China. This research tests the validity of Australian Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendation issued by Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) corporate governance council, to assess the validity of policies in Australia. In particular, this study examines whether board of directors and audit committee attributes are associated with real earnings management in the Australian market by using a sample drawn from the ASX 300 list from 2011-2019. The empirical results provide some support to the appropriateness and effectiveness of existing Australian Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendation, and the evidence regarding the complementary association between board effectiveness and audit committee effectiveness could be adopted by policymakers to propose new recommendations in the future. I independently selected my research topic, collected all the data, raised hypotheses, and built the empirical models, such as two-way fixed effect model and interaction model, and finally wrote my thesis. This independent research changed my understanding of accounting and finance, and turned me into a self-learner. Moreover, it improved my ability to integrate all aspects, especially my execution capability.

Nevertheless, theory exists to explain phenomena, and theoretical research is oriented by solving practical problems. Therefore, I am eager to be part of the industry and apply the advanced theory learned in school into practice. Therefore, instead of being a researcher that engaged in business research and continue my PhD in Australia, I prefer to become a practical talent that occupied in financial industry. The January of 2019 witnessed my involvement in an internship at Ernst & Young Changsha. In this duration, I was involved in an internal control project for a listed media company. My main responsibility was to provide consultation service for internal control of its six subsidiary companies. The most interesting part of this job was to examine the executive situations with its staffs. During the monitoring, I found that some staffs made mistakes frequently due to the absence of paper evidence. I tried to talk with the staffs and manager face to face, and provided them my personal suggestions, which also improved my communication skills and critical thinking. Finally, my suggestions have been accepted, I was able to complete my job efficiently with high quality.

Months later, I was approved to work as a full-time intern at Hill + Knowlton Strategies Shanghai Branch. This three-month internship was another experience that evidenced my personal advantages and self-development. My professionalism in accounting was further enhanced, and my interpersonal skillset was refined, too. There were a dozen of interns at this company, but I was the only one that was assigned to work off office for daily

business because of my strong interpersonal skills. This internship confirmed my determination of embarking a career in financial industry. To sum up brief, those two internship experiences sharpened my academic skills, meanwhile enhanced my ability in consulting and team-working, which is needed for my future ideal position, a supportive manager.

Upon graduation, I would like to seek a manager-level position at one of the leading multinational companies, ideally, investment banks and consulting companies, such as Goldman Sachs, Deutsche, Boston, McKinsey& Company. I realized that though I am a university graduate student with professional financial knowledge and independent research ability, I am still lack of career and management skills. Therefore, I plan to pursue the Master of Global Management at Hong Kong University. More importantly, having a high-level professional skills and fruitful knowledge is a key point achieving my ambitious career planning. In general, prestigious university like the University of Hong Kong is able to provide me a solid platform because of your high standard level of teaching and high reputation.