

PUN KATE CRUZ

HONG KONG, CHINA

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

My desire to study the world of information technology didn't start out the same as that of my peers. While others mostly pursue this field because they are passionate about computers and alike, I embarked on this road to become a cybersecurity specialist in the future. I first became vividly aware of the dangers lurking in the internet world when my favourite social-storytelling app got hacked back in 2020, where numerous user data was leaked to the invader. This incident highlighted the importance of understanding the vulnerability of personal data in both the real and virtual worlds and became my motivation to pursue a career in the tech world and to contribute to ensuring the safety and integrity of information.

Knowing that I had fallen short in DSE, I didn't give up my ambition. Instead, I reflected on the reasons why I didn't perform as well as I should have. I didn't wallow in depression and self-blame; I focused on improving my shortcomings and strengthening my strengths. My time at HKCC helped me develop better study habits and mental mindsets. I try to strive for work-life balance and manage my time better. Knowing that I have a terrible habit of procrastinating, I planned my studies ahead of time. Feelings of nervousness before exams are somewhat of a bad habit of mine. To combat this, I began doing self-meditation and journaling, hoping it would help me understand how to feel less nervous and calm myself when I panic. To better equip myself, I joined various activities that helped me develop the necessary skills, such as computing, problem-solving, leadership ability, teamwork skills, etc.

Having a rather shallow amount of IT knowledge, I decided to study information technology as my major in hopes of building up my foundational knowledge. Other than just immersing myself in my studies, I find myself joining various IT-related learning events, like the Microsoft AI Certified Fundamentals, FinTech Introduction Workshop, etc. In my free time, I would attend an online self-learning course that taught the basics of computer science, such as algorithms and networking systems. I also study different programming languages, such as C# and HTML, and build up my projects. Even though it was difficult to self-teach myself to code, I never gave up and remained persistent in my pursuit of being an all-rounded programmer. These experiences help foster my IT knowledge and practice my programming skills.

No decent IT technician is without practical experience. Since May 2023, I have been working at United Overseas Bank as a part-time project administrator/IT helpdesk support contracted under EasTech Limited. My main duty is to assist with IT project coordination, planning, and execution, which includes tasks like maintaining project documentation, updating project status reports, and so on. My time at UOB HK allowed me to gain insights into what the actual IT work field may look like. I was able to apply the previously learned knowledge and polish my skills, from Excel to minor programming and utilisation of the SharePoint site.

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Outside of my academics and work, I participated in the Leadership and Communication: Student Ambassador Programme 2022–23, organised by HKCC, to enhance my interpersonal and teamwork skills. I served as MC at college events and hosted campus tours. These skills are crucial for an IT technician, as they require adaptability, active listening, and a shared goal to build perfect programs. Beside leadership skills, the scheme provided me an opportunity to work on my public speaking skills, which are crucial for IT technicians when they need to introduce products and minimise misunderstandings from users. It offers chances for promotion, influencing projects, and career advancement. As an introvert, joining the scheme helped me overcome speaking challenges, serve as an MC, and encourage crowd engagement.

If I were to sum up what kind of person I am, I would describe myself as a lifelong learner, driven by the pursuit of personal growth and passion. Whether it is in the school environment or not, I find myself seeking ways to improve myself, whether it be academic or intrapersonal. To fulfil my dream of becoming a cybersecurity specialist, I worked hard in numerous areas to better equip myself.