

# UNDERSTANDING MANAGEMENT

Grace Guo is Ernst & Young's learning and development leader for Greater China. Having worked in finance before moving into learning and development, she finds the skills and training acquired as a CGMA designation holder are transferrable to her work designing and delivering training programmes for staff across the region.

Grace started her career as an audit assistant at multinational professional services firm, Ernst & Young (known as EY). Over the course of five years, she became one of its signing auditors for China. As part of her personal continuous development, she also studied with CIMA, becoming a member in 2005. What she learned proved to be very complementary to her work and to the philosophy that EY holds both towards its clients and its staff.

“When you are carrying out an audit, being able to think and interpret data from the viewpoint of the management team gives you a common language on which to base your recommendations,” says Grace. “At EY, we believe that the quality of an audit depends on how accurately you can identify risk, not just in finance but also in the broader operation of the business. This philosophy is embedded into our methodology. To identify the risk areas to which a specific client is exposed, you need to understand their business. As a CGMA, not only do I have an understanding of how management views financial data. I also have the business acumen that allows me to think like corporate management.”



**Grace Guo**

ACMA, CGMA

learning and development  
leader for Greater China

## Grace's top tips:

- Management mind set is very important - think strategically.
- Keep learning – the journey of development never stops.
- Embrace all change.
- Be bold enough to step outside your comfort zone.
- Drive your career and manage your experience, consolidate your knowledge to create synergy for growth.
- Build up strong practical training, but back it up with ongoing studies to maximise your learning experience.

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## All change

In 2005, Grace shifted the focus of her career. She was seconded as a trainer to EY's learning and development team and spent several years working as a professional trainer, course content developer and programme designer. In 2010, she was appointed as learning leader for EY Greater China's assurance service line. She began her current role, responsible for all five of the firm's service lines (assurance - including financial audit; advisory; tax; transaction and advisory services; and core business services) in 2012. Today Grace manages a team of 50, whose remit covers over 11,000 EY staff in the Greater China region.

Her role is to put into practice EY's passion for helping its people reach their goals and achieve their potential. She develops and delivers training through EYU, an in-house career development framework that EY has created to make sure that its staff progress and thrive. The framework consists of three core elements, the so-called 'pillars of EYU': learning; experience; and coaching. Performance goals, aligned with team objectives, are agreed for each person and regular feedback is given throughout the year to help keep them on track. As a CGMA, Grace herself has benefitted from a similarly holistic approach to learning.

"At EY, we are proud of the mutual commitment we have with our people to achieve their potential," says Grace. "Being a CGMA, I have experienced first-hand how important it is to have both practical and theoretical skills. At EY, we offer a range of teaching experiences. Classroom-based courses cover specific areas of expertise and knowledge. At the same time, we manage our staff's experiences so they can learn through their work, rather than doing the same tasks day-in and day-out. These experiences vary, leading staff in different directions as they pursue their career goals, and may account for up to 70 per cent of someone's personal development. We also offer coaching to enrich our people's careers and deliver the best results for clients. This can take the form of on-the-job mentoring or regular career conversations with a counsellor."

## Continuing benefit

Even though Grace no longer has a role in finance, she still puts the training she received as a CGMA to good use.

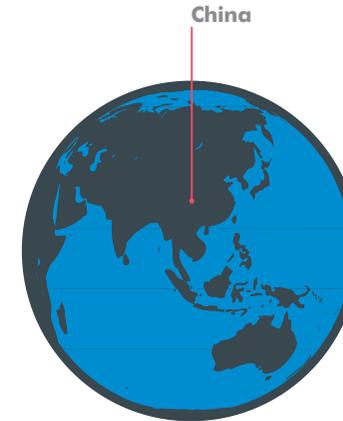
"Now that I am in a learning and development role rather than finance, my CGMA skills are just as useful," says Grace. "The analysis and decision-making skills come in to play on a daily basis, for example when I'm considering which vendor, programme or solution to go for, or carrying out the necessary investment appraisals and project assessments. What's more, I have found that the skills CGMAs learn are actually relevant to the learning needs of EY staff in certain of our service lines. I keep up with the CGMA resources, such as webinars, publications and courses. Sometimes, where our own internal global learning network does not cover a particular area, I have used these course materials to build up the competency of my staff."

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## GRACE GUO'S CAREER PATH



- Audit assistant at EY
- Signing auditor at EY
- Became a member of CIMA in 2005
- Seconded to EY's learning and development team as a professional trainer (2005)
- Learning leader for EY Greater China's assurance service line (2010)
- Learning and development leader for Greater China, responsible for all 5 service lines (2012)

## Financial expertise and business insight

### About the CGMA designation

Success in today's highly competitive business landscape requires insight and innovation.

The Chartered Global Management Accountant® (CGMA®) designation recognises the most talented and committed management accountants who combine core financial skills with business acumen to drive strong business performance. CGMA professionals are either AICPA members with qualifying management accounting experience or associate or fellow members of the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants.

CGMA designation holders are helping many of the world's leading organisations achieve sustainable business success.



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