Hyun Choi

Country: Korea
Course: Diploma of Information Technology (Networking)
Institute: TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute, Petersham College

Hyun Choi took an English course at SITEC in Ultimo, then went to TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute, Petersham College, to study a Diploma of Information Technology (Networking). His Diploma gave him credit towards a bachelor's degree at UTS, where he then continued his study.

Hyun Choi was an excellent student. He has won three important awards for his work:
- the Institute award for International Student of the Year
- first prize in the NSW Cisco competition (as part of the Petersham College team)
- second prize in the Australia and New Zealand Cisco competition (as part of the Petersham College team)

How do you feel about winning the International Student of the Year Award?

I can't believe it even now! I studied really hard and it feels like it's all been worth it!

Why did you choose to study your course at Petersham College?

I actually started studying at university in Korea, but this was disrupted by my military service. During my time in the army I was involved with telecommunications and enjoyed this work. It's a bad time for people in Information Technology in Korea, and my aunt, who lives in Sydney, suggested I visit Australia and consider studying here. When I came out the only English words I knew were "hi", and "I love you"! So when I decided to stay here, the first thing I did was enrol at Ultimo to learn English. This was a wonderful experience, and from this I decided to study Information Technology (Networking) and the Cisco Networking Academy Program.

What was the overall experience of studying like?

I loved studying at Petersham College. It's a very different education system to the one we have in Korea. There the teacher is like a god and he talks whilst you listen. Here, I felt that the teachers were my friends. I was encouraged to ask questions and there was free communication. All of this made it easy to study and to learn.

What was the highlight of your time at Petersham?

I really enjoyed working in a team. In fact I was in the Petersham team that won first prize in the NSW Cisco competition, and came second in the Australia and New Zealand Cisco competition. In the team we basically had to be trouble shooters and how to quickly solve the problems put in front of us. We beat UTS – but since I'm going to UTS now I better not gloat too much about that!

I also enjoyed becoming involved in the Student Association at Petersham College, and an added benefit was that it gave me more time to practise my English. Getting better at speaking English was one of the reasons I chose a home with people who were not from Korea!

What did you like best about the teachers?

I had wonderful teachers. There was one teacher who I wasn't sure about at first. I was frustrated because he didn't give me answers straight away, but I soon understood that this was his teaching strategy. He became my best teacher since he made me learn the skills to find the answers myself. I cannot speak highly enough of the support and knowledge of my teachers.

Did you receive any credit at university for your Diploma?

My Diploma has given me exemptions of one and a half semesters at UTS where I'm doing a Bachelor in Information Technology.

Has studying networking helped you to progress your chosen career?

Yes, most definitely. The TAFE NSW course has been practical and given me the confidence and skills to work in the industry. Although I'm now studying at UTS it is a lot more theoretical than TAFE NSW and I actually value the TAFE NSW learning more. I would recommend the TAFE NSW course to anyone who is interested in obtaining hands-on skills.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

I would definitely like to be working in the information technology industry. Living in Australia now I consider it my home and I am very happy here.

My short term goal is to be a network engineer after graduating from university. I like to have hands-on experience - applying knowledge which I have learnt at TAFE NSW and uni to work situations.

My medium term goal is to be a network administrator after I gain enough hands-on experience as a network engineer.

My long term goal is that I want to be a teacher like my teachers at TAFE NSW – Sydney Institute, Petersham college. I would like to share the knowledge which I'll gain from work as a network engineer and administrator.