International student leverages STEM master's degree to launch professional services career

February 10, 2026



Shanghai native Jocelyn Zhang landed a job in Deloitte's Audit and Assurance practice after graduating from the Freeman School's five-year BSM/MACCT program.

Jocelyn Zhang (BSM/MACCT ’23) likens her job to detective work.

As an audit and assurance senior with Deloitte, Zhang probes financial statements for errors and red flags, verifying that the numbers are accurate and not materially misstated.

“I’m a big-picture person, so the meticulous nature of audit was an adjustment,” she says. “Being here has trained me to be more detail oriented, work in teams and present to clients — all skills I wanted to develop.”

Zhang credits the five-year BSM/Master of Accounting program at Tulane University’s Freeman School of Business with helping her to fast-track her education and achieve her goal of working in the United States.

A native of Shanghai, Zhang chose Tulane for the flexibility to explore both business and pre-med as a first-year student. After completing her freshman year online due to Covid, she arrived on campus in the fall of 2021 and quickly realized that business, rather than medicine, was her true calling.

“I was a finance and molecular biology student for my first two years, but then organic chemistry hit me,” she laughs. “I love biology, but I wasn’t sure if I wanted to do chemistry that much. After a long time thinking and strategizing about my future plans, I ended up sticking with finance. A key selling point was the five-year BSM/MACCT.”

The Freeman School’s BSM/MACCT program enables students to add a Master of Accounting to their undergraduate business degree with just one additional year of study, saving time and tuition. The program offers the added benefit of fulfilling the 150-credit-hour requirement needed to earn a CPA license.

“There’s a lot of overlap between finance major and accounting classes, so by junior year, I’d finished most of my finance classes along with some of the accounting classes as well,” she says. “It was so time efficient — two degrees in five years.”

Charles Lundelius, managing director of the Capital Markets Accounting Practice at BRG and a supporter of the program, says the Master of Accounting's integration of accounting and finance makes it especially valuable for students.

"Having had the opportunity to guest lecture in both finance and accounting classes at Freeman, I can say that the program’s incorporation of financial concepts into the accounting program is not only helpful but essential as accounting standards emphasize fair value and as financial instruments to be fair valued become ever more complex," he says. "Freeman’s multidisciplinary approach is critical to anyone heading into the accounting profession."

And for international students in particular, having a master's degree can also be critical. With a bachelor’s degree, international students are typically eligible one year of Optional Practical Training (OPT) before needing an H-1B work visa. Because Freeman’s Master of Accounting is a STEM-designated program, however,

international graduates are eligible for up to three years of OPT, increasing their chances in the H-1B lottery.

“Every year that you work in the U.S., your employer can sponsor you and apply for an H-1B,” Zhang explains. “With three years of OPT, that’s two more chances than you’d have with just one.”

Zhang interned with Deloitte following her junior year and loved working in Washington D.C., so when the firm offered her a full-time position in audit following her graduation, she took it.

Deloitte sponsored her for an H-1B visa in her very first year. She wasn’t selected in the first lottery, but she received her H-1B the following year.

“That’s how I benefited from the Master of Accounting program,” she says. “I’m very appreciative of.”

While getting an H-1B isn’t a guarantee for graduates, Zhang encourages international students to broaden their networks and get involved on campus to build their skills and confidence.

“A lot of international students stay in the international student bubble,” she says. “I joined Alpha Kappa Psi (AKPsi), the business fraternity, and learned a lot from my brothers. I also joined the International Students Advisory Board. The Office of International Students and Scholars has a lot of ways for international students to get involved at Tulane.”

While Zhang is happy in her current role, she is also planning ahead. She’s getting married next year and hopes to eventually transition into financial planning.

“I want to own my own company one day, so I’m focused on building project management skills over the next two or three years,” she says. “I love working, as you can probably tell by my resume. I did the five-year program in three-and-a-half years. I love being efficient.”