

Profile

Tax Manager,
Singapore

Lilac was awarded DITT
in October 2025

Qualifications

DITT

Lilac Chong



Interview

Tell us about your current role, career so far and how did you first start working in tax?

I am a Tax Manager specialising in GST (Goods and Services Tax), focusing on Singapore GST compliance, client servicing, and project management. My role encompasses tax automation initiatives and process improvement areas I'm particularly passionate about.

My tax journey began over a decade ago in Kuala Lumpur at a Big 4 firm, where I worked in Corporate Tax handling statutory filings and tax computations. I then transitioned to Indirect Tax, starting with UK VAT, which opened my eyes to the complexities and opportunities in indirect taxation. Over the years, I expanded my expertise across multiple jurisdictions, managing VAT/GST returns for the UK, Norway, Denmark, and APAC countries including Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, UAE, Oman, Indonesia, and Thailand. This exposure to diverse indirect tax systems across different regulatory environments has been invaluable.

What area of tax do you work in and how did the tax technology qualification help you in your day-to-day job?

I work in GST, and I have witnessed a remarkable evolution in how we prepare and file tax returns. When I started my career, the process was predominantly paper-based. Now everything is digital and paperless.

In every task and project, we now leverage technology to simplify and streamline processes. Early in my career, we used Excel macros to automate repetitive tasks. Today, the landscape has expanded dramatically to include sophisticated tax technology solutions.

The DITT qualification has been instrumental in understanding the breadth of available technologies and how to evaluate and implement them effectively. Module 2.3 on tax engines helped me appreciate how calculation accuracy can be improved through automation. Module 3.1 on data analytics opened my eyes to how we can extract meaningful insights from tax data to provide strategic advice to clients rather than just compliance services.

What motivated you to undertake this qualification?

My primary motivation was my passion for tax technology combined with the recognition that globally, we are transitioning to Tax Administration 3.0. I was eager to understand the various methodologies and tools available to facilitate this transformation effectively.

Additionally, since the UK was my first exposure to VAT and remains a leading jurisdiction in tax digitalisation through initiatives like Making Tax Digital (MTD), I was excited to deepen my understanding of HMRC's strategies.

Module 1.3 extensively covers MTD and its phased implementation, providing insights I can adapt to my current work in Singapore.

What are your observations on the syllabus, learning experience, assessment questions and touchpoint communications?

The syllabus is comprehensive and strategically structured, progressing logically from foundational concepts in Module 1 (Understanding the Tax Technology Landscape) to practical applications in Modules 2 and 3 (Tax Technology Solutions and Data Analytics). This progression allowed me to build knowledge incrementally.

The learning experience was enhanced by real world case studies, interactive elements and current relevance like AI in tax, blockchain application and evolving digital reporting requirements. The assessment questions were well designed to test not just theoretical knowledge but also the ability to apply concepts to practical scenarios. This application-based approach was particularly valuable.

What stood out in terms of learning and skills you have developed as a result of studying the DITT?

I've developed several key competencies through this qualification:

Strategic Technology Evaluation: Module 2.2 on selecting and implementing tax technology taught me a structured framework for evaluating different solutions based on organisational needs, integration capabilities, and ROI considerations.

Data Analytics Capabilities: Module 3 transformed my understanding of how tax data can be leveraged beyond compliance. I've learned to use data visualisation tools to identify trends, anomalies, and opportunities for tax optimisation.

Change Management Understanding: Module 2.5 on managing technology implementation highlighted the human and organisational aspects of digital transformation. I now recognise that successful tax technology adoption requires not just technical implementation but also stakeholder engagement, training, and change management strategies.

Cross-jurisdictional Digital Perspective: The course's global outlook helped me understand how digital tax administration is evolving differently across jurisdictions, enabling me to anticipate future developments in the markets I serve.

Most importantly, I've developed a "technology-first" mindset. I now instinctively consider how technology can enhance efficiency, accuracy, and value delivery in every project I undertake.

How did you manage studying and working at the same time?

I took more than a year to complete the diploma while maintaining my full-time role as a Tax Manager. Balancing both requires deliberate time management strategies.

My advice to others would be to:

- Set realistic timelines that account for work pressures
- Establish a consistent study routine early on eg listen to modules during morning commute
- Don't hesitate to use annual leave strategically for exam preparation
- Communicate with employers about your study commitments to gain their support

Do you have any guidance on how best to approach the learning material?

The learning materials are thoughtfully designed with practical examples accompanying every theoretical concept, which significantly aids comprehension. I'd recommend:

1. Ensuring you understand each modules objectives; this helps you see how individual concepts connect to the broader picture.



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2. Engage with the examples such as jurisdiction-specific case studies and Technology implementation scenarios, as these bring abstract concepts to life.
 3. Consider how each section applies to your current role or jurisdiction. This personal connection deepens understanding and aids retention.
 4. Create one-page summaries of each module in my own words, focusing on how I could apply the concepts in my work. This synthesis reinforced learning.
 5. Leverage supplementary resources: The course references various industry publications, OECD guidelines, and jurisdiction-specific resources to enrich understanding.

Which module did you enjoy the most and what were the most relevant to your current role?

Module 3: Tax Data and Analytics was my favorite and most immediately applicable to my current role. This module transformed how I perceive the value tax professionals can deliver. Rather than viewing GST compliance as purely a reporting obligation, I now see the data we collect as a strategic asset.

How do you think this programme will benefit the profession?

This programme addresses a critical competency gap in the tax profession. As tax administrations globally move toward Tax Administration 3.0 characterised by real-time reporting, data analytics, and automated compliance tax professionals must evolve from being purely technical tax advisors to technology-enabled strategic partners.

Specific benefits include:

1. Future-Proofing Skills: The programme equips tax professionals with the digital skills necessary to remain relevant as automation handles routine compliance tasks, enabling us to focus on higher-value advisory services.
2. Common Language with IT: Module 2 provides tax professionals with sufficient technical literacy to communicate effectively with IT departments and technology vendors, bridging a gap that often hinders successful implementation.
3. Strategic Value Enhancement: By understanding data analytics and technology capabilities, tax professionals can position themselves as strategic advisors who use data-driven insights to inform business decisions, not just compliance operators.
4. Quality and Efficiency Improvements: The programme teaches systematic approaches to process improvement through technology, directly benefiting both practitioners and their clients through reduced errors, faster turnaround times, and lower costs.
5. Global Standardisation: As the programme covers international developments in digital tax administration, it creates a shared knowledge base among tax professionals globally, facilitating better collaboration across jurisdictions.

Ultimately, this qualification elevates the entire profession by establishing tax technology literacy as a core competency rather than a niche specialisation.

Would you recommend this programme to others?

Absolutely, I would strongly recommend this programme to fellow tax professionals, particularly those who work in Indirect Tax/VAT/GST, are curious about tax technology, work across multiple jurisdictions and aspire to advisory roles.

The investment of time and effort is significant, but the return in terms of enhanced capabilities, career differentiation, and ability to deliver greater value to clients is substantial. Moreover, the DITT credential signals to employers and clients that you possess specialised expertise in an area of growing importance.

What kept you motivated throughout the programme?

Several factors sustained my motivation during the 12+ month journey:

1. Immediate Applicability: Almost every module contained concepts or tools I could immediately apply in my work.
2. Career Differentiation: Completing the DITT would distinguish me in an increasingly competitive market and open doors to specialised roles.
3. Future-Focused Mindset: Understanding that the profession is evolving rapidly and that traditional tax skills alone may not be sufficient in five or ten years has created a sense of urgency and purpose.

When motivation waned during particularly busy work periods, I reminded myself of the long-term career benefits and the unique opportunity to gain structured expertise in a field I'm passionate about.

Any words of wisdom to future candidates thinking of studying the DITT?

Having completed this journey, here are my key recommendations for prospective candidates:

- Start with a clear motivation in mind
- Plan your time realistically, budget 12-18 months to complete alongside full-time work
- Engage with the content; apply concepts to your real work rather than just consuming information
- Look for opportunities to apply what you've learnt at your workplace, to demonstrate value to your employer
- Reflect on how each modules interconnect
- Prepare for assessments with practice questions
- Embrace the technology mindset.

Finally, remember that completing the DITT doesn't mark the end of your tax technology learning journey it provides the foundation for continuous growth in this dynamic field. The tax technology landscape evolves rapidly, so commit to ongoing learning beyond the qualification.

The profession needs more tax professionals with technology literacy. By pursuing this qualification, you're not only investing in your own career but also contributing to the evolution of the tax profession as a whole.

Good luck on your DITT journey!

