



Photo: Domino Postiglione

**PROFILE** Marzena Szmigielska: master of commerce, Raffles College

MARZENA Szmigielska studies at night, works part-time and saves the weekend for her six-year-old daughter and husband.

She says she hasn't had a spare moment since starting her master of commerce last October.

Still, Szmigielska, who majors in management at Raffles College of Design and Commerce, manages to score distinctions. Her secret is not impeccable time management, nor the drive to start her own marketing business. She says it's her husband's home cooking.

"I'm an organised person," she says but adds: "I have a very loving husband and daughter and they keep me going."

Szmigielska worked as a marketing manager in Poland before moving to Australia seven years ago. She had put her plans of postgraduate studies aside until she had perfected English and secured a job in her new country.

Once settled, Szmigielska started shopping around for a good course to help her acquire the skills of running a small business. But being a working mother, the 32-year-old had to find a college close to her home and workplace, where she works 20 hours a week as a marketing supervisor.

Macquarie University was on the cards before a friend who worked at Raffles College told her about the postgraduate degree in commerce. Szmigielska was sold.

Having completed her bachelor's degree in marketing in Poland, Szmigielska noticed differences between the two countries' higher education systems and structuring.

Back home there were no semester breaks, a larger number of subjects and no electives.

Szmigielska prefers studying in Australia but there is one setback for her.

"There are less subjects to cover and more flexibility – it's much better," she says. "But, on the other hand, it is in another language."

Szmigielska believes she may also be the oldest in the class but says it's no big deal. She enjoys the class discussions and now has little trouble keeping up with the language.

When exams and assessment deadlines hit, life is a little less enjoyable but Szmigielska has a simple formula to achieve high marks.

"If you attend the class and focus on what the teacher says, you should have no trouble," she says.

Set to graduate in April, Szmigielska believes completing her masters is vital for her to achieve her future goal.

She says choosing two subjects each semester instead of three is manageable and more beneficial for her learning.

"I try to take as much knowledge from my course to later help me run my own company," she says.

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**Wednesday 23 September**

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- 10am – 1pm Computer Science and Engineering

**Thursday 24 September**

- 2pm – 5pm Civil and Environmental Engineering

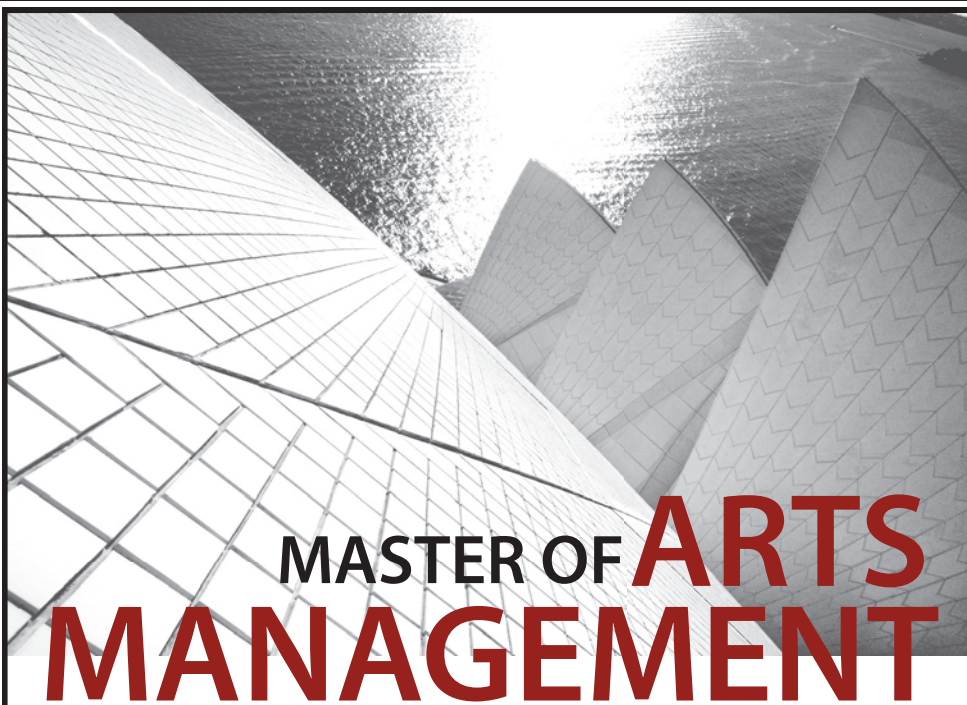
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