

SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2023



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Having a HEART for the silver generation

Whether it is learning to converse in a Chinese dialect or supporting caregivers, Community Care scholar Lee Shi Pian aspires to forge deeper connections with seniors through her work as a medical social worker



Ms Lee and her paternal grandmother, who is her motivation for learning Hokkien. PHOTO: LEE SHI PIAN

Ms Lee Shi Pian's paternal grandmother would laugh whenever Ms Lee tried to practise what she learnt during her weekly conversational Hokkien lessons.

The lessons, which also include Cantonese and Malay, are part of the activities offered by the Singapore Healthcare Society (SHS) to better prepare healthcare students for work after they complete their studies. The SHS is a society started by MOH Holdings (MOHH) to provide a platform for allied health, pharmacy and nursing scholars to interact with one another and build support networks.

In Ms Lee's case, she wants to be able to connect better not only with the elderly in her family, but also with the seniors whom she would be serving in her role as a medical social worker in future.

Currently in her third year pursuing a bachelor's degree in social work at the National University of Singapore (NUS), the 22-year-old is a recipient of the Community Care Scholarship administered by MOHH, in partnership with the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC).

In the same Hokkien class as her are students from other healthcare fields like allied health, pharmacy and nursing.

"No one else in my Hokkien class was studying social work," she says. "So it was a good chance to learn about my peers' courses, which is important since healthcare is interdisciplinary."

Singapore's Healthier SG initiative
Citing how the Government's Healthier SG initiative – which focuses on preventive care and supports residents to lead healthier lifestyles – aligns with her interest, Ms Lee seeks to play an active role in helping Singapore's seniors maintain good health and age in place within the community.

"I feel drawn towards community care

because I see value and purpose in putting my hands to the work that needs to be done so as to meet the increasing healthcare needs of our fast-ageing population," she says.

Social work was something she had always been interested in because it offers her opportunities to grow while making a difference in other people's lives.

"I wanted to learn something that would allow me to develop my people skills," she says, about her academic choice.

"Social work was a course that would equip me with tangible and actionable skills that would result in my personal growth and could be applied to my personal life as well."

Witnessing her older sister's personal growth journey after she became a medical social worker was another reason Ms Lee chose social work.

She affectionately shares that her sister has become more patient and understanding after entering the workforce. Her sister now plays the role of a mediator whenever family members get into disagreements and helps Ms Lee understand others' perspectives.

Ms Lee became more curious about social work and eventually decided on the same profession as her sister. After all, it gives one "many lenses to see the world and the skills to interact with others", she says.

"I want to do a job in which I can channel my energy and passion, and

I see value and purpose in putting my hands to the work that needs to be done so as to meet the increasing healthcare needs of our fast-ageing population.

MS LEE SHI PIAN
RECIPIENT OF THE COMMUNITY CARE SCHOLARSHIP

take pride in being able to help people," she adds.

She was halfway through her social work studies at NUS when she found out about the Mid-Term Community Care Scholarship.

Wanting to relieve the financial burden on her father – who is the sole breadwinner of her family of seven, with three children in university – she applied for the scholarship.

"On hindsight, I think the scholarship search and application process were a way of taking ownership of my future career path," she says.

So far, the scholarship has given her opportunities to interact with stakeholders in the healthcare sector such as leaders, professionals and her peers, which has allowed her to understand more about Singapore's healthcare scene and its future growth.

Anticipating the needs of caregivers

Her personal experience with her late maternal grandmother also gave her insights into the challenges that families and caregivers face.

Her own family and their helper were the main caregivers of her grandmother who was living with dementia.

"By witnessing the care given to my grandma, I have a better understanding of how big of an undertaking caregiving is and how caregiving can influence family dynamics," she says.

As a result, she hopes to offer the caregivers she works with some comfort in knowing that she can empathise with their emotional and practical needs.

After she completes her studies next year, Ms Lee will start work at St. Andrew's Community Hospital (SACH) as a medical social worker. She hopes to learn from more

3 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE COMMUNITY CARE SCHOLARSHIP

- Candidates can apply either for the Full-Term scholarship before entering university, or the Mid-Term scholarship if they are currently pursuing a relevant health science degree.
- The scholarship, which is offered by MOH Holdings, covers courses in four healthcare disciplines: physiotherapy, occupational therapy, medical social work and speech therapy.
- Existing allied health professionals can pursue a degree conversion course under the scholarship at local or approved overseas universities.



Scan for more on the Community Care Scholarship.

experienced colleagues and grow to be as proficient as they are.

She is also excited at the prospect of working with other care team members such as doctors, nurses and allied health professionals – both within and beyond SACH – to provide the best care and experience for patients.

To others considering social work as a profession, she advises them to focus on understanding each client's unique situation and help every client to make the best of his or her circumstances.

"With this in mind, I hope to remain curious about my future patients and reflect on how I can do better in my role as a medical social worker – understanding each individual patient's needs, addressing their concerns and journeying with them to work towards their healthcare goals," says Ms Lee.

COMMUNITY CARE IN SINGAPORE

Singapore's Healthier SG strategy focuses on preventive healthcare as the population ages rapidly. By 2030, around one in four citizens will be aged 65 and above.

As such, the strategy involves fostering community partnerships to build an integrated health and social ecosystem to support residents as they age.

Singapore is developing a network of community care professionals to meet the changing and varied needs of seniors. Nurturing an alliance of like-minded practitioners, like allied health professionals, nurses and community care organisations such as St. Andrew's Community Hospital (SACH) can better effect transformative care.

The community care sector is in need of more healthcare talents and newcomers, like Ms Lee



Ms Lee is looking forward to learning more from the medical resources and experienced colleagues when she starts work at SACH as a medical social worker after graduating next year. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

Shi Pian (above), to join the community care sector. They can look forward to many career pathways and developmental opportunities in the sector.

Through the award of the Community Care Scholarship and Community Nursing Scholarship, AIC is partnering with MOHH to develop future leaders for the sector.

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Ms Lee (top left, pictured with her NUS classmates) says she is drawn to social work because it offers her opportunities to grow and to make a difference in other people's lives. PHOTO: LEE SHI PIAN

The Straits Times
Scholars' Choice 2023: SECTION 1

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How can we, the next generation of engineers, enhance the rail transport system for even smoother journeys?

MR HAIQAL ANWAR
Recipient of the SGRail Industry Scholarship

Scan for more on the SGRail Industry Scholarship.

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/WINSTON CHUANG

Ensuring a smooth ride every day

Even small contributions have a huge and lasting impact, as this SGRail Industry scholar has discovered

By Mary Wu

No idea is too small at public transport operator SMRT Trains (SMRT). Even new staff have the same opportunities as veterans to make a real impact. This was what executive engineer Haiqal Anwar experienced within the first two months of joining the Rolling Stock division at SMRT in July 2022. Though fresh from school, he was able to apply what he learnt and contribute to improving a key safety invention for trains. With the help of computer-aided drawing and 3D printing tools, the 25-year-old worked with his teammates from the Preventive Maintenance unit to come up with a second iteration of a safety tool which is used to unlatch the train's Current Collector Device (CCD) carbon shoe. The CCD works by transferring electricity from the power line to the train. The first version has already been implemented while the second version that Mr Haiqal had a hand in designing is in its prototype stage. With the proposed tweaks, version two will enhance operational efficiency. "I am glad to have had the opportunity to take part in this development and apply the knowledge that I had acquired in school such as Mechanics of Materials to help improve the design," he says. "Our mentors and supervisors are supportive of us. They empower us to make incremental changes to workflow processes for efficiency's sake."

Mr Haiqal is now with the Preventive Maintenance team at Thomson-East Coast Line (TEL) that connects commuters between the north, central and eastern parts of Singapore. Among other things, his job responsibilities include improving Work Instructions (WI) – quick reference pictorial guides – so that ground maintenance crew can complete their jobs with more clarity and efficiency. These WIs cover the checking of headlights, wheels and air-conditioning system to the annual gear oil change – which keeps the train's gears lubricated – and the replacement of the CCD carbon shoe when necessary. **Developing his expertise** Mr Haiqal studied aeronautical engineering at polytechnic. However, his fascination with the train system continued to grow over time, especially during the daily commute from his home in Tampines to Singapore Polytechnic in Dover. It spurred him to apply for the mid-term Singapore Rail (SGRail) Industry Scholarship in 2020 and pivot to mechanical engineering for his bachelor's at Nanyang Technological University. "My intrigue and passion for the rail industry grew over the years," he says. "I thought to myself: How can we, the next generation of engineers, enhance the rail transport system for even smoother journeys?" His passion deepened during a

three-month summer internship with SMRT in 2021. Then, he was attached to the Rolling Stock Engineering department that serviced the North-South and East-West Lines. He visited the train depot and was exposed to other departments such as signalling, power systems and track maintenance. He joined SMRT full time after graduation in July 2022. Right now, Mr Haiqal is laser-focused on amassing practical hands-on experience to achieve his goal of becoming a chartered engineer in the next five to seven years. Having this formal recognition will give him an edge in his career. "Since secondary school, I've always been interested in understanding how mechanical systems work, and how different sub-systems interact with each other," he says. The SGRail Industry Scholarship also gave him the chance to work in both the public and private sectors of the rail industry. As part of the programme, Mr Haiqal will be seconded to the Land Transport Authority (LTA) for two years. "With the SGRail Industry Scholarship, you will have the opportunity to gain perspectives from the transport regulator, and also contribute to a public transport operator – like me at SMRT – where you can play a part in establishing a world-class transportation service that is safe, reliable and customer-centric."



I hope to make environmental communication more research-based and approachable, to maximise both reach and impact.

MS RACHEL HAN
Recipient of the SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award

Scan for more on the SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award.

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/WINSTON CHUANG

Less waste, more gain

SMU scholar and environmental start-up co-founder wants sustainability to become Singaporeans' way of life

By Audrey Ang

When she noticed the massive amount of packaging waste generated from her family's e-commerce orders in just one week during the circuit breaker in 2020, Ms Rachel Han was inspired to find ways to repurpose them. A month later, the 21-year-old co-founded environmental start-up Package Pals with two other like-minded friends. "Package Pals is a circular packaging initiative that seeks to eliminate e-commerce packaging waste through second-hand packaging," explains Ms Han. The start-up collects used packaging before it ends up in waste bins and distributes them to online businesses for reuse, thus reducing the need for new packaging. Ms Han and her co-founders also conduct educational talks, workshops and events, and post informative content on their social media platforms to create awareness about sustainable living. "Sustainability has to become a mindset and a lifestyle," says Ms Han. "There is no point in 'offsetting' huge hauls of fast fashion clothing with carbon credits when there is no fundamental change to our habits or system." She may only be a second-year student at Singapore Management University (SMU), but Ms Han is already halfway to achieving her dream of making a meaningful impact on the world. As someone who wants to influence and inspire others, Ms Han actively seeks opportunities where she can be exposed to new experiences that broaden her views and perspectives. This was one of the main reasons why she applied for the SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award. What appealed to her was the emphasis on global exposure with opportunities for overseas exchange programmes. Currently pursuing a double degree in Bachelor of Social Science and Business Management, with a second major in Urban Sustainability and Innovation, Ms Han wanted to study the nuances of human behaviour while gaining business management skills that can help grow her start-up. "A value I saw in my double degree was in bridging the gap between the meaningful causes many social organisations have and the lack of business knowledge to optimise their processes," she says. **Honing her passion** Under the SMU scholarship, she also had the opportunity to participate in the Pembroke Cambridge Summer Programme (PCSP) at the University of Cambridge last year. Experiencing seminar-style lessons and interacting with students from around the world were some of the best parts of the PCSP programme, says Ms Han. She also took a materials science course, a subject not offered at SMU, to better understand the packaging materials she handles in her business and equip herself with technical knowledge that might prove useful for innovation in future. As for her goals after she graduates, Ms Han says: "I would first like to create a reimagined, lower-waste e-commerce packaging scene in Singapore. Then I hope to make environmental communication more research-based and approachable, to maximise both reach and impact. "Ultimately, be it at individual, industry or political levels, I hope that sustainability becomes a central value and way of life rather than a secondary factor for consideration".

What to know about the SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award

- It offers overseas opportunities: Scholars can participate in exchange programmes with over 200 university partners, including, the University of Pennsylvania, Carnegie Mellon University, University of Southern California, Sciences Po and Kyoto University.
- You get hands-on training: The Scholars' Core modules are focused on experiential learning to develop leadership, decision-making and complex problem-solving skills. Some also encourage students to tackle real-world problems.
- Dual degree options available: Scholars can take double bachelor's degrees, integrated SMU bachelor-master programmes or a bachelor's and master's combined degree programme.

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She clinched the DesignSingapore scholarship on her second try – and has since showcased at major global exhibitions

»» By Olivia Ho

The DesignSingapore Scholarship, which was launched in 2005, is the only one in Singapore that supports all

"When I heard that, it made me question myself," says Ms Yee, who grew up with mostly Western

“When you are younger, you might not know how to differentiate a good goal from a better goal – or discern what you might want in the long term. It is worth taking the time to explore different things.

"As long as you can pick yourself up, success is just learning from one failure to the next."



SCHOLARS
CHOICE 2023
WINNER

I wanted to break out of my box and be in an environment that would let me do that.

MS CLARA YEE

Recipient of the DesignSingapore Scholarship

Scan for more on the DesignSingapore Scholarship.



PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

This veteran librarian shares how NLB is bringing interactive content to parks and using comics to counter fake news

»» By Audrey Ang

Another example is the new

Information literacy is an important part of what NLB does. Recognising the growing and

Q **Contributed to this space:** NLB scholars can work in various divisions. If you enjoy working with children, seniors or persons with disabilities, we have specialised teams to conceptualise and deliver services to them. Want to get others excited about history and heritage? Our archives team is the place for you. Whatever your passion, NLB's spirit of innovation and experimentation will give you a voice to help shape the future.

Libraries are a natural equaliser as they make credible information and services available for free to anyone.

MS FONG YING YI
Deputy director, National
Library Board, Strategy division

Scan for more
on the **NLB**
Undergraduate
Scholarship.

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/WINSTON CHUANG

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```
inputlayer = Input(shape=(maxlen,))
embedlayer = Embedding(input_dim=vocab_size, output_dim=embedding_dim, input_length=maxlen)(inputlayer)

J = Dropout(0.2)(embedlayer)
O = GlobalAveragePooling1D()(J)
I = Dropout(0.2)(O)
N = Dense(2**5, activation='relu')(I)

U = Dropout(0.2)(N)
S = Dense(2**1, activation='relu')(U)

outputlayer = Dense(1, activation='sigmoid')(S)
model = Model(inputlayer, outputlayer)
model.compile(optimizer=Adam(learning_rate=0.0001), loss='binary_crossentropy', metrics=['accuracy'])
filepath = 'HomeTeamSpecialistScheme/CriminalIntelligence.hdf5'
model.save(filepath)
filepath = 'HomeTeamSpecialistScheme/CriminalIntelligence.hdf5'
checkpoint = ModelCheckpoint(filepath, monitor='val_loss', mode='min', verbose=0, save_best_only=True)
callbacks = [checkpoint]
model.fit(X_train, y_train, epochs=100, validation_data=(X_val, y_val), batch_size=128, callbacks=callbacks)
```

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INTELLIGENCE
OFFICER

DENYSE
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Protecting Singapore at the front lines

From quashing armed incidents to crafting public security plans, this MHA Uniformed Scholarship recipient keeps the country crime-free

ASP Elaine Sim is the Team Leader of the Emergency Response Team from Central Division. PHOTOS: SPH MEDIA/ FRENCHESCAR LIM

Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Elaine Sim is often clad in her 17kg “full battle armour” that includes a submachine gun, pistol, bullet-resistant vest, ballistic helmet and extra rounds of ammunition.

The Team Leader of the Singapore Police Force’s (SPF) Emergency Response Team (ERT) from Central Division is always armed and ready for a simple reason: Officers from the ERT can be dispatched at any time to respond to incidents involving dangerous weapons or firearms. Such incidents can range from domestic disputes involving knives and slashing incidents to terror attacks.

ASP Sim carries the same load while patrolling areas under the Division’s operational terrain as well as places with high footfall, such as shopping malls and tourist attractions.

ERT teams typically operate in small groups of four to five officers with one of them assuming the role of Team Leader.

On top of being activated for armed incidents, ERT officers also engage with various stakeholders such as operators and management teams of shopping malls and high-traffic venues.

Through regular walkabouts and engagements, the ERT team can better understand the environment and terrain they may have to operate in, address possible security gaps as well as develop contingency plans and conduct various security exercises.

This allows the Police to respond more effectively to public security incidents.

To that end, simulated exercises are held on a regular basis for ERT officers – as well as officers from the various Home Team agencies – to familiarise them with their roles and responsibilities should an incident take place.

To meet the demands of their job, ASP Sim and her team of ERT officers are highly trained in the use of weapons and combat tactics.

“The tactical combat aspect of ERT is physically and mentally demanding, so it

is crucial to maintain physical fitness and tactical acumen to be always ready for any armed or public security incidents,” says the 27-year-old, who is a recipient of the Local Merit Scholarship under the MHA Uniformed Scholarships (SPF).

While ERT officers undergo physical training and simulated exercises to maintain their physical fitness and sharpen their tactical skills, ASP Sim also runs and practises yoga regularly.

It is also important for ERT officers to keep abreast of current affairs and stay updated on tactics and operating procedures to deal with terror incidents.

Behind that tough exterior

Yet, ASP Sim believes that policing is not all about being tough and displaying strength. Over the past four years, the officer says she has been learning to find the right balance between empathy and firmness.

When it comes to perpetrators of crimes, it can be easy to paint them with the same brush.

“My time as an Investigation Officer (IO) has taught me that while it is important to ensure that justice is served, it is equally important to understand the plight of the perpetrator and provide them with assistance, where appropriate or necessary,” she says.

ASP Sim was an IO at Tanglin Division for two years before she assumed her current role as an ERT Team Leader at Central Division. Before that, she was a Ground Response Force (GRF) Officer in Orchard Neighbourhood Police Centre under Tanglin Division.

“People often come to us for help, be it complainants, victims or even defendants,” she says. “Treating every individual with objectivity and fairness, regardless of their background and identity, is one of the main cornerstones of our mission to deter and detect crime.”

Joining the SPF as a newbie can be daunting, but for ASP Sim, the Vacation Attachment Programme (VAP) she participated in as part of her scholarship eased her into the policing world gently.

During the first year of the programme, she had the chance to learn about the training regimes within the Home Team

SPF SCHOLARSHIPS

The Singapore Police Force offers various scholarships and awards to candidates who demonstrate strong leadership qualities and have a strong interest in policing work. Scholars will continue on their learning journeys in world-renowned universities which provide intellectually, socially and personally enriching programmes. Upon graduation, scholars will be involved in shaping policies that address issues on public law and order as well as play an integral role in protecting the country and its communities.

The exercises and deployments I was part of intrigued me and further assured me that my journey with the SPF would be an interesting one.

ASP ELAINE SIM
Recipient of the MHA Uniformed Scholarship

Maintaining physical fitness and tactical sharpness is key for ASP Elaine Sim and her ERT team.



WORKING TOWARDS AMBITION

ASP Elaine Sim’s mother played a critical part in shaping her career choice.

“When I was younger, my mother would always share with me stories of her National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC) days and how she herself intended to be a Police officer,” she says.

These anecdotes inspired her to join the National Cadet Corps (NCC) as a co-curricular activity in secondary school, where she had the rare opportunity to try her hand at handling weapons such as the M16 and SAR21 rifles.

“In secondary school, I had the chance to fire live rounds and even participate in an International Cadet Exchange Programme with the New Zealand Cadet Forces,” she recalls fondly.

ASP Sim enjoyed the camaraderie

forged at the weekly trainings and annual camps during her time in NCC.

“We were unified as one and working towards a common goal. The sense of camaraderie within a uniformed organisation was what drew me to sign on with the SPF,” she says.

Receiving the Local Merit Scholarship in 2014, ASP Sim chose to read life sciences at the National University of Singapore (NUS) because she was an inquisitive and rational person by nature.

Furthermore, she had always been a fan of crime and forensic-related TV dramas, such as the hugely popular Forensic Heroes series by Hong Kong broadcaster TVB. That was why she also did a minor in forensic science. ASP Sim graduated from NUS with first class honours in 2018.

Departments and was exposed to the various facets of policing through visits to multiple departments in SPF.

Subsequently, during the second and third years of the VAP, scholarship recipients like her were attached to the different departments within the Force as “interns” to have a more hands-on and broad-based policing experience.

“The exercises and deployments I was a part of intrigued me and further assured me that my journey with the SPF would be an interesting one,” says ASP Sim.

Culture of teamwork and mentorship

Such is the nurturing culture in the SPF that she knew that she could always look to her superiors for advice.

“We never felt alone, and I knew that I had supportive bosses to fall back on. This reaffirmed my commitment to be a genuine and sincere leader myself – one who is there for my team,” she says.

ASP Sim has also come to appreciate the importance of open communication with her team, such as clearly sharing the rationale behind some of her decisions as a Team Leader.

“Effective communication is a two-way street – listening attentively with an open mind and heart is key,” she explains.

“Even though I have my own perspective, it is crucial to actively listen to the team members and to be receptive to constructive feedback on how I can be a better listener, team player and leader.”

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THE SPF SCHOLARSHIP

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AC ZED TEO
Commander
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Home Team's X-Factor

HTX officers force multiply our frontline's capabilities with science and tech innovations

From a purpose-built vehicle to counter rogue drones, to an intelligent chemical sensor that detects abnormalities in the air, as well as the Multi-Modal Biometrics System used by the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) to enhance border security, a team of scientists and engineers at HTX (Home Team Science and Technology Agency) are developing out-of-the-box solutions to augment the operational abilities and efficiency of our nation's Home Team frontline officers. Let's hear how these two HTX officers work on exciting projects behind the scenes to safeguard the nation.

Countering biological warfare agents

In a densely populated and globally connected city like Singapore, a biological threat can devastate our city-state easily. Having witnessed the Covid-19 pandemic and how it disrupted lives and the economy around the world, the importance of harnessing science and technology to quickly counter its spread cannot be overstated.

How can we better prepare for future threats that may be even more virulent or deadlier? Ms Kemberly Kay Xuan En and her team at HTX are looking for a solution.

As a research scientist at the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Centre of Expertise, Ms Kay is part of the team that worked on a first-of-its-kind bio-agent detection device which can autonomously detect malicious bio-agents in the air.

Once deployed, the device will operate 24/7 at high traffic areas and remotely alert frontline officers to the presence of bio-agents in the atmosphere, facilitating the authorities to quickly investigate the event and quarantine affected members of the public.

"Singapore's high population density means that any threat will affect the country disproportionately," says the 26-year-old.

"The CBRNE team develops proprietary and cutting-edge technologies to detect, identify and manage, if not outright

At HTX, we are always scanning the horizon for unknown and evolving threats - from CBRNE agents to the malicious use of new technology.

MS KEMBERLY KAY XUAN EN
Research scientist at the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) Centre of Expertise at Home Team Science and Technology Agency (HTX)

neutralise, these new and evolving threats," she adds.

Ms Kay also works closely with officers from ICA to detect contraband substances, including narcotics and malicious bio-agents, that may be imported into Singapore. She is usually based at Woodlands Analytical Laboratory but may move to other checkpoints, depending on operational requirements at any time.

Besides the bio-agent detection device, Ms Kay has also conducted research on protective suits that keep workers on the frontlines safe against potential exposure



PHOTOS: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

BE A PART OF THE HTX TEAM

HTX is looking for passionate individuals with scientific, engineering and digital backgrounds to join them in harnessing science and cutting-edge technology to safeguard Singapore from current and future threats. Outstanding students are invited to apply for the HTX Scholarship, a full-ride scholarship for STEM disciplines.



Scan for more on the HTX Scholarship.

Using a bot to flag contraband items online

With the rapid digital and technological advancements today, HTX officers are always at the forefront of these important advances to keep our nation safe.

An artificial intelligence (AI) engineer with HTX, Mr Hud Syafiq Bin Herman plays a critical role in developing solutions to ensure Home Team departments have access to the latest technology and tools to safeguard Singapore.

One of Mr Hud's projects is an automated program which can process large volumes of e-commerce listings. Through analysis of pictures, item descriptions and profiles, the program can flag listings of contraband items being sold online. This allows authorities to quickly remove them before they endanger the public.

"With this tool, we will be able to force multiply the Home Team and allow officers to focus on other urgent matters," says the 26-year-old.

Mr Hud is also working on bringing new capabilities to the Home Team departments via cloud computing. Cloud platforms allow low-latency, high-volume remote computing, which facilitate new technology like Natural Language

Processing (NLP), used to quickly summarise text and convert speech to text.

A recent project that Mr Hud worked on included prototype programs that leverage machine learning forecasting models to predict traffic flow and use computer vision to automatically identify number plates. These digital aids can augment efforts in crime solving and enhancing the general safety of the public.

These projects energise Mr Hud's commitment to empower Home Team departments through data science.

Having graduated from Imperial College London with a bachelor's degree in chemistry and a master's degree in business analytics, Mr Hud continues to supplement his knowledge in computer science and artificial intelligence by attending courses to keep up with the rapidly evolving tech capabilities.

"I am glad that HTX has a conducive learning culture which encourages us to attend courses to upgrade ourselves and keep abreast of the latest developments," he says.

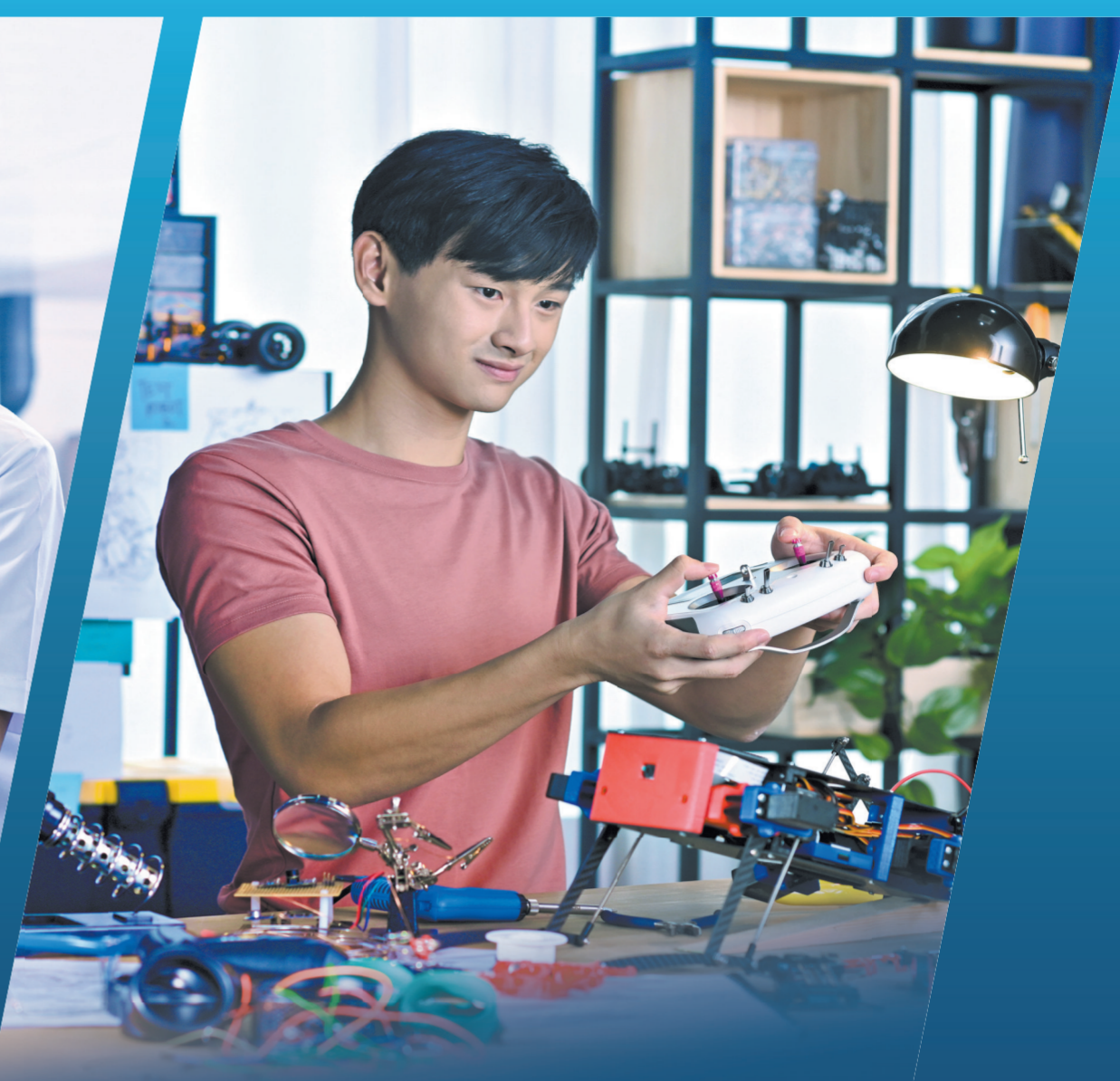
"HTX is a budding organisation and we are building a culture of learning, experimentation and openness. I like that I have space to grow professionally in the data and computing field, and that my work is purposeful."

I like that I have space to grow professionally in the data and computing field, and that my work is purposeful.

MR HUD SYAFIQ BIN HERMAN
AI engineer at the xData, Enterprise Group at Home Team Science and Technology Agency (HTX)

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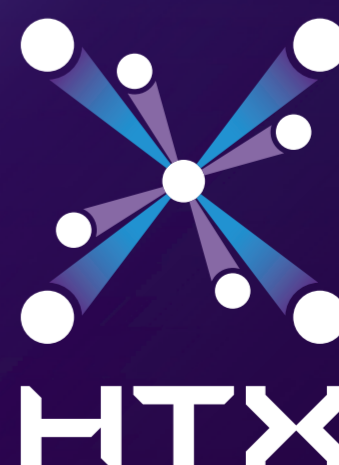
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Singapore needs to be resilient, agile and flexible in planning for future crises. We need to look beyond traditional security threats and be ready for new or emerging threats.

MS HEATHER LOY
Senior assistant director (Border Security) MHA

Scan for more on the MHA Civilian Scholarship.

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM



Protecting our borders from behind the scenes

This senior assistant director at MHA works with counterparts across the security sector to keep Singapore safe

By Aster Tan

Think Home Team, and valiant, uniformed officers on the ground usually come to mind. However, there are other officers who work behind the scenes to keep the nation safe and secure.

One of them is Ms Heather Loy. In her career with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) as a Civilian Generalist, she has been through various domains such as policy development, joint operations and human resources. The 37-year-old also dealt with a range of issues from the historic relocation of the Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (KTMB) railway operations from Tanjong Pagar Railway Station to Woodlands Train Checkpoint, to the enacting of the Remote Gambling Act in 2014, which sought to protect vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by remote gambling.

One of the world's most connected countries, Singapore is constantly exposed to external threats and influences. The MHA and its Home Team departments maintain border security to prevent the entry of undesirable persons or smuggling of prohibited items into the country while protecting Singapore's sovereignty.

Now, as Singapore reopens its borders to the world, Ms Loy is reviewing and updating existing border security measures as a senior assistant director (Border Security) at the ministry.

She says: "As the pandemic has shown us, Singapore needs to be resilient, agile and flexible in planning for future crises. We need to look beyond traditional security threats and be ready for new or emerging threats."

In order to do this, Ms Loy collaborates with colleagues from Home Team agencies, other ministries and private sector stakeholders, as well as foreign counterparts to develop security policies and measures for key infrastructural projects such as the redevelopment of Woodlands Checkpoint and Johor Bahru – Singapore Rapid Transit System Link.

Milestone projects

For the Woodlands Checkpoint redevelopment project, Ms Loy works closely with the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) on policy planning, communications approach and implementation plans. She also engages the relevant regulatory authorities on land use planning and various security considerations.

As part of her role in MHA's Joint Operations Group, she engages stakeholders through discussions to review and update border security measures.

"In an environment that is unpredictable and evolving (like our borders), the security sector needs to be able to adapt quickly and navigate challenges," she says.

This year marks Ms Loy's 13th year at MHA. Joining the ministry as a senior executive, she has risen through the ranks and taken on key roles across different domains. At MHA, officers like Ms Loy enjoy an all-rounded career as they get to choose from a variety of postings and are encouraged to follow their interests by making their own career choices.

Ms Loy was also placed in the Home Team Leaders-in-Development Programme, which aims to develop future leaders in

the Home Team.

In 2013, she was seconded to Contact Singapore, an agency that was previously an alliance between Economic Development Board and the Ministry of Manpower. She joined the Shanghai office, which broadened her horizons beyond the security lens and made her better appreciate the hard work that goes into ensuring that Singapore remains an attractive destination for investments and talents.

After her secondment to Contact Singapore, she returned to MHA and joined the Strategic Human Resource & Workforce team, which was in charge of looking at workforce planning and supporting workforce transformation for the Home Team.

Following this stint, Ms Loy was awarded an in-service scholarship to pursue her master's degree. To complement her bachelor's degree in political science from the National University of Singapore, she took up a master's in History of International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science in September 2019, which allowed her to gain deeper insights into key events and personalities that shaped global events in history.

Even after her varied roles in MHA, Ms Loy is still passionate about the agency's mission of keeping Singapore safe and secure. She wants to continue to make an impact on society and is eager to embark on new areas of work.

"I am looking forward to leading a team in the near future and perhaps going into a new domain within the MHA family, such as international relations," she says.

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Law graduate pursues passion to serve the nation

Instead of becoming a lawyer, this Ministry of Home Affairs Uniformed Scholarship recipient helps keep Singapore's borders safe and secure

Ms Lee Wei Ting graduated from National University of Singapore (NUS) law school with a second class (upper division) honours degree last year. But she will not be taking the Singapore Bar Examinations.

"Not being able to practise as a lawyer isn't a big deal to me," says the recipient of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Uniformed Scholarship.

While becoming a lawyer is still considered prestigious by most and entry into the four-year programme at NUS is highly competitive, the 23-year-old saw her Bachelor of Laws degree as a means towards a law enforcement career with the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA).

"The career came first," she says, adding that she is drawn to law enforcement because she has always been impressed by the work and professionalism of uniformed officers.

While considering the scholarship after completing her A levels, she was already clear that she wanted a career that would allow her to marry her interests in both legal studies and law enforcement.

At law school, Ms Lee says she had the chance to pick up skills that lawyers need.

"I learnt how to analyse complex situations and come up with the best solutions based on reasoning and critical thinking," she says.

Besides sharpening her thinking process, Ms Lee found that familiarity with the legal language has been useful for the work she does at the agency.

"It helped me better understand ICA's enforcement powers and appreciate the situations that they can be applied in," she says.

From research to reality
Before accepting the MHA Scholarship, Ms Lee explored the different uniformed law enforcement agencies and found that the work at ICA appealed to her the most.

"ICA does interesting things that people would not normally think about because of how smooth the process is at the borders," she says. "But there is more than meets the eye when it comes to ICA's work."

She understands how different from the other Home Team agencies law enforcement is for ICA, whose mission is to secure and safeguard Singapore's borders yet ensuring the country's connectivity to the rest of the world.

"We're not just doing protective security; we're also ensuring efficient flow of people and goods," she says. "We cannot let security be compromised for the sake of efficiency."

In 2020, Ms Lee got her first taste of ICA's "interesting" duties during her one-month internship while still an undergraduate. She assisted in the review of the officer training programme

through research and development of outreach materials.

Now as a full-time ICA officer, her job scope extends beyond security at physical checkpoints. She also has to learn about "community safety, crowd management and security practices in the private sectors", all of which are relevant to what the agency does.

Even at the checkpoints, ICA officers must be familiar with a wide range of regulatory issues, ranging from laws on customs to food safety and medication permits, which are constantly revised.

"ICA's job really goes beyond what people commonly associate with the 'usual' immigration and registration matters," she says.

"To better carry out our duties, ICA officers also need to keep current with what is happening within Singapore and around the world."

Embracing new challenges
Transiting from university to operations work at ICA, Ms Lee's aim is to meet the expectations of the agency as well as the public it serves.

ICA's job really goes beyond what people commonly associate with the 'usual' immigration and registration matters.

MS LEE WEI TING
Recipient of the MHA Uniformed Scholarship

To prepare her for her first role as a Team Leader at Woodlands Command, she had to undergo a six-month ICA Basic Course (Inspector) at the Home Team Academy.

Once in the field, she will be required to lead and make real-time decisions in the face of members of the public – quite unlike the hypothetical scenarios played out in a classroom setting.

"As someone who is coming in as a new Team Leader, I will need to make an effort to learn from everyone how things work, so I can perform to the standards required," she says.



Maintaining border security aside, Ms Lee Wei Ting's work at the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority also keeps Singapore connected to the rest of the world. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

MHA UNIFORMED SCHOLARSHIP

Depending on your interests and aspirations, this scholarship will allow you to kick-start your leadership journey as a uniformed officer in one of these five Home Team departments, namely Singapore Police Force (SPF), Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF), Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA), Singapore Prison Service (SPS) and Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB), or as a paramedic with the SCDF.

Ms Lee will be responsible for a group of up to 20 front-line officers while managing the day-to-day operations at the checkpoint that include profiling duties and conducting in-depth investigations into open cases.

ICA officers like Ms Lee also get to experience different deployments across both staff and ground postings. As part of her four-year bond, she will be rotated to a new position two years after her first deployment.

Pointing to the agency's "very big ecosystem", she envisions that her future with the agency will be filled with plenty of learning experiences as she seizes various opportunities to take on new responsibilities.

Pushing her personal limits
As Ms Lee takes her first steps as a full-fledged inspector in charge of a team, she can already say that ICA has helped her achieve many things she did not believe she was capable of.

These include handling revolvers and going through a leadership camp that honed her decisiveness, mental agility and resilience.

"I stepped out of my comfort zone," she says, comparing with her younger self in junior college and university.

Showing the gutsiness that has pushed her to take on challenges, she says: "I mean, (my friends and peers) are not practising to handle firearms and shooting a gun. I am."

ICA has also shown her that "the playing field is equal". She cites the example of trainees having to go through

an intensive five-day firearms training, regardless of gender and familiarity. She also highlights the growing number of women holding leadership positions in the uniformed services.

Ms Lee revels in the prospect of continuous learning and tackling new experiences at ICA.

"While my peers from NUS are looking at different areas of law, I am learning about the relevant laws that ICA will be enforcing," she says.

Speaking to the 18-year-olds who are now mulling over their future, especially young women, Ms Lee has only one piece of advice.

"Go for it. Whatever decisions you choose to make today will blaze a trail for others in the future."



To prepare her as a Team Leader at Woodlands Command, Ms Lee undergoes on-the-job training to familiarise herself with operations there. PHOTO: ICA



The MHA Uniformed Scholarship application deadline is on Mar 15, 2023. Scan here to find out more.



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ADVERTORIAL

Defending the nation

These three officers share how their SAF scholarships allowed them to gain a worldly perspective and a reminder that Singapore's stability cannot be taken for granted

Training people to protect our land

A significant part of an infantry soldier's time is spent outfield with his unit. But for Colonel (COL) Muhammad Helmi Khaswan, his career is more colourful than just camo green.

For one, the 39-year-old has had working experience outside of soldiering. He served as an honorary aide-de-camp to the President for 11 years since 2010, helping his full-time counterparts with official events and functions organised by the President's office.

In 2020, he was seconded to the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) to be the deputy director of both the industry division and the strategic planning division.

There, he had a hand in developing information and communications technology as well as shaping media policies, as part of the various initiatives rolled out during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The secondment gave me an insight to not only the broader public service and to be more attuned to the needs of our citizens, but also the agile nature of digital technology and wider digital

transformation needs and practices of the economy," he says. "I learnt how our policies need to cover a span of issues and factors."

While COL Helmi enjoys his experiences outside of the military, he is a soldier through and through.

The Commander of the 2nd Singapore Infantry Brigade trains units of soldiers under his charge to be operationally ready, and develops capabilities for the next-generation SAF.

It is encounters with these men that impress upon him the importance of his role as a battlefield commander as well as a mentor and guide.

"Knowing that my actions and decisions can have a profound impact in the lives of my men, it reminds me to always be a good role model to them," he says.

COL Helmi was serving national service at the Officer Cadet School when he began to consider applying for the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Merit Scholarship. He was awarded the scholarship in 2004.

He read chemical and biomolecular engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the US, and completed his master's degree in



It is necessary for officers to listen and seek to understand as much as we can.

COLONEL MUHAMMAD HELMI KHASWAN
Recipient of the SAF Merit Scholarship



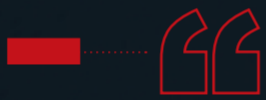
advanced chemical engineering at the University of Cambridge in Britain in 2007.

To be a SAF commander is a unique occupation because of its conscript majority, he admits.

"It is not sufficient to lead and wield power only through command authority," he says. "It is necessary for officers to listen and seek to understand as much as we can."



PHOTOS: MINDEF



The safe and efficient launch and recovery of RSAF aircraft ensure our servicemen and women achieve their mission safely.

CAPTAIN NICOLE TAN
Recipient of the SAF Merit Scholarship



Keeping Singapore's busy airspace safe and secure

When there are potential air threats, aircrafts from the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) are quickly deployed to investigate any possible incidents.

But what about incoming friendly military aircraft? These include all RSAF aircraft as well as foreign military ones entering and exiting training areas within the busy Singapore skies.

The job of steering and guiding these aircraft falls on the shoulders of Captain (CPT) Nicole Tan and her team in 203 Squadron, which is in charge of round-the-clock air surveillance and air control operations of Singapore's airspace.

"The pressure on seat can be very real, especially during situations when split-second decisions need to be made," says the 25-year-old air traffic controller, who is in charge of the movement control of aircraft within the Paya Lebar Control Zone.

"Singapore's status as an air hub is contingent on it being able to provide safe and world-class air traffic services. On a day-to-day basis, my squadron works closely with our civil counterparts to ensure that traffic within our region flows smoothly and safely," she says.

"The safe and efficient launch and recovery of our RSAF aircraft ensure that our servicemen and women can achieve their mission safely."

While she spends most of her time in operations rooms and control towers, her job is not limited to Singapore.

Last September, she travelled across the border to Kuantan, Malaysia for the annual Search-and-Rescue Exercise Malsing, a bilateral training exercise between the RSAF and the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF).

Assigned to be the staff officer to the Chief-Of-Staff (Air Staff) for that exercise, she was tasked to organise the trip and ensure all administrative details were in place. It gave her a chance to learn from her RMAF counterparts.

Such learning opportunities did not only start after she joined the RSAF. As a recipient of the Singapore Armed Forces Merit Scholarship, she had earlier taken part in a two-week military scholar exchange programme with the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

Held in both Brunei and Singapore, the programme took place during a term break while she was pursuing her undergraduate studies in biochemistry at Imperial College London.

"Not only did I learn more about their country's culture and military, but I was also able to forge close bonds with those who attended the programme," she recalls.

After graduating, CPT Tan went on to pursue a postgraduate degree in philosophy and public policy from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

It is these opportunities to explore beyond Singapore's borders that makes her appreciate what she has at home.

Every day, as she puts on her headset, she is reminded of the importance of her job – protecting Singapore's skies from the potential threats that the nation-state faces.

Defence and diplomacy across the seas

For Captain (CPT) Darren Chan, last year was a highlight of his career with the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN).

As the Navigating Officer on board the RSS Intrepid, he had to analyse and plan the different routes the ship took to cross the Pacific Ocean during the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) maritime exercise in the waters off Hawaii.

For 90 days, the 26-year-old and his team charted how the ship sailed over 12,000 nautical miles to different countries before finally returning home.

It also meant keeping a constant eye on the ship's fuel supply and the movement of typhoons in the region – tasks that required him to make numerous on-the-ground adjustments.

But what made the RIMPAC exercise even more unforgettable for him was the experience of undergoing the various activities and challenges with his crew.

"The camaraderie we shared made the experience the most memorable time in my career so far," he says.

It is this camaraderie of uniformed services that drew him to The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Scholarship.

He had the opportunity to meet some SAF scholars for a dinner engagement when he was in junior college.

"One of them shared that joining the RSN was like being a part of a family, and that I would make an impact on the people under my charge – the most rewarding part of the job," recalls CPT Chan, who read business economics at the University of California, Los Angeles before completing his master's degree in management science

and engineering at Columbia University in the US.

Choosing a scholarship is, he says, "more than just a way to study overseas".

"It also leads to a career, so try to find out as much as possible about the job and the service you are interested in," advises CPT Chan, who is currently a policy officer in the Defence Policy Office.

"I am glad to have experienced firsthand the ability to make a difference, both towards the defence of our waters and also on the lives of the people whom I have worked with."



A scholarship also leads to a career, so try to find out as much as possible about the job and the service you are interested in.

CAPTAIN DARREN CHAN
Recipient of The SAF Scholarship



SAF SCHOLARSHIPS

There are various scholarships offered by the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF). These include The SAF Scholarship (formerly known as SAF Overseas Scholarship) and the SAF Merit Scholarship. Open to both men and women, it allows successful applicants to receive sponsorship for up to four years of local or overseas studies, inclusive of master's if applicable. Through various command, instructional and staff appointments, scholarship holders will hone their skills as a leader, manager, planner and strategist.



Scan for more on SAF scholarships.

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Fortifying our defence in cyberspace

Part of the new Digital and Intelligence Service, this SAF Merit Scholarship recipient crunches data and analyses information to protect Singapore

If Singapore were to ever enter into conflict, Military Expert 4 (ME4) Alvin Leong would be among those on the front line. The 28-year-old, however, would not necessarily be carrying a rifle or shouldering his field pack – rather, he would be manning the defences of Singapore's cyber infrastructure.

ME4 Leong is part of the Digital and Intelligence Service (DIS), the Singapore Armed Forces' (SAF) fourth service inaugurated in October 2022.

The DIS is entrusted with the mission of defending the peace and security of Singapore from evolving and increasingly complex threats in the digital domain.

The enthusiast of current affairs and military technology decided to sign on as a Senior Military Intelligence Expert (MIE) during his national service training in Officer Cadet School in 2014. The vocation was a perfect synthesis of his interests and academic strengths, he shares.

"To provide useful analysis, senior MIEs must possess a good understanding of the strategic environment, such as the region's political, economic and socio-cultural situation. This breadth of competencies required was challenging yet enjoyable to me," he says.

While training to be an MIE, he received the SAF Merit Scholarship. He left for New York University in 2015 to major in finance and economics.

I never expected to wield such sophisticated technological capabilities to fulfil my mission.

ME4 ALVIN LEONG
Recipient of the SAF Merit Scholarship

"After spending three years in the US, I realised that my understanding of Europe and China could be enhanced if I studied there."

This led him to pursue a double masters' degree programme in 2018. He spent the first year at Sciences Po studying international security, with a focus on European studies, before going on to the second year at Peking University in Beijing, specialising in international relations.



PHOTO: MINDEF

THE 4TH SERVICE

The Digital and Intelligence Service (DIS) is set up to defend Singapore against threats in the digital domain. It will also consolidate and integrate the existing Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C4I) as well as cyber capabilities of the SAF. There are three specialisations for DIS regular servicemen. C4I experts develop cutting-edge digital products and solutions to give the SAF the technological edge. Military intelligence experts collect intelligence and identify existing vulnerabilities in the SAF's digital capabilities. Lastly, digital and intelligence systems engineers monitor the service's day-to-day operations and work with partners to integrate new technologies effectively.

After completing his studies, he was assigned to a lead analyst role within the then-SAF Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence (C4I) community.

There, his primary role was to use data science and computing skills to process and analyse information to support the SAF and Ministry of Defence in decision-making.

"As a young military expert, I never expected to wield such sophisticated technological capabilities to fulfil my mission, nor did I expect my products to reach such a wide audience among SAF senior leadership," he says.

He was later promoted to the position of Officer Commanding in his current DIS intelligence unit, where he is planning the unit's scope in its operations.

"What motivates me every day is understanding that performing my responsibilities well and building the structures and processes for my men to do the same will contribute to the safety and security of our country."



Scan for more on SAF scholarships.

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Riding the waves of maritime tech

This MPA Overseas Scholar hopes to steer the shipping industry towards a greener future through hyperloop technology

By Lin Jiasheng

Imagine travelling from London to Edinburgh, but instead of a five-hour train journey, you ride in a magnetically levitated (or “maglev”) pod hurtling through near-vacuum, low-friction tubes and arrive in less than an hour.

What sounds like science fiction may become a reality within our lifetime.

The hyperloop concept of high-speed travel is in active development in Switzerland, Britain, Germany and the United States. This new technology could one day revolutionise transportation, including shipping, even as Singapore reaches for bigger goals in maritime tech.

Mr Lee Wei Juin, a Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) scholar, was excited to be a part of HYPED, a project team within The University of Edinburgh to develop hyperloop technology.

In September 2022, HYPED built their first test track in Edinburgh.

For seven months, the 26-year-old was the project manager for HYPED’s software quality assurance team while pursuing an engineering degree in electronics and computer science at Edinburgh.

“Until a year ago, I hadn’t heard about hyperloop, so it was very cool to work on something so new. It can potentially help us move away from more carbon-intensive options like flying,” says Mr Lee.

Despite criticism about the cost and feasibility of hyperloop technology, he sees great potential in such cutting-edge technology.

“Hyperloop is just like the iPhone when it first came out,” he points out. “Many people did not see the need for it, but it has shown its value over time.

“Technology is iterative and makes incremental improvements. All new technology will face criticism, but we should give it time to mature and let its advocates push its boundaries.”

A heart for public service

Like many other sectors, the maritime industry has readily embraced new technologies for more efficient and greener operations. Mr Lee is confident of the relevance of computer science and technology to Singapore’s port operations.

“With the 5G network becoming more prevalent and available even in remote maritime areas, we can see the viability of technology like autonomous ships, remote management, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) supporting labour-saving applications such as remote maintenance,” he says. “It is a really exciting time to be in tech and MPA.”

Mr Lee’s decision to take up the MPA Overseas Scholarship was influenced by his father. As a child, Mr Lee would listen to his father talk about his work as a craftsman at Jurong Shipyard. He even had the opportunity to visit Raffles Lighthouse.

“At MPA, I can marry my interests in tech, the maritime sector and public service,” says Mr Lee.

When MPA awarded him the scholarship in 2021, Mr Lee was already sure about his intended area of study and university of choice.

“The University of Edinburgh is one of the few universities offering a joint honours programme in Electronics and Computer

Science, and it is world-renowned for its Computer Science (CS) programme,” he says. “One of my CS professors wrote a programming language called Haskell. As a student, I have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the language.”

Mr Lee’s skills in software, coupled with his passion for technology, has strengthened his optimism for his career at MPA.

“Ships and ports are complex electronic systems, and they will only get more complex and digital,” he says.

Singapore is building the Tuas Port which – when completed in the 2040s – will be the largest fully automated port in the world. After he returns from his studies at Edinburgh in 2025, Mr Lee hopes to get the role of a software engineer or solution architect at MPA.

“Computer science has taught me ways to solve optimisation problems – from the most optimal route for ships to travel, to optimising cargo loading and handling,” he says.

He hopes that through technology, the world can transition into a greener future.

“We will use less carbon-intensive fuels, automated efficient shipping to minimise carbon emissions, and even analytics to foresee and avoid energy crunches,” he says.



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I am looking forward to all the overseas opportunities that ESSEC's Global BBA offers.

MS KYRA POH
Recipient of the Sport Excellence Scholarship

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM



Not your average high-flyer

This champion indoor skydiver is aiming for the skies with her ESSEC Business School Global BBA programme

By Joshua Wong



Ms Kyra Poh is not your ordinary 20-year-old. She holds not one but three Guinness World Records for indoor skydiving.

Having represented Singapore in international competitions and winning 45 gold medals to date, Ms Poh clinched a Sport Excellence Scholarship (spexScholarship) offered by Sport Singapore. While there were many other universities she could have chosen from, she picked ESSEC Business School's Global Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) programme in Singapore.

Last year, ESSEC was ranked among the top 5 per cent in the world for Business & Management Studies by QS World University Rankings, and its BBA programme has been recognised as one of the best in France.

With an International Baccalaureate score of 41/45, Ms Poh could have made it to most universities in the world but she was drawn to ESSEC's Global BBA.

The programme's flexibility, coupled with the school's open culture and international outlook, aligned well with her personal aspirations to continue pursuing her sport at an elite level.

Making global connections

A huge part of Ms Poh's university experience at ESSEC comprises the people she meets and the conversations she has with them. After all, ESSEC has a diverse population, with 42 different nationalities represented on campus.

ESSEC's Asia-Pacific campus is located within the one-north business park. "I really enjoy coming to school, learning from the professors and meeting new people almost every day," she says.

With a vibrant and lively campus culture, Ms Poh observes that people are open to chatting anywhere, even in elevators. This open communication culture has led the self-described extrovert to befriend people from many different countries and programmes.

She has even picked up French and Spanish to an advanced level. She views it as an exchange of cultures when she receives support from her friends in these languages and in return, she helps them to learn Mandarin.

To further her international exposure, Ms Poh also intends to study abroad in Cergy, France this year, as part of ESSEC's wide range of exchange programmes offered.

"I am looking forward to all the overseas opportunities that ESSEC's Global BBA offers, from social missions to exchange programmes on other campuses," says Ms Poh.

In her third year, she hopes to earn a double degree from one of ESSEC's over 175 institutional partners worldwide, including such prestigious names as King's College London in Britain and Tsinghua University in China.

Reaching for greater heights

While she is excited about studying abroad, Ms Poh remains rooted in her love for skydiving. She hopes to use her education to explore how the sport can be made more environmentally sustainable as it does burn a lot of fuel and generate carbon emissions.

For those who are about to embark on the next stage of their learning journey, Ms Poh has these words of advice to share: "Go with an open mind and interact with anyone and everyone. Try to meet as many people as possible, as every single person can teach you something in one way or another.

"Or, to paraphrase a common saying: If you want to fly fast, fly alone; if you want to fly far, fly together."



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Keeping public finances in check

The AGO Auditing Service Scholarship paved the way into the world of auditing for this scholar

» By Malavika Menon

Since young, Ms Ong Jia Qi has always been good with numbers. That, and having an eye for detail makes her a good fit for her role as an auditor at the Auditor-General's Office (AGO).

The 27-year-old says she applied for the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship in 2014 because the agency's values of independence, professionalism and integrity aligned with her own.

Over her four-year career, Ms Ong had been part of the team auditing the financial statements of the Monetary Authority of Singapore, as well as conducting audits for the education and security sector. The scholar recently wrapped up an attachment at a commercial audit firm and returned to AGO where she is now an assistant director in the Strategic Planning and Policy Department.

She shares more about her job and what it was like to take a leap into the field of accountancy.

What led you to this scholarship?

After completing my A levels at Victoria Junior College in 2013, I was going through scholarship opportunities, trying to find one that would play to my strengths and give me the chance to learn something new. I chanced upon the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship which piqued my curiosity.

After I had been awarded the scholarship, I was often invited back to many AGO events such as the AGO Exchange, an annual event where audit groups would share key learning points and takeaways on how the audits were conducted and how the findings were uncovered.

The scholarship also gave me the chance to complete two internships at AGO, in 2016 and 2017, where I gained exposure to the audits of different public sector organisations.

What does a day at AGO look like, and what are some challenges?

Our role is to audit and report to the President and Parliament on the proper accounting and use of public resources to enhance public accountability and help strengthen the financial governance of the public service.

Our observations could include inefficient use or wastage of public funds and resources, or non-compliance with control procedures or legislation.

We also work hard and play hard. After our peak period, there will be many events organised for staff bonding. This is something that I have always looked forward to ever since I joined full time in 2018.

While auditors are generally not welcomed by auditees with open arms, I have learnt to always maintain professionalism and work together with the auditee to achieve our common objective: strengthening financial governance.

How was your experience at the commercial audit firm?

I would say the only difference between working at AGO and a commercial audit firm is the different profiles of the auditees and the scope of work. It challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and gain exposure to a new environment with different practices and culture.

Having to pick up new practices, tools and procedures quickly within six months was definitely a steep learning curve at first.

Besides the attachment, being part of AGO also gave me the chance to go for my first overseas work trip. A study trip to the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) in South Korea allowed me to learn more about BAI's digital and technological transformation strategy, including their IT systems and their manpower development plans.

Why do you think your work makes an impact?

I have learnt to see the bigger scheme of things and realised that our rigorous audits have helped many agencies to improve on their processes.

I am proud to be in AGO because I know that public agencies would act upon its findings. This means that we are all working towards strengthening financial governance together.

I had always wanted to be in public service because I want to give back to society and bring about change in my own capacity.

Scan for more on the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship.



SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2023



I have learnt to see the bigger scheme of things and realised that our rigorous audits have helped many agencies to improve on their processes.

MS ONG JIA QI

Recipient of the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM



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Enabling the future of smart shipping

This MaritimeONE scholar is among a new generation of tech talents aiming to transform the sector

» By Alan Yuen

Imagine self-navigating ships fitted with advanced software systems that can automatically calculate the most fuel-efficient routes for the vessels. Running 24/7, these systems will free workers from mundane and repetitive tasks while minimising the risk of human error.

MaritimeONE scholar Sean Ng is among a new generation of tech talents designing and maintaining new systems that will turn such visions into reality.

"I see myself as part of a bigger

picture, as a trailblazer within the maritime industry in Singapore," says Mr Ng.

A third-year computer science undergraduate at the National University of Singapore, he was awarded the X-PRESS FEEDERS — MaritimeONE Scholarship offered by the Singapore Maritime Foundation in 2022.

"One big reason I pursued this scholarship was because I knew Singapore is a strong maritime hub," says the 23-year-old.

As one of the world's busiest

and most strategically important maritime centres, Singapore is an essential link in the global supply chain. Over 90 per cent of the world's trade is carried out by sea.

One area Mr Ng is keen to explore is big data analytics. Vessels are now loaded with sensors and Internet of Things (IoT) devices. These devices allow operators to continuously collect a steady stream of data such as temperature, humidity and gas content. This data can be used to detect food spoilage in containers

SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2023



There is plenty of room for growth and innovation in the maritime sector.

MR SEAN NG
Recipient of the Singapore Maritime Foundation X-PRESS FEEDERS — MaritimeONE Scholarship

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/CAROLINE CHIA



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or alert the crew to gas leaks. It can also provide valuable insights into their operations and help them make data-driven decisions. For example, organisations can analyse the data to identify the most efficient routes and cargo loading configurations. This will help to slash fuel consumption, which reduces both emissions and costs.

Similar smart technologies are being considered at Tuas Port, a mega project to cement the country's title as the world's busiest transshipment port. By leveraging technology, the industry can improve productivity, worker safety and fuel efficiency.

The new port will be fully automated and digitalised. Innovations being tested include using a vessel traffic management system powered by artificial intelligence. This system can predict congestion hotspots and assist vessel route planning to speed up port operations.

Off-the-beaten path

Mr Ng himself was unaware of many of these trends before he applied for the scholarship. His friends were surprised when he announced his plans to enter the maritime industry.

"A lot of my friends raised their eyebrows," he says.

Due to the insatiable demand for skilled software engineers, many of Mr Ng's peers aspired to join technology and finance companies, two of the most sought-after sectors.

While acknowledging he is going off the beaten path and initially doubting his decision, he is excited about his career prospects.

"Why can't the maritime industry benefit from tech?" he says. "Just like banks are using technology to strengthen their core business, there is plenty of room for growth and innovation in the maritime sector."

By joining the industry in its early stages of digitalisation, Mr Ng believes he can take on bigger responsibilities and make a larger impact.


To help him prepare for his career, his sponsoring company offered him an internship as part of the scholarship programme. In January 2023, he started a six-month internship at X-PRESS FEEDERS, which provides feeder solutions globally.

Full steam ahead

The MaritimeONE Scholarship is a joint initiative by Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF) and its scholarship sponsors from the maritime industry to foster talent in the sector.

Besides providing financial support for scholars to pursue both diploma and degree programmes locally or overseas, recipients will also have access to career and internship opportunities.

Scan for more on the SMF MaritimeONE Scholarship.



Bringing history to life for new audiences

The NHB scholar and his team are using gaming and augmented reality to keep stories relevant in the digital age

By Audrey Ang

As a young boy, Mr Samuel Lee remembers his late grandfather taking him to Raffles Place and Collyer Quay and sharing with him stories about the past. These include gruesome atrocities the senior Lee witnessed outside the old Cathay Cinema during the Japanese Occupation and the 1972 fire at Robinsons department store.

"Many of his stories were part eyewitness account, part speculative reconstructions to entertain his grandkids," says Mr Lee.

"Reflecting on this decades later, I suppose this is what got me curious about the messy and unruly nature of history-making and why heritage work is so interesting and colourful."

Mr Lee always knew he wanted to work in a history-related field, either as a curator or museum professional. This ultimately led him to apply for the National Heritage Board (NHB) Scholarship after his A levels.

As an undergraduate, he majored in literature at the National University of Singapore because it provided him the context to study about methods of cultural analysis more broadly.

Mr Lee then did a Master of Arts Program in the Humanities, with a focus in art history, at the University of Chicago. For his thesis, he chose to do archival research and worked with curators and conservators dealing with modern and contemporary art at the Art Institute of Chicago.

"My studies have taught me to be more alert to the different ways in which art has been displayed and conserved, and the digital turn today is but another chapter in the history of exhibitionary culture," he says.

Making history relevant to all
Today, the 31-year-old is part of the management and operations team at the Heritage Conservation Centre (HCC). His job scope as assistant manager involves strategic planning for HCC, researching Singapore's National Collection of artefacts and artworks, and finding ways to make them more accessible to everyone.

"I use technology to bring the work that HCC does behind closed doors to the public," he says.

One way he has done that is through Roots.gov.sg, NHB's heritage resource portal that is home to a significant portion of the National Collection – some dating back to more than a hundred years ago. This makes it easy for anyone to access this information and learn more about Singapore's heritage.

Another initiative is Heritage Hunter, a 2021 virtual treasure hunt game that encourages people to learn more about the Singaporean culture while solving fun riddles and winning great prizes such as a smartwatch or a staycation.

"Digitalisation allows NHB to increase our reach beyond the physical limitations of our museums and institutions – people can experience heritage anytime, anywhere," Mr Lee explains.

"It also enables us to reach the key youth segment. Heritage has to remain relevant in the digital age and we have to tell stories in new and different ways to reach our audiences."

Presently, Mr Lee and his team are exploring the possibility of providing access to the National Collection when they are not on display in the museums. Using augmented reality and virtual reality, visitors may be able to view HCC artefacts via an on-premise interactive platform in the future.

While his job may not be as public-facing as his colleagues who work in exhibitions and programmes, Mr Lee finds satisfaction in being involved in the overall creative and critical aspects of working in the cultural sector, whether it is developing strategic goals

for the HCC or working on resource planning.

He takes pride in being able to play an indelible role in the preservation of Singapore's history and culture while bringing the nation's heritage to a wider audience.

"Understanding our heritage helps to cultivate a sense of a national identity that is not couched solely in surface-level commonalities," he says.

"It is also rooted in a deep respect for the diversity and complexity within which we must live."

Scan for more on the NHB Scholarship.



Heritage has to remain relevant in the digital age and we have to tell stories in new and different ways.

MR SAMUEL LEE
Recipient of the NHB Scholarship



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As an NUS Global Merit Scholar, Akashah pursued his Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering at NUS College of Design and Engineering. His enthusiasm for motors led him to be part of the NUS Formula Society of Automotive Engineers, where he helped design and build Formula-style racecars to compete in Michigan against some of the best universities around the world. Akashah is committed to shaping a better tomorrow for the automotive industry through innovative and sustainable solutions.

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The scholarship creates many opportunities to create better links between the government and the people.

MS NURUL ASYIQIN
Recipient of the PA Scholarship



PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

Making volunteerism her life's work

Having received financial aid herself, this PA scholar hopes to pay it forward by working with low-income students as well as seniors

By Audrey Ang

Ask Ms Nurul Asyiqin what her fondest childhood memory is and she will tell you it has to be volunteering at community neighbourhood events with her mother and three siblings.

Growing up, Ms Nurul's family received financial aid under the Ministry of Education's Financial Assistance Scheme. Ms Nurul was also part of kidsREAD, a reading programme for children from less privileged families that is run by the National Library Board.

Her mother believed that volunteering was a way to give back to the community that once helped them and would take the children to the events she helped to organise at their local Residents' Committee (RC), Zhenghua-Senja RC.

Ms Nurul recalls participating in painting sessions under a void deck with other kids and helping to set up tables and chairs for Children's Day and Halloween.

"It was a lot of fun and made me appreciate the events the RCs and Community Clubs/Centres (CCs) offered for residents, as well as the volunteers behind these events who took time off to help out," says the 20-year-old.

Her positive childhood experience, coupled with a desire to pay forward the kindness shown to her and her family, spurred her on to apply for the People's Association (PA)

Scholarship after her A levels.

"The scholarship creates many opportunities to create better links between the government and the people," she says.

Bridging her passion with practice

Ms Nurul is currently in her second year at Nanyang Technological University, studying in the Bachelor of Communication Studies programme, and continues to volunteer whenever she can. She is part of her school's volunteering club and has conducted workshops for seniors to teach them how to edit photos.

As part of the PA Scholarship, Ms Nurul also had the chance to do an internship at Zhenghua Constituency Office for two months in 2022.

In that role, she assisted with managing the counter as well as helping the residents to book facilities, buy tickets to events, apply for financial assistance and answering enquiries.

"It was very daunting at first to respond to residents' calls and questions as they were asking about many things and I struggled to provide relevant information," she recalls.

However, while learning on the job, she was soon able to handle queries more smoothly. She also found a great sense of satisfaction in being able to help people while interacting with the residents on a more personal level.

Ms Nurul hopes to apply her knowledge of media and communication tools to better understand on-the-ground sentiments and organise events that bring the community together. She believes she can use what she has learnt in her studies to address the different needs within society.

For example, one of her group projects was to help seniors bridge the digital divide. She learnt more about different forms of communication media and which would be most effective in communicating with an older age group, such as choosing traditional print or radio advertisements over social media advertisements.

"PA is a platform that brings people of all ages together," she says. "A large part involves organising community events and communicating with residents from all walks of life to let them know about the available programmes."

Whether it is helping seniors adapt to Singapore's digitisation or supporting low-income students with enrichment classes, Ms Nurul is eager to make a difference in people's lives when she graduates in 2025.

"I am open to everything and hope to be more involved in organising projects and programmes," she says. "I am excited to learn more and look forward to applying my skills."



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Pushing for ethical AI practices globally

This Singapore Digital scholar led the development of a key framework to drive responsible use of emerging technology

By Rei Kurohi

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere. From chatbots to searchable image databases that help find missing persons, internal tools to predict customer demand, recommendation engines that suggest interesting products to customers and more, researchers and developers across the world are creating new applications of AI every day.

AI applications can deeply impact human life, which is why the transformative technology must be fair and safe – as well as support inclusivity, diversity of thought, and collaboration – in order to maximise its benefits for society. Only under such circumstances can AI innovation continue while bettering society.

As a Singapore Digital (SG Digital) Scholarship holder, Ms Annabel Lee was given the opportunity to address these concerns while serving her bond at the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA).

The 33-year-old tech policy expert was instrumental in the creation of Singapore's Model Artificial Intelligence (AI) Governance Framework, the first of its kind in Asia that was launched in 2019.

Cited by industry experts as an example of Singapore's proactive approach to AI adoption, the framework explains how AI systems work and aims to promote public understanding and trust in AI technology by encouraging best practices in the private sector.

Among other things, it states that decisions guided by AI should be explainable, transparent and fair as far as

possible, and that AI solutions should prioritise the interests of human beings.

By consulting extensively with stakeholders – including government agencies, industry players, civil society groups and academics – Ms Lee and the pioneering team worked to turn philosophical concepts like ethical theories into practical guidelines.

"I learnt so much from working at IMDA," she says. "It gave me a foundational understanding of how governments think about technology policy and the weight of responsibility they carry in making decisions."

As a "living document" that has continued to evolve in response to new developments, even after Ms Lee left IMDA to join the private sector in 2018, the second edition of the framework was launched in 2020 and has been adopted by organisations such as HSBC, DBS, Google and Microsoft.

Forging her tech career

Today, Ms Lee is the director of Digital Policy (APJ) and ASEAN Affairs at Amazon Web Services (AWS), one of the leading global providers of cloud infrastructure.

In her role, she helps to define how cloud service providers like AWS can help organisations build trusted digital infrastructure and meet their security, innovation and digital trust goals. By engaging with companies and government agencies who are working on digital policy issues, she also helps to develop policies for digital transformation across the region.

Ms Lee's career in tech policy would have surprised her younger self. She remembers growing up

during the fledgling years of the Internet, when dial-up access was just starting to take off.

"I never thought I'd work in the tech industry," she says. "Since I liked writing and speaking, I thought I would end up becoming either a lawyer or an actress instead."

She was drawn to the idea of doing tech policy work at IMDA, as it would mean working in a "fast moving, ever-changing sector". She also wanted to pick an organisation where she would feel excited to serve her bond after finishing her degree.

Her bachelor's degree at the London School of Economics and Political Science was funded by the SG Digital Scholarship in 2008, which opened the door for her to join IMDA and the exciting tech industry at large.

The industry scholarship offers recipients the flexibility to chart their own career in the tech or media sectors by serving their bond in any organisation and industry of their choice, subject to approval by IMDA.

Relishing the challenge of trying new things, Ms Lee says working in the tech sector has been deeply rewarding.

"I have always loved environments that are constantly evolving and am always curious about new areas of policy. I like being able to move fast, fail fast and try again," she says.

"The idea that everything is constantly changing keeps me motivated every day."








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Threats are always evolving, so our defence technologies and capabilities have to keep up and adapt accordingly.

MS YANG SHULI
Recipient of the DSTA Scholarship

Establishing effective comms out in the field

This DSTA Scholarship holder develops ways to improve connectivity among military units for better decision-making

By Jo-ann Huang

Solving problems has always been Ms Yang Shuli's forte. As a child, she enjoyed mathematics and science in school. In fact, she likes solving problems so much that even her career is centred around it. "I have always been curious about the world around me, and the underlying principles behind how things work," says the 25-year-old.

"It was natural for me to pursue electrical engineering at university, as it allowed me to peer into the inner workings of modern technology." The Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) Scholarship holder graduated from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 2019. Studying at NUS gave her a

strong foundation in electrical engineering but she was further stretched to her limits at the University of California, Berkeley in the US a year later. While pursuing her master's degree in electrical engineering and computer science, she not only interacted but also competed with some of the best talents from around the world. It was eye-opening and gruelling but "my year there was ultimately an invaluable experience", she says.

Besides supporting her undergraduate and postgraduate studies, the DSTA Scholarship also offered her opportunities to gain real-world experience from industry experts. She also attended a semester-long exchange programme at the Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands.

"I specifically enrolled in courses not commonly offered in Singapore," says Ms Yang. "For example, I took an image processing course in which I designed and created an app for my final project. Similar to the music identification app Shazam, it identifies videos based on a short sample."

There is also the Global Internship Programme for scholarship holders like Ms Yang to acquire insights through attachments with DSTA's global industry partners.

She spent six weeks after her undergraduate studies with marine electronics and systems specialist Atlas Elektronik in Germany. At its headquarters, she worked on passive sonar detection algorithms primarily used to detect noises from marine objects.

"These opportunities have allowed me to immerse myself in different learning, working, and living cultures," she says. "It broadened my horizons and helped me grow as an engineer."

Solving problems in the field With experience gained from her attachments, Ms Yang brings a refreshed perspective to problem-solving and to her work at DSTA.

In her two-and-a-half years at the agency, she has been pushing the technological limits to ensure that "relevant information is shared for greater situational awareness and better decision-making" for the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) to achieve its targets swiftly and decisively.

The senior engineer at DSTA specialises in communication technology. Her work involves working on possible ways to improve connectivity for various platforms used by the Singapore Army and the Republic of Singapore Air Force.

"At DSTA's Advanced Systems Programme Centre, I acquire, develop and integrate various engineering solutions across a spectrum of technologies to enhance the SAF's defence capabilities," she says.

"These include areas such as radio communications, satellite communications, and datalink techniques." Clear communications during military operations are imperative for instructions and feedback to be disseminated effectively. But it can also be challenging because the equipment used need to withstand rumble and tumble, and must also be designed for reliable transmission regardless of conditions.

"Threats are always evolving, so our defence technologies and capabilities have to keep up and adapt accordingly," she says, adding that she is glad to make a direct impact on safeguarding Singapore and her loved ones.



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2023

Growing a lush and liveable city

This NParks scholar has a vision of building a green and sustainable country now and for future generations

By Pearlyn Tham

If you have noticed a more calming and colourful vibe to Singapore's walkways during your recent strolls, you can thank Ms Pearlynn Sim for that. The 28-year-old was a streetscape manager at National Parks Board (NParks) up until June 2022, managing roadside greenery in Sengkang and Ang Mo Kio to provide a more pleasant and lush environment for pedestrians.

One way Ms Sim achieved this was by planting more greenery to provide shade and lessen the heat generated from the roads. She opted for native flora such as the purple bamboo orchid flowers, lush seashore ardisia plants with pink star-shaped flowers and red-barked memp4t trees. These native plants are planted to mimic the natural structure of forests for birds and insects to move freely.

"These green corridors also serve as additional habitats for these types of biodiversity," she adds.

Today, Ms Sim's role as a corporate strategy and planning manager is to coordinate and implement strategies that achieve NParks' vision for a City in Nature. It is one of the key pillars of the Singapore Green Plan 2030 which aims to make the country more green, liveable and sustainable.

Ms Sim's love for animals and nature started from a young age. Once a month, her animal-lover parents would take her to the zoo. At Raffles Institution where she read mathematics, geography, biology and chemistry, she enrolled

in their Raffles Ecological Literacy Programme and co-authored You Been to Ubin? – a children's book that raises awareness about threats to marine life at Pulau Ubin. The book was sold in bookstores and distributed at local libraries.

After her A levels, she joined local nature groups like NUS Toddycats!, TeamSeaGrass and International Coastal Cleanup Singapore, participating in their activities almost every weekend.

When work is second nature

An internship attachment with NParks – where she organised the annual Festival of Biodiversity that highlights Singapore's natural heritage – motivated Ms Sim to apply for the NParks Undergraduate Scholarship in 2013.

"I wanted to be a part of Singapore's environmental scene and was keen to join an organisation with a vision that strongly resonates with my own aspirations," says Ms Sim.

In 2018, she graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources Conservation from the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver, Canada, and joined NParks full time the same year.

One of Ms Sim's tasks at NParks has been to coordinate the OneMillionTrees movement, which aims to plant one million more trees across Singapore by 2030.

As part of this initiative, Ms Sim is cultivating community partnerships with organisations and individuals supporting the movement. She also curates

publicity resources, explores new ways to increase awareness and recruits volunteers.

"I enjoy working with like-minded colleagues who love nature and the outdoors," she says.

"It is also inspiring to work in an environment where everyone wants to help NParks transform Singapore into a City of Nature."

Thriving overseas

Ms Pearlynn Sim shares tips on how to make the most of your scholarship experience:


- **Pick a well-rounded course:** Ms Sim opted for the multidisciplinary Natural Resources Conservation programme at UBC as it allowed her to understand various issues related to nature conservation.
- **Meet like-minded individuals:** When she spent a semester in Haida Gwaii, Canada, Ms Sim interacted with peers from a diverse community. This helped to broaden her world view.
- **Engage in extracurricular activities:** At UBC's Beaty Biodiversity Museum, she was part of the museum guiding and outreach team. "It was therapeutic to share about the truly incredible diversity of flora and fauna with visitors."

I enjoy working with like-minded colleagues who love nature and the outdoors.

MS PEARLYNN SIM
Recipient of the NParks Undergraduate Scholarship

Scan for more on the NParks Undergraduate Scholarship.

PHOTO: NPARKS



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AGE
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EDUCATION
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Putnam School of Film & Animation
American Film Institute Conservatory

Paving the way for a more efficient commute

Through his work at a traffic nerve centre, this LTA scholar hopes to reduce congestion on the road

By Mary Wu

After the year-end holiday lull, roads in Singapore tend to get very busy during peak hours as people head back to work and school. What if there was a way to ease traffic and reduce time spent on the roads?

This is what Land Transport Authority (LTA) scholar Victor Khoo is working on. The 32-year-old is a senior engineer from the Transportation Technology team within the Intelligent Transport Systems Development division.

With the aid of artificial intelligence tech such as predictive analytics, he and his engineering colleagues are figuring out how to ease bottlenecks and make the journeys of Singaporeans smoother. They are currently developing a new traffic monitoring system for the Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) operations control centre, akin to LTA's traffic nerve centre.

The ITS operations control centre is where LTA operators monitor, analyse and control Singapore's extensive network of roads, sensors, signboards and cameras. Mr Khoo and his team are putting together the requirements for a new prediction and simulation capability before development and testing can commence.

Mr Khoo explains that when the new feature is up and running, it could predict and possibly resolve traffic jams before they happen. Instead of manually computing the best recovery plan, the system will monitor current traffic, predict future scenarios and recommend the best option to

improve the situation.

He envisions a future where all the road systems, infrastructure (including traffic lights, road signs and lane-markings) and vehicles are interconnected in such a way that they can automatically "talk" to each other in real-time, creating a safer and more optimised commute.

They can also share useful information such as sharp curves, traffic incidents and jams.

Opportunities to gain new skills

A self-professed automation and robotics geek, Mr Khoo's interest in the LTA Undergraduate Scholarship was piqued when he learnt that the North East Line was the world's first fully automated underground driverless heavy rail rapid transit line when it started operations in 2003.

"It is pretty amazing to know that Singapore made a major breakthrough in railway automation that put it on the world map," he says.

Thus began his journey as an LTA scholar, which saw him complete a Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical and Electronic Engineering) degree from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in 2016, and a year later, a Master of Science (Advanced Control and Systems Engineering) from The University of Manchester in Britain under LTA sponsorship.

In his third year at NTU, he did a 10-week internship with LTA where he participated in and assessed various rail testing activities and technical issues with train models.

"The internship provided a

crucial foundation for my professional development, exposure to the real-life working environment and a smooth transition to my career within LTA," he says.

When he joined LTA full time in October 2017, his request to join the rail side of the organisation was granted. His first posting to the Integrated Control Systems division gave him the rare opportunity to go to Qingdao, China for the testing of trains before their delivery to Singapore for stage 1 of the Thomson-East Coast Line (TEL).

Later, his second posting in 2020 sent him to the Signalling and Platform Screen Doors division where he worked on delivering the signalling system for stage 2 and 3 of the TEL project.

During these postings, he was also involved in the Johor Bahru – Singapore Rapid Transit System Link.

Eight months ago, he moved on to his third and current posting to expand his expertise beyond rail – but still with the aim of improving the everyday commute of Singaporeans.

For those looking to take up the LTA scholarship, Mr Khoo says that his biggest motivation is the satisfaction he derives from seeing a project from ideation to completion.

"LTA is one of the biggest government agencies where you can use your skills to benefit our commuters and transport systems. This is what makes me passionate about my job."

LTA is one of the biggest government agencies where you can use your skills to benefit our commuters and transport systems.

MR VICTOR KHOO
Recipient of the LTA Undergraduate (Local) Scholarship

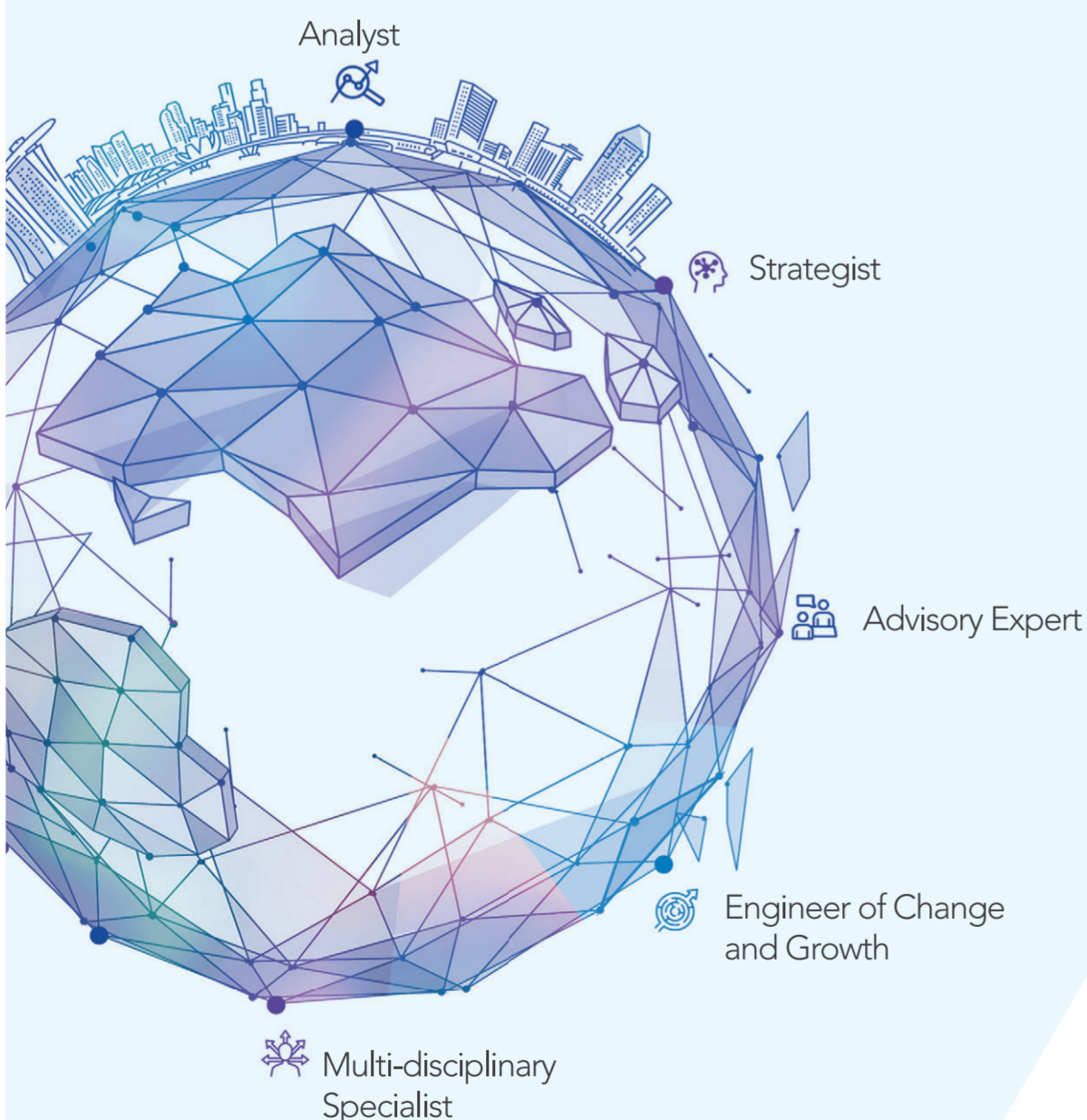
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I hope to be part of the spark in instigating digital innovation at the Changi Airport Group.

MR JOSHUA TAM
Recipient of the CAG Undergraduate Scholarship

Scan for more on the CAG Undergraduate Scholarship.



PHOTO: CHANGI AIRPORT GROUP

Using data to give you a warm welcome

This CAG scholar has improved customer experience and minimised check-in times at Changi Airport

By Marianne Tan

Having grown up overseas for most of his childhood due to his father's job, Mr Joshua Tam cherished every trip back home to visit friends and family. Naturally, Changi Airport became a landmark that he associated with these happy memories.

After returning to Singapore permanently in 2012, Mr Tam experienced another momentous occasion at the airport – the warm reception he and his teammates from the Singapore Men's National Softball Team received after they had clinched a gold medal at the 2019 Southeast Asian Games.

"I can still vividly remember being welcomed back by a sea of red and white at Terminal 1's arrival hall," recalls the 26-year-old.

These joyful memories were also what motivated him to apply for the Changi Airport Group (CAG) Undergraduate Scholarship for his studies at the National University of Singapore, where he pursued a Bachelor of Science in Business Analytics.

"I wanted to join CAG so that I could share the same feelings of joy with every traveller who comes through Changi Airport," he says.

Mr Tam's fondness for Changi Airport also stems from its good customer service and high standards of cleanliness. He credits processes like data analytics with minimising check-in time and improving the pre-boarding of passengers.

His keen interest in data, which originates from his fascination with using it to effect outcomes in competitive sports, is what he hopes to eventually leverage for CAG's benefit.

"I want to analyse the data I collect and use it to create value for people and organisations," he says.

Mr Tam had his first experience tapping on the power of data when he worked as a data analytics intern under the iChangi application team in 2021. He was involved in enhancing the app, which provides customers with travel information and options to purchase duty-free items.

In particular, Mr Tam was tasked with designing suitable metrics for the app to evaluate its performance and gather insights.

"I conducted an analysis of consumer shopping behaviours based on past data, categorised purchasing patterns into specific groups, and developed a logic that the system will follow for users of the iChangi app," he says.

This greatly helped the team to understand customers' behaviours and devise methodologies that can augment their purchasing experiences.

Building the airport of the future
With CAG's support, Mr Tam is currently pursuing a Master of Science in the Management of Information Systems and Digital Innovation at the University of Warwick, in Britain.

He hopes his studies will help him effectively connect the dots between technology and related fields so he can formulate innovative solutions to tackle business issues when he eventually joins CAG full time.

"The modules in my postgraduate studies are highly relevant and aligned with CAG's road map in digital transformation,

while niche topics like blockchain and digital finance will enrich my technical knowledge," he says.

He looks forward to being involved with CAG's plans for a unified data organisation. This will provide the company with readily available data for analysis and machine learning to help improve the customer experience at Changi Airport.

"I hope to be part of the spark in instigating digital innovation at CAG," says Mr Tam.

Be clear about what you want

For students applying for a scholarship, Mr Joshua Tam shares these tips:

- Intern with the company:** Mr Tam's internship helped him to appreciate what he has been learning at school while narrowing down what he wanted to do in the future.
- Make sure your goals are aligned:** When he was applying for the CAG scholarship, Mr Tam thought of what he wanted to be in the long run and how this synchronised with CAG's corporate mission.
- Expect a holistic application process:** Mr Tam was given tasks that challenged him intellectually while also testing his leadership skills and personal qualities.

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Embracing change with an open mind

This SgIS scholar challenges himself with unconventional choices in life like taking on a new career path in chipmaking

By Jo-ann Huang

If there is one key takeaway that Mr Kenny Siew has from his O levels, it is that hard work pays off. He scored A2 for Additional Mathematics, which was a remarkable improvement from his F9 results during his mid-year exams. He also transformed his average preliminary exam results of Cs and Ds to mostly As and Bs in the national exams.

The former Compassvale Secondary School student was so disappointed with his grades at mid-year that it jolted him into action. He spent whatever free time he had outside of school studying at Sengkang Community Club's study space.

Mr Siew reaped the rewards of his determination and scored well enough to join a junior college. "I was so happy with my results that I cried," recalls the 26-year-old.

This lesson of not giving up when the going gets tough stuck with him and taught him the importance of having a growth mindset, an approach he says gave him the confidence to pursue unconventional choices in his academic and career path.

Even though he scored well enough to enter a junior college of his choice, the self-confessed "hands-on" person took the polytechnic route. He preferred the polytechnic's practical and specialised style of learning which focuses on preparing students for the workforce.

Mr Siew knew he had to work hard to qualify for university as a polytechnic graduate. He performed well at Singapore Polytechnic's chemical engineering diploma course and qualified for the chemical engineering degree programme at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

During his polytechnic days,

Mr Siew made it a point to do internships in fields that were unrelated to his studies.

In his final year at polytechnic, he took up an internship in the pharmaceutical field where he was involved in the development of new anti-resistant antibiotics.

Despite being unfamiliar with the healthcare field, he took it in his stride and adopted a positive attitude.

"Keeping an open mind is very important because it helped me to discover new things," he says.

It was also this mindset that steered Mr Siew towards the electronics sector.

An unorthodox decision

Wanting to have a hand in Singapore's 5G future, Mr Siew decided on chip manufacturing as a career even though he studied petrochemicals as a chemical engineering student at NUS.

He pursued his interest by applying for the Singapore-Industry Scholarship (SgIS) in his second year. SgIS is an undergraduate scholarship offered by the Ministry of Education in partnership with 118 sponsoring organisations across strategic sectors such as aviation, electronics, maritime and social services.

With the scholarship, he could apply to more than one sponsoring company under that sector at one go. Mr Siew chose the electronics sector despite having no prior experience.

"Chipmaking is something totally new to me," he says.

"Having this growth mindset has really helped me to adapt faster as I am more open to learning and acquiring new knowledge."

He went through a series of interviews with several companies before he was accepted by RF360 Singapore, a unit of US-based chipmaker Qualcomm. Even though he had specialised in petrochemicals in university, he decided to take up the scholarship, which would mean switching to chipmaking after graduation.

After graduating in 2022, he joined RF360 as a technology development engineer and worked in a department that explores and develops ideas to fabricate radio frequency filtering solutions to isolate the required bandwidths for devices.

RF360 works to develop and manufacture innovative 5G solutions for mobile devices and fast-growing business segments, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), drones, robotics and automotive applications.

As the development and adoption of 5G accelerates in Singapore, Mr Siew intends to remain with RF360 over the next five years or longer to build experience and accrue skills in the exciting field.

For 18-year-olds who do not yet know which scholarship or field best suits them, he says students should do their homework and research the sponsoring organisations they are interested in before crafting their resumes accordingly.

He also encourages tertiary students to not fear rejection and apply for the scholarship regardless of how well they performed academically.

Mr Siew says: "Besides grades, the sponsoring organisations also look for other skill sets such as critical thinking or your ability to communicate well."

SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2023

Besides grades, the sponsoring organisations also look for other skill sets such as critical thinking or your ability to communicate well.

MR KENNY SIEW
Recipient of the Singapore-Industry Scholarship

Scan for more on the Singapore-Industry Scholarship.

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

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Creating impact through compassion

A positive experience with 'angels' at the hospital at age 13 inspired this SIT scholar to give back through nursing

» By Joshua Wong

They were like angels,” says Mr Joshua Ting of the nurses who took care of him when he was admitted into a single-bed isolation room at age 13. It was also the moment that inspired him to become a nurse.

The story came full circle nine years later when he returned to the very same ward during a polytechnic attachment stint, reuniting with the nurse who had cared for him at KK Women's and Children's Hospital when he was young.

"It was really an inspiration to meet her again," recalls Mr Ting. "I wanted to cry at that moment; it was so surreal."

The reunion further cemented his calling to the vocation, inspiring him to apply for the Bachelor of Science with Honours in Nursing, a programme jointly offered by the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and the University of Glasgow.

Currently, the 27-year-old is a full-time staff nurse in the general ward at Alexandra Hospital, which is a part of the National University Health System.

The road to becoming a nurse had not been smooth sailing as Mr Ting's parents initially objected to his decision to study nursing after O levels.

Undeterred, he held firm to his convictions and enrolled in Ngee Ann Polytechnic's nursing diploma programme.

In 2020, Mr Ting picked SIT to further his studies in nursing as it offered a two-year direct-honours programme. The cherry on the

cake was the full-term bond-free SIT Scholarship, which he was awarded in the same year.

Receiving the acceptance letter for the scholarship was “the turning point of his life”, he says, as it allowed him to pursue his career of choice without having to worry about finances.

In addition to receiving full coverage of tuition fees, SIT scholars also have access to a specially curated programme consisting of exclusive seminars, workshops and events designed to equip recipients with the skills needed to help them succeed in their careers.

Getting involved on the ground

Throughout his university days, Mr Ting took the initiative to engage in multiple attachments to gain more work experience.

In his first year, he went on an attachment with St Luke's ElderCare. He got to refine his clinical examination skills at the nursing home.

He also did a clinical placement at a family medicine clinic and conducted a wide scope of duties, including providing provisional diagnoses and initiating treatment plans under a doctor's supervision.

"SIT places a constant emphasis on applied learning. It isn't all about theoretical concepts, but the practical aspects too," says Mr Ting.

Unfortunately, an overseas immersion programme at the University of Glasgow did not materialise because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In his second year, Mr Ting

worked as a research assistant at SIT. Together with his professor from SIT's nursing programme, they developed a web-based game that uses real hospital scenarios to enhance the teaching of evidence-based practice for incoming batches of nursing students.

The SIT scholar is currently learning a coding language in his spare time. He hopes to be able to combine his nursing knowledge and newfound tech skills to lessen the workload of nurses.

As Mr Ting continues to hone his skills, his long-term goal is to eventually transition to healthcare consulting or policymaking. By having on the ground working experience, it would enable him to have a better understanding of the processes and challenges faced by the healthcare sector.

"There are different specialties in nursing. I would like to take a helicopter view to observe and understand things from a broader perspective," says Mr Ting, who aspires to make a bigger impact by effecting changes on a macro level.

By paying forward the care that he has received, he hopes to have a lasting positive effect on Singapore's healthcare landscape. "Ultimately, my conviction is to do the right thing and be a catalyst today for tomorrow's transformation," he says.

"I hope to improve nurse retention and hospital work culture while contributing towards more effective care delivery and a better healthcare experience for patients."

I hope to improve nurse retention and hospital work culture while contributing towards more effective care delivery and a better healthcare experience for patients.

MR JOSHUA TING
Recipient of the
SIT Scholarship

Scan for more
on the **SIT**
Scholarship.



PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM



Photo: Liew Tong Leng

The REP programme has fuelled my passion for empowering businesses through technology.

MS PERLYN CHEW
Scholar in the Renaissance Engineering Programme

The CNYSP has exposed me to research since my freshman year, which is quite unique to the programme.

MS ZANN TEO
Scholar in the CN Yang Scholars Programme

The ability to work as a team and present findings is always crucial but communicating well as a data scientist is just as important.

MR SYED ZAHEEN
Scholar in the NTU-University Scholars Programme

Scan for more on the NTU scholarships

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

Taking varied paths

NTU's Premier Scholars Programmes opened the door for these three undergraduates to discover their passions

By Marianne Tan

From research opportunities and overseas trips to internships at world-renowned organisations, Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Premier Scholars Programmes (PSP) offer a multidisciplinary approach to learning while equipping students with skills to thrive in an evolving workplace. Three students share how their respective programmes benefitted them.

Using technology to empower businesses

While interning at Amazon and Shopee, Ms Perlyn Chew, 23, often had to straddle the seemingly opposing worlds of engineering and business management.

As part of Amazon's technology consulting team, she had to come up with technical solutions using cloud technologies and data analytics to meet clients' business needs.

At Shopee, she worked as a technical product manager, acting as a bridge between the different teams – business, software engineering and quality assurance testing – to ensure that a product met market demands.

"These roles required me to have a strong understanding of both the technical and business aspects as well as the communication skills to be able to explain complex technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders," she explains.

The computer science undergraduate credits her abilities to the Renaissance Engineering Programme (REP), NTU's flagship engineering programme that covers a broad spectrum of multidisciplinary subjects bridging engineering, business and humanities.

As part of her REP curriculum, Ms Chew learnt business and technology management, which she says have complemented her engineering studies.

"The REP programme has fuelled my passion for empowering businesses through technology," she says.

Creating a species checklist for dung beetles

Dung beetles help to disperse seeds, recycle nutrients and even reduce methane emissions. If these insects vanish, forest biodiversity will decline, with healthy ecosystems endangered.

Ms Zann Teo, 22, a scholar with NTU's research-focused CN Yang Scholars Programme (CNYSP), discovered her fascination with the insect during her first CNYSP research attachment at the Tropical Ecology and Entomology Lab at NTU.

In her third-year research project, this eco champion compiled a species checklist to help scientists and biologists make better conservation plans.

This project was recognised as the Regional Winner of Asia for the category of Earth & Environmental Sciences at the UA Global Summit 2022 in Dublin.

"I hope my research can deepen our understanding of the impact of climate and land use change, and guide future biodiversity conservation policy," she says.

Through CNYSP, Ms Teo completed her final year project at the Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research at University College London, where she interacted with leading ecologists from around the world.

"The CNYSP has exposed me to research since my freshman year, which is quite unique to the programme. The funding support has also let me attend conferences overseas to enrich my knowledge in the field."

Communicating well as a data scientist

If curiosity is a skill highly sought after at the workplace, Mr Syed Zaheen, 23, will probably outshine many of his peers.

During his National Service years, he tried his hand at building apps. In his free time, he watched YouTube videos on topics ranging from psychology and maths to philosophy.

As a culture and society enthusiast, Mr Syed also got to dabble in ethnographic fieldwork on heritage conservation and sustainability as part of his curriculum in the NTU-University Scholars Programme (NTU-USP), which offers interdisciplinary courses across the sciences, engineering, humanities and social sciences, with opportunities for overseas programmes.

The NTU-USP allowed him to explore his varied interests while complementing the quantitative nature of his major in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence.

One of his overseas research trips took him to Ipoh where he presented findings about preserving the town's heritage as a former mining settlement that was dependent on Chinese immigrant labour.

"The ability to work as a team and present findings is always crucial but communicating well as a data scientist is just as important," he explains.

Mr Syed recently completed an internship as a software developer and will be further exploring his options in data science and research.

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OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must have a strong record of academic and co-curricular achievement. Consideration will be given only to those who show a capacity for independent thought, together with a deep and genuine commitment to their respective chosen fields. This must be demonstrated by knowledge, activities and initiatives in those fields, outside of the framework of their school curriculum. A mere declared interest or nominal participation in a co-curricular activity in any such field will not be sufficient. Candidates will be asked to submit with their prescribed application form a personal statement (maximum 500 words) stating their career aims and aspirations, and how they see their chosen course of study as helping to achieve them.

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A scholarship's annual value will cover fees and book allowances, initial clothing allowance, maintenance allowance and one-time return economy class airfare and is tenable for the whole undergraduate course of study leading to a first degree.

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CLOSING DATE: 10 March 2023
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Children are our future changemakers and problem-solvers. It is our duty to raise them right and equip them with the skills needed.

MR CHUA WEI JIAN
Recipient of the MOE Teaching Award

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

Opening young minds to wonders of nature

This MOE Teaching Award recipient aims to inculcate the love of learning in a new digital world

By Lin Jiasheng

Mr Chua Wei Jian's interest in the natural environment started when he was young. He loved being outdoors, be it running, kayaking or rowing with the dragon boat team at junior college.

Amidst nature, Mr Chua has always been fascinated by the biological systems of plants and animals as well as the ecosystems they thrive in.

"Our living environment is more fragile than we think," says the 23-year-old who chose to specialise in biology.

"Because of global economic development and climate change, many plants and animals are facing extinction faster than we can even identify, let alone conserve them."

The climate change problem is compounded by misinformation surrounding climate science.

"Unfortunately, many adults have been misinformed about climate change and do not see the urgent need for climate action, nor even believe in it," says Mr Chua.

He believes climate education has to start from young. However, even this is an uphill task as most children's experience of the world is increasingly mediated through the screens of digital devices and social media – instead of being out there in a natural environment.

One way to re-acquaint children with nature and teach them to treasure natural habitats and creatures is through experiential learning, says Mr Chua.

He is currently in his third year at the Nanyang Technological University-National Institute of Education (NTU-NIE), and his studies are not confined to the

classroom or the laboratory. "We frequently go on excursions to places like S.E.A. Aquarium, Sungei Buloh Wetland Reserve and beaches around Singapore. Our professors and local guides go the extra mile to help us understand biology concepts beyond theories and textbooks," he says.

"My learning journey has been enriched through these field trips and interacting with specimens of plants and animals. It is a great way to learn about the natural world and I definitely aim to do the same for my future students."

Broadening his scope of education

As of July 2023, NIE's degree will be a double major programme, which recognises the academic rigour and depth of knowledge that NIE undergraduates undertake in their content area of expertise and in the field of education. On top of that, undergraduates will have to complete a minor. In Mr Chua's case, he will have a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Education, with a minor in Chemistry.

As part of his MOE Teaching Award, Mr Chua took advantage of the opportunity to study overseas at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the United States.

"I wanted to go farther and have a different experience out of Asia," he says. "The focus in the US was less about rote learning and more about thinking deeply and critically, and how to communicate those ideas to people from diverse backgrounds."

Mr Chua hopes he can utilise these vital communication skills to reach students of different abilities and social backgrounds

in his future classroom. In his second year, he conducted educational research on how lower secondary students construct scientific arguments. Among other findings, he found a generally higher proficiency in text analysis over reading of quantitative data like charts and tables.

Mr Chua's research has deepened his understanding of student performance and pedagogical methods.

"My research experience will help me to better prepare for my science classes, especially when it comes to choosing the students' preferred medium of communication," he says.

He had the chance to apply the theories he learnt at NIE during his teaching stints at Fern Green Primary School and North Vista Secondary School in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

"These teaching internships gave me a confidence boost – from knowing nothing at all to feeling prepared to enter the teaching profession," he says.

Mr Chua feels a strong sense of mission as an educator. "Children are our future changemakers and problem-solvers," he says. "It is our duty to raise them right and equip them with the skills needed to meet the pressing challenges of their time."



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Helping improve the taxpaying experience

Understanding how people make decisions led this IRAS scholar to find the best ways to nudge taxpayers to pay taxes on time

By Rachael Boon

Sometimes, all it takes to nudge someone in the right direction is a text message. In 2013, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) experimented with SMS reminders to encourage taxpayers to pay their taxes on time. The messages would also recommend the most convenient payment mode and highlight that taxpayers still had a "last chance" before penalties were imposed.

The experiment, which drew on the concept of behavioural nudges, was overwhelmingly successful: Forty-seven per cent of text message recipients promptly paid their overdue tax, compared with 16 per cent in the control group.

The reminder text messages also helped reduce the number of calls and walk-ins to the Revenue House in Novena as many taxpayers had received the information they needed.

"There are many reasons why people don't pay taxes on time. Everyone is busy, so it's not difficult to miss a letter or deadline," says Ms Xu Dingjiao.

She was part of a team at IRAS that looked at how simple changes in the way agencies communicate with the public can influence behaviours and improve compliance rates in areas such as tax filing.

"Behavioural economics help us understand people's decisions in that context, rather than assuming people are intentionally not paying their taxes," says the 34-year-old, who did a double major in economics with operations research and management science at University of California, Berkeley, on an

IRAS undergraduate scholarship. After completing the four-year bachelor's degree in just three years, she went on to pursue a master's in statistics at Harvard University in 2010.

Ms Xu has always been interested in understanding how people make economic decisions such as making purchases.

"Economics has a close link to the work done at IRAS and I felt I would be able to apply what I studied," she says.

Embracing innovation at work
After graduating from Harvard University in 2011, she became a tax auditor with IRAS. Ms Xu later went on to handle research, behavioural insights and design thinking work as part of her career development, and eventually became a manager.

Today, she is a director with the valuation and stamp duty branch of the property tax division. The branch oversees the administration of stamp duty, capital valuation for the government, and supports the property tax division in data analytics and research. The division also carried out Covid-19 efforts such as the rental relief framework and Rental Support Scheme at the height of the pandemic.

"I felt proud of what we've done to help businesses during those trying times," says Ms Xu.

"When I tell my friends I work at IRAS, they 'act scared', which always amuses me," she says, of the stereotypical view people have of the agency.

"Yes, we are serious about our work, but there is a lot of emphasis on innovation, creativity and improving the lives of taxpayers too."

For instance, Ms Xu was part of

IRAS' transformation office, called LEA:D – Leveraging Analytics, Design and Digitalisation, and helped to shape strategies to create a smoother tax paying experience for taxpayers. She was in charge of developing a design strategy, setting the vision and purpose of design in IRAS, as well as articulating the processes and establishing a central team to scale up the use of design.

Being a people person is one reason why she likes interacting with people and understanding how taxpayers tick. She also enjoys managing a team and motivating others, which was why she chose to pursue a Master of Business Administration at INSEAD in 2018 on an IRAS postgraduate scholarship.

"I am interested in being with a large team and am ready to lead as a people manager in any department at IRAS," says Ms Xu.

She has benefited from a formal mentorship programme in place for IRAS scholars, but notes that IRAS managers are often informal mentors as they care for their staff.

New officers, regardless of whether they are scholars, "also get to try a variety of projects that shape the direction of their careers," she adds.

Ms Xu wants to pay it forward and take on more responsibilities as part of her contribution to nation-building in Singapore.

"There's a great team of people here who have new ideas and are willing to work beyond their usual job scope, such as taking on Covid-19-related work, even though they have to sacrifice personal time. We want to work together with the community on what's best for them," she says.

We are serious about our work, but there is a lot of emphasis on innovation, creativity and improving the lives of taxpayers too.

MS XU DINGJIAO
Recipient of IRAS Undergraduate and Postgraduate Scholarships

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

Scan for more on the IRAS Scholarships.





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Going beyond the news

From attending a black metal concert to questioning inequality, this SPH journalism scholar goes all out for her stories

By Mary Wu

As an intern with Berita Harian's (BH) news desk in 2006, the then 18-year-old Nur Adilah Ahmad Mahbob found herself in a most unexpected place – at a black metal concert.

"There I was, a tudung-clad lady amidst a crowd of hardcore fans," she recalls. "It was a taste of what my journalism career would be like; sometimes unexpected, often pushing me out of my comfort zone."

Ms Adilah was also exposed to many exciting facets of the profession, from crime and court to the general election, not to mention the adrenaline rush of meeting deadlines.

That same year, Ms Adilah accepted a scholarship from Singapore Press Holdings, now known as the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship, and commenced studies at the National University of Singapore.

The scholarship also allowed her to do a six-month exchange programme at the University of Toronto, Canada, in 2009 when she took the opportunity to travel and explore North America.

What may be surprising is that Ms Adilah does not have a bachelor's degree in journalism or the humanities. She specialises in molecular and cell biology, in the field of life sciences.

However, it is not as unrelated to journalism as one might think.

"The rigour in science education instils a sense of curiosity about the world, a

passion for learning and critical thinking – values and skills which prepared me for a career in journalism," notes the 35-year-old.

Her grounding in science has also proven to be useful when reporting on topics such as the pandemic, climate change and technology. Her deeper understanding has helped her to better explain complex concepts to readers.

Writing stories that matter

It has been over a decade since Ms Adilah joined the company full time in May 2010, and she has been covering general news beats.

Since July 2022, she has been working with a team to plan news features for the weekend. In her current role as a senior correspondent with BH, she also works on her own stories and develops more in-depth features.

"I've been able to cover topics such as marriage and divorce trends in the Malay community, awareness of end-of-life planning and amendments to the Maintenance of Parents Act," she shares.

One topic she recently covered was social mobility and inequality in Singapore's Malay community. While it has been heartening to write about the Malay community over the years, she says there are still many issues that need to be highlighted.

"It is important to identify the barriers that may impede the progress of certain segments of

society and examine what we can do to help improve their lives," she says.

As part of her job Ms Adilah has had opportunities to travel to Germany, China and Laos for work, and upgrade her skills through courses.

At the recent Temasek Foundation WAN-IFRA Young Media Leaders Fellowship Programme, she met fellow journalists from the region and discussed the future of the media industry in the digital space.

"Whether in print, online or social media, platforms may change, but the basics of journalism – the discipline to report accurately and responsibly, and the skill to tell impactful stories – will always remain non-negotiable," she says.

As a journalist, Ms Adilah says she wants to make an impact on society by raising awareness on certain issues and tackling challenging narratives.

"The important thing is to bring an issue to light without sensationalising it or 'click-baiting' readers," she says.

The important thing is to bring an issue to light without "click-baiting" readers.

MS NUR ADILAH AHMAD MAHBAB
Recipient of the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

Scan for more on the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship.





MR ZAC LIEW
Recipient of the NUS Sports Scholarship

You shouldn't avoid applying out of fear of not getting the scholarship. You deserve more credit than you think.

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRÉCHESCAR LIM

Playing to his advantage

The NUS Sports Scholarship helps this national athlete juggle hectic schedules with the help of a sports manager

» By Bryant Chan

After classes every weekday, Mr Zac Liew makes the hour-long journey from Prince George's Park Residences at the National University of Singapore (NUS) to the National Training Centre in Bishan. He trains there from 4 to 8.30pm with the other members of the Singapore national gymnastics team, and then returns to campus. On Saturday, the 21-year-old has no classes but spends four hours training. He gets to rest and recharge on Sunday.

Although Mr Liew has been part of the national development team since he was nine years old, juggling the intensive training and competition schedule of a national-level athlete with a rigorous university timetable is a next-to-impossible feat, as the first-year student discovered upon matriculating into NUS.

Thankfully, the gymnast gets assigned a sports manager as a recipient of the NUS Sports Scholarship – a scholarship awarded to a small number of highly-talented individuals who possess outstanding academic and sports participation and representation records.

His sports manager helps to manage his training schedule, class timetable and competition arrangements. On top of that, this adviser also helps him chart his career path during regular check-in sessions.

"They help you plan and integrate your sporting life and career, and offer tips and tricks to make university life easier," says Mr Liew. "I don't think other universities are helping their athletes at this level."

Sports managers also help their respective NUS scholars facilitate the process of applying for leaves of absence and work out plans to make up for missed lessons.

Chasing the dream
The bond-free NUS Sports Scholarship covers tuition fees, a living allowance and a housing allowance annually, as well as guaranteed offers of on-campus housing for the first two years and an overseas exchange opportunity with one of NUS's partner universities.

For the artistic gymnast, who hopes to compete in the Asian Games, SEA Games and World University Games this year, as well as the 2026 Commonwealth Games, the scholarship is an indispensable resource to him.

It was this level of support that reassured Mr Liew that he had made the right choice by becoming a NUS scholar, over the offers from other schools.

"Having seen so many batches of student athletes over the years, NUS really understands what we need," he says.

Naturally, he will also be seeking help from his sports manager to recommend the most suitable college for his Student Exchange Programme that is taking place in his third year.

With over 300 partner universities across more than 40 countries to choose from, Mr Liew hopes to study in an American or European college with a strong culture in gymnastics.

"It would be good to see how they train over there because they perform at such a high level," he says. "Singapore has a pretty strong showing in South-east Asia, but we are still a distance away from competing with the top guys in the world."

If he is being honest, Mr Liew never expected to attend university on a scholarship, particularly as an athlete in a sport as niche as gymnastics.

He is the only member of the NUS gymnastics team – and by extension, one of the few to receive the NUS Sports Scholarship for gymnastics.

While Singapore does not hold national collegiate-level gymnastics competitions, Mr Liew will be representing NUS at international competitions around the world.

The fact that NUS has given him so much support, both financially and academically, has made him redouble his efforts to encourage all scholar hopefuls to apply.

"You shouldn't avoid applying out of fear of not getting the scholarship," he says. "You deserve more credit than you think."

Scan for more on the NUS Sports Scholarship.







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Nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit

Online and on-demand classes free up SUSS scholar's schedule to network and work on his own start-up

By Pearlyn Tham

The dynamic world of start-ups has always fascinated Mr Daniel Lee. The Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) Scholarship holder had his first encounter with entrepreneurship at just 16 years old when a family friend offered him a three-month internship with her headhunting start-up.

This experience fuelled his love for learning beyond the classroom and inspired him to take up a human resources course at polytechnic after seeing the impact that human resources can have on the lives of the job candidates and their families.

After graduating from Singapore Polytechnic in 2018, Mr Lee furthered his studies at SUSS where he is now in the third year of his four-year Bachelor of Human Resource Management course at the S R Nathan School of Human Development.

The SUSS scholar is also doing a minor in financial technology. On why he chose the school, the 24-year-old says that one of the main reasons is the flexible curriculum that it provides.

As the university has a unique mix of full-time students like Mr Lee, along with part-time ones who are working adults, the curriculum caters to their different schedules and lets them plan their timetables accordingly.

For both virtual and online classes, students are graded in terms of class participation in person or on online discussion boards.

Online lessons are taught by an instructor and have a fixed schedule, while virtual lessons are pre-recorded classes available on-demand via the school's intranet.

This new way of learning, with its large degree of flexibility and trust in the students, is a huge pull factor for Mr Lee.

"I really appreciate the flexibility of being able to choose how and when I want to learn," he says.

The flexible learning model frees up his schedule for him to focus on his interests outside of school, like working part-time or taking on internships – something that SUSS strongly encourages students to do so they can beef up their portfolios and shape world views for working life.

For the same reason, Mr Lee signed up for the SUSS Venture Builder Programme, which creates a highly immersive, incubator-like environment for start-up talent and budding entrepreneurs.

Open to all SUSS students, the programme lets applicants experience a three-month work attachment overseas in partnership with other universities in the Asian region – wherever "there are entrepreneurial opportunities", according to the school.

For Mr Lee, it was BINUS University in Jakarta, Indonesia where he was mentored by in-residence entrepreneurs for his project which consists of an intersection between blockchain and human resources.

Cherishing time as a student

"One of the skills I picked up during my attachment overseas was networking. In an unfamiliar environment, I had to think on my feet in difficult social situations. This is a crucial skill as building trust and establishing relationships are critical in my field," says Mr Lee.

As a SUSS scholar, Mr Lee has enjoyed additional opportunities

to network for his future.

Scholars are invited to take part in many activities and events within the university, such as open houses, seminars and community involvement projects. They also get to mingle at the scholarship awards ceremony.

On top of that, the bond-free scholarship gives him more freedom in his schedule.

"The scholarship frees me up to have more time to do the things I am passionate about and pursue my interests both within and outside of school," says Mr Lee.

"Many students may rush through university to graduate, but for me, I want to savour the journey to do the things which I can only do as a student."

Preparing for the future

Mr Lee is currently working on an early-stage start-up outside school hours, an experience that he says will give him insights into the intricacies of running a business such as seeking funding and ensuring product-market fit.

Looking ahead, he is confident that what he has learnt will be transferable across industries when he eventually joins the workforce.

"Skills in human resources can be used in any organisation as it is all about serving and working with people," says the SUSS scholar.

"However, my career goals are less about getting ahead – I am more influenced by my need to live a life with no regrets."



SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2023



Many students may rush through university to graduate, but for me, I want to savour the journey to do the things which I can only do as a student.

MR DANIEL LEE
Recipient of the SUSS Scholarship

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM



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Unlocking students' potential with music

The MOE Teaching Scholarship holder believes her pupils can shine in their own ways

» By Goh Hwee Koon



I am keen to explore the possibilities of music therapy to support those with social and emotional needs.

MS ABBI CHOW
Recipient of the MOE Teaching Scholarship

Scan for more on the MOE Teaching Scholarship.




PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

From playing the ukulele to making pop music, groups of students from Ahmad Ibrahim Primary School took turns to stage musical performances last year.

The preparations for these performances were led by Music and English Language teacher Abbi Chow, together with two other teachers, as a way to help students discover their hidden talents.

Although the performing students had minimal background in music, she encouraged them to overcome self-doubt and step forward to perform – to resounding cheers and applause from their fellow schoolmates. The 15-minute performances during recess were so well received that they will be continued this year.

"It is rewarding to introduce them to music experiences that lift their spirits, witness the effort they put in during their practices and celebrate their newfound confidence to perform in front of their peers," says the 25-year-old.

She believes that doing well in school goes beyond just getting good grades; it is important that students believe in themselves and recognise that everyone has the potential to shine in his or her own way.

"It's about exploring their talents and interests, trying new things and being brave enough to show up and work hard at what they love," she adds.

The same can be said for Ms Chow herself who discovered her career path during a mission trip to village schools in Thailand when she was 17 years old.

It was then that Ms Chow realised she had the ability to hold the attention of a class of students while helping them to pick up a new language.

"I enjoyed the experience which also made me discover hidden skills I never knew I had," she says.

Discovering her own potential

Ms Chow's personal journey of self-discovery in Thailand, coupled with encouragement from her teachers, led her to apply for the MOE Teaching Scholarship in 2016.

She enrolled in the National Institute of Education (NIE) to pursue a Bachelor of Arts (Education) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

As of July 2023, NIE's degree will be a double major programme, which recognises the academic rigour and depth of knowledge that NIE undergraduates undertake in their content area of expertise and in the field of education.

Ms Chow chose music as her subject major because she wanted to share her love for music with others, especially with children from less fortunate backgrounds who are not able to afford lessons outside of school.

On top of that, she is formally trained as a pianist and plays the violin too. She enjoys listening to film music as well as creating music compositions.

At NIE, she got to discover more music genres and had the opportunity to learn to play other instruments like the bass guitar and *guzheng*.

With a minor in English language, Ms Chow enjoys using songs and stories to teach the subject to kids.

As an MOE scholar, she had the opportunity to go overseas for her practicum in her second year. She went to an elementary school in Taiwan.

One key takeaway from the practicum was the importance of building rapport with students.

Bonding well with her pupils helps Ms Chow to connect with them meaningfully which in turn will influence them to be more receptive to learning.

One way to do so is through activities such as helping her students prepare for their musical performances. The smaller group meetings, compared with her usual class sizes, gave her more opportunities to interact with each student, allowing her to better understand each individual child.

With the growing awareness of mental health issues among children and teens, Ms Chow wants to use the power of music to help students, especially those with special needs.

"While counselling and extra intervention measures are already available now, I am keen to explore the possibilities of music therapy to support those with social and emotional needs," she says. "This could be something for me to explore and contribute to society in the future."



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This MHA Uniformed Scholarship (SPS) holder is following his police officer father's footsteps in transforming lives for the better

» By Emmy Abdul Alim

On top of overseeing their daily routines, prison officers spend a lot of time engaging

The SPS works with different stakeholders – including government agencies like Yellow

"A simple gesture can have a significant impact on others," says Mr Lin. "If we are able to help an inmate turn his life around, we would be helping not just the inmate himself but also those around him."

MR CLIFFORD LIN
Recipient of the MHA
Uniformed Scholarship (SPS)

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/CAROLINE CHIA

Many scholarship providers look beyond academic performance. For instance, industry scholarships will factor in your portfolio and extracurricular activities you have outside of school when assessing your application.

Start by doing research about the scholarship and consider the purpose of the award before deciding what to include or omit. Don't hesitate to eliminate any accomplishments that don't fit. Rule of thumb: Think quality over quantity.

Create a powerful story of why you deserve the scholarship by boldly showcasing your accomplishments and focusing on leadership qualities and contributions. Scholarship committees are always on the lookout for a well-rounded student who goes above and beyond.

Use your application to show who you are as an individual — your biggest strengths, your life goals, and what you're most proud of in life. Highlight specific examples of what sets you apart from the rest. Above all, be yourself.

These days, it's common for scholarship providers to ask for a recommendation letter. So reach out to people in your life who know about your work ethic, talents and character. Approach your school counsellors, mentors, academic advisors, coaches, teachers or staff in a community or volunteer organisation. Do not ask your family members or personal friends.

Evaluate the importance of your accomplishments in terms of:

- How well they fit the purpose of the scholarship.
- How much of an impact they have made.
- How unique they are.

Your application is the first impression you make to the scholarship provider. So ensure the document is neat; the word count is met; and that there are no misspellings, missing words or grammatical errors. Ask your friend, parent or teacher to help edit and proofread your application before submitting it. Also, be aware of deadlines.



Changi Airport Group

CAG, which manages Changi Airport, undertakes key functions focusing on airport operations and management, air hub development, commercial activities and airport emergency services. The company also takes care

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Guide To Scholarships

Which scholarship **EMPOWERS** you?

From equipping you to reimagine a better tomorrow to motivating you to positively impact the world, the right scholarship gives wings to your dreams and takes you places you never imagined possible. Come take a closer look at the esteemed scholarship providers that are listed here

Agency for Integrated Care

To create a vibrant care community for Singaporeans to live well and age gracefully, AIC coordinates and supports efforts in integrating care to achieve the best care outcomes for its clients.

AIC partners MOH Holdings to attract, develop and groom talent into future leaders in the Community Care sector through the award of the Community Care Scholarship (CCS) and Community Nursing Scholarship (CNS).

Scholars will be deployed to one of AIC's partnering Community Care organisations or community hospitals to serve out their service commitment upon graduation.

If you wish to play a vital role in ensuring the health and well-being of seniors and the community, apply for the CCS and CNS today.



Design Singapore Council

As the national agency that promotes design, Dsg aims to develop the design sector, help Singapore use design for innovation and growth, and make life better in this UNESCO Creative City of Design. As a subsidiary of the Singapore Economic Development Board, Dsg also hopes to help shape Singapore into an innovation-driven economy and a liveable city through design by 2025.

Talents with creative flair, the drive to push boundaries



and a heart to serve Singapore will be groomed under the DesignSingapore Scholarship to become design leaders who deftly utilise strategy and innovation to make things better by design.

Scholarship recipients will contribute to Dsg projects and initiatives to gain new experiences, grow professionally, and expand their portfolio.

Defence Science and Technology Agency

Stay Ahead with the DSTA Scholarship. With the DSTA Scholarship, you can enjoy many opportunities to grow and excel in a collaborative and dynamic environment where innovation thrives.

Explore diverse career pathways within the Defence Science and Technology (DS&T) sector, comprising the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA), DSO National Laboratories (DSO) and Centre of Strategic Infocomm Technologies (CSIT), in exciting domains



from engineering to digital transformation and cybersecurity.

Gain access to a wide range of training opportunities and engage with industry leaders and mentors through DSTA internships and the Global Internship Programme.

So apply for the DSTA Scholarship and be part of a mission that contributes towards strengthening Singapore's defence capabilities.

Auditor-General's Office

As an independent organ of state and the national auditor, AGO's mission is to audit and report to the President and Parliament on the proper accounting and use of public resources to enhance public accountability and help strengthen the financial governance of the public service.

Its observations include system weaknesses, non-compliance with control procedures or legislation, and instances of excess, extravagance, or gross inefficiency leading to waste in the use of public funds and resources.

AGO believes in nurturing dynamic and driven individuals who would like to contribute towards enhancing public accountability. If you have an analytical and enquiring mind, and are interested to pursue a fulfilling career in public sector auditing, the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship is a good fit. A mid-term option is available as well.



Scan to uncover details on your preferred scholarship

www.scholarschoice.com.sg



Land Transport Authority

LTA is on the lookout for future leaders who want to actively shape Singapore's innovative and future-ready land transport industry, transforming Engineering through technology.

As an LTA scholar, you will get to experience different functions through job rotation; participate in high-level corporate committees; play a part in management's decision-making; and demonstrate your flair as a leader amongst many others. Your career will benefit from the statutory board's strong network of international experts as well as opportunities for overseas exchanges, attachments and training.

Full-time engineering undergraduates studying in local universities can sign up for the Local Study Award. Upon graduation, you can anticipate opportunities to work on mega-infrastructure projects using cutting-edge technology.





Home Team Science and Technology Agency (HTX)

Are you passionate about science and technology and seeking a meaningful career? Embark on the HTX scholarship and be part of the Home Team's Force Multiplier to keep Singapore safe and secure.

A statutory board of the Ministry of Home Affairs, HTX is home to scientists and engineers who harness cutting-edge science and technology to deliver transformative solutions that empower Singapore's frontline of security. Leveraging its expertise in AI, biometrics and profiling, CBRNE, cybersecurity, data science, forensics and robotics etc, HTX augments its Home Team's capabilities in their mission to solve crimes, save lives, secure borders, safeguard data and systems, and enhance public safety.

With HTX, you can sharpen your capabilities and fulfil your potential.

Infocomm Media Development Authority

IMDA leads Singapore's digital transformation by developing a vibrant digital economy and an inclusive digital society.

The Singapore Digital (SG Digital) Scholarship empowers you to pursue tech- or media-related studies at the undergraduate or postgraduate level. This includes digital and interactive media, film and television, games, cyber security, information technology, and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) courses. Forge your own career path in a company of your choice*, and excel on a global stage.

Join IMDA as an architect of Singapore's digital future to develop and regulate the infocomm and media sectors; and to create a dynamic, holistic and exciting ecosystem filled with growth opportunities through talent, research, innovation and enterprise.

*Subject to IMDA's approval.



ESSEC Business School

A pioneer of business-related learning since 1907, ESSEC offers a learning-by-doing pedagogical approach founded on the creation and dissemination of cutting-edge knowledge, a blend of academic learning and practical experience, and a multicultural openness and dialogue.

Candidates are automatically considered for the Academic Excellence Scholarship or the Regional Diversity Scholarship. To prepare them for a successful international business career, students will read the ESSEC Global Bachelor of Business Administration, which is taught in English and remains the top-ranking programme in France.

With three campuses in France, Asia-Pacific and Africa, ESSEC students also do a total of 10 to 16 months of global internships and embark on exchange/double degree/specialised tracks at universities worldwide for one to two semesters.





Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore

IRAS acts as the custodian for the nation's taxes and enterprise disbursements. The statutory board also represents Singapore internationally on matters relating to taxation and provides advice on property valuation to the government.

By leveraging analytics, design and digitalisation, IRAS has also been making continuous significant strides in transforming taxpayer and staff experiences. At IRAS, people are one of the most important assets critical to its success. IRAS is committed to developing the potential of talented individuals.

Apply for IRAS Overseas Undergraduate Scholarship, IRAS Merit Undergraduate Scholarship, or IRAS Mid-Term Undergraduate Scholarship, and join IRAS for a career with dynamic and varied exposure, career development opportunities and the constant pursuit of innovation.



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Immigration and Checkpoints Authority

Under the Ministry of Home Affairs Uniformed Scholarship with ICA, you will have the opportunity to play a crucial role in Singapore's homefront security. Keeping Singapore's borders safe and secure is your top priority, with many exciting available roles in checkpoint clearance, intelligence, enforcement, immigration and national registration.

As an ICA scholar, you are primed for key leadership positions through a structured programme of command and staff appointments that empower you to discover and develop your potential.

Not only will you be equipped with holistic skills to prepare for your future career in ICA's fast-paced and dynamic environment, you will also be exposed to a diverse range of functions such as immigration, enforcement, and intelligence fields.

Teachers are the ultimate influencers who lead the future from the classroom. Embark on an unmatched leadership journey by shaping the character and values of the next generation.

The Public Service Commission Scholarship (Teaching Service) prepares you for a career that includes policy formulation and leadership roles in the Education Service and wider Civil Service.

The Education Merit Scholarship, MOE Teaching Scholarship and MOE

Ministry of Education

Teaching Award offer developmental opportunities to groom you for senior positions in the education service.

Candidates will undergo their teaching training at the National Institute of Education after completing their undergraduate degree.



Ministry of Defence / Singapore Armed Forces

The mission of MINDEF and the Singapore Armed Forces is to enhance Singapore's peace and security through deterrence and diplomacy, and should these fail, to secure a swift and decisive victory over the aggressor.

As the bedrock of our defence and security, MINDEF/SAF continually seeks talent who are willing to take up the challenge to defend our sovereignty and way of life. There is a diverse range of scholarships to choose from:

- Military scholarships: The SAF Scholarship, SAF Merit Scholarship, SAF Engineering Scholarship, SAF Medicine Scholarship and SAF Dentistry Scholarship
 - Civilian scholarships: PSC Scholarship (Engineering) – Defence and Security, and Defence Merit Scholarship.
- Taking up a scholarship is a lifelong mission to contribute to the peace and security of Singapore. Answer the higher calling. Defend what matters.



National University of Singapore

NUS is a leading global university and Singapore's flagship university, known for its innovative and rigorous education, research and entrepreneurship. Since 1905, the tertiary institution has nurtured generations of leaders and luminaries across diverse industries and professions, in Singapore and beyond.

NUS Scholarships are highly coveted scholarships awarded to high-calibre individuals who demonstrate academic excellence, high intellectual capacity, sound character, strong leadership potential, and a passion for creativity and innovation.

NUS offers a variety of scholarships to prospective students, such as the NUS Global Merit Scholarship, NUS Merit Scholarship, NUS Sports Scholarship and the NUS Performing and Visual Arts Scholarship.



With the mission to develop Singapore as a premier global hub port and International Maritime Centre (IMC), and to advance and safeguard Singapore's strategic maritime interests, MPA is the driving force behind Singapore's port and marine development, taking on the roles of Port Authority, Port Regulator, Port Planner, IMC Champion, and National Maritime Representative.

MPA partners the industry and other agencies to

enhance safety, security and environmental protection in our port waters. It also facilitates port operations and growth; expands the cluster of maritime ancillary services; and promotes maritime R&D and manpower development.

MPA scholars have the opportunity to pursue their graduate studies locally or in Asia, Europe, the UK or the US, and gain exposure through internships and overseas exchange programmes.

Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore



Ministry of Home Affairs

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), commonly known as the Home Team, is in charge of Singapore's Homefront and Internal Security. It is made up of 11 Agencies with a common mission – to safeguard the safety and security of our Home.

MHA offers Uniformed and Civilian scholarships and careers to individuals who enjoy meaningful work that would make a difference in the lives of their loved ones and the community.

Scholarship recipients will get to pursue undergraduate studies at a prestigious local or overseas university; receive full salary* and allowance; and be sponsored for vacation attachment programmes, summer exchanges; and Post-graduate education*. Upon graduation, you can look forward to growth opportunities to ready yourself as a future Home Team leader.


Kickstart your leadership journey with MHA.

* Where applicable



Scan to uncover details on your preferred scholarship
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Singapore-Industry Scholarship (SgIS)

Singapore citizens looking for a multi-industry scholarship can apply for SgIS, the only one of its kind that's in partnership with the Singapore Government. Full-term and mid-term (local and overseas) scholarships are available.

The sponsoring organisations are from strategic sectors, with a strong focus on developing talent. There are currently 118 sponsoring organisations from a wide range of industries that include art, aviation, lifestyle and food.

As the next generation of leaders, your core skills and competencies will be honed through internships and professional development, through the SgIS Scholars' Development and Engagement Programme. You will also interact with leaders from the public and private sectors, allowing you to gain valuable insights about the industry you are interested in.




National Institute of Education

If you have a strong passion to teach and inspire young minds, the NTU-NIE Teaching Scholars Programme (TSP) is for you.

TSP is a prestigious four-year programme that attracts passionate young individuals who have a calling to be professional leaders in education.

The programme augments a Bachelor of Arts/Science in Double Major – "Academic Discipline" and Education, providing you with a well-rounded education.

TSP scholars will be exposed to a multi-disciplinary curriculum with an interactive pedagogy, practical work experience, overseas opportunities, and personal mentorship. TSP aims to produce graduates with intellectual rigour, strong leadership, and global perspective to make significant contributions to education.




Nanyang Technological University

NTU is a leading global young university that is nimble and keeps up with changing global trends. Whether you are an innovator, a changemaker or a trailblazer, you can tailor your curriculum to match your strengths and interests.

Choose from a range of signature programmes and scholarships including the Renaissance Engineering Programme, CN Yang Scholars Programme, NTU-University Scholars Programme, NTU-NIE Teaching Scholars Programme, LKCMedicine Scholarship and the Nanyang Scholarship.

On the NTU Smart Campus, you will be immersed in a rich and stimulating learning environment, supported by mentors who are among the best in their field. Study at one of the world's most beautiful and sustainable campuses. Realise your potential with a scholarship that is just right for you.




National Heritage Board (NHB)

If you treasure heritage, join NHB in preserving and celebrating our shared heritage.

As the custodian of Singapore's heritage, NHB manages the national museums and heritage institutions, and sets policies relating to heritage sites, national monuments and the national collection, through which it curates heritage programmes and presents exhibitions.

The statutory board under the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth offers the NHB Scholarship, which supports passionate talents in Singapore to pursue full-time undergraduate or postgraduate studies (up to Masters) in various disciplines that will develop your skills for an exciting and meaningful career in the field of culture and heritage.

Areas of study may include archaeology, conservation, history, curation, policy, management and more.




National Library Board

Join NLB in making knowledge come alive, sparking imagination and creating possibilities.

NLB nurtures Readers for Life, Learning Communities and a Knowledgeable Nation by promoting reading, learning and information literacy through its network of 29 libraries across Singapore, the National Library and the National Archives of Singapore. NLB also forges strategic partnerships that encourage awareness, appreciation and greater discovery of Singapore's history through its rich collections in Singapore and the region.

Under the NLB Undergraduate Scholarship, scholars can choose to pursue full-time undergraduate studies locally or at renowned universities overseas in diverse fields ranging from the Humanities, to Social Sciences, Information Science, and Data Analytics. Be a part of NLB's transformation under the Libraries and Archives Blueprint 2025, and grow your domain expertise in various knowledge fields.




National Parks Board

NParks is the lead agency for greenery, biodiversity conservation, wildlife, and animal health, welfare and management. It has greened roads and infrastructure, as well as sensitively restored habitats to conserve Singapore's native biodiversity.


Beyond enhancing and managing Singapore's urban ecosystems to create a more liveable and climate resilient nation, NParks also works closely with the community to engender stewardship of our natural heritage and bring people closer to nature.

With the NParks Undergraduate Scholarship, dynamic individuals can look forward to studying in Australia, Canada, UK, USA or Singapore. They will develop specialised skill-sets and be exposed to various professional portfolios, including streetscape, parks and conservation. Outstanding scholars may also work in the Ministry and other statutory boards.



Scan to uncover details on your preferred scholarship

www.scholarschoice.com.sg





Singapore Institute of Technology

SIT is Singapore's first University of Applied Learning, offering industry-relevant degree programmes that prepare its graduates to be work- and future-ready professionals. It aims to maximise the potential of its learners and to innovate with industry, through an integrated applied learning and research approach.

The flagship SIT Scholarship recognises students for their academic excellence, robust co-curricular record and strong leadership qualities. It aims to nurture well-rounded individuals and future leaders who will contribute to the community.

SIT scholars gain valuable development opportunities and networks without the constraints of a bond. In addition, the university's upcoming campus within the Punggol Digital District will feature a vibrant learning environment where academia and industry will be tightly integrated with the community.



Singapore Rail

SGRail Industry scholars will have the unique opportunity to work on projects with the Land Transport Authority (LTA) and public transport operators SBS Transit Ltd or SMRT Corporation Ltd through a structured developmental programme.

Coupled with the perspectives gleaned from both the public and private sectors, your career path will be nothing short of diverse

and dynamic. Choose from a wide range of specialities such as Signalling, Rolling Stock, Power, Permanent Way and Systems.

Expect to gain valuable exposure and expertise in the exciting rail industry and make a positive impact on the lives of people in Singapore. All SGRail Industry Scholarships are centrally awarded and managed by LTA, on behalf of Singapore's rail sector.



Singapore Civil Defence Force

If you are a highly motivated individual who is passionate about safeguarding the safety and security of Singapore, sign up for the Ministry of Home Affairs Uniformed Scholarship (SCDF) and be an integral part of the Singapore Civil Defence Force.

The scholarship will kickstart your leadership journey as an SCDF Fire & Rescue or Paramedic Officer

and go through structure postings to acquire specialised capabilities as well as staff and command competencies. There is pride in knowing that your day-to-day work contributes to a greater cause of keeping your loved ones and our country safe.

Make a difference in the lives of others; be a part of this noble mission; and join The Lifesaving Force today.

Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, SMU is internationally recognised for its world-class research, distinguished teaching and its highly interactive, collaborative, and project-based approach to learning.

SMU offers a wide range of scholarships dedicated to nurturing a new generation of inspiring and impactful leaders for the future. Each year, one in three SMU first-year students is given a scholarship or financial award.

The SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award realises scholars' leadership potential and hones their ability to make a meaningful impact on society. Other scholarships include the Lee Kong Chian Scholars' Programme, the SMU Merit Scholarship Programme, the Yip Pin Xiu Scholarship that honours excellence in sports, and the Dato' Kho Hui Meng Scholarship, amongst a wide range of scholarships and awards.



People's Association

Established on July 1, 1960, as a statutory board to promote racial harmony and social cohesion in Singapore, PA works to build and bridge communities in achieving One People, One Singapore.

If you are looking for a meaningful career in the areas of youth, active ageing, sports, arts and culture, social development or community leadership, the PA Scholarship is for you. PA scholars gain a

rich experience of community organising and leadership through involvement in community projects, regular engagement with grassroots and PA leaders, job placements in various strategic units, and participation in overseas attachments and programmes.

Embark on a fulfilling and challenging career with many opportunities to develop your potential to the fullest with the PA Scholarship.



Singapore Land Authority

SLA optimises land resources for the economic and social development of Singapore through development and regulatory work.

Play a part in shaping Singapore's landscape with SLA's prestigious local and overseas scholarships. The SLA Undergraduate Scholarship provides talents with the space, skills, and resources

to innovate and bring a new perspective to the areas of land management and optimisation.

The statutory board under the Ministry of Law also offers specialised programmes in collaboration with other public agencies.

The Singapore GeoSpatial Scholarship and Singapore Geomatics Scholarship provide scholars with the opportunity to harness the power of geospatial information science and technology to improve policy-making and enhance public service delivery.



Scan to uncover details on your preferred scholarship
www.scholarschoice.com.sg





Singapore Police Force

The Singapore Police Force Scholarship (SPFS) is one of the most prestigious scholarships awarded by the Public Service Commission. It is awarded to candidates who have shown outstanding leadership qualities, possess impeccable integrity and have a strong interest in policing work to safeguard our nation.

As an SPFS scholar, you will continue your learning journey in a world-renowned university that provides intellectually, socially and personally enriching programmes.

Afterwards, you will be involved in shaping policies to address issues on public law and order and play an integral role as a guardian of homeland security. You will also acquire investigation acumen, policy conceptualisation skills, as well as command and leadership abilities.



Singapore Tourism Board

The lead development agency for tourism, STB works with industry partners and the community to shape a dynamic Singapore tourism landscape. The statutory board under the Ministry of Trade and Industry brings the Passion Made Possible brand to life by differentiating Singapore as a vibrant destination that inspires.

If you are excited to champion the development,

marketing and promotion of Singapore's tourism sector – which is a key pillar in Singapore's economy – apply for the STB Scholarship Programme (full-term or mid-term available).

Not only will you make an impact and forge a career in the tourism sector, you can also pursue your passions while leveraging important networking opportunities, support, and other career development.



**Singapore
University of
Social Sciences**

SUSS is Singapore's sixth autonomous university. It stands out for its rich heritage in inspiring lifelong education and transforming society through applied social sciences. There are over 90 undergraduate and graduate programmes on offer, in full- and part-time study modes.

SUSS scholarships aim to recognise academic excellence and develop leadership potential. The Global Excellence Scholarship recognises both academic

and non-academic strengths; the Social Impact Scholarship looks for work experience and/or community involvement in social sciences sectors; while the SUSS Scholarship is suitable for all-rounders who can be future leaders.

These bond-free premier schemes provide you with the opportunity to develop your full potential in your chosen discipline.



**Singapore
Maritime
Foundation**

Established in 2004, the Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF) is a conduit between the public and private sectors to accomplish the twin mission of developing and promoting Singapore as an International Maritime Centre (IMC); and to attract, engage and grow a talent pipeline to position Maritime Singapore for continued growth.

The MaritimeONE Scholarship Programme is an initiative spearheaded by the Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF)

and its maritime partners to nurture talents for Singapore's maritime sector. Sponsored by some of the industry's leading organisations, the scholarship programme supports various local and overseas diploma and degree programmes.

In addition to providing financial incentives, these sponsors have pledged their commitment to the programme by offering MaritimeONE scholars possible career and internship opportunities.



Scan to uncover details on
your preferred scholarship
www.scholarschoice.com.sg



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SCDF is transforming the Force to meet the challenges of tomorrow. Be a part of this change and join our noble mission as a scholar.

Find out more at www.scdf.gov.sg/home/join-us/scholarships



SCDF
The Life Saving Force
... for a safer Singapore



Transforming S'pore tourism with tech

This STB scholar hopes to elevate the tourist experience through augmented reality and digital innovation

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/FRENCHESCAR LIM

During a Singapore Tourism Board (STB) internship, Mr Edwin Tan got to see first-hand how technology could transform and reinvent the tourist experience.

One of the projects he worked on with his team was to make use of augmented reality (AR) to come up with a storytelling game to reunite a lost fairy with her family in the sprawling Gardens by the Bay's Floral Fantasy.

"The aim was to bring the guests on a magical journey," says the 25-year-old.

From enhancing visitor experiences to streamlining booking processes, technology is playing an increasingly pivotal role in the tourism sector. Edwin describes, for example, the ways in which AR has been incorporated into tourism in Singapore – from more immersive exhibits to educational tours in hotels.

He predicts that in the future, some

tour guides may even use the technology to provide personalised tours for visitors, which means that no two tourists would experience Singapore the same way.

"The future of AR in tourism is exciting," he says.

Supplementing knowledge with skills

Edwin is a recipient of STB's mid-term local scholarship which funded the final year of his Bachelor of Social Science (Economics and Psychology double major) as well as his Master of Science in Marketing Analytics and Insights, both at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

In addition, he also pursued a master's degree to bolster his existing theoretical knowledge with practical skills so he could solve real-world problems. It was a chance to equip himself in preparation for a career within the digital economy.

Though STB is looking to attract various applicants from all majors, it is seeking,

The future of AR in tourism is exciting.

MR EDWIN TAN
RECIPIENT OF THE STB SCHOLARSHIP

in particular, STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) applicants to champion innovation within STB as well as drive technology transformation within the sector.

Of the various Groups in STB, scholars attached to the Technology Transformation Group during their

ADVERTORIAL

internship will get to work closely with key industry stakeholders to accelerate their tech capabilities. The group responds to the growing significance of technology in tourism, be it in using data analytics to generate insights about consumers, enhancing digital engagement with visitors, and more.

This year, Edwin will be joining STB under the Management Associate Programme (MAP), which offers two job rotations each year.

Management associates go through a 12-month training period which includes an attachment to the Singapore Visitor Centre at orchardgateway and two 21-week divisional deployments within STB. They may also get the chance to drive national events such as the Singapore Food Festival and the Formula 1 Singapore Airlines Singapore Grand Prix.

Beyond the MAP, officers like Edwin can look forward to a breadth of learning opportunities and experiences across many pillars of work, including the chance to join regional offices around the world. He is looking forward to this diversity of work experience.

"In five years, I see myself as a manager with a relatively good understanding of the tourism industry," he says. "By then, I hope to have the opportunity to lead bigger projects that will attract greater footfall to Singapore."

Turning passion into future projects

One passion project the avid gamer hopes to helm in the future is an e-sports event.

"It would be awesome for Singapore to host more international gaming events, such as the League of Legends World Championship," says Edwin, who has been playing League of Legends since he was in secondary school.

Multiplayer game Dota 2 held its annual flagship tournament, The International, in Singapore for the first time in 2022, with STB's support. In addition, the Olympic Esports Week will be coming to Singapore in June this year.

"Hosting major e-sports events can raise Singapore's profile as a destination for tourism and business, which might translate to future visits and tourism spending in Singapore," he says.

Making travel greener

Creating a sustainable tourism sector is this STB scholar's mission

Ms Laura Gan was in the middle of her two-year posting to the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) regional office in London when the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

As borders closed and global tourism ground to a halt, she returned home in 2020. However, this unexpected detour would open doors in her career.

Laura was posted to the Strategic Planning & Incentive Policy team which formulates STB's strategies to maintain Singapore's vibrancy as a top tourist destination. One area is to reimagine the sector through the lens of sustainability.

"Sustainability is such a buzzword now," says Laura. "But what is sustainability? How do you apply it in the context of your business? Sustainability goes beyond the environment; it also covers the social and the economic aspects."

"It's about how to upskill the workforce in many different facets of sustainability – for example, if you have a marketing role, it's about how you can effectively communicate your organisation's key sustainability messaging in a way that the layperson can understand."

The 30-year-old now leads a team as an assistant director at the Sustainable Tourism Office, created in 2022 to oversee and drive the implementation of STB's sustainable tourism strategy.

Her team works horizontally across STB's other teams, strategising on how to implement changes in the tourism



Showcasing what our little red dot has to offer and telling stories of Singapore always make me proud.

MS LAURA GAN
RECIPIENT OF THE STB SCHOLARSHIP

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA/WINSTON CHEUNG

sector in line with Singapore's wider sustainability strategy.

This could mean getting tourism industries to develop sustainability roadmaps and strategies - relooking their waste and energy management practices.

"We must consider the entire consumer journey," says Laura. "We don't just want you to visit a sustainable attraction or stay in a sustainable hotel. It's also about how you get there, what you eat, what you buy."

Milestone projects

In 2022, the strategic planning team launched the Tourism Sustainability Strategy as well as the Tourism Sustainability Programme. The three-pronged strategy covers destination development, industry development and a marketing plan.

"Our vision is to be a City in Nature, where large experiences come with small footprints," she says.

Her team organised the inaugural Sustainable Tourism Dialogue in 2022, which had 200 attendees both in person and online. They sought to break out of industry silos and increase engagement

between different tourism stakeholders and academia.

Since joining STB in 2015, Laura has had the chance to work on major projects such as the Orchard Road rejuvenation project and a string of high-profile campaigns to mark the Singapore Bicentennial in 2019.

One close to her heart was The Last Overland, which she worked on during her stint in the STB London office. It was a reverse recreation of the 1955 Oxford-Cambridge Far Eastern Expedition, in which six university students drove more than 19,000km from London to Singapore in six months.

The 2019 team drove in the opposite direction from Singapore to London over 100 days.

"There were many challenges along the way, from team members taking ill on flag-off day to navigating challenging terrains with the original 1955 Oxford car," she recalls.

"To bring this story full circle was such a nice way to link Singapore and the UK. It was an inspirational story of passion and strength, which truly epitomised STB's brand, Passion Made Possible."

Laura was awarded the STB full-

THE SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD'S SCHOLARSHIP

The Singapore Tourism Board's Scholarship programme supports undergraduates who seek diverse opportunities and dynamic careers. It includes training and development opportunities across the industry.



Scan for more on the STB Scholarship.

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