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# Deciphering crime & codes

This SPF scholar  
strives to optimise  
AI, so officers can  
focus on critical  
tasks requiring  
human expertise

“While relying on  
technology, we  
must recognise  
that policing is at  
its core a people-  
centric endeavour.”

ASP Alden Tan  
Recipient of The Singapore  
Police Force Scholarship



PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

When he was a child, Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) Alden Tan was glued to every episode of Crimewatch, the long-running info-educational series that brings Police cases to life through re-enactments.

Each episode ends with a Police officer presenting the case's outcome and offering crime prevention messages – a role that ASP Tan now fulfils as a senior investigation officer (IO) with the Singapore Police Force (SPF).

“It has come full circle – from watching the show to now hosting it,” says the 25-year-old.

Crimewatch was the spark that ignited ASP Tan's passion for the Police Force, so stepping onto the programme's set – and into the Police station each day – feels surreal, he says.

“I see all the Police cars that I used to be so excited about, and now I am actually working on cases.”

ASP Tan's passion for Police work led him to accept The SPF Scholarship in 2018. He was also one of five recipients of the prestigious President's Scholarship awarded that year.

Combining his interest in economics with his recognition of technology's role in modern-day policing, he chose to study economics and computer science at Yale University.

“Many crimes are moving into the digital space, including online scams, harassment and doxxing,” he says. “Having a technical background helps when investigating such crimes or developing policies to address them.”

#### Empathy and people skills

After graduating in 2022, ASP Tan was attached to SPF's Anti-Scam Command for three months before starting his training in the Senior Officer Basic Course.

The following year, he was posted to Orchard Neighbourhood Police Centre as a ground response force officer before joining Tanglin Division as an IO.

His current responsibilities include visiting crime scenes to gather evidence, interviewing victims, witnesses and suspects, and organising evidence to build a case against perpetrators.

His case files read like a living ethnography of Singapore. One day he is gathering evidence at a luxury mansion or regal embassy; the next day, he could be in a rental flat or dingy alleyway. Cases involve all levels of society – from persuasive lawyers and hardened criminals to young offenders.

“As an investigator, you never know what awaits when you are on duty,” he adds.

The role has deepened his

understanding of human nature and taught him to approach cases with greater empathy.

“Some who commit crimes are at their wits' end, often lacking social and familial support,” he says.

One incident that stuck with ASP Tan involved a family of three facing theft charges. The mother, who was the sole breadwinner, was struggling with mental health issues herself while caring for a husband with dementia and an adult son with autism who needed constant care.

“The family was barely making ends meet,” he says.

“After carrying out my investigations, I referred them for social assistance and ensured they received resources to help them navigate this difficult period.”

#### AI solutions to fight crime

As an SPF scholar, ASP Tan has also found opportunities to take on exciting projects that align with his interests, alongside his policing duties.

Last June, he took on a concurrent role in SPF's ops-tech department to work on artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives.

He plays a key role in implementing AI capabilities across the Force to enhance SPF's operations. Additionally, ASP Tan collaborates with stakeholders on AI governance to ensure the technology is used safely, and to maintain public trust.

He recently completed an AI governance course, equipping him with the knowledge to stay ahead of the rapidly evolving field.

Such opportunities to pursue specialised interests are available to all SPF scholars, who are encouraged to take on projects and roles that align with their skills and passions.

“Regardless of your background, there will always be something suitable for you and your interests in the SPF,” he says.

“Officers can explore various paths to build expertise across a range of functional domains.”

The tech-savvy IO also gets to build real-world projects of his own. In July 2023, he joined

the nation's AI Trailblazers initiative with colleagues to develop practical AI solutions for the Government and industry.

Drawing from his front-line experience as an IO, he focused on solving a common challenge: Police reports lodged online by members of the public often lack crucial details.

Gathering missing pieces of information through back-and-forth communication between officers and citizens is time-consuming and frustrating for both parties, adds ASP Tan.

“Some citizens may be reluctant to share additional information over the phone, fearing that it might be a scam call, while others feel frustrated about having to provide more details after spending time lodging a report,” he says.

“Likewise, for officers, gathering missing information requires significant time and effort.”

To address this problem, ASP Tan and his team developed an AI-powered chatbot that aims to streamline the process by prompting users for specific details right from the start.

Leveraging his technical background, he bridges the gap between front-line officers and product engineers, ensuring that solutions meet operational needs. The project earned the AI Trailblazers Innovation Award in January 2024.

Still in development, the team is working to improve the system before public deployment.

While technology can help officers fight crime, ASP Tan maintains that IOs' most valuable asset is their interpersonal skills – something AI can never replace.

“Technology can help improve efficiency while freeing up officers' time to focus on interacting with people and to better serve members of the public,” he says.

“While relying on technology, we must recognise that policing is at its core a people-centric endeavour and we must preserve the human touch.”



Yale University days

▲ ASP Tan at a project showcase for a coding class he taught as a teaching assistant in university.

▲ Celebrating graduation day with his parents. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ASP ALDEN TAN

Receiving the President's Scholarship



▲ ASP Tan (second from right) with President Halimah Yacob and her husband at the President's Scholarship Award Ceremony in 2018. PHOTO: SINGAPORE POLICE FORCE/FACEBOOK

## About The SPF Scholarship

>>> The Singapore Police Force Scholarship is one of the most prestigious scholarships offered by the Public Service Commission (PSC) to candidates who demonstrate strong leadership qualities and have a strong interest in policing work. Scholars will continue 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.



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The SPF Scholarship.

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THE STRAITS TIMES SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2025

# Designing smooth rides for Singaporeans

Drawn to problem-solving, this LTA scholar puts his technical skills to work for millions of commuters

“The train has stopped here for a short while as the train ahead is still at the next station,” the public announcement system on the station platform broadcasts.

This announcement that commuters may have encountered during their Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) rides is a clue to Lau Jie Jian’s work at the Land Transport Authority (LTA).

The 32-year-old project manager oversees the signalling system for LTA’s upcoming Cross Island Line (CRL), forming part of the invisible backbone that gets millions of daily commuters to work or school and back home safely.

“Rail signalling is the brain behind train movements,” says Jie Jian, a recipient of the LTA Undergraduate Scholarship (Mid-term).

“It is a critical system used to control and manage train movement safely and efficiently.”

Consider a typical peak-hour scenario: A train approaching at 80kmh needs to make a longer stop at a station. To what speed should the following train decelerate, maintaining a safe separation while ensuring passengers do not wait too long for the next train?

Jie Jian and his team must consider such factors in their calculations – from train

“By improving travel times and enhancing journey experiences, we contribute to the nation’s development and liveability.”

➔ **Lau Jie Jian**  
Recipient of the LTA Undergraduate Scholarship (Mid-term)

specifications to weather conditions. Even a slight delay can cause a cascading effect across the network, which is why each MRT line requires a different signalling system to account for its unique variables.

**Ensuring safe station operations**  
CRL, Singapore’s eighth MRT line, will be the longest underground line at more than 50km long, with eight interchange stations.

When fully completed in the 2040s, the line will connect key hubs like Jurong Lake District, Punggol Digital District and Changi region, and is expected to serve up to one million riders every day.

Before his current position managing CRL’s signalling system, Jie Jian worked in the Rail Services division along the Thomson-East Coast Line (TEL). There, he looked after the air-conditioning, fire

protection and ventilation systems of MRT stations and trains.

“Working on projects like the North-South Corridor, an upcoming expressway complementing the TEL, has given me a chance to collaborate with designers, architects as well as engineers across different disciplines,” says Jie Jian.

A typical work day can vary, depending on the project’s timeline. At the start of a project, Jie Jian is usually reviewing documents and meeting stakeholders in the office.

At a later stage, he would don his safety equipment and head down to the MRT stations or tunnels, overseeing the equipment testing.

For the mechanical engineering graduate, completing a project – from designing to construction to testing and commissioning – gives

him a sense of satisfaction.

“Being part of the TEL Stage 4 opening was particularly rewarding,” says Jie Jian, referring to the opening of seven stations on the TEL in June 2024. “Witnessing the various components come together and seeing commuters at the newly opened train stations makes all the work behind the scenes worthwhile.”

Throughout his career at LTA, Jie Jian has been exposed to various technical domains, from mechanical to electrical to civil engineering.

“The complexity of the rail systems means there is always something new to learn,” he says. “Even though I’ve been with LTA for six years, I still don’t know everything. There are multiple systems within the industry, and subsystems in each system.”

With support from his bosses to

pursue new skills and courses, he continues to grow professionally. Recently, Jie Jian ventured into machine learning and data science for MRT ridership estimation.

Looking back a decade ago when he first applied for the LTA scholarship, Jie Jian affirms he has chosen a satisfying and meaningful career.

“Our work directly impacts the daily lives of Singaporeans. By improving travel times and enhancing journey experiences, we contribute to the nation’s development and liveability,” he says.



LTA project manager Lau Jie Jian is part of the team that is responsible for the upcoming Cross Island Line’s signalling system. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA



Scan for more on the LTA Undergraduate Scholarship.

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# Once a shy introvert, now protecting our borders

Her early days in NPCC prepared this MHA scholar for a career in defending her country

Each time she puts on her uniform, Hazel Wong feels her quiet strength emerge. The crisp navy-blue uniform of an Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) officer has given this self-confessed introvert the confidence to step out of her shell.

After months of training at the Home Team Academy, Hazel is equipped with the skills and knowledge to carry out her job at ICA.

More importantly, she has gained a newfound confidence to engage, communicate and lead.

"In a new environment, I am a bit more shy," she says, "but when I am in uniform, I feel I am confident enough to get the job done."

What has surprised her is how the simple act of wearing the uniform draws out her inner qualities and eases her transition into her front-line role.

Having started working full-time since November last year, the 23-year-old now oversees a team of 14 in her position as a group leader at Woodlands Checkpoint, one of the busiest checkpoints in the world.

"When I am in uniform, I can carry out my duties with pride and confidence," Hazel adds. "It's a reminder of the role I play and the standards I strive to uphold every day."

## Becoming a confident leader

Uniformed groups have always been a big part of Hazel's growing-up years. She recalls fondly her first close-up encounter with firefighters and police officers on Total Defence

## Volunteering during NPCC days



► Hazel (second from right) was elected student council president at CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School.

PHOTO: SPH MEDIA



With ICA teammates

▲ As a group leader, Hazel Wong (second row, fourth from right) now oversees a team of 14 at Woodlands Checkpoint. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF HAZEL WONG

Day when she was in Primary 2, which inspired her to join the National Police Cadet Corps (NPCC) in secondary school.

"The firefighters and police officers demonstrated their equipment and roles, sparking my interest in an exciting non-deskbound job," says Hazel.

By Secondary 3, Hazel's leadership potential shone through when she was elected student council president at CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School.

She continued to build on her ability to lead at Eunoia Junior College, serving as a cadet inspector in NPCC and later, as an honorary officer mentoring young cadets.

Her foundation from uniformed groups carried Hazel through her undergraduate years at the National University of Singapore (NUS), where she pursued a sociology degree while undergoing NPCC honorary officer training and competing in taekwondo.

◀ During her NPCC days, Hazel volunteered her time with various organisations.

## With fellow student councillors



Yet, beneath this packed schedule, doubt often crept in. "I questioned whether I could handle it all," she recalls.

Receiving the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Uniformed Scholarship, which she applied for during her first semester, changed everything.

The scholarship felt like a vote of confidence – a moment that validated her potential. With a career at ICA awaiting her after graduation, each challenge became a stepping stone rather than a stumbling block.

"The scholarship boosted my confidence as it showed that ICA believed in me and trusted my potential," she says.

Beyond the financial support given by the scholarship, Hazel was paired with a mentor, Deputy Assistant Commissioner (DAC) Samantha Koh, after receiving the scholarship in 2021.

"She offered advice readily," Hazel says. "Knowing I could reach out to her for guidance at any time has been invaluable."

Through their discussions, DAC Samantha also offered Hazel a window into ICA – from its daily operations to career pathways. These conversations helped Hazel envision her future in the organisation with greater clarity.

In her third year at NUS, Hazel seized the chance to spend a semester at the University of Melbourne. The time living by herself abroad transformed how she approached challenges.

"Being independent made me more resourceful," she explains. "Instead of always asking for help, living overseas forced me to first think of how to solve problems on my own."

## Vital statistics in border security



**553 THOUSAND**

A record number of crossings at both checkpoints on Dec 13, 2024, surpassing the previous peak in Sep 2024



**47.1 MILLION**

parcels, containers, consignments and low-value goods entered Singapore in 2023 through air, land and sea checkpoints



**192.8 MILLION**

travellers passed through all checkpoints in 2023

Source: ICA

The experience opened her eyes in unexpected ways. During a master's-level course, she found herself among older international students.

"What struck me most was how they handled disagreement," Hazel recalls. "They would openly express their differing opinions but always framed them respectfully, ensuring their points came across clearly."

These lessons on the art of communication now shape

▼ Hazel graduated from the National University of Singapore with a bachelor's degree in sociology.



Graduation day with family

"When I am in uniform, I can carry out my duties with pride and confidence."

Hazel Wong  
Recipient of the MHA Uniformed Scholarship (ICA)

## New experiences in Melbourne



▲ Her semester in Melbourne, Australia, taught Hazel how to be more independent and vocal.

how Hazel navigates workplace conversations at ICA.

"I've learnt to articulate my thoughts constructively and respectfully, even when differences arise," she adds.

## Guiding with purpose

At Woodlands Checkpoint, Hazel's foundational posting is just the beginning of her ICA journey.

Down the road, she will be taking on roles in other departments, such as ground operations or policy development, to broaden her experience and build the expertise she needs to make meaningful changes within the organisation.

Even though she has only been on the job for less than three months, she is already looking at ways to improve work processes to create a positive work environment at the checkpoint.

"Sometimes, members of public lash out at our officers when they do not understand the need for certain procedures, which leaves our officers feeling demoralised," says Hazel.

"Such emotions will eventually get to them if it happens every day."

Hazel plans to schedule regular one-on-one sessions with her team members to let them voice their concerns so she can better understand their challenges and support them in their work.

"Thanks to the ICA scholarship, I have been supported from the very beginning with valuable advice and guidance. Now, I look forward to mentoring others and making my journey at ICA count for something bigger than myself," she says.

## About 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 five Home Team departments: Singapore Police Force (SPF),

Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF), Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA), Singapore Prison Service (SPS) and Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB), or as a paramedic with SCDF.



Scan for more on the MHA Uniformed Scholarship.

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THE STRAITS TIMES SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2025

# Making news relatable to Gen Zs

This SPH Media scholar uses social media and online videos to engage the younger generation in caring about the news

Having no-holds-barred chats with influencers on hot-button topics like toxic relationships and body insecurities. Producing a gameshow-like video series that invites social media personalities to play games and glean financial tips from experts. Asking then-Presidential Election candidate Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam to sing a Jay Chou song amidst

a rapid-fire round of light-hearted questions. Content producer Zhang Xi Ying has been involved in these productions one way or another. In some of these videos, she plays host and interviewer. In others, she is the main producer, working behind the scenes in the control room to coordinate camera switches and cue hosts. Since she joined HeyKaki –

SPH Media's Chinese media brand focused on producing video content for young adults – two years ago, the 27-year-old has been involved in hundreds of videos and has interviewed many well-known personalities. Her job today is very different from the career in print journalism she had initially envisioned. She studied Chinese language and



As a content producer with HeyKaki, Zhang Xi Ying has created hundreds of videos in conversational Mandarin. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA



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"Each time you walk into NTU, you feel like you are entering a true university, the real corridors of learning. And I like the profs. They may not be your assigned mentors but will still look after you and sponsor you for projects and competitions."

**SCHOLARSHIP BENEFITS**  
★★★★★  
**CAMPUS FACILITIES**  
★★★★★  
**CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION**  
★★★★★

Chong Su Ying  
TAISP



"The professors are approachable and easy to relate to. They are experts in their areas, and they communicate clearly."

**GLOBAL EXPOSURE**  
★★★★★  
**PROGRAMME REPUTATION**  
★★★★★  
**MENTORSHIP**  
★★★★★

Leom Sheng Rui  
REP



"NTU is forward-looking and outward-looking, being very well connected globally. I chose the CN Yang Scholars Programme because of the opportunities to build an international network through overseas conferences, learning trips, attachments, and research projects."

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★★★★★  
**CAMPUS FACILITIES**  
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★★★★★

Muhammad Izzuddin Bin Husein  
CNYS



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literature at Peking University on the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship, and had stints at Chinese newspaper Shin Min Daily News.

Like many journalists, Xi Ying's passion for writing began early in life. A voracious reader of Chinese literature, she started contributing to Lianhe Zaobao when she was in junior college before securing the scholarship.

**“I have the opportunity to tell meaningful stories of people from all walks of life, bring together different perspectives and speak about issues that matter.”**

**→ Zhang Xi Ying**  
Recipient of the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship

**Telling stories that matter**  
While studying in Beijing, she interned as a foreign correspondent with Lianhe Zaobao's China desk to write news and commentaries on China's political, economic and social issues.

Through her stints at the local Chinese dailies, she covered stories such as the disappearance of Chinese-medium schools in Singapore and a fatal accident at Tanjong Pagar Road in 2021.

With younger Singaporeans increasingly consuming only short-form content and becoming less interested in their mother tongue, Xi Ying saw an opportunity when HeyKaki was formed in April 2022 to report on the news differently.

While the videos are packaged in a bite-sized manner, content producers like Xi Ying ensure the topics are those that youth are concerned about.

She chooses her guests based on their popularity with young viewers and their ability to share relatable stories. Guests on the show include content creators and social media personalities.

Conversational Mandarin, peppered with Singlish and English, is used in all the videos to make the content more accessible.

Despite transitioning from print to digital media, Xi Ying maintains her journalistic mission: "I have the opportunity to tell meaningful stories of people from all walks of life, bring together different perspectives and speak about issues that matter."

"By being relatable, I hope to accompany our audience on their 'adulthood' journey while helping to improve their Chinese as they watch our videos."



Scan for more on the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship.





ADVERTORIAL

“I am proud to be on the team advancing Singapore’s interests at the international level.”

Andrew Ang  
Recipient of the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship

# Balancing innovation and regulation

With new technologies transforming capital markets, this MAS scholar balances fintech innovation with financial regulation

During his junior college days, Andrew Ang developed a keen interest in complex economic issues. Reading *The Big Short*, by financial journalist Michael Lewis, he learnt about how the bursting of a housing bubble in the United States led to the 2007 global financial crisis.

This budding curiosity led him to apply for the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) Undergraduate Scholarship which took him to Britain to pursue a bachelor’s in political economy from King’s College London and a master’s

in finance and economics from The London School of Economics and Political Science. MAS also offers a mid-term scholarship for undergraduates at university who share Andrew’s passion for shaping Singapore’s future financial centre.

While at university, Andrew had the opportunity to do an internship at MAS. He studied the impact of “dark trading” – financial trades that take place outside an exchange. His work contributed to an MAS staff paper, which was used to guide policymaking.

When Andrew joined MAS in 2019, his first posting was in financial supervision within the Capital Markets Group, where his work involved ensuring the safety and resilience of financial institutions in Singapore, to mitigate the impact of crises on investors

and the broader financial system.

He was on the team that oversaw entities such as exchanges and clearing houses. His job scope included running risk assessments of supervised entities and ensuring they had proper controls to address their risks.

In 2023, Andrew moved to the policy team within the Capital Markets Group, where he now formulates policies that govern the way MAS regulates and supervises the capital markets in Singapore, as well as the entities that operate in these markets.

Last May, Andrew was in Zurich where financial regulators from around the world had gathered to discuss the future of blockchain-based digital assets.

He was part of the team that represented MAS at the International

Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) meeting. This was part of a high-level Fintech Task Force established by the IOSCO – and chaired by MAS – to oversee and implement IOSCO’s regulatory agenda on digital assets, artificial intelligence and other new technologies.

On the agenda was setting global standards for digital assets and other emerging technologies, which could exacerbate existing risks or pose new risks to investors and the wider financial markets.

“Given the global, cross-border nature of capital markets, our international work has been important in sharing our approach on regulating digital assets and influencing international policy formulation,” says the 30-year-old.

“I am proud to be on the team advancing Singapore’s interests at the international level.

“In addition to supporting MAS at international fora, my work also involves monitoring emerging developments such as digital assets and distributed ledger technology and, where relevant, calibrating MAS’ policy response to such developments,” he shares.

“For example, if there is a novel

business model that does not fit into the existing paradigm, how do we regulate this? How do we tackle novel risks? These are some questions we seek to address.”

## Striking the right balance

Strong and well-regulated capital markets are key components of a vibrant economy, Andrew stresses.

“I look at not just financial risks – which cover market, liquidity and credit risks – but also other kinds of emerging risks, including operational, technological, legal and regulatory risks,” he adds.

Excessive regulation, however, can stifle growth.

Andrew has to stay abreast of emerging developments and technologies, such as blockchain, to create a regulatory environment that fosters innovation while mitigating risks.

His academic background has proven useful, but Andrew notes that MAS officers come from different fields. “In my policy work, colleagues with legal training help us understand regulations in other countries and compare them with Singapore’s policies,” he says.

All fresh hires will undergo an extensive training programme to equip them with the foundational skills they need as MAS officers.

Andrew’s journey from a curious student to a key player in Singapore’s financial landscape exemplifies the opportunities offered by the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship.

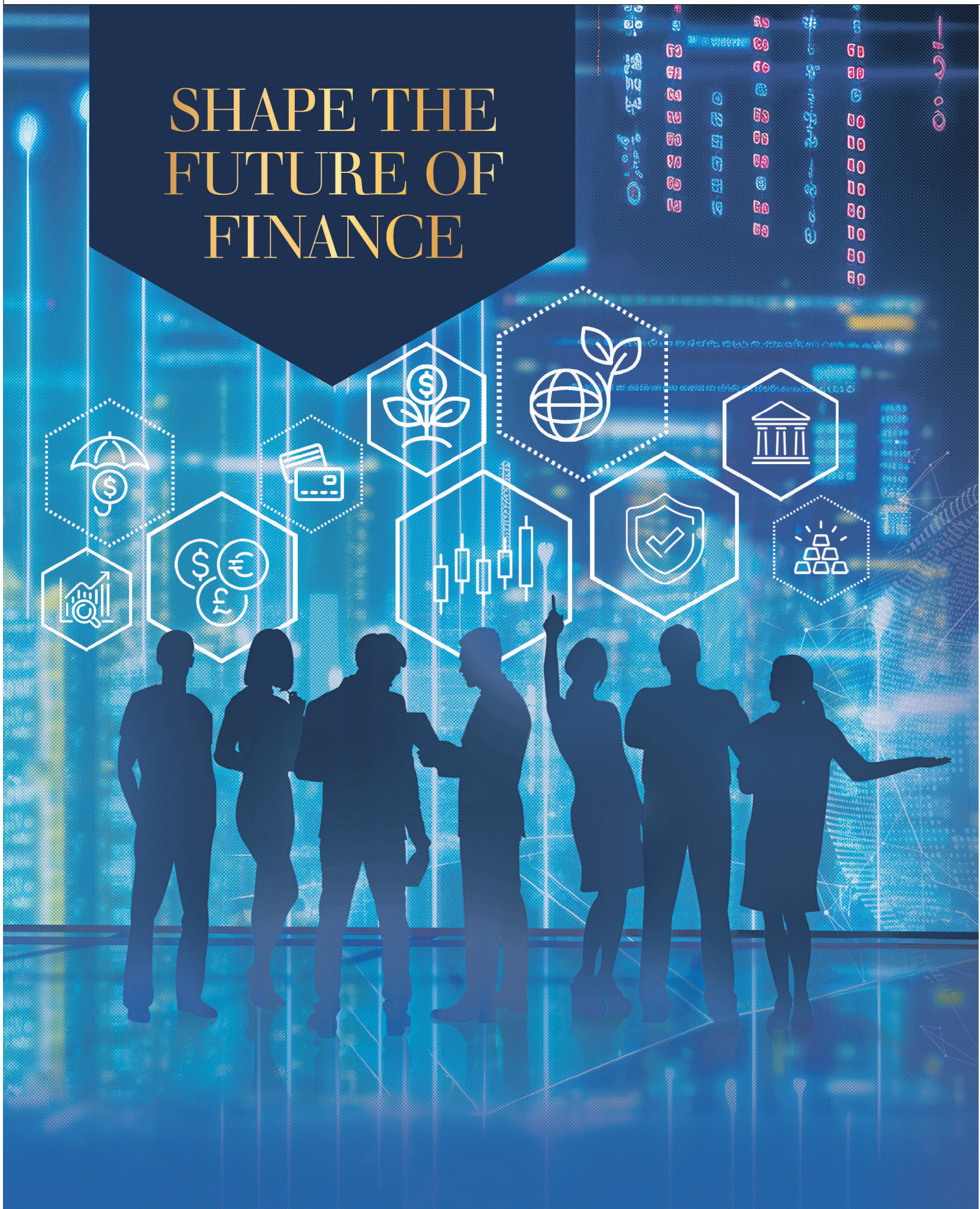


Scan for more on the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship.

## About MAS Undergraduate Scholarship

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THE STRAITS TIMES SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2025

# New AI scholarship powers his ambitions

The NTU Turing AI scholar is already connecting with world-class experts through masterclasses while creating a space where fellow innovators can thrive

Should he receive a time machine, freshman Timothy Yong knows exactly where he is headed: forward, into a future being shaped today by artificial intelligence (AI).

"The past is cool, but I am more curious about the unknown, such as how AI will take the front seat in healthcare and environmental protection," says the 21-year-old.

Timothy is among the inaugural batch of 34 recipients of the new Turing AI Scholars Programme at Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

The scholarship is named after Alan Turing who is renowned for his ground-breaking contributions to the fields of mathematics, logic, computer science and AI.

Says Professor Luke Ong, dean of NTU's college of computing and data science: "The emergence of AI as a general-purpose technology makes it pivotal in reshaping humanity's future."

He points out that the new scholarship programme is designed to prepare Singapore's talent for this transformation by advancing cutting-edge research and nurturing socially conscious innovators.

Graduates of the programme can take on diverse roles in the industry,

"We might not have a time machine yet, but we can **create the AI future we want to see.**"

**Timothy Yong**  
Scholar in NTU's Turing AI Scholars Programme

from AI engineers and data scientists to policy advisors and ethical compliance officers.

"We want to empower students to pioneer innovations that contribute to Singapore's digital economy and global advancements," adds Prof Ong.

Eyeing the tech industry, Timothy sees the bond-free scholarship programme as a springboard into the world of AI.

The first-year data science and AI undergraduate was particularly drawn to the programme's comprehensive approach.

His journey began last August with an eye-opening masterclass taught by Professor Peter Millican from the University of Oxford.

The class explored the philosophical foundations of AI,

challenging him to think more deeply about technology's impact on mankind.

One discussion centred on defining a machine's intelligence – a debate that is becoming increasingly relevant as AI systems grow more sophisticated in mimicking human behaviour.

"This module is not typically included in a traditional computer science curriculum," says Timothy.

"It's quite theoretical, but I found it useful because it provides a holistic understanding of how our field can shape society."

As his semesters go by, Timothy

will attend five more masterclasses that are led by other world-leading AI practitioners.

He will also write a research paper in his second year, guided by a distinguished professor in AI.

In his third year, he will embark on a six-month exchange to the University of California, Berkeley, followed by an attachment with an AI industry leader.

At the end of the programme, Timothy will have the option to pursue a direct master of science in AI in just six additional months, a pathway that typically takes twice as long to complete.



First-year undergraduate Timothy Yong is among the inaugural cohort of NTU's Turing AI Scholars Programme. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

The close bonds Timothy formed with fellow Turing AI scholars will also enrich his journey.

"I can immerse myself in a motivated and supportive community of like-minded individuals who will spur me to creatively explore my interests," he says.

"It's also a healthy competition. My course mates are not afraid to share resources such as extra practice papers and summaries from seniors in their respective courses.

"It is quite wholesome, and there is a mutual understanding that sharing helps one another."

## Fostering creativity

Timothy has found that balancing his studies with other activities enhances his innovative thinking.

For instance, he recharges by jamming with his hall of residence's band and playing floorball regularly.

Encouraged by their professors, he and his course mates have also initiated the Turing AI Club, creating a launchpad for tomorrow's AI pioneers just as the first computer clubs once did.

Members of the club can receive funding from industry partners like A\*Star to pursue various research projects in the field.

"We want to build a space where students can come together for projects and hackathons," Timothy explains.

"When like-minded people come together, innovation will happen naturally. We might not have a time machine yet, but we can create the AI future we want to see."



Scan for more on NTU's Turing AI Scholars Programme.

# Silicon Valley tech scholar innovates with purpose

Supported by IMDA's SG Digital Scholarship, he has leveraged his education and experience to develop impactful solutions

When faced with a challenge that needs the world's brightest minds to solve, Joshua Chandiramani would assemble his Ateam: the three legendary Steves.

The late visionary Steve Jobs, for his problem-solving skills; his fellow Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, for his technical brilliance; and movie director Steven Spielberg, for his boundless creativity.

For Joshua, it is not just about individual genius – it is about how diverse perspectives and teamwork can unlock solutions no single person is able to achieve alone.

It is a lesson the 25-year-old Singapore Digital (SG Digital) scholar honed during his transformative years at the University of California (UC) Berkeley, in the United States, under the Infocomm Media Development Authority's (IMDA) Singapore Digital (SG Digital) Scholarship.

Today, as a software engineer at Google in California, he creates innovative and secure software solutions while fuelling his lifelong passion: harnessing technology to improve lives on a global scale.

"The tech industry is evolving rapidly with the advent of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML)," says Joshua.

"These powerful tools are transforming the way we enhance and deliver services, making them more efficient and effective."

Growing up, Joshua remembers watching Steve Jobs present at Apple's annual Worldwide Developers Conference.

"I was moved by the introductory

"I wanted to pursue a career in computing to **develop innovative solutions to problems that will improve people's lives.**"

**Joshua Chandiramani**  
Recipient of the Singapore Digital Scholarship

video that highlighted how apps have made a difference in people's lives," he says.

"When I saw a blind man had discovered a GPS app that enabled him to walk independently through a forest near his home, tears of joy streamed down his cheeks – he had regained his freedom.

"It was then that I decided I wanted to pursue a career in computing to develop innovative solutions to problems that will improve people's lives."

Recognising that the SG Digital Scholarship was a pathway to his aspirations, Joshua applied for the scholarship after completing his A levels at Raffles Institution (Junior College).

Landing a scholarship that brought him to the epicentre of tech innovation – Silicon Valley – has been a dream come true for Joshua.

The scholarship not only covered his overseas expenses for three years, but also connected him with IMDA's wide network of tech leaders and fellow engineers in

the birthplace of iconic companies that have shaped society.

At UC Berkeley, his bachelor's degree in computer science allowed him to take courses in AI, ML, deep learning and natural language processing.

He worked on innovative projects, including exploring an AI-powered neural network to help identify and classify brain tumours in magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, contributing to advances in medtech.

## Tech as a force for good

While at university, this self-described "try everything at least once" student went beyond his computer science studies to fully embrace university culture.

Joshua was vice-president of NextGen Consulting at UC Berkeley, a competitive consulting club. He was part of a team developing data-driven business development and marketing strategies for businesses such as United Airlines, Lyft, Sephora and Blue Origin.

He also became the president of Big Data at UC Berkeley – one of the largest data science clubs at the university.

There, he led the creation of a free, self-paced online course called Data Science Demystified to help secondary school students around the world learn more about AI and ML.

"Growing up, I didn't have such a resource and it is not offered in high schools, so I wanted to make it more available to the youth today, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in



During his time in UC Berkeley, Joshua Chandiramani led the creation of a free AI and ML course for secondary school students which is accessible globally. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

an increasingly data-driven world," he says.

When he returns to Singapore to serve his five-year bond – SG Digital scholars can fulfil their bond in a tech or media role at any organisation and industry of their choice – Joshua plans to dive deeper into AI and ML.

"In today's fast-changing job market, staying relevant means upskilling and reskilling, especially for technical roles," he says. With platforms like Coursera and Big Data at Berkeley offering free AI and ML

courses, there is no shortage of opportunities to learn.

"Change is the only constant. Embracing change allows us to adapt, acquire new skills and innovate, helping us grow both personally and professionally," he says.



Scan for more on the IMDA Singapore Digital Scholarship.



THE STRAITS TIMES SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2025

# Train enthusiast heeds calling

This SGRail Industry scholar wants to expand his knowledge of complex train systems to help power smoother journeys

Ever wondered how trains are powered? At their heart is a complex network of wires and cables that controls everything from your passenger experience to the train's movement.

For Adam Wee, a recipient of the Singapore Rail (SGRail) Industry Scholarship, these little known aspects of train engineering came to life during his internship with SBS Transit (SBST).

Says the 26-year-old: "Working on the equipment and devices located within the train was very interesting. You only get the chance to see this if you are stationed at the depot."

Adam's interest in the world of engineering began in his childhood. "As a child, I loved problem-solving. I was always curious about how various mechanisms – like a fan or a clock – work," he says.

It is no wonder he is drawn to the complex mechanical systems that power MRT trains.

"I was fascinated that these giant electric vehicles can transport so many people to so many places," says the train enthusiast.

To fulfil his curiosity, he took up a bachelor's degree in engineering with honours in sustainable infrastructure engineering (land) at the Singapore Institute of Technology.

"My interest and enthusiasm for this field truly deepened during my time at university," says Adam, who graduated last month.

The curriculum in his course covered complex systems in the rail

industry such as rolling stock (the industry term for train vehicles) and rail signalling (which controls the train's movement, such as its speed and direction on the tracks).

As a budding engineer, this knowledge gives Adam a deeper appreciation of the critical role public transport plays in getting millions of commuters from one place to another, and in driving the nation's productivity.

During his SBST internship at the North East Line (NEL) depot, he finally got the opportunity to see the theories of train mechanics play out in real life.

It was also his first time entering a siding. Sidings are dedicated tracks in the depot where trains are parked when they are not in service.

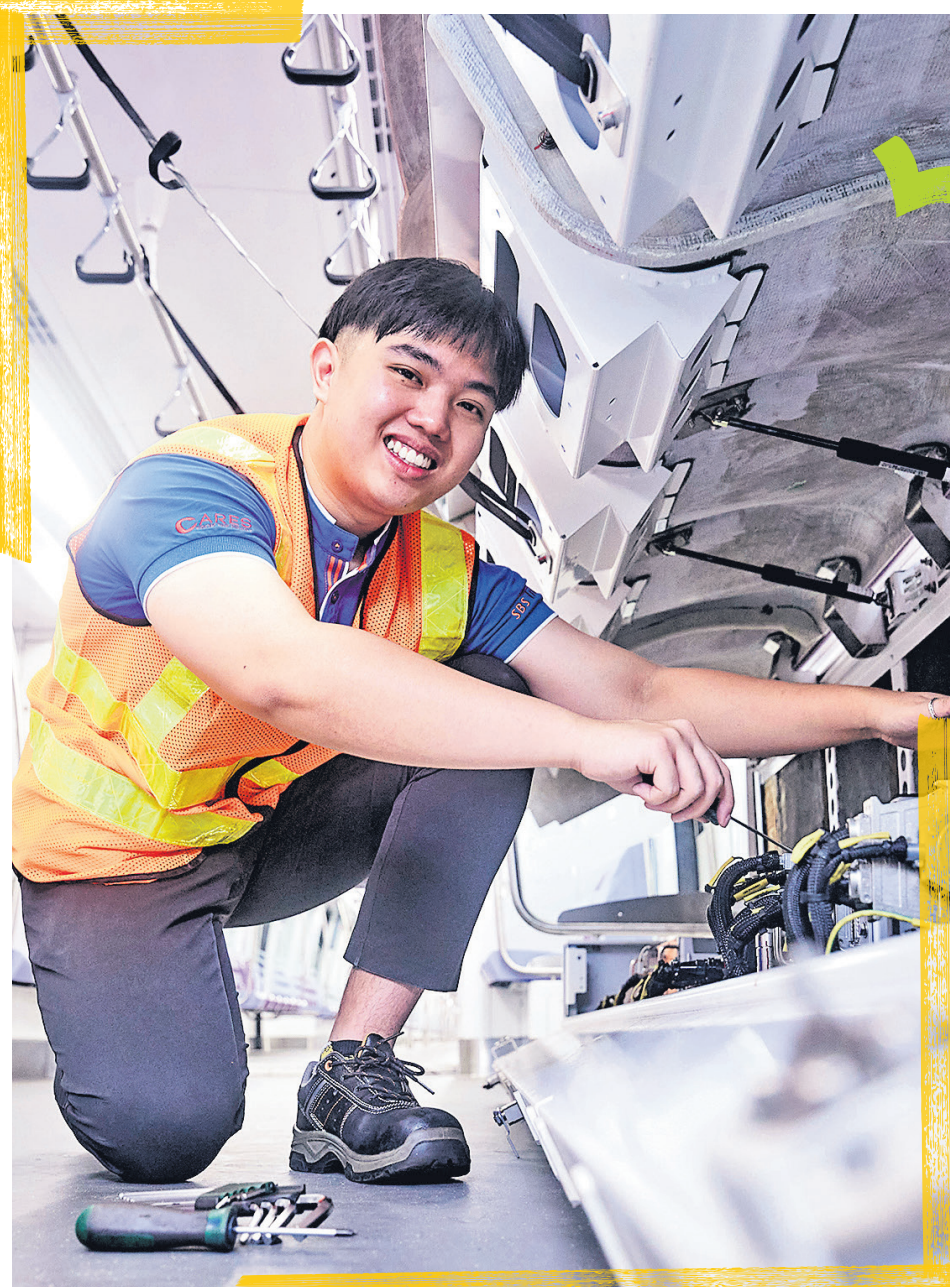
"Having only ever seen trains in operation as a public transport user, it was a 'wow' moment to see them parked at the depot or undergoing maintenance," he says.

## Becoming a rail engineer

Equipped with safety gear like a high-visibility vest and safety shoes, Adam spent much of his time during the one-year internship working inside or under the train.

Armed with the necessary tools, his job involved modifying parts or installing new ones for better train performance.

Adam has also worked on projects that track real-time data



As an SBST Transit intern, Adam Wee performed hands-on engineering work on train systems. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

to detect abnormal patterns in train components, from the vehicle's wheels to the electrical relays powering the train.

These analyses help engineers decide when maintenance or replacements are needed.

"The hands-on experience showed just how much there is to learn and appreciate about the intricacies of the rail industry," he adds.

Today, whenever Adam spots a familiar carriage number during his regular commute, he takes pride in knowing his work has contributed to that train's smooth operation.

“Everything regarding the train can be explained by science. To properly **rectify any problem**, we must first be able to **understand it**.”

➔ **Adam Wee**  
Recipient of the SGRail Industry Scholarship

SBST as a full-time engineer. He will lead a team of assistant engineers and technicians.

He says that he looks forward to learning from more experienced team members.

However, his learning will not stop there.

Inspired by advice from Mr Lee Hwee Kiat, NEL's head of rolling stock, Adam will further his studies by taking a master's degree in mechanical engineering.

"During a troubleshooting session, Mr Lee reminded us that everything regarding the train can be explained by science. To properly rectify any problem, we must first be able to understand it," he says.

With his sights set on becoming a chartered engineer, Adam is eager to deepen his expertise to help keep Singapore's world-class rail system running smoothly and efficiently.



Scan for more on the SGRail Industry Scholarship.

# THE FUTURE OF MOBILITY IN YOUR HANDS

Get a head start in a career with diverse opportunities.

If you are excited about shaping the future of land transport and how commuters travel, the LTA Scholarship gives you the opportunity to do just that.

You will play a part in developing strategies, policies and smart land transport engineering solutions to deliver faster, safer and more inclusive journeys for all.

Join us in bringing our land transport vision to life. Build an exciting career where a multitude of opportunities awaits you. Apply now at <https://lta.gov.sg/careers>



Land Transport Authority  
We Keep Your World Moving



THE STRAITS TIMES SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2025

LAUNCH  
YOUR

DREAM

WITH THE RIGHT  
SCHOLARSHIP

From academic excellence to diverse passions, discover premium scholarships from reputable organisations. Your future starts here – take the first step towards realising your potential



Immigration and Checkpoints Authority

Under the Ministry of Home Affairs Uniformed Scholarship with Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA), you will have the opportunity to play a crucial role in Singapore's home-front security.

Keeping Singapore's borders safe and secure is your top priority, with many exciting roles in checkpoint clearance, intelligence, enforcement, immigration and national registration available.

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 in the immigration, enforcement and intelligence fields.

Infocomm Media Development Authority

The 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 is an industry scholarship that develops the next generation of leaders for Singapore's tech and media ecosystem.

The scholarship supports both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across a wide range of areas, including artificial intelligence, cyber security, quantum

technologies, digital and interactive media, film and television as well as other programmes from overseas universities. Recipients have the flexibility to chart their own careers in the industry by serving their bond in an artificial intelligence, tech- or media-related job role in Singapore.

If you aspire to be a future leader in Singapore's digital economy or media ecosystem, it is time to choose differently. Apply for the SG Digital Scholarship.



Land Transport Authority

The Land Transport Authority (LTA) is driven by the vision of a people-centred land transport network that connects communities and places. Apart from charting the future of land transport through masterplans, it continually looks at innovative ways to manage traffic flow, provide reliable public transport and advocate active mobility options as it strives towards a car-lite city.

LTA is on the lookout for future leaders who are keen to

actively shape Singapore's innovative and future-ready land transport industry. LTA Scholars can look forward to opportunities to work on mega-infrastructure projects, experience multiple functions through job rotation, participate in high-level corporate committees, and play a part in management decision-making. Your career can benefit from LTA's strong network of international experts and structured developmental opportunities.

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS)

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) Undergraduate Scholarship offers exceptional individuals the chance to pursue a fulfilling career that serves the Singapore economy, supports regional development, and connects global markets.

As the central bank and financial regulator, MAS plays a vital role in shaping the future of finance,

promoting financial stability and innovation, and greening the financial ecosystem.

As an MAS scholar, you will have the opportunity to contribute to this vital work. Apply for the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship today and take the first step towards a purposeful career in finance.



Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is ranked the world's top young university by Times Higher Education. Offering a global education that keeps up with changing trends, NTU prepares students for the challenges shaping tomorrow's world.

Choose from a range of signature programmes and scholarships including the new NBS Global Leaders Programme, Turing AI Scholars Programme, CN Yang Scholars Programme, NTU-University

Scholars Programme, NTU-NIE Teaching Scholars Programme, LKCMedicine Scholarship and 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 and realise your potential with a scholarship that is just right for you.

SGRail

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.

Enriched by perspectives 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 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.

SPH Media

Ready to shake up the media landscape? The SPH Media Journalism Scholarship is not just about breaking news – it is your chance to master the craft of storytelling in all its forms. You will get to work side by side with experienced journalists and editors, and discover what it takes to craft

compelling print features, produce multimedia content, or discover new ways to engage audiences.

With this scholarship, you will start your career with Asia's leading media organisation, learning the foundations of great journalism while exploring new ways to tell stories that matter.



SCAN TO  
UNCOVER  
AVAILABLE  
SCHOLARSHIPS



THE STRAITS TIMES SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2025

## 1 NETWORK & CONNECT

Building relationships can open doors to opportunities and insider tips.

- Attend workshops, career fairs, or sessions related to scholarships.
- Reach out to past scholarship recipients for advice on their application journey.

## 2 SHARE YOUR STORY

Your story makes you stand out. Committees want to see the real you.

- Talk about your passions, struggles and achievements.
- Explain how the scholarship will help you achieve your goals.
- Be yourself – don't try to sound too formal.



# TO SNAG THAT SCHOLARSHIP

Ready to level up your scholarship game? Check out these seven must-know hacks to make your application stand out

## 3 START EARLY STAY ORGANISED

Give yourself time to plan and avoid last-minute stress.

- Mark deadlines on a calendar.
- Break the process into research, writing and collecting documents.
- Set small weekly goals to stay on track.



## 4 APPLY FOR MORE THAN ONE

The more you apply, the better your chances.

- Look for smaller scholarships in your school, community or special interest groups.
- Don't assume you won't qualify – apply anyway!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Singaporean scholars are shaping the future!

### Passion for Social Change

These changemakers are all about making a difference, diving into local causes like community welfare and climate action.

### Tech Innovators

As Singapore becomes a smart nation, these scholars are responsible for cool tech solutions for everyday challenges.

### Homegrown Entrepreneurs

Inspired by the startup scene, many launch businesses while juggling school.

### Global Thinkers

Scholars are looking for options to study abroad, expand their horizons and become more adaptable globally.

### Community Engagement

Scholars actively volunteer with local groups to uplift fellow Singaporeans.

### Mental Health Advocacy

This generation is pushing for mental health awareness and support in Singapore's high-pressure education scene.

## 5 ASK FOR REFERENCES

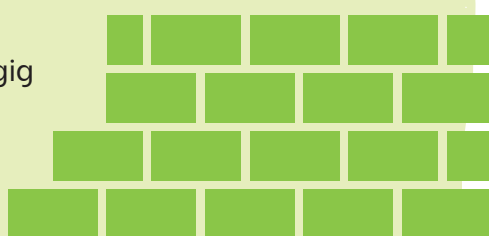
A glowing recommendation can boost your chances.

- Pick teachers, mentors or bosses who know you well.
- Give them plenty of time to write and share your goals.

## 6 BUILD YOUR BRAG FILE

A quick list of achievements saves time and keeps you organised.

- Write down every award, volunteer gig or project you've done.
- Highlight the ones that show leadership, creativity or hard work.



## 7 SHOWCASE YOUR SKILLS CREATIVELY

Unique presentations can make your application memorable.

- Use visuals or creative formats to showcase projects or achievements (like a portfolio or video).
- If allowed, add a personal touch that reflects your personality or interests.



SCAN TO UNCOVER AVAILABLE SCHOLARSHIPS

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Deepanraj Ganesan  
Journalist at The Straits Times

# I AM A JOURNALIST

SPH Media Journalism Scholarship now open for application.

SCAN TO APPLY



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