SMU
SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

Centre for
Global Education
and Opportunities

## SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

# YOUR GATEWAY TO ASIA & BEYOND




## A Guide for New Colombo Plan Scholars

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# INTRODUCTION

## SINGAPORE: CONNECTING ASIA TO THE WORLD



### World-Class Education

Singapore is a dynamic city-state renowned for its world-class education system, rigorous academic programmes, state-of-the-art facilities, and distinguished faculty.



### A Multicultural Society

As a cosmopolitan hub, Singapore offers a rich mix of cultures, languages, and traditions. Students are immersed in a multicultural environment where they can gain cross-cultural competencies essential for today's global workforce. English is widely used, alongside exposure to Mandarin, Malay, and Tamil, enriching cultural understanding and communication skills.



### A Gateway to Global Careers

Singapore's strategic location and strong economy make it a hub for multinational corporations and start-ups. Students can gain practical experience, build professional networks, and access opportunities that open doors to global careers.

## AUSTRALIA – SINGAPORE RELATIONSHIP

"The bilateral relationship with Singapore is one of Australia's closest and most comprehensive in Southeast Asia." — Australian High Commission, Singapore

Through the Australia–Singapore Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, both countries collaborate across education, trade, defence, science and innovation, and the digital economy. For NCP scholars, studying in Singapore offers a unique opportunity to strengthen regional understanding while experiencing first-hand one of Australia's closest partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.



# DISCOVER SMU

## WHERE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE MEETS REAL-WORLD LEARNING

Singapore Management University (SMU) is a premier university in Asia, recognised for its world-class research, distinguished teaching, and interactive, collaborative learning approach. Established in 2000, SMU is home to over 14,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate, and research programmes across eight schools:

- Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB)
- Yong Pung How School of Law (YPHSL)
- School of Accountancy (SoA)
- School of Computing and Information Systems (SCIS)
- School of Economics (SoE)
- School of Social Sciences (SoSS)
- College of Integrative Studies (CIS)
- College of Graduate Research Studies (CGRS)

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, interdisciplinary research addressing Asian issues of global relevance. Our faculty collaborate with leading international universities, as well as partners in industry and the public sector. Located in the heart of downtown Singapore, SMU's city campus fosters strong linkages with business, government, and the wider community.

# WHY CHOOSE SMU?




## ACADEMIC, CULTURAL AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR NCP SCHOLARS

SMU offers NCP scholars a unique blend of academic excellence, cultural immersion, and experiential learning. Acknowledging the rigorous selection process of the NCP Scholarship Programme, SMU offers **direct admission to its Visiting Student Programme (VSP)** for NCP scholars, ensuring a seamless application process. Scholars also benefit from a wide range of academic, leadership, and experiential learning opportunities throughout their time that enrich their study experience at SMU.



### Course Selection

Choose 2 to 4 courses taught in SMU's small seminar-style classes, designed to maximise interaction and learning.

**Explore the Course List**

- Develop cross-cultural perspectives through SMU's broad-based Core Curriculum, with courses that deepen your understanding of diverse communities, cultures, and civilisations.
- Gain insights into the Indo-Pacific by exploring courses on Singapore and Asia, covering topics such as politics, economics, sustainability, finance, ageing societies, and law.
- Apply your learning through SMU-X, where you will work on real-world projects with industry partners, gaining first-hand insights into business and innovation across Asia while building valuable professional networks.



# BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

## EXCHANGE STUDENT AMBASSADOR (ESA) TRAINING

The ESA Training is a series of interactive workshops that empower students to unlock their potential, build meaningful connections, and to gain valuable insights beyond the classroom. Through 7– 8 weekly sessions, participants enjoy exclusive experiences and learning opportunities fully sponsored by SMU's Centre for Global Education and Opportunities (GEO).




Engage with communities



Build meaningful connections



Develop intercultural skills

## EDVENTURE PROGRAMME

SMU EdVenture is an 8D7N non-credit-bearing field trip organised by SMU GEO during recess week, hosted by a leading university in Asia. Held in a dynamic Asian city, the programme offers students a unique blend of academic and cultural immersion.

Participants experience the academic excellence of both SMU and the host institution within a single semester, engage with a diverse international cohort, and receive an official certificate of completion. The programme includes industry visits and cultural experiences, providing insights into the host country's history, economy, innovation ecosystem, and business landscape.



Gain regional insights




Build global networks



Expand cultural perspectives

# LEADERSHIP IN ACTION





## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the Exchange Student Ambassador (ESA) Training, students have the opportunity to visit social enterprises that offer first-hand insights into social inclusion, community impact, and sustainability initiatives in Singapore.

**Learn more about Singapore's social enterprises**



## ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION

Develop entrepreneurial skills through networking events and seminars organised by SMU's Institute of Innovation and Entrepreneurship. Students also have opportunities to collaborate with SMU students on joint business ventures, supported by grant funding and mentorship.

**Discover SMU Innovation & Entrepreneurship**



## GLOBAL NETWORKS

Expand your global network by joining the Singapore Global Network (SGN), where you can connect with professionals, entrepreneurs, and like-minded individuals with an interest in Singapore. Through networking events, career opportunities, and community initiatives, SGN helps you build meaningful connections that extend beyond your exchange experience.

**Explore Singapore Global Network**

# RESEARCH & INNOVATION



Explore SMU's diverse research institutes and centres, which advance knowledge and address real-world challenges across areas such as urban development, finance, sustainability, law, ageing, digital technologies, and artificial intelligence. Students are encouraged to attend public lectures, seminars, and conferences throughout the year to gain insights from leading researchers and industry experts.

- SMU Urban Institute
- Sim Kee Boon Institute for Financial Economics
- Singapore Green Finance Centre
- Centre for Commercial Law in Asia
- Centre for Digital Law
- Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy
- Centre for Research on Successful Ageing
- Centre for Research on Intelligent Software Engineering
- SMU-A*STAR Joint Lab in Social and Human-Centered Computing
- SMU Business Families Institute
- UOB - SMU Asian Enterprise Institute
- Lien Centre for Social Innovation




# LIFE AT SMU

SMU is committed to providing a welcoming environment for international students. Through a wide range of programmes, resources, and student activities, you'll have the support and opportunities to settle in, build meaningful connections, and make the most of your exchange experience in Singapore.

## ACCOMMODATION

SMU offers a range of accommodation options, with support provided to help students find comfortable and convenient housing during their stay in Singapore.

**View SMU's housing guide**

## ACADEMIC ENRICHMENT

Join SMU's academic clubs to explore your academic interests beyond the classroom. Across all eight schools, students can develop practical skills and build valuable connections with peers and industry professionals.

**Learn about SMU academic clubs**

## LANGUAGE SUPPORT

Students can access a network of accredited language centres in Singapore to fulfil local language requirements and develop communication skills in a multilingual environment.

**Find out more on the next page**

## HEALTH & WELLNESS

Medical insurance is included in SMU's miscellaneous fees, with counselling, wellness programmes, and fitness and recreational facilities supporting students' well-being throughout their exchange.

**Explore SMU campus facilities**

## STUDENT LIFE

SMU offers a vibrant campus life with diverse activities and organisations, allowing students to build friendships and explore interests in sports, arts, culture, and entrepreneurship.

**Discover student clubs & societies**

## SMU EVENTS & FESTIVALS

SMU hosts events and festivals year-round, including cultural celebrations, academic conferences, and social gatherings, offering opportunities to connect with students, faculty, and industry professionals.

**Browse upcoming events at SMU**

# LOCAL LANGUAGES



## CONNECT WITH ASIA THROUGH LANGUAGE

Language learning is an integral part of the New Colombo Plan experience, helping students deepen their understanding of the Indo-Pacific and engage more meaningfully with diverse cultures and communities. Through Singapore's multilingual environment and extensive network of language learning centres, students can pursue language studies that complement their academic and personal goals.

## LANGUAGE LEARNING IN SINGAPORE

- **Fulfil NCP language learning requirements**
- **Strengthen cross-cultural communication skills**
- **Gain deeper insights into the Indo-Pacific region**
- **Enhance future academic and career opportunities**



## LEARN MORE

SMU has compiled a guide featuring language learning centres in Singapore, including information on course offerings, schedules, proficiency levels, fees, certifications, and available discounts.

**View language learning centres guide**

**Important Note:**

The language learning centres listed in the guide are external providers and are not affiliated with SMU. Students should contact the centres directly and review all terms and conditions before making any commitments.



# LIVING IN SINGAPORE



## WEATHER & CLIMATE

Singapore enjoys a tropical climate year-round, with warm temperatures and occasional rainfall. Light, breathable clothing and an umbrella are recommended for daily comfort.

## LANGUAGE

English is an official working language of Singapore, making it easy to communicate and navigate daily life. As a multilingual society, many Singaporeans are also fluent in Mandarin, Malay, or Tamil. You may even encounter Singlish, a unique local form of English influenced by Singapore's diverse languages and cultures.

| Makan | Lah | Shiok | Paiseh |
|---|---|---|---|
| Malay word for eat (or to eat) | Adds emphasis ("Okay lah!") | Really delicious or satisfying | Embarrassed or sorry |

*Don't worry - you'll quickly pick up these local expressions during your stay!*

## TRANSPORT & MOBILITY

Singapore's efficient and extensive public transport network makes it easy to travel around the city. Students can conveniently commute using the MRT and buses, with payments accepted via contactless bank cards and stored-value cards. Ride-hailing services such as Grab, Gojek, TADA, Ryde, and ComfortDelGro are also widely available.

## DINING & CUISINE

Singapore is a food lover's paradise, offering a diverse range of cuisines that reflect its multicultural heritage. From iconic hawker centres to world-class restaurants, students can explore a vibrant food scene and experience the unique flavours of Singapore.



**Lau Pa Sat**

*10-minute bus ride from SMU*



**CHIJMES**

*1-minute walk from SMU*



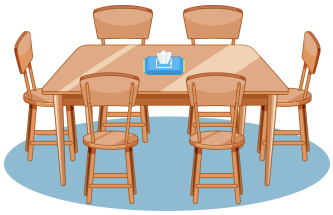

**Maxwell Food Centre**

*10-minute bus ride from SMU*

## LOCAL ETIQUETTE

Understanding a few local customs can help you settle into life in Singapore with ease. Here are some everyday practices you'll quickly pick up during your exchange.

**"Chope-ing" seats**



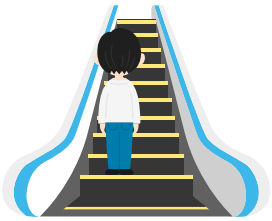
In Singapore, tissue packets are often placed on tables to "chope" (reserve) seats at food courts.

**No eating or drinking in public transport**



Eating and drinking are not permitted on the MRT and buses.

**Escalator etiquette**



People in Singapore typically stand on the left side of escalators and walk on the right.

## SAFETY & SECURITY

Singapore is widely recognised as one of the safest cities in the world, providing a secure environment for students to live and study. While daily life is generally safe, students are encouraged to remain vigilant, take sensible precautions, and familiarise themselves with local emergency contacts and safety procedures.



# FESTIVALS

Singapore's multicultural society is reflected in its vibrant calendar of festivals and celebrations. Throughout the year, you will have the opportunity to experience the traditions, food, performances, and customs of the country's diverse Chinese, Indian, Malay and other communities.

## CHINESE NEW YEAR

Witness Singapore's largest cultural celebration as neighbourhoods come alive with lion dances, festive markets, family traditions, and vibrant street decorations.



## HARI RAYA AIDILFITRI

Experience the rich traditions of Singapore's Malay Muslim community through festive bazaars, cultural performances, and the vibrant Geylang Serai Light-Up.



## MID-AUTUMN FESTIVAL

Explore the traditions of the Chinese community through lantern displays, cultural performances, mooncake celebrations, and festive activities held across the city.



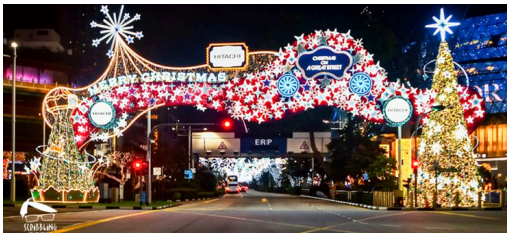
## DEEPAVALI

Immerse yourself in the Festival of Lights as Little India transforms with colourful illuminations, cultural performances, traditional crafts, and Indian cuisine.



## CHRISTMAS

Enjoy Singapore's unique take on the festive season with spectacular Orchard Road light displays, Christmas villages, concerts, and year-end celebrations.



# NCP SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



**LILOU CLARA HENRIETTE LAURET**
Queensland University of Technology
*New Colombo Plan Scholar 2026*
*SMU Spring 2026 Exchange Student*

## A GATEWAY TO ASIA

I was drawn to Singapore because it offered the perfect combination of academic excellence, cultural diversity, and opportunities for regional exploration. As one of the world's safest countries, it provided an environment where I felt comfortable embracing new experiences and travelling independently. Its central location also made it an ideal gateway to the broader Indo-Pacific region, allowing me to explore neighbouring countries and gain a deeper appreciation of the region's diverse cultures and perspectives.

Singapore's multicultural identity was another major factor in my decision. I was excited by the opportunity to experience a society where different cultures, languages, and traditions coexist so seamlessly, particularly through its iconic hawker centres, which reflect Singapore's unique cultural heritage.

Choosing Singapore Management University (SMU) was a natural fit. Its strong international reputation, interactive learning environment, and globally connected student community aligned perfectly with my academic interests in law and desire to develop an international perspective. Together, Singapore and SMU offered an experience that extended far beyond the classroom, allowing me to grow academically, professionally, and personally.

**"An exchange is not just about the places you visit, but the people you meet and the person you become along the way."**

Continue Lilou's story →

READ MORE

# NCP SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



**EESHAN BHASKAR KARRA**
The University of Melbourne
*New Colombo Plan Scholar 2026*
*SMU Spring 2026 Exchange Student*

## A STRATEGIC CHOICE

As a Finance and Economics major, Singapore was the logical choice. It sits at the absolute crossroads of global trade, finance, and consulting in the Indo-Pacific. I wanted to immerse myself in an ecosystem where the concepts I study in text-books are actively shaping regional market dynamics in real time. SMU, and specifically the Lee Kong Chian School of Business, stood out because of its distinct corporate-ready culture and seminar-style pedagogy. Unlike traditional, large-lecture university setups, SMU's emphasis on interactive, presentation-heavy learning mirrored the exact environment of a corporate boardroom. Plus, the city-campus layout meant I wasn't isolated in a student bubble; I was stepping right out of class into the heart of Singapore's business district, which was a fantastic excuse to explore the city.

## BUILDING SKILLS FOR A GLOBAL CAREER

My experience at SMU has been a massive catalyst across all areas of my growth, packed into a single semester. Academically, the university's seminar-style teaching completely shifted how I approach learning; instead of passively absorbing lectures, I had to actively engage with professors, defend my analyses in real-time, and treat every class like a corporate boardroom. Personally, being part of the Student Ambassador program pushed me out of my comfort zone and allowed me to connect with and appreciate an incredibly diverse mix of people and cultures from all over the world. Professionally, Singapore served as the ultimate gateway to the region; studying the specific nuances of APAC business dynamics gave me the exact context and edge I needed to land a management consulting internship right here in the city, providing a firsthand look at regional strategy that will be invaluable for my career.

# NCP SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



**LUKE ROBERT BUKER**
University of Queensland
*New Colombo Plan Scholar 2026*
*SMU Spring 2026 Exchange Student*

## AN INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE

SMU was also viewed as a good choice as an international student, with its vast community of international students from across South East Asia and activities and programmes designed to aid in your journey, such as the EdVenture Experience, where I had the pleasure of experiencing Vietnam within a group of people I still call friends today.

## LEARNING BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

My most memorable experience at SMU was one of my classes, an SMU-X course which involves practical live case work with a real company. Within this course, sustainable and impact investing offered by the School of Business, not only was I exposed weekly to leading executives in this space where I could connect and develop my expertise, but I also worked on a rigorous, consulting-style advisory case focused on the launch of a proposed investment fund, where my team and I were tasked with developing strategic recommendations to guide decision-making.

This was a particularly memorable experience as it exposed me to a new dimension of work, offering the opportunity to participate in a live consulting-style environment. Collaborating with a strong team to recommend effective solutions not only enhanced the quality of our outcomes but also propelled my critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It was also within this course that I gained connections that opened doors to where I am interning today.

# NCP SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



**CLARE ELISE MATIJEVIC**
Bond University
*New Colombo Plan Scholar 2024*
*SMU Fall 2024 Exchange Student*

## STUDYING IN THE HEART OF SINGAPORE

Singapore is a modern archetype with a unique blend of multi-culturalism and endless opportunity and remains a convenient travel base. The city can provide world-class education in an urban environment central to an authentic exchange experience. I chose Singapore Management University based on the extensive exchange student support, small class sizes, city location and the subject transferability for my law degree.

## MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY

My most memorable experience at SMU would be the Exchange Student Ambassador (ESA) Program. This program occurred over a six-week duration and taught soft-skill workshops to develop students' skills in sustainability, graphic design, public speaking, creative thinking, networking, resume writing and global awareness. The multi-disciplinary approach and interactive teaching format effectively allowed me to build connections and learn new skills.

## TAKE THE LEAP

I would encourage you to ‘say yes’ and make the most of every opportunity that comes your way and go on exchange or travel. I have learned an invaluable amount about myself, the people around me and other cultures. The direct experience of living in another country will challenge and benefit you in ways that cannot be considered until the leap of faith has been taken. Take the leap.

# NCP SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



**NATHAN JOHN NOTLEY**
Deakin University
*New Colombo Plan Scholar 2023*
*SMU Spring 2024 Exchange Student*

## EXPLORING THE FUTURE OF LAW

The subject I still tell people about was taught jointly by the law and computer science schools. It was designed to teach law students how large language models actually work. For one assessment, we had to build a legal agent capable of answering complicated legal questions. In the final class, everyone brought in their agent and our classmates tried to catch them out with difficult questions while the lecturer assessed how they responded. Watching people try to break something we had spent weeks building was slightly nerve-racking, but it was also one of the most memorable classes I took. I had never done anything remotely like it at my home university. I also took a class on AI law, policy and ethics with a lecturer who was closely involved in developing AI regulation in Singapore. Each week, different groups would research what was happening in a particular jurisdiction and report back to the class. For that semester, we became a group of mini-experts on how different countries were approaching AI. Because the field was changing so quickly, it felt as though we were following the law as it developed rather than studying something already settled in a textbook.

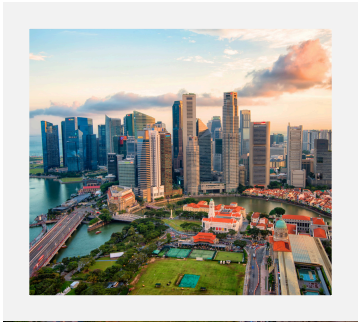
## BRIDGING THEORY AND PRACTICE

There was also a nice bit of timing with an M&A subject delivered in partnership with White & Case. I had already started arranging work experience in the firm's Singapore office, so I was learning from the firm in class shortly before working with its people in the office. That experience ultimately led to my current role as a lawyer with White & Case in Melbourne.The timing of my exchange could hardly have been better. I now use one of the world's largest legal technology platforms in my work every day, and I have since given presentations at the firm explaining how large language models work and what is happening behind the "black box." I am also working on a technology project that draws on the same foundations. When I was building that legal agent at SMU, I knew the subject was interesting. I did not expect what I was learning to become part of my everyday work quite so quickly.

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# START YOUR SMU JOURNEY



## BUILD YOUR INDO-PACIFIC EXPERIENCE

Discover new perspectives, build meaningful connections, and gain valuable Indo-Pacific experience at Singapore Management University. Whether your interests lie in business, finance, economics, law, or technology, SMU offers opportunities to learn, grow, and make an impact beyond the classroom.

We look forward to welcoming you to Singapore and to SMU — your gateway to Asia, where unforgettable experiences, meaningful connections, and new perspectives await.




## CONTACT INFORMATION

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SMU Visiting Student Programme (VSP)