

When crime goes digital, policing evolves with it

This SPF scholar leads officers on the digital front – partnering with foreign agencies and using data to track down criminals operating globally



▶ Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police Gregory Kang and his team fight crime in cyberspace. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

The trail stretched across borders and time zones – a man had skipped bail in 2021 and fled to Thailand where he became a cybercriminal, hacking into multiple FairPrice and Zalora accounts to make fraudulent purchases.

The Singapore Police Force (SPF) worked closely with its foreign counterparts to track him down and finally deported him back to Singapore last August.

Working closely with fellow officers and leading the Singapore team was Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Police (DAC) Gregory Kang. The 34-year-old, who is Assistant Director of the SPF's Criminal Investigation Department (CID), oversees the Cybercrime Division. This division covers cybercrime investigations, policy development, international collaboration, and training. With a team of Police officers, he leads investigations into major cybercrime cases and works closely with foreign agencies to bring offenders to justice.

When he graduated in 2015 as a Singapore Merit scholar on the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Uniformed Scholarship (SPF), cybercrime was rapidly emerging as a major threat.

"Cybercrime has become one of the growing threats to law and order," says DAC Kang.

"In 2020, cybercrime and scam cases nearly matched physical crime cases for the first time, and today, they are more than double the number of physical crime cases in Singapore."

Over the years, the SPF's role has evolved to confront these crimes online and it has worked with other government agencies and the private sector to protect Singaporeans from such invisible threats.



“Criminals do not stay static, and the SPF is always thinking about how we can evolve our crime-fighting strategies to stay ahead of the bad guys.”

DAC GREGORY KANG
Recipient of the Singapore Merit Scholarship under the MHA Uniformed Scholarship (SPF)

According to SPF's Mid-Year Scam and Cybercrime Brief 2025, cybercrime and scam cases had decreased by 21.5 per cent to 22,476 cases in the first half of 2025, compared with 28,625 cases in the same period the year before.

The results are encouraging, but enforcement cannot ease up.

"Cybercrime knows no borders," says DAC Kang.

"The offenders we deal with are often overseas and very well organised. There is a strong emphasis amongst law enforcement agencies worldwide to collaborate and share information as well as mount operations together so that we can bring criminals to justice."

This means Police officers now need to be as fluent in cybercrime-fighting techniques, data analysis, financial investigations and cross-border investigations as they are in traditional methods of inquiry.

As such, DAC Kang is spearheading efforts to build a more diverse and skilled cybercrime workforce, bringing in civilian investigators with expertise in artificial intelligence and data science to work alongside uniformed officers.

"Criminals do not stay static, and the SPF is always thinking about how we can evolve our crime-fighting strategies to stay ahead of the bad guys," he says.

Protecting people from harm

Even as crime patterns shift, the core purpose of policing remains unchanged: keeping people safe.

For DAC Kang, that conviction took root more than a decade ago, when he was a rookie investigator at Bedok Police Division handling a case of voyeurism at a Housing Board flat.

"We identified the suspect, and it took several interviews to elicit his confession," he recalls.

"Getting him to admit to his crime was important because it showed him that we had the tenacity to see the case through, and that made it less likely he would do it again."

When the victim said she finally felt



▶ DAC Kang and his family on his graduation day at Columbia University in 2015. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF DAC GREGORY KANG

◀ DAC Kang during his appointment as Honorary Aide-de-Camp (2017–2020), where he supported the President of Singapore at official events.



safe at home again, knowing that the perpetrator had been found, her words reinforced DAC Kang's conviction on the positive impact of police work.

"Her gratitude stayed with me. It reminded me why we put in the effort – so people can feel safe in their own homes," he says.

Since joining the SPF in 2011, DAC Kang's secondments to other government ministries have broadened his understanding of how the public service protects and supports Singaporeans from all walks of life.

After a stint at MHA's Policy Development Division, he was rotated to the wider public service in 2023 and became a Deputy Director at the Ministry of Social and Family Development's (MSF) Social Mobility and Service Integration Division.

There, he developed policies and oversaw the roll-out of ComLink+, a programme that helps lower-income families with children achieve stability, self-reliance and social mobility.

"This was close to my heart because my parents had worked hard to give me

a good childhood, and then I had the opportunity to put in place policies that would support other families to do the same for their children," says DAC Kang.

Defusing crises through dialogue

Besides his policy work, DAC Kang has also served as one of the SPF's crisis negotiators since 2021 – a specialised role that demands empathy and patience in high-risk situations.

Negotiators are called to hostage incidents, barricaded situations or to support distressed individuals. Activation can happen at any hour, even in the middle of the night.

At the scene, negotiators often find themselves coaxing distraught individuals from harming themselves.

"It is a very serious responsibility because we have to make sure that we bring the person back to safety," he says.

"We have to put ourselves in their shoes and recognise that they are going through a very difficult time.

"What we can do is not to offer solutions but to be empathetic and help them gradually come to a better frame of mind."

Through these diverse roles, he has seen first-hand that police work is not defined by simply being "garang" (fierce) or outwardly tough. Much of it happens in quieter, more humane moments that demand patience and care.

"SPF officers come from all walks of life. I never thought I would find a career that excites me every single day, but I did. Now, I come to work each day, eager to work with my team to build a cyber-ready SPF," he adds.

FIGHTING CRIMINALS IN CYBERSPACE

55,810
scam and cybercrime cases reported in 2024 – up 10.8 per cent from the previous year and the highest on record.

\$179 million
in potential losses averted in the first half of 2025 through interventions by the Anti-Scam Command and its partners.

8 transnational scam syndicates dismantled in the first half of 2025, including money-laundering cells and a government-official impersonation call centre.

Sources: Five Things You Should Know about the Annual Scams and Cybercrime Brief 2024 and the Singapore Police Force's Mid-year Scam and Cybercrime Brief 2025.

About the Singapore Police Force 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 at world-renowned universities that 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.



Scan for more on the SPF scholarship

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The Straits Times Scholars' Choice 2026

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

From hackathons to Apple role

He credits his multidisciplinary training – which blends technical skills with business strategy – for his Cubstart win and landing a cybersecurity internship at his dream company

Most engineering students are trained to solve technical problems. For Nanyang Technological University (NTU) undergraduate Xu Jialu, that was only the starting point.

During an internship at a fintech company, Jialu was tasked with designing a payment solution.

He pressed beyond the technical brief and asked more questions: How would it create value – and at what cost?

"It was not just about building something that worked. We had to think about the cost, the long-term value and whether it made sense for the business," explains Jialu.

This big-picture mindset was shaped by the Renaissance Engineering Programme (REP), NTU's flagship engineering dual-degree scholarship programme, where students are trained to bridge technical know-how and strategic thinking through a multidisciplinary curriculum designed for a rapidly evolving world.

The programme integrates engineering and science with business, technology management and the humanities, equipping students with skills to look beyond code and make real-world decisions with confidence.

Students pursue a bachelor of engineering science in a chosen specialisation before progressing directly to a master of science in technology management in their fourth year.

Now in his final undergraduate semester, Jialu – who is from

REP's 12th cohort – has seen the full breadth of the programme's curriculum.

In his first year, he took foundational engineering modules alongside subjects that were outside his core discipline, including writing, ethics and civics, and health and well-being.

The second year introduced core engineering modules, alongside courses in sustainability, career design, workplace readiness and accounting.

REP's small cohort size – just 39 students in Jialu's batch – also shapes the learning experience, allowing for more one-on-one time with lecturers and visiting professionals.

Stepping into the real world

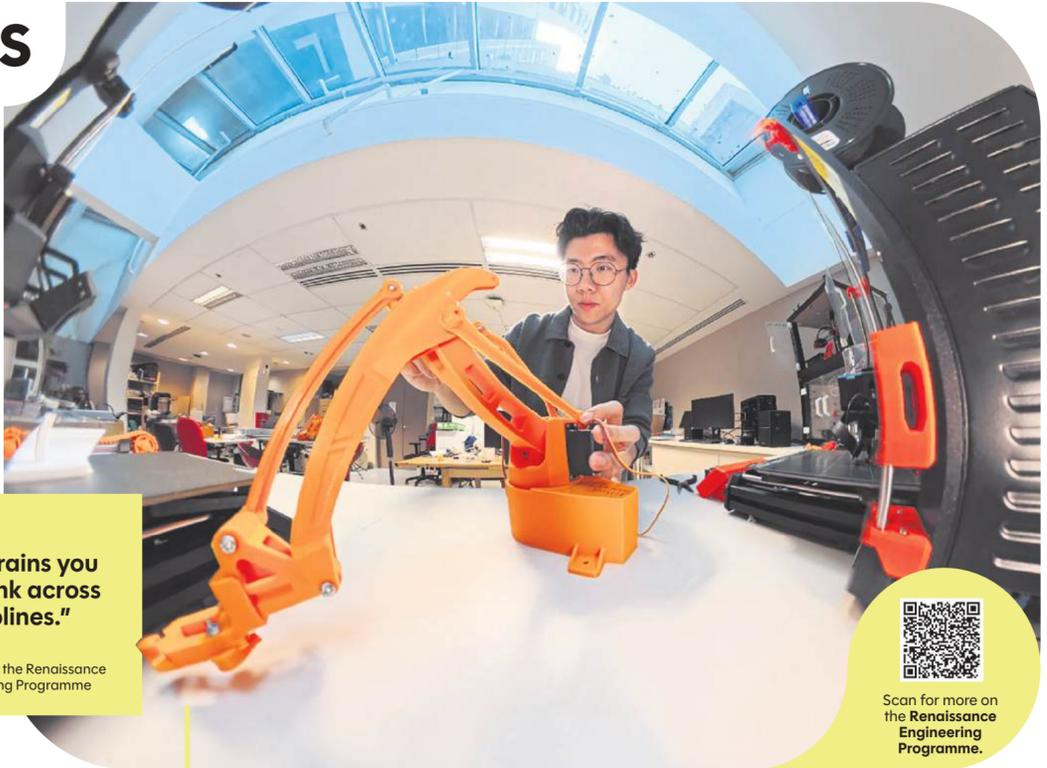
From August 2024 to May 2025, Jialu spent his third year on an overseas exchange at the University of California, Berkeley in the US, taking courses ranging from computer security and interface design to astronomy.

He also joined Cubstart, a web and mobile development course led by the organisers of Cal Hacks, the world's largest collegiate hackathon.

The semester culminated in a final competition, where his team clinched first prize for Best App.

REP trains you to think across disciplines."

Xu Jialu
Scholar in the Renaissance Engineering Programme



Xu Jialu is currently working on his capstone project in the emerging field of 3D ceramic printing. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

They had designed a day-planner app that automatically removes and adjusts reminders so users are not overwhelmed with additional tasks.

"That win only happened because I'd already been exposed to real-world problem-solving at REP," he reflects.

Today, Jialu is applying those same skills at Temasek Laboratories@NTU and REP Makers' Lab, where he is working on his capstone project in the field of 3D ceramic printing.

Working alongside a professor and two PhD researchers, his team is building a machine-learning model to predict print failures.

The aim is to reduce waste and

enable the reliable manufacture of ceramic components with optimised internal structures, such as those used in orthopaedic implants and prosthetics that require complex gyroid designs.

The project reflects the breadth of training REP students receive – and how the programme encourages them to move across disciplines with ease.

This year, Jialu will be taking that multidisciplinary grounding into a very different setting: cybersecurity at Apple Singapore's Information Security department. He counts securing the internship after a month-long application process as one of his biggest achievements.

"When you develop software, you cannot ignore security. Cybersecurity complements my work, and it is an exciting, high-stakes field that is only becoming more relevant," says Jialu.

The shift underscores the range of roles REP graduates can undertake – spanning hardware, software, product development and cybersecurity – and how the programme prepares them to adapt as technologies and industries evolve.

"I've always considered Apple my dream company, and now that an opportunity to work there is within reach, I am very excited," he says.



Scan for more on the Renaissance Engineering Programme.

Meet the molecular 'matchmaker'

By uncovering ways to pair proteins that would not normally interact, this A*STAR scholar is opening up fresh possibilities for treating diseases once thought difficult to target

For years, scientists have believed that diseases can be treated by changing how molecules "talk" to one another inside human cells. These invisible conversations can determine whether a cancer spreads or if a loved one loses their memory.

However, what scientists did not have was a reliable way to control those connections. That was the challenge Dr Liu Shuang undertook early in her scientific career – at a time when no clear road map existed.

The A*STAR scholar studies molecular glues – an elusive class of compounds that act like matchmakers inside cells.

They work by helping proteins that do not usually interact form new partnerships, disrupting disease-causing processes or prompting the removal of harmful proteins altogether.

For years, these were discovered largely by accident, however in 2022 during her postdoctoral fellowship at the Broad Institute of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard, Dr Liu and her colleagues pioneered one of the first systematic screening methods to identify molecular glues.

Their discovery laid the groundwork for a faster, more intentional approach to finding or designing new medicines and treatments to fight various ailments.

"By bringing the right pairs together, we can help treat disease," says Dr Liu. "I am a matchmaker for proteins in the human body."

The 35-year-old's breakthrough work now paves the way for scientists around the world to screen for molecular glues.

"I ended up changing how

researchers globally look for molecular glues," she says.

Dr Liu was able to commit to long-term research because she was supported by A*STAR's National Science Scholarship (BS-PhD) that funded the bulk of her 11-year training from her undergraduate degree through to her doctoral and postdoctoral research.

Dr Liu's academic journey took her from Imperial College London, where she earned a master of science in chemistry with medicinal chemistry, to the University of Oxford, where she completed a PhD in chemical biology.

She later joined the Broad Institute as a postdoctoral fellow.

At Oxford, Dr Liu studied how cancer drugs work at the molecular level, before being mentored by renowned American chemist and Harvard University professor Stuart Schreiber at the Broad Institute.

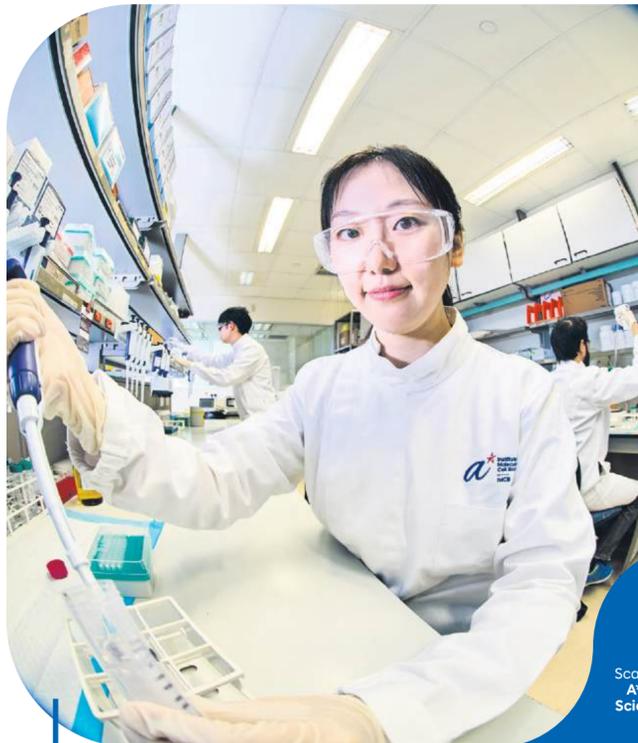
Developing new therapies

Dr Liu's academic training not only strengthened her self-discipline and logical thinking but also helped her become an independent thinker – a crucial trait for scientists working at the frontiers of discovery.

In early 2025, Dr Liu was awarded the prestigious National Research Foundation Fellowship, enabling her to set up her own lab. She is a principal investigator at A*STAR Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology.

While her PhD and postdoctoral research focused largely on cancer, her scientific interests have since expanded into neurodegenerative diseases, a shift driven by a deeply personal experience.

Dr Liu's paternal grandmother



Dr Liu Shuang is the principal investigator at A*STAR Institute of Molecular and Cell Biology where she runs her own lab with a team of four scientists to conduct independent research on molecular glues. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

passed away three years ago, and towards the end of her life, she could no longer recognise her granddaughter.

Although no formal diagnosis was made, Dr Liu believes her grandmother lived with neurodegenerative dementia.

With her expertise in molecular glue discovery, she hopes to drive new therapeutic strategies for cancer and neurodegenerative diseases.

At A*STAR, Dr Liu works with

a multidisciplinary biomedical ecosystem that includes drug development, antibody engineering, human genetics and bioinformatics.

She believes the agency's collaborative efforts are crucial for keeping pace with rapid shifts in drug discovery, particularly as artificial intelligence (AI) becomes more deeply embedded in the field.

These efforts will be further supported by the A*STAR Centre for Frontier AI Research.

By bringing the right pairs together, we can help treat disease. I am a matchmaker for proteins in the human body."

Dr Liu Shuang
Recipient of the A*STAR National Science Scholarship (BS-PhD)



Scan for more on the A*STAR National Science Scholarship (BS-PhD).

"This presents a major opportunity for me to build a cutting-edge drug discovery platform and enhance the global competitiveness of Singapore's biomedical industry," she says.

Looking back, Dr Liu reflects on why she chose to take up the scholarship at 19. Beyond income or overseas exposure, she was driven by the potential of science to benefit humankind.

"A true scientific breakthrough can benefit patients not just in Singapore but around the world, and that gives real meaning to the path I have chosen," she adds.



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'There isn't just one way to succeed in this role'

From commanding firefighters to shaping how officers are trained and deployed, this MHA scholar shows how varied a leadership journey in the SCDF can be



As Senior Assistant Director of Plans and Policy, LTC Ang Hwee Ting designs new hiring schemes and deployment pathways to support the organisation's growth. PHOTOS: SPH MEDIA, COURTESY OF LTC ANG

Dark smoke billowed into the sky as the fire spread across the industrial building. For Lieutenant-Colonel (LTC) Ang Hwee Ting, then Fire Station Commander of Jurong Island Fire Station, the stakes were unmistakably high.

Jurong Island – home to Singapore's petrochemical and energy industries – is a protected zone critical to the nation's water, energy and chemical supply chains, making its Fire Station one of the Singapore Civil Defence Force's (SCDF) most critical postings.

That incident in 2018 tested everything she had learnt in training, from managing mixed teams of experienced officers and young national servicemen to making split-second decisions.

"It became clear very quickly that this was not a simple incident, so we had to be extremely cautious and act decisively," says LTC Ang.

It was a defining moment and a poignant reminder of what serving in the SCDF means: staying calm amid uncertainty and displaying sound leadership when it matters most.

Drawn to the frontlines

LTC Ang did not grow up dreaming of a uniformed career, but an event in her teens provided the spark for where she is now. When she was 17, a cooking fire broke out in a neighbour's flat while the husband was asleep in the bedroom, unaware of what was happening.

She sprinted down to the carpark to collect the keys from the neighbour's family member, who had called to say they were on their way, then rushed back upstairs to hand them to the firefighters so they could enter without delay.

"The adrenaline rush felt great but knowing that our actions can change someone's life mattered even more," she recalls. "That was when I knew SCDF would be my career."

From the start, she did not want a conventional job, preferring a diversity of roles, challenges and the opportunity to make a difference. The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Uniformed Scholarship (SCDF) offered all three.

Under the MHA scholarship scheme, LTC Ang received the Local Merit Scholarship to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Life Sciences at the National University of Singapore.

Upon her graduation, she went through seven months of training at the Civil Defence Academy and became a



LTC Ang (second from right, standing) at an interdivision games event in 2018, during her tenure as Fire Station Commander at Jurong Island Fire Station.



Collaboration is central to LTC Ang's work, as she engages colleagues across the Force on workforce planning and policy initiatives.

On a work trip to the US in 2016, LTC Ang (middle) had the chance to observe firefighting operations and capabilities in other countries.



An off-duty moment with her workmates reflects the camaraderie built through shared SCDF experiences.

RISING THROUGH THE RANKS

2013-2014

Rota Commander, Tuas Fire Station

2014-2017

Senior Staff Officer, Biological Threat, Hazardous Materials Department

2017-2020

Fire Station Commander, Jurong Island Fire Station

2020-2023

Assistant Director, Risk Management and Review Branch (Risk Management and Audit Office)

2023-Present

Senior Assistant Director, Plans and Policy (Human Resource Department)

Rota Commander at Tuas Fire Station, leading a team of 25 firefighters.

Within five years, she was appointed the Fire Station Commander of Jurong Island Fire Station, where she took charge of its operational readiness and oversaw 90 staff members.

In December 2020, LTC Ang took on a very different challenge as the Assistant Director at SCDF's Risk Management and Audit Office.

That was during the Covid-19 pandemic, when infections and quarantine measures notably strained manpower across organisations.

Appointed the Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Secretariat Lead for the SCDF, she tracked manpower gaps and absenteeism across the Force, translated national Covid-19 guidelines into day-to-day operating measures, and regularly updated contingency plans as risks and restrictions changed dynamically.

In 2021, she led a major review of SCDF's Enterprise Risk Management framework and examined how risks – from manpower shortages to operational

disruptions – were identified, assessed and reported across the Force.

It was a significant shift from commanding a Fire Station to shaping policies, frameworks and systems.

"Understanding the risks our officers face on the ground helps me design better frameworks at the organisational level," she says.

Today, as Senior Assistant Director of Plans and Policy in SCDF's Human Resource Department, the 36-year-old reviews workforce policies to keep SCDF's manpower structure agile.

This includes designing new hiring schemes and deployment pathways, and exploring strategic workforce plans to support the organisation's growth.

One of her key focus areas has been to expand SCDF's pool of Paramedics.

Demand for Emergency Medical Services (EMS) rose sharply during the Covid-19 pandemic and continues to steadily grow with Singapore's rapidly ageing population.

This sustained demand has intensified manpower pressures on the EMS.

Shaping policies and people

LTC Ang's contributions earned prestigious recognition in 2024 when she and her team received the Commendation Award from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The award recognises operational excellence, strong teamwork and exemplary alignment with the Home Team values of Honour and Unity.

Policy work, she observes, is seldom about grand reform, but steady, sustainable progress.

"Even small changes can meaningfully shape how people experience their careers," she says.

Beyond her primary appointment, LTC Ang also serves as an Honorary Aide-de-Camp (HADC) to the President of Singapore,

a distinguished secondary role she has held since 2017.

Chosen through a rigorous nomination process, the position places her at the heart of state-level functions and ceremonies at the Istana – a setting that demands precision, adaptability and diplomacy.

"During an event, many issues may arise," she says. "As an HADC, you have to have an eye for detail and the ability to think and act fast when things do not go according to plan."

Looking back, LTC Ang sees her scholarship not just as study support but as an accelerator in her career development.

"It gave me exposure earlier, both in operational leadership and policy roles," she says.

"I have learnt that there isn't just one way to succeed in this role. If you are willing to learn, adapt and step up when it matters, there are numerous opportunities in the SCDF to grow in ways you may not expect."



"The adrenaline rush felt great but knowing that our actions can change someone's life mattered even more. That was when I knew SCDF would be my career."

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ANG HWEETING
Recipient of the Local Merit Scholarship under the MHA Uniformed Scholarship (SCDF)

About the 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).



Scan for more on the MHA Uniformed Scholarship.

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Where science meets purpose

Young scholars at HTX are applying frontier science such as quantum-inspired computing and advanced nanomaterials to solve real-world public safety challenges

What if your love for science and technology could translate directly into protecting lives and keeping Singapore safe? At HTX (Home Team Science and Technology Agency), scientists, engineers and researchers across disciplines develop solutions to solve crimes, save lives, secure borders, and safeguard data and systems. Among them are innovators Joshua Lim and Bethany Chong, who will get the chance to work on frontier technologies at HTX while seeing their impact unfold in the real world.



▲ From credit card fraud to online threats, HTX scientist Joshua Lim uses his quantum computing skills to help fight crime. PHOTOS: SPH MEDIA

“I want the work I do to be able to help just one more person and keep them safe.”

JOSHUA LIM
Recipient of the HTX Scholarship

Fighting crime with quantum science

Joshua Lim has always been drawn to the edges of what is possible.

After his A levels, he developed a keen interest in quantum computing, an emerging field with the potential to solve complex problems far more efficiently than today's computers.

When he enrolled at Imperial College London for a master's in theoretical physics, his curiosity took him to another frontier: fusion energy.

For his academic projects, Joshua spent time researching how this renewable energy could one day be made viable to power cities.

"Fusion is an exciting field, but we are many years away from realising a fusion reactor," he notes.

Unsure of how to apply his knowledge to make a tangible difference, he found a new direction at an HTX scholarship talk held at his university campus.

The speaker, who worked in the agency's Robotics, Automation & Unmanned Systems Centre of Expertise shared how the agency allowed him to pursue his interest in developing robots to benefit the Home Team departments. This convinced Joshua to apply for the mid-term HTX Scholarship to complete his master's.

Now a scientist at HTX's Disruptive Technologies Office, the 25-year-old has had his passion for quantum computing rekindled.

Quantum computing uses quantum bits, or qubits, which can explore many possible answers at the same time.

Conventional computers can only do it one by one. This means quantum computing is able to solve complex problems much faster than today's supercomputers, with the potential to help fight crimes like credit card fraud.



▲ Joshua works with his team in the Disruptive Technologies Office to boost the Home Team's capabilities.

"There are millions of credit card transactions each day," says Joshua.

"We are developing an algorithm that can detect abnormal or fraudulent transactions, which can run on everyday hardware like a laptop instead of a supercomputer," he explains.

Joshua aims to apply the same algorithm to other areas such as cybersecurity, where it can detect incoming attacks, or in security cameras where it can study suspicious activities.

The Disruptive Technologies Office also drives scientific development in fields such as biometrics, digital and information forensics, as well as command and control, to boost the Home Team's capabilities.

In his current role, Joshua is given the freedom and independence to determine how to elevate and expand on each project's goals, as long as they are in line with HTX's mission to enhance public safety.

"My director recently told me that our team should not look at future solutions for present problems, but future solutions for future problems," Joshua says.

"That changed the way I look at my work. I want the work I do to be able to help just one more person and keep them safe."

From dismantling toys to researching public safety

Growing up, Bethany Chong drove her parents up the wall when she constantly dismantled household items to see how they work.

"I would break apart anything I could get my hands on, be it a remote control, a piano or brake cables on a bicycle," says the 23-year-old scholar.

Her parents would then insist that she fix those items. As she grew older, Bethany's inquisitiveness evolved into a knack for crafting practical solutions using artificial intelligence (AI)-assisted code and space-age materials.

While interning at a fragrance firm in 2023, she noticed an inefficient workflow: Fragrance-testing notes were written by hand, scanned and then re-entered online.

To fix the cumbersome process, she watched videos on how to use the Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) feature in Excel to automate tasks and studied other VBA codes.

"I tried to implement it myself. If I faced a problem, I would get generative AI to help me understand what went wrong," she says.



▲ Bethany (left) with the team from HTX's Human Factors & Simulation Centre of Expertise during her internship at HTX.

Within days, Bethany had automated the firm's note-taking system.

At Nanyang Technological University, where she studied materials engineering, Bethany spent months developing a silica-based nanomaterial capable of absorbing environmental pollutants. She would go on to graduate as the valedictorian of her faculty in 2025.

Bethany chose to fulfil her Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholarship (Engineering) bond at HTX where she felt she could best apply her capabilities and know-how in materials engineering.

As part of her scholarship requirement, she did an internship with HTX's Human Factors & Simulation Centre of Expertise where she worked with other researchers to study how the weight of backpacks carried by Home Team officers affected their thermal comfort.

"We conducted tests using a robot that mimics sweating and walking," she says.

"The comfort of their uniforms is a big factor that affects their performance and safety."

The project was close to her heart as among her family friends are a police officer and a firefighter.

To gain a broader perspective on the technological landscape, Bethany decided to pursue a master's degree in technology policy at the University of Cambridge in Britain.

She is also grateful that the PSC Scholarship has given her the flexibility to explore the private sector before she starts work at HTX.

"We are encouraged to go on a gap year before coming back to work so we can acquire skills from different sectors

▶ Currently pursuing a master's in technology policy at the University of Cambridge in Britain, Bethany Chong is looking forward to starting work at HTX when she graduates later this year.

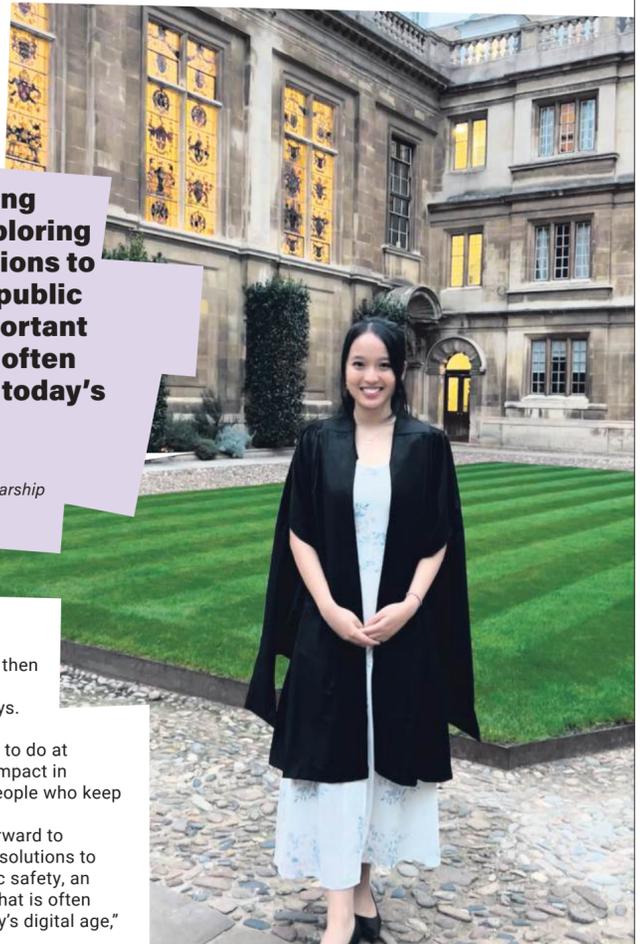
“I am looking forward to exploring material solutions to contribute to public safety, an important aspect that is often overlooked in today's digital age.”

BETHANY CHONG
Recipient of the PSC Scholarship (Engineering)

and countries, and then bring them back to Singapore," she says.

Bethany is clear on what she wants to do at HTX: Make a real impact in empowering the people who keep Singapore safe.

"I am looking forward to exploring material solutions to contribute to public safety, an important aspect that is often overlooked in today's digital age," she says.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BETHANY CHONG

About the HTX Scholarship

▶▶ HTX is looking for talented individuals with a strong interest and aptitude for advanced technology like robotics and AI to future-proof Singapore's safety and security. Bright minds are required to help develop science and technology solutions to augment the Home Team's capabilities in enhancing public safety. Outstanding students are invited to apply for the HTX Scholarship, a full-ride scholarship for STEM disciplines.



Scan for more information on the HTX Scholarship.



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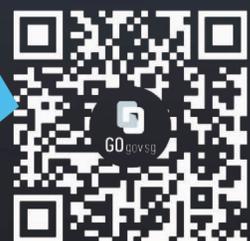
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ADVERTORIAL

He's speeding up your Woodlands Checkpoint crossing

After seeing first-hand how long waits affect daily commuters, this ICA officer worked on automated systems that enhance checkpoint efficiency

The most meaningful item Aloysius Thum received for his work was not a trophy or an award – it was a watch. This was from his team when he was posted out of his first role as a team leader at Woodlands Checkpoint, after months of working side by side through shifts and peak-hour surges.

"Every time I wear the watch, it reminds me of my officers – it holds quite a bit of sentimental value for me," says Aloysius, who is now a manager (border security) at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Joint Ops Group Security Policy Directorate.

It is a fitting memento for someone whose work helps travellers clear immigration faster than before.

With the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority's (ICA) new QR-code clearance system, those minutes saved at the checkpoint make a difference to daily commutes and weekend trips.

In 2024, Aloysius was part of ICA's Future Ops and Transformation division. The team was behind the roll-out of the QR-code clearance system at land checkpoints in Singapore.

At the start, much of his time was spent understanding new clearance technologies and figuring out how they would work in real time. Even as testing got under way, the outcome was far from certain.

"During the project development, we had doubts as to whether it would work or create meaningful impact," says the 30-year-old.

But results came fast. "Within weeks of implementation, we witnessed how a single innovation could change the daily routines of countless travellers – the scale of impact was incredible," he recounts.

By March 2025, a year after the initial roll-out, both checkpoints at Woodlands and Tuas were able to clear 2,000 more travellers per hour than the year before, shaving off 20 seconds to a minute per car clearance, depending on the number of passengers.

At Woodlands Checkpoint – one of the world's busiest land border crossings – even small improvements have an outsized impact.

With peak volumes of up to 550,000 travellers a day, that translates to a lot of time saved.

"These are numbers on the screen but it is very different when you go down to the ground and talk to people who tell us how, as commuters, they can leave home later and spend more precious time with their families," says Aloysius.

One friend even called to thank him for helping to shorten his travel time to Johor Bahru each time he drove over to Malaysia for a football match.

A recipient of the MHA Uniformed Scholarship, Aloysius joined ICA in 2021 after graduating with a bachelor of social

Immigration and Checkpoints Authority officer Aloysius Thum helped to design and test the QR-code clearance system that is currently being used at Singapore's land checkpoints. PHOTOS: SPH MEDIA



It is incredibly fulfilling to work on initiatives that will change how things are done – not just today but for years to come."

ALOYSIUS THUM
Recipient of the MHA Uniformed Scholarship (ICA)



Aloysius (second from left) with his team at an appreciation dinner. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ICA AND ALOYSIUS THUM

Aloysius (far right) at a promotion ceremony recognising his work in ICA's Future Ops and Transformation division.

sciences (honours) in public policy and global affairs from Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

In his early days as a team leader at Woodlands Checkpoint, self-doubt crept in as he learnt to find his footing on the ground.

"Initially, I wasn't confident I could overcome the preconceptions that often come with the 'scholar' label or build genuine relationships with my colleagues," he says.

Through his shifts at the border – resolving issues, guiding colleagues and learning on the job – his self-doubt gradually gave way to confidence.

The watch from his team became a symbol of that journey. Aloysius still wears it today as a reminder of how he overcame his initial lack of confidence to become a respected team leader.

Shaping the future of border operations

In his current position at the MHA Joint Ops Group Security Policy Directorate, Aloysius continues to play a key role in driving changes in border operations.

Where he once dealt with issues as they arose on the ground, he now contributes to broader security policy development, using his front-line experience to bridge operational realities with strategic development.

During his time in ICA's Future Ops and Transformation division where he worked on the QR-code clearance system, his portfolio included the Automated Passenger Clearance Systems, which is set for progressive roll-out from Tuas Checkpoint at the end of 2026.

He also ensured that upgrades and new solutions are seamlessly integrated into the redevelopment of Woodlands Checkpoint.

To help Singapore stay ahead in border operations, Aloysius studied different clearance and screening systems. In 2025, he visited overseas facilities where he learnt from best practices in biometrics at a conference in Helsinki and studied scanning technologies at a Texas customs facility.

With his operational background and project experience as his foundation, Aloysius now approaches each initiative with confidence, contributing to frameworks that strengthen border security and improve border operations.

"It is incredibly fulfilling to work on initiatives that will change how things are done – not just today but for years to come," he says.

FROM GAINING DIVERSE EXPERIENCES TO DRIVING CHANGE

Ministry of Home Affairs scholars gain exposure across operations and transformation roles – from working alongside officers and travellers at checkpoints, to testing and implementing new clearance technologies.

Over time, they develop various leadership skills, learn from global best practices and contribute to initiatives that shape Singapore's security and daily travel experience.

Aloysius Thum's journey shows what's possible:



■ **Checkpoint operations:** Led front-line teams at Woodlands Checkpoint, managing peak-hour surges, resolving operational issues and working alongside officers on daily shifts.

■ **Shape innovation and new technology:** Contributed to the roll-out of QR code clearance system and Automated Passenger Clearance System.

■ **Leadership roles in Future Ops and Transformation:** Helped plan, test and implement new clearance processes, using front-line experience to shape how border operations work at scale.



■ **Learning from global best practices:** Studied biometric clearance systems at an international conference in Helsinki and scanning technologies at a customs facility in Texas.

About the 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).



Scan for more on the MHA Uniformed Scholarship (ICA).

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ADVERTORIAL

He's committed to keeping drugs out of S'pore

Once focused on front-line enforcement, this MHA scholar now plays a more strategic role in how CNB tackles emerging drug threats



When he was a relatively new officer at the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB), Joel Liew received a phone call from an elderly woman in her eighties.

Her son, aged 60, was under investigation for drug-related offences. Halfway through the call, the mother broke down in tears.

"She told me she was afraid she might never see her son again if he went to prison, given her age and failing health," says Joel.

"I could feel, very deeply, the heartbreak in her voice."

In that moment, at a loss for words, Joel faced a situation no training manual had prepared him for.

"I just stayed on the line and listened," he recalls, "because she needed someone to listen to her."

Years on, that conversation stayed with him – a reminder of the responsibility he carries as a drug enforcement officer.

"Behind every drug case are loved ones who often suffer in silence as they watch someone they care about spiral out of control," says Joel.

"Our drug laws serve to protect our society from the scourge of drugs."

Choosing a path less taken

He discovered the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Uniformed Scholarship (CNB) while researching his options after completing his A levels in 2014.

Backed by the scholarship, he graduated with a second class (upper division) honours law degree from the National University of Singapore.

Many of his peers pursued legal practice upon graduation, but Joel had always been drawn to a career in law enforcement.

"Law enforcement aligned with my desire to pursue an interesting, non-desk-bound job," says the 30-year-old, who joined CNB in 2020.

His early years at CNB were spent on the ground, rotating through the Enforcement and Investigation Divisions.

Today, in his fourth posting as a senior narcotics officer, Joel works in the Policy, Planning and Research

▶ During his foundational postings in the Central Narcotics Bureau, Joel Liew (far right and below) was able to gain experience and insights into front-line drug enforcement work. PHOTOS: MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS



▲ Reflecting the collaborative effort behind the Bureau's anti-drug work, Joel (far left) is pictured with his CNB teammates. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JOEL LIEW

Division where, away from the anti-drugs raids and arrests, his day-to-day is quieter but no less consequential.

His work involves shaping and deliberating policy decisions – ensuring they are supported by evidence – as well as analysing drug-related developments and assessing whether existing laws need to be updated.

Last year, Joel represented CNB as part of the Singapore delegation at the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs held in Vienna.

He not only negotiated resolutions to advance Singapore's interests and reaffirm the nation's anti-drug stance, but he also shared with international counterparts how Singapore has responded to the emergence of new psychoactive substances and their variants.

In 2024, Singapore introduced a new legislative framework that allows officers to take enforcement action when they encounter psychoactive substances that are not yet listed as controlled drugs.

"I was proud to highlight this in my discussions with international partners as we shared information and perspectives on tackling this global threat," says Joel.

Behind every drug case are loved ones who often suffer in silence as they watch someone they care about spiral out of control. Our drug laws serve to protect society from the scourge of drugs."

JOEL LIEW
Recipient of the MHA Uniformed Scholarship (CNB)

Before the new legislation came into effect, Joel had drafted a standard operating procedure to guide CNB officers on how to handle cases involving psychoactive substances.

He was also part of the project team overseeing the operational roll-out of the new framework.

"Policies are only effective if they are well implemented," says Joel.

Focused on the community

Joel's firm conviction of a drug-free Singapore also motivates him to take the message out to the local community.

During a Home Team Scholars' Vocational Programme that he hosted in 2023 and 2024, he invited an ex-drug abuser to share his rehabilitation journey.

"His story on how he turned his life around to stop hurting his loved ones was inspiring," says Joel.

The former addict also spoke about how he distanced himself from former associates so that he could stay drug-free.

Joel also takes part in school outreach sessions where he engages

KEEPING UP WITH CHANGING TACTICS

The Central Narcotics Bureau tracks evolving tactics employed by drug traffickers as drug distribution has increasingly shifted onto digital platforms, notes Joel Liew.

Suppliers are adapting their methods in an attempt to evade detection. Drugs are now often advertised and sold through encrypted messaging platforms and anonymous accounts, which can disappear and reappear quickly.

"You can close one down, and another one will pop up the next day," he says.

Even as methods change, he stresses that suppliers remain within the reach of the law.

"Changing the mode of sale does not mean you cannot be detected," he adds.

students and teenagers on the harms of drugs.

"I've spoken to students on my school visits and some of them ask why Singapore continues to adopt a tough stance on drugs," he says.

He does not just answer with data or statistics but often recounts that phone call with the elderly mother from years ago, using it to illustrate the impact of drugs on families.

"The harm that drugs can cause is not something that young people see on a day-to-day basis," says Joel. "During my enforcement posting, I saw first-hand the hidden harm caused by drugs in parts of society that many rarely see."

Now, years into his time at CNB, Joel reflects on the choice he made to step into law enforcement rather than private legal practice.

"I had asked myself if I would find the work fulfilling, what kind of impact I could create, and whether the mission inspired me," he says.

As it turns out, he found his answers long ago.



▲ Joel representing CNB in Singapore's delegation to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna in 2025.

About the MHA Uniformed Scholarship

▶▶ If you are passionate, like Joel, about wanting to safeguard Singapore from the harms of drugs and ensuring everyone can live, work and play safely, we invite you to apply for the MHA Uniformed Scholarship. Select CNB as your Home Team Department of choice and embark on a fulfilling career where you can enforce, educate and engage others for a drug-free Singapore. Upon returning from your studies, you will have access to a structured road map of learning and development opportunities, including operational and staff appointments, with the potential for leadership roles across the Home Team and public service.



Scan for more on the MHA Uniformed Scholarship.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



What a career in defence looks like – up close

From front-line duty to defence diplomacy, these six scholars show how the same commitment to safeguarding Singapore can take shape in very different ways

For those working at the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), responsibility comes early. Through routes such as The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Scholarship and the Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholarship (Engineering), these six scholars are trusted with safeguarding Singapore. That trust shows up in different ways – on the front lines, in policy rooms and in roles where impact unfolds over time. Together, their stories show how contributing to something larger can move alongside personal priorities, growth and a life beyond the role.

Courage to take charge

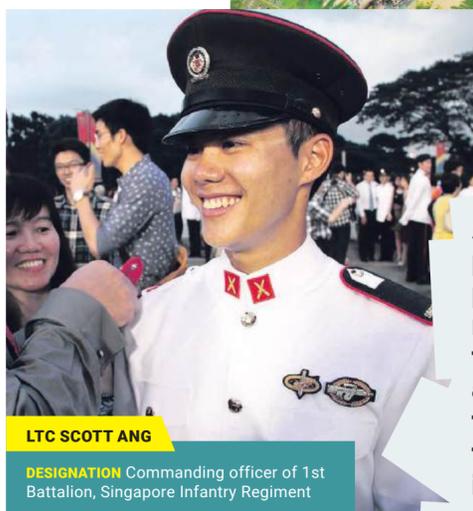
Military service runs in his blood. His father was a naval diver with the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). Stories of “hell week” and gruelling training did not put him off. They did the opposite.

Fresh out of national service enlistment, Lieutenant-Colonel (LTC) Scott Ang knew back then what he valued most in green: camaraderie. “Having seen what military life was like, I enjoyed that camaraderie and brotherhood, pushing yourself while looking out for your peers in training,” says the 33-year-old.

Today, LTC Ang is the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, Singapore Infantry Regiment. He is responsible for the training, readiness and operational effectiveness of his battalion.

For him, one needs the courage to make difficult calls in uncertainty and push the unit to adapt even when it is uncomfortable.

In a large organisation like the army, change is the only constant. Keeping up



LTC SCOTT ANG

DESIGNATION Commanding officer of 1st Battalion, Singapore Infantry Regiment

SCHOLARSHIP The SAF Scholarship in 2012 and President's Scholarship in 2013

EDUCATION Bachelor of arts in law from the University of Cambridge

← LTC Scott Ang, then Second-Lieutenant, during his Officer Cadet School commissioning ceremony in 2012, where his parents pinned on the newly earned rank. PHOTO: COURTESY OF LTC SCOTT ANG

“Just being present when people wouldn't normally expect you to be there, paying attention to little things that matter – that's an example of inspiring leadership.”

LTC SCOTT ANG
Recipient of The SAF Scholarship and the President's Scholarship

to date with warfare technology means adopting new systems and rethinking the way things are done, LTC Ang says.

“Without facing change head-on, we run the risk of becoming obsolete.”

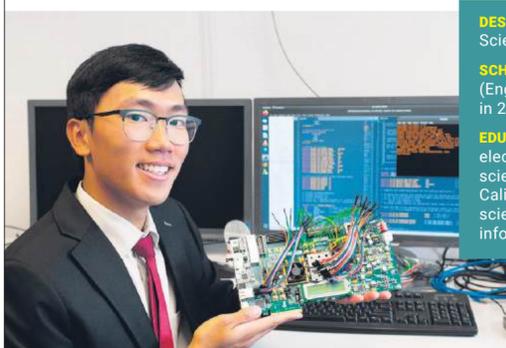
Soldiers have to fight, sweat and bleed together. They must rely on one another to bring each other home, which is why LTC Ang prioritises fostering unity in his battalion.

He does that by simply being on the ground with his men. He joins them for drills, and makes time to sit down with them to hear what is working and what is not.

He says: “Just being present when people wouldn't normally expect you to be there, paying attention to little things that matter – that's an example of inspiring leadership.”



← Lieutenant-Colonel (LTC) Scott Ang (second from right) commands the 1st Battalion, Singapore Infantry Regiment. PHOTO: MINDEF



ADRIEL TAN

DESIGNATION Engineer at the Defence Science and Technology Agency

SCHOLARSHIP PSC Scholarship (Engineering) – Defence and Security in 2018

EDUCATION Bachelor of science in electrical engineering and computer science from the University of California, Berkeley, and master of science in electrical engineering and information technology from ETH Zurich

← Engineer Adriel Tan is skilled in translating tech-speak for operational users in the military. PHOTO: COURTESY OF ADRIEL TAN

Curiosity to solve real needs with tech

When engineering student Adriel Tan received the chance to intern at Apple's Cupertino headquarters in 2021 – working alongside top-notch tech mentors and testing the very chips powering millions of devices – he did not hesitate.

“It was something I'd dreamt about since I was young,” says the 26-year-old.

The US tech giant offered to convert his internship into a full-time role, but he chose instead to answer a higher calling in defence technology, where his skills could directly contribute to Singapore's national security.

“It is a very important skill – to be able to explain what's going on and put things into context.”

ADRIEL TAN
Recipient of the PSC Scholarship (Engineering) – Defence and Security

Today, as an engineer with the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA), Adriel's work helps strengthen Singapore's defence. Much of what he does stays behind closed doors. To friends and family, he tells them that he helps develop communication systems for the Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF).

In reality, the work is far more complex. As part of DSTA's Advanced Systems Programme Centre, his job involves being part engineer, part mediator, part translator.

He bridges operational users – such as officers from the SAF – with defence contractors who design and build the technologies the SAF relies on.

“It is a very important skill – to be able to explain what's going on and put things into context,” he says.

He recalls having to break down some complex technical concepts to a colonel, something that would have terrified his younger national serviceman-self.

Enjoying the challenges of his job, Adriel aspires to contribute to the lives of Singaporeans through his career.

“Technology moves so quickly. In a few years, today's cutting-edge tech can become obsolete. But the impact you leave on people, that will last,” he says.

Tact for managing high-stakes dialogues

The itinerary moved quickly: Washington DC for numerous meetings, then on to military training grounds in Idaho and a visit to the F-35 jet production facility in Texas.

Working on the US desk at MINDEF's Defence Policy Office, Nicole Lee, 26, was part of the team supporting the high-stakes ministerial visit – her proudest accomplishment since joining the organisation in 2022.

“The role of the US is important for regional peace and stability,” she says.

NICOLE LEE

DESIGNATION Assistant director on the US desk at the Defence Policy Office

SCHOLARSHIP Defence Merit Scholarship in 2018

EDUCATION Bachelor of arts in economics and master of science in econometrics and quantitative economics from the University of California, Los Angeles



“A constructive bilateral relationship is key to strengthening our nation's defence.”

NICOLE LEE
Recipient of the Defence Merit Scholarship

▲ Nicole Lee (third from right), from the Defence Policy Office, supports ministerial visits to the US. PHOTO: MINDEF

“This stability is an essential condition for Singapore's security and prosperity, and creates space for defence cooperation with various countries.”

For example, with access to the US airspace – 20 times larger than Singapore's – the RSAF can train realistically and enhance its operational readiness. Nicole adds: “A constructive bilateral relationship is key to strengthening our nation's defence.”

To keep agendas moving, Nicole not only travels to Washington DC annually, but she and her team also help sustain the bilateral relationship through regular communication.

“We also look out for opportunities for our principals to meet and engage with one another,” she says. “There is value in maintaining a regular cadence of engagements at various levels.”

ADVERTORIAL

Passion and commitment aligned across all fronts

She flies a 20m naval helicopter that takes off and lands on moving frigates. Yet, the role she is most proud of is being a mother to her sons – a two-year-old and an 11-month-old.

The fondness in LTC Lou Yang's voice is tangible the moment she starts talking about them.

"I can never get enough of those chubby cheeks and drooly kisses," the 37-year-old says. When she is out at sea, technology allows her to stay connected with her family through video calls.

LTC Lou is the commanding officer of the RSAF's 123 Squadron of the S-70B Seahawk naval helicopters, which operates off Sembawang Air Base as well as from the RSN's Formidable-class frigates.

"At work, I give my best, so that when I return to my children, I can be fully present with them," she shares.

That balance is not left to chance in the SAF, where careers are planned with life stages in mind.

At work, I give my best, so that when I return to my children, I can be fully present with them."

LTC LOU YANG
Recipient of the SAF Merit Scholarship

▲ Lieutenant-Colonel (LTC) Lou Yang commands the Republic of Singapore Air Force's (RSAF) 123 Squadron that operates the S-70B Seahawk naval helicopters. PHOTO: MINDEF

Support for servicewomen and parents has grown over time, LTC Lou says, after years of progressive changes led by those before her.

A key initiative born of this progress is the establishment of the Servicewomen Network within each military service in the SAF, which offers mentorship and a channel to surface issues that matter to women in uniform.

With advice from the network, LTC Lou

was able to request a staff posting to accommodate her pregnancy and early years of motherhood, a process that her superiors were extremely accommodating towards.

"They were very willing to have such conversations," she recalls. "They were deliberate in making sure that some of these immutable challenges, particularly for women, were adequately addressed."



▲ The RSAF enables mothers like LTC Lou to plan careers and caregiving in tandem. PHOTO: COURTESY OF LTC LOU YANG

LTC LOU YANG

DESIGNATION Commanding officer of 123 Squadron

SCHOLARSHIP SAF Merit Scholarship in 2009

EDUCATION Bachelor of science in biomedical engineering from Duke University and master of arts in East Asian Studies from Yale University



▲ Military Expert 4 Megan Wong (centre) decodes online material for threats to Singapore's safety. PHOTO: COURTESY OF ME4 MEGAN WONG

ME4 MEGAN WONG

DESIGNATION Senior military intelligence expert in the Open-Source Intelligence eXploitation Group

SCHOLARSHIP SAF Merit Scholarship in 2020

EDUCATION Master of arts in politics from the University of Edinburgh

Clarity to guide decisions

Off duty, her TikTok feed is a familiar mix of funny memes, new eats around Singapore and Swiftie reels. Once she dons her uniform, she flips the feed and combs through public posts to draw insights that matter to national security.

This is routine for Military Expert 4 (ME4) Megan Wong. She is a senior military intelligence expert in the Open-Source Intelligence eXploitation Group, which is under the Digital and Intelligence Service (DIS).

The 25-year-old reviews online material, makes sense of the noise to identify risks, and then uses her judgment to decide what warrants escalation and response.

"If there are high-key events like summits, we pay attention to what is online and trending," she adds.

As information online can be used to manipulate narratives, ME4 Wong says that digital threats are not "a single, clear-cut" issue.

If there are high-stakes events like summits, we pay attention to what is online and trending."

ME4 MEGAN WONG
Recipient of the SAF Merit Scholarship

Therefore, her team members come from varied backgrounds – from aerospace to physiotherapy.

She says: "The beauty of this is to prevent groupthink. We want people from various fields so that we can examine the same issue from different perspectives."

ME4 Wong also works closely with other personnel from different vocations under the DIS, such as the Command, Control, Communications, Computers Experts (C4X), and has picked up technical terms and the basics of cloud computing models. This helps her translate operational needs into technical terms for the C4Xs, who can then create the systems her team uses to increase work efficiency.

Continuous training helps her perform her job well.

She adds: "Trainers were there for me, and the SAF senior leadership were always keen and happy to share their experiences with us through informal chats."

Agility for active learning

For a naval officer, each morning at sea begins with a different frame of blue. Some days, the view of a hulking freighter from the bridge; on others, only open water and a pale line of dawn.

The view changes but the mission does not, says Captain (CPT) Satesh Kumar. He and his fellow sailors from the RSN stand watch over the sea lanes that feed Singapore's economy and daily life.

From 2023 to 2024, the 27-year-old served as the gunnery officer and later, as navigating officer on the Littoral Mission Vessel RSS Independence. He was responsible for the training and readiness of the weapons department, and subsequently, the ship's safe

In each new posting, you get to occupy a different vantage point."

CPT SATESH KUMAR
Recipient of The SAF Scholarship

navigation and the development of junior officers.

Through his shipboard duties, he is also gaining exposure to defence diplomacy – a steep learning curve that already led him to engage at different levels. For instance, he has participated in dialogues organised by naval counterparts overseas, such as those from the Philippines.

In 2025, he did a short stint at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he was attached to the Singapore Embassy in Washington DC.

Now with MINDEF's Defence Policy Office, he formulates defence policies and strategies to strengthen bilateral defence relations with the US, including planning the 15th Singapore-US Strategic Security Policy Dialogue held in November 2025.

Even though – like every sailor – he misses the closeness and camaraderie of being on the bridge with fellow sailors while out at sea, he welcomes the exposure to new roles and ideas ashore.

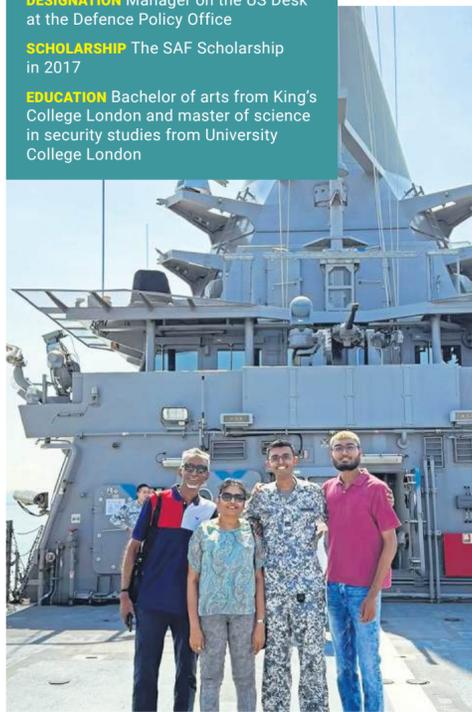
"In each new posting, you get to occupy a different vantage point," he says. "Coupled with experiences from previous operational duties, I have a more complete understanding of the SAF's and MINDEF's strategic considerations."

CPT SATESH KUMAR

DESIGNATION Manager on the US Desk at the Defence Policy Office

SCHOLARSHIP The SAF Scholarship in 2017

EDUCATION Bachelor of arts from King's College London and master of science in security studies from University College London



▲ Captain Satesh Kumar (second from right) pictured with his family against the RSS Independence vessel during an event organised by the Republic of Singapore Navy. PHOTO: COURTESY OF CPT SATESH KUMAR

About the MINDEF / SAF scholarships

►► The mission of the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) 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. MINDEF/SAF scholarships are offered to those who are willing to take up the challenge and answer the call of defending our nation. Taking up the MINDEF/SAF scholarship is not just about seeking a job or a career but it is about a lifelong mission to contribute to the peace and security of Singapore.



Scan for more information on MINDEF/SAF Scholarships.



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Learning to lead without having all the answers

From the rigour of Oxford tutorials to her exchange at Wharton, this SMU scholar is developing a leadership style grounded in critical thinking and the confidence to navigate uncertainty

During her first tutorial at the University of Oxford, Isa Koh found herself hesitating to speak up.

"I wanted to make sure I had thought things through first," recalls the Singapore Management University (SMU) student, who spent six weeks in Britain as part of the Exeter College Summer Programme.

By the end of the month, that hesitation had eased.

In small, discussion-led classes that encouraged students to participate, Isa realised that learning was not about having all the right answers.

"In Singapore, we tend to overthink," Isa says. "Being in Oxford changed that for me as the sessions were very open and nurturing. I learnt that it's when you are not afraid to share that you learn the most."

The summer programme was one of multiple overseas learning opportunities she enjoys as a recipient of the SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award.

The 21-year-old is among the inaugural batch of students at the university's College of Integrative Studies (CIS) which began admission in 2023.

Unlike traditional degree programmes with fixed majors, CIS students can customise their course of study across disciplines to match their interests and goals, alongside core modules.

Initially, Isa was unsure about enrolling in a newly established college, but conversations with faculty members and current scholars reassured her.

"I didn't know which field I wanted to work in," she explains. "The flexibility allowed me to explore different courses and disciplines without the pressure of committing too early."

Growth beyond uncertainty

As part of the CIS core curriculum, students have the opportunity to take modules that encourage questioning and critical inquiry.

In one module, Modern Challenges, Isa was tasked with analysing real-world issues from different angles and making sound decisions under pressure.

She had to draw on those lessons during her time as a team leader for Project Smile Manila, a student-led initiative supported by the SMU Centre for Social Responsibility.

To qualify for funding, her 20-member team was required to arrange visits to a minimum number of local companies in the Philippines.

Organising the visits was not easy, especially as the trip fell close to the Christmas holidays. When one confirmed company pulled out at the last minute, the team risked falling short of the required number of visits – and jeopardising their funding.

Isa quickly reassessed the situation and identified another qualifying visit: a tour of the hotel where they were staying. The move ensured the team met the requirement and kept the project on track.

"Being able to think on my feet and navigate challenges – even at the



When I am unsure, I remind myself that growth often comes from trying and moving forward."

Isa Koh
Recipient of the SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award



Scan for more on the SMU Global Impact Scholarship Award.

Among the pioneer batch of students at SMU's College of Integrative Studies, Isa Koh gets to explore various disciplines and subjects through a customised course of study. PHOTO: SMU

last minute – was something I didn't realise I was capable of," she says.

She credits this growth to her scholarship and CIS experience, which encourage her to question assumptions and approach problems from multiple perspectives.

As she continued to explore her interests, Isa took on internships across a range of industries – in both large organisations and smaller firms – to gain broad exposure. This included a bank and

a digital marketing consultancy firm. Working in the firm's lean team meant taking on greater responsibility, including fronting a pitch to an international company.

"When I am unsure, I remind myself that growth often comes from trying and moving forward," she says. "I tell myself to 'just do it' and tackle the task head-on."

This year, Isa is studying in a new environment, having begun a six-month exchange programme at The

Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania where she is currently taking courses in risk management, finance, economics and business analytics.

Rather than rushing to define a single path, Isa is learning to embrace uncertainty and remain open to experiences.

"I have come to accept that exploration is part of the process. And that's precisely what CIS and SMU allow me to do," she says.

The engineer behind the chips in your tech

From studying molecular forces as a teen, this SgIS recipient now leads memory chip manufacturing and mentors the next generation of engineers

As a student who once explored invisible molecular forces, Nathan Chai has always wanted to improve things through science and technology.

Today, the 33-year-old is doing just that in his role as the process and equipment engineering senior manager at Micron Technology. There, he leads a team of engineers to improve the manufacturing processes behind the memory chips in everyday devices.

When he was 16, Nathan participated in scientific research projects at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University.

His work on surface plasmon resonance as well as its application on measuring molecular properties of thin films later won a Bronze Award at the Singapore Science and Engineering Fair.

"I have always been curious about developing new and better solutions for different things," says Nathan. "Physics has been a way for me not just to understand the world around me but to further technological innovation," he adds.

While exploring his options in junior college, the Singapore-Industry Scholarship (SgIS) stood out.

"I prioritised industry because I wanted my career to be focused on innovating and generating real-world applications," says Nathan.

He adds: "I saw the scholarship as an opportunity to gain an early start with a company I was genuinely interested in."

"This is why SgIS appealed to me, given its strong partnerships with multiple industry players."

Covering a wide range of industries – with sponsoring organisations from engineering to hospitality, aviation and aerospace – SgIS is the only multi-industry scholarship offered in partnership with the Singapore Government at different stages of the university path. This means scholars

can undertake either full-term or mid-term scholarships.

Nathan's top pick from over 100 companies partnering with SgIS was semiconductor manufacturing giant Micron Technology.

"Through my research, I identified the semiconductor industry – and Micron in particular – as an area I was very keen to pursue. Knowing that SgIS partners with Micron ultimately confirmed my decision to apply," says Nathan.

He was awarded the full-term scholarship, which sponsored his bachelor's degree in engineering (chemical engineering) at NUS.

Hands-on experience

In his third year of university, Nathan did his internship with Micron Technology, where he was mentored by a senior leader of the fabrication plant.

During that time, Nathan focused on process improvement, where he had to identify inefficiencies and then implement applicable solutions for them.

In one instance, he had to write a script to automate several manual processes engineers on the floor dealt with every day. "They were still using it when I left," he adds.

By the time he completed his internship, Nathan had participated in no less than three different projects and accrued



Scan for more on the Singapore-Industry Scholarship.



Process and equipment engineering senior manager Nathan Chai helps improve processes at Micron Technology, while also mentoring his team. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

committee of the LEAP (Lead, Excel, Accelerate, Progress) Programme, which comprises leadership development training, networking and mentoring.

"I served as a co-lead for the mentoring sub-committee, where we paired scholars with senior leaders in a structured year-long mentoring programme," says Nathan. "Beyond mentorship, the LEAP Programme also includes leadership development workshops and networking opportunities among scholars," he adds, explaining that it provides a much stronger framework for the development of scholars.

"This allows them to fully maximise the opportunities available to them," he says.

Just last year, Nathan also joined the Singapore Institute of Technology's (SIT) Industry Mentorship Programme – a collaboration between SIT's Centre for Career Readiness and NTUC Youth – to mentor young engineers and help shape their career paths.

In his current job, Nathan is also committed to helping his team at Micron build technical skills and grow as individuals.

When he started, the most experienced engineer on his team had under two years of experience.

"Now, in such a short time, they are able to lead their own projects, come up with their own innovative ideas and run their own programmes," says Nathan.

For him, that growth matters as much as any technical breakthrough. "Building my team from the ground up and seeing them achieve success in their own ways is really my proudest achievement," he says.

I have always been curious about developing new and better solutions for different things."

Nathan Chai
Recipient of the Singapore-Industry Scholarship

substantial fluency in several coding languages.

"The skills and experience that I took away was way more than I had expected," says Nathan.

He has since taken on a bevy of mentorship roles, both within and outside of Micron Technology.

He was part of the first batch of SgIS scholars who joined the

ADVERTORIAL

How she keeps S'pore's green spaces thriving

From managing community parks to reviewing building materials and policies, this NParks scholar is helping the nation become more climate-resilient



Steaming hot blue pea rice and sweet, juicy papayas – for Bai Sin Yeou, these were more than just mere food items. They were the highlight of a potluck party she had organised for allotment gardeners at Kallang Riverside Park, where dishes made from their own harvest filled the tables.

Sin Yeou joined National Parks Board (NParks) in 2021 as a park manager, overseeing the construction of the Kallang Riverside Park's allotment garden.

Based on a ballot system, aspiring gardeners are assigned a garden plot to hone their green thumbs. The lease for each plot is renewed annually for up to three years. The Kallang Riverside Park garden alone saw over 300 applications for 30 plots.

"It was overwhelmingly popular and I was very proud to guide the first batch of gardeners by organising virtual and in-person meetings to introduce themselves, and forming a Telegram group to exchange gardening tips," she says.

After three months of getting to know each other better, Sin Yeou organised a potluck gathering for the allotment gardeners.

From a young age, the 27-year-old discovered the charm of gardening in urban spaces. Growing up, her parents would plant aloe vera and kang kong along the common corridor outside their Housing and Development Board (HDB) flat.

Even now, whenever she returns home from overseas, she is proud to see the iconic rows of lush, colourful bougainvillea along the East Coast Parkway expressway linking Changi Airport to the rest of the island.

"To attract investors, we have to show that our country is safe and pleasant to be in," she says.

"It is important that we have greenery and that everyone has equal access to it, as being in a green space is good for the body and the mind."

Under the Singapore Green Plan 2030, Singapore will have 300km of nature ways

▶ Nature-lover Bai Sin Yeou was part of the team behind the book, Singapore's Orchid Diplomacy, jointly published by NParks and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2024. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

and 500km of park connectors by 2030, so that every household will be within a 10-minute walk from a park.

Lifelong love of nature

When she was a teenager, Sin Yeou already knew that she wanted a meaningful, hands-on, outdoorsy job with NParks.

"I want to help create spaces where both people and wildlife can thrive together," she says.

"From the birds in the trees to the otters in the river, everyone has a home in Singapore's green spaces."

Drawn to nature and open spaces like the Singapore Botanic Gardens, and with a strong interest in biology and geography, Sin Yeou pursued her bachelor's degree in environmental studies (with a specialisation in environmental biology) at the National University of Singapore on the NParks Undergraduate Scholarship.

In Sin Yeou's third year, she enjoyed an "eye-opening" semester during her overseas exchange programme at The University of Edinburgh where she learnt about conservation programmes in the Scottish Highlands.

Upon returning, in her first posting as a park manager, Sin Yeou would gear up in sleeve guards, long pants and a sunhat, and slather on sunblock before riding her bicycle to start her workday at 8.30am at Kallang Riverside Park. She would make pit stops at various parks along her park connector



▶ Sin Yeou joined several conservation programmes in the Scottish Highlands during her overseas exchange programme at The University of Edinburgh.



▶ Sin Yeou (front row, in dark blue) with the allotment gardeners at Kallang Riverside Park.



▶ Sin Yeou (left) was involved in orchid diplomacy during Expo 2025, when she delivered the specially commissioned orchid Dendrobium Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai Japan. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF BAI SIN YEOU

route to assess tree health and inspect infrastructure like pathways for safety hazards before ending her morning in Bugis.

Her second posting at the National Orchid Garden showed her how Singapore's national flower plays an important role in attracting tourism as well as strengthening its diplomatic relations with the rest of the world. This is part of a uniquely Singaporean tradition known as orchid diplomacy, in which specially cultivated orchid hybrids are named after visiting heads of state, royalty and other distinguished guests as gestures of friendship and goodwill.

While her main job scope was to manage the orchid nursery and ensure the flowers were healthy and at their best for display, she also had the opportunity to contribute to the research of the book, Singapore's Orchid Diplomacy, a 2024 collaboration between NParks and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Then came a memorable assignment. Sin Yeou delivered a special orchid to Expo 2025 in Osaka. The specially commissioned orchid Dendrobium Expo 2025 Osaka Kansai Japan was unveiled at the opening ceremony of the Singapore Pavilion to mark

Singapore's participation in the event and the 59th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Japan.

Soon after, her career took a new turn within the public service. She transitioned to a new role under a job rotation scheme with the Ministry of National Development. She is now the assistant director in the infrastructure division, where she works on climate resilience projects.

"This is about reviewing safety codes and regulations to make sure that they are up to date with the latest climate changes," she explains.

"For instance, buildings may need to change the materials they use so that they don't heat up so easily."

She may no longer spend her days inspecting the parks, but she continues to nurture her love for plants. She has two shelves of aroids, succulents and cacti at home because she loves the routine of tending to them and helping them flourish.

And which plant would best describe her?

"The cactus – because I may look prickly but I am actually soft inside," says Sin Yeou. "And I'm also resilient."



PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

It is important that we have greenery and that everyone has equal access to it, as being in a green space is good for the body and the mind."

BAI SIN YEOU
Recipient of the NParks Undergraduate Scholarship

About the NParks Undergraduate Scholarship

▶▶ The NParks Undergraduate Scholarship is the most prestigious scholarship awarded to outstanding individuals who have achieved academic excellence, demonstrate leadership capabilities and are actively involved in co-curricular and community/voluntary activities. We offer you a gateway to a career that actively engages you in the development of a vibrant urban eco-system. Scholars and awardees can pursue an overseas or local education at world renowned universities.



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

198 LinkedIn rejections couldn't stop his AI dream

After multiple setbacks, one start-up gave this SG Digital scholar the chance to pivot careers

Landing a job opportunity is one challenge. Being truly ready for it is another.

Haidi Azaman learnt this lesson during his first data science internship.

As a mechanical engineering undergraduate who wanted to make a switch, he realised how steep the climb would be.

"I wasn't at a level where I could do data science yet," he recalls. "I didn't even know basic Python packages like pandas, which is a software library used to organise and analyse data."

The role was with a maritime start-up developing algorithms to predict ship arrival times.

It was one of only two companies that responded to his 200 cold LinkedIn messages.

Faced with a gap in his skills but refusing to give up after finally getting a foot in the door, Haidi spent several months developing his coding skills, learning how to clean datasets, uncover patterns and use data to make predictions – the core building blocks of data science.

His interest in data science had taken root midway through university.

A casual conversation with a senior about machine learning and how neural networks mimic the human brain sparked his interest.

"What fascinated me was how powerful software could be," he says.

"You may be one person behind a computer, but what you build can create real impact."

His engineering background, he realised, had quietly prepared him for the transition. The training had taught him how to break complex problems into parts, test assumptions and iterate – habits that would later anchor his work in data science.



In his third year, Haidi received the A*STAR Research Internship Award (ARIA), which gives undergraduates the opportunity to sharpen their skills and discover their passion in scientific research.

During his one-year internship, he worked on cognitive AI research, from conducting experiments to analysing results.

After graduating from the National University of Singapore (NUS) with a bachelor of engineering (mechanical engineering) in 2023, Haidi applied for the SG Digital Scholarship

(Postgraduate) – offered by the Infocomm Media Development Authority – to pursue a master of science in data science and machine learning at NUS.

Applying AI in the real world
What stood out to him was the flexibility of the bond. Scholars can serve in approved tech or media roles across Singapore, rather than being tied to a single organisation.

"That was my 'aha' moment," he says. "It gave me the freedom to define my own career path in a tech company."

Using machine learning models, AI scientist Haidi Azaman develops advanced data systems at SAP Labs Singapore to help organisations retrieve information accurately and reliably. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

While pursuing his master's, Haidi also interned at the Singapore office of ride-hailing firm Gojek, where he worked on strengthening facial-verification systems used by drivers.

Some of them, he learnt, would attempt to trick the system by holding up printed photos to the camera.

The solution did not come from data, but from a simple human insight grounded in observation.

"A printed photo doesn't blink," Haidi explains.

Together with his team, he successfully trained an image-classification model to detect a subtle, involuntary human behaviour: an eye blink.

It became an additional signal the system could use to verify that a real person – not an image – was in front of the camera.

That experience showed him that even as AI becomes more autonomous, progress still begins with intentional human input.

In 2024, Haidi joined SAP Labs Singapore in a full-time role as an AI scientist. He works on advanced data systems that help organisations retrieve information accurately and reliably.

"Before any model is trained, someone has to understand the data," he says. "If humans don't do that carefully, the system will give confident but wrong answers."

In the age of AI, Haidi believes human judgement matters more than ever.

What fascinated me was how powerful software could be. You may be one person behind a computer, but what you build can create real impact."

Haidi Azaman
Recipient of the SG Digital Scholarship (Postgraduate)

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Weaving relationships that build Singapore's social fabric

This PA scholar strengthens ties through grassroots community work and by building partnerships between people, organisations and the Government

Community-building, Seah Tiong Kiat has learnt, often starts from a willingness to show up for one another.

The point hit home most clearly when he met Ms Lydia Susiyanti in 2025.

Ms Lydia, a mother of six living in a rental flat, is her family's sole breadwinner. Still, she provides free breakfast each morning for children in her block who need the extra support.

What struck Tiong Kiat was not just her gesture of kindness but the fact that she made room for others even when she had little herself.

Encounters like these have shaped his understanding of community, gleaned over years of meeting various Singaporeans from all walks of life through his work at the People's Association (PA).

The 33-year-old is currently assistant director (forward planning) in PA's partnership department where he focuses on improving how it develops partnerships with corporate and community organisations.

"You get to see how talented people are, and how interesting and diverse they can be – something you may not realise if you are not in this field," he says.

The PA scholar joined the agency in 2018 and was posted to Nee Soon Link Community Centre as constituency manager.

While he was there, he engaged volunteers, organised activities for residents and interacted with them to better understand their needs.

At times, he met residents facing difficult situations – from financial strain to family conflicts. These encounters helped Tiong Kiat be more empathetic, a trait he also attributes to his sociology training, which taught him to apply a different lens to societal issues.

Building something bigger

Tiong Kiat's interest in community work first took root in secondary school, when a teacher used news stories to discuss issues and challenges people face in real life.

That stayed with him and eventually led him to pursue a diploma in psychology and community services at Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

After completing his diploma course, Tiong Kiat searched for scholarships in related sectors and found the PA Scholarship.

He clinched it and went on to major in sociology at Singapore Management University to complement his psychology background and broaden his perception of people and society.

Although he is no longer on the front lines, he finds himself making an impact in other ways.

Working with corporate organisations, charities and social service agencies, he helps them to make greater community impact. For example, he matchmakes like-minded organisations, allowing them to achieve more together.

"There are different ways that partners can contribute," says Tiong Kiat.

"No matter how small they think they are, everyone has something to offer."

Tiong Kiat says his role is to help people and organisations "make friends with each other because it builds resilience". He adds that it is relationships that will help communities weather the tough times.

Falling ill during an internship in Guangzhou in 2016 showed Tiong Kiat the value of having someone to lean on. In the same vein, PA was a support to Singaporeans during the pandemic, when it helped residents with mask distribution and aid queries.

"When something like Covid-19 happens, it is your neighbour who can be there for you," says Tiong Kiat.

Today at PA, he continues to help people, organisations and

businesses to strengthen the nation's social fabric and make it easier for Singaporeans to support each other.

"Singapore's heartbeat is strongest when we look out for one another," says Tiong Kiat. Joining PA has let him play a part in keeping the community spirit alive and making the nation a better place.

He adds: "At PA, the impact you have on Singaporeans can be seen and felt very tangibly."

Singapore's heartbeat is strongest when we look out for one another."

Seah Tiong Kiat
Recipient of the PA Scholarship

Assistant director (forward planning)
Seah Tiong Kiat's work at the People's Association focuses on improving partnerships with corporate and community organisations.
PHOTO: SPH MEDIA



Scan for more on the PA Scholarship.



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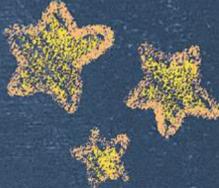


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Ms Eunice Kho
Bukit-View Primary School
Senior Teacher

SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Designing the tax experience you never notice

Overseeing data governance and digital initiatives, this IRAS scholar aims to simplify tax compliance

When people file their taxes in Singapore, the process is usually quick and straightforward as forms are pre-filled with income details. Submissions now take minutes, not the hours they once did.

The work behind that ease – the policy choices, system changes and process engineering – have to start long before tax season.

One of the public officers behind the scenes is Leong Shi Wei, a director at the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS). His work spans across the areas of tax policy, data and technology.

To him, a smooth taxpaying experience matters because it underpins public trust.

"We work with partners to co-create digital solutions that embed taxation into the systems taxpayers already use or are familiar with," explains the 35-year-old.

"The goal is fewer errors, less friction and an experience that feels smoother and not burdensome."

His journey began with an IRAS Overseas Undergraduate Scholarship, which took him to the University of Warwick in Britain to study economics, followed by a master's degree in management science and engineering at Stanford University in the US.

Improving taxpaying experience

Today, Shi Wei leads more than 40 officers across five teams in IRAS' data and ecosystem management branch.

They oversee data policy, governance and digital partnerships to make the process more seamless and automated.

A key part of their work involves building secure digital



Scan for more on the IRAS Overseas Undergraduate Scholarship.

We want to streamline processes and make taxpaying seamless, but we also want to ensure people do not forget why tax matters."

Leong Shi Wei
Recipient of the IRAS Overseas Undergraduate Scholarship

Over the years, IRAS director Leong Shi Wei has built a diverse career, with stints at both the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Transport. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

links that allow business software to connect directly with IRAS' systems.

This means companies and individuals can submit payroll or tax information straight from the accounting or payroll software they already use without having to manually enter data or log on to IRAS' portal.

The agency currently works with more than 200 software providers and intermediaries to reduce the administrative burden in taxpaying.

"We want to streamline processes and make taxpaying seamless, but we also want to ensure people do not forget why tax matters," says Shi Wei.

"Taxes fund shared goods. They reflect our values as a society."

Those values were tested most sharply during Shi Wei's three-year secondment to the Ministry of Finance in 2018.

As the Covid-19 pandemic unfolded in 2020, tax policy moved from long-term planning to urgent response.

"During the pandemic, tax authorities were driven by a strong sense of purpose," he recalls.

"We had to introduce relief measures quickly to support businesses and livelihoods while ensuring fiscal sustainability."

For Shi Wei, it brought home the fact that tax policy is not just on paper, but affects real lives.

"It was about whether businesses survived, and whether workers kept their jobs," he says.

In his subsequent posting to the Ministry of Transport in 2021, he developed strategies for the air hub division during aviation's deepest crisis due to the pandemic. He was involved in efforts to reopen the air hub, support workforce retention and address sector financing challenges.

When Shi Wei returned to IRAS in 2023 to take on his current leadership role, what struck him most was not the complexity of the work but its reach.

Decisions made behind closed doors would ultimately shape business operations and national funding priorities as well as the taxpayer experience.

Tax work, he says, is as much about service design, behavioural insights, data analytics and emerging technologies as it is about legislation.

"It goes to show that tax is not boring – and IRAS is definitely not just about tax," he adds.

"IRAS looks ahead and plans for the future needs of our nation and taxpayers. Because the work is multidisciplinary, officers can take on a range of roles – including service, operations, technology and compliance – and also work with emerging technologies like artificial intelligence."

That sense of purpose and adventure, he says, is what keeps him going even after more than a decade at IRAS.

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

She conducts audits at military camps, not just from her desk

This AGO scholar inspects defence facilities and analyses data, contributing to the annual 'red book' that holds government agencies accountable

Securing her safety harness and helmet on the rooftop of a Ministry of Defence facility, 23-year-old Vanessa Lee is not there for the view.

She is verifying equipment installations as part of an eight-month audit into how public funds were approved, spent and accounted for.

For the associate audit officer who joined the Auditor-General's Office (AGO) in July 2025, she can be deep-diving into data analytics one day; and the very next day, she is in restricted areas to verify assets purchased with taxpayers' money.

This is a far cry from the stereotype of auditors being buried in spreadsheets under fluorescent lights.

Her job involves checking government entities' use of public funds.

She assesses whether systems work as intended, safeguards are in place and taxpayer dollars are used for their intended purpose – efficiently, transparently and without waste.

"I see our role as helping to ensure the Government is not spending excessively, and that use of public funds are appropriately approved and accounted for," says Vanessa.

Her findings feed into AGO's annual report – known within the Government as the "red book" – which is submitted to the President before being tabled in Parliament.

Knowing that her work contributes to ensuring transparency in how public resources are used gives Vanessa a deep sense of purpose, affirming her decision to apply for the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship.

"I read the annual reports and learnt about AGO's core values, so I could understand what made AGO different from the 'Big Four'," she says, referring to the four largest global accounting firms.

"I wanted a career where my values aligned with the organisation – and where I could stay interested in the work every day."

The scholarship not only supported a semester-long exchange at Tilburg University in the Netherlands, but it also funded her bachelor of business administration in accountancy at the National University of Singapore in May 2025.

Beyond the spreadsheet

Having joined AGO upon graduation, she was most intrigued by how auditors uncover discrepancies through careful analysis, often using digital tools to detect patterns in the data others might miss.

Those tools are now part of her daily work, with AGO expanding its use of platforms such as Power BI and Tableau to help auditors analyse data more effectively and present insights more clearly to senior management.

"We use a variety of digital tools and systems – it's not just pen and paper," Vanessa points out.

For her, what a typical workday looks like depends on the audit stage.

During the planning phase, she holds preliminary discussions with auditees to understand their operations, finances and risk areas.

"This is probably what most people picture when they think of auditing," she says.

In the next phase, which is known as implementation, auditors conduct fieldwork – performing sample checks,

reviewing approvals and carrying out site visits to physically verify assets.

Rooftop inspections fall into this phase, often surprising those who assume auditors are desk-bound.

Her role demands technical rigour, analytical judgement and physical presence – a combination that ensures that no two days are the same.

"We don't just sit in our office all day, as most people often assume," she adds.

Like many fresh graduates, Vanessa faced a steep learning curve when she first joined the agency seven months ago, but today, she has a clearer understanding of AGO's audits and greater confidence in her role.

"It is important for me to always know why I am doing what I do – and that there is meaning behind it," says Vanessa.



Scan for more on the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship.



I see our role as helping to ensure the Government is not spending excessively, and that use of public funds are appropriately approved and accounted for."

Vanessa Lee
Recipient of the AGO Auditing Service Scholarship

Associate audit officer at AGO, Vanessa Lee shares that her role demands technical rigour, analytical judgement and physical presence – a mix that ensures no two days are alike. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

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Meet Chan Yong Jie, a Year 3 NUS Business School student and NUS Merit Scholar. Supported by his scholarship, Yong Jie pursued Accountancy and a second specialisation in Business Analytics, crafting a path that merged his love for numbers, technology, and strategy. Further afield, Yong Jie broadened his perspectives by attending the NUS Summer Programme in London and Winter Programme in Chiang Mai.

His experience in NUS was further enriched with an on-campus stay at the College of Alice & Peter Tan, where an interdisciplinary course and regional fieldwork deepened his understanding of social issues. Driven by a desire to uplift vulnerable communities, Yong Jie also took on leadership roles at the NUS Students' Community Service Club in support of disadvantaged children.

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ADVERTORIAL

On a mission to shape Singapore's future

Working across AI policy and green energy, these PSC scholars are laying the groundwork to prepare the nation for new challenges

With the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and as energy systems become cleaner and more sustainable, Singapore's future is being reshaped. What once seemed like distant scenarios are now present realities, fundamentally altering how Singaporeans live, work and play for the years ahead.

For these two public officers, thinking about that future is part of their everyday work. As Public Service Commission (PSC) scholars, they participate in long-term planning that converts bold questions into concrete decisions with generational impact.



◀ As vice-president of two EDB divisions, Germaine Chua works with agencies and energy players to shape Singapore's sustainable future. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

Her mission: Powering an economy that grows greener and stronger

The wide red cycling paths stretching across Singapore are a visible reminder of why Germaine Chua's work in the public service matters.

Between 2018 and 2020, she was part of a team strengthening Singapore's active mobility network. Then an assistant director at the Ministry of Transport (MOT), she worked on policies to encourage safe cycling path usage at a time when interest in active mobility devices and cycling was growing rapidly, even though the supporting infrastructure had yet to catch up.

Today, when the 34-year-old takes her two young children out for strolls around their Toa Payoh neighbourhood, she sees how well-planned infrastructure creates safer spaces for pedestrians and cyclists, improves mobility for residents and brings communities together.

"There is a sense of fulfilment that comes with seeing infrastructure across Singapore come to fruition and knowing you had contributed to it," says the recipient of the PSC Scholarship (Foreign Service).

Growing up in Singapore, Germaine saw how efficient public systems

deeply influenced daily life and wanted her work to serve a larger purpose.

The PSC Scholarship funded her studies, first at the University of Oxford where she studied philosophy, politics and economics, followed by a master of arts in regional studies - East Asia at Harvard University.

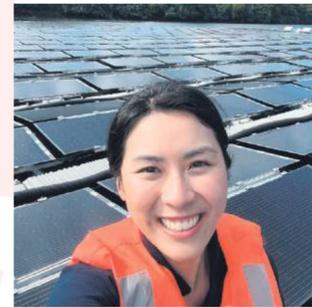
After completing her overseas studies, she started her career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Singapore before moving to MOT. In 2020, she joined the Prime Minister's Office as deputy director in the Strategy and Policy Planning Division as well as special assistant to the head of Civil Service. There, she gained a whole-of-Government perspective of how decisions across agencies can impact Singapore's long-term future.

Over her 12-year-long public service career, Germaine has seen how different agencies work together to tackle complex issues while serving a common purpose. Each of her postings has added a new layer to her understanding of why her work is important.

In the past two years, Germaine has been helping the country navigate its transition to a low-carbon economy. She is now working at the Singapore

“There is a sense of fulfilment that comes with seeing infrastructure across Singapore come to fruition and knowing you had contributed to it.”

GERMAINE CHUA
Recipient of the PSC Scholarship (Foreign Service)



▲ Germaine on a site visit to a solar farm in 2024. PHOTO: COURTESY OF GERMAINE CHUA

Economic Development Board (EDB), helming two portfolios in the green economy space.

In the Resource and Carbon Division, she works with agencies such as the national water agency PUB and the Energy Market Authority to support access to power, water and renewable energy for investments into Singapore.

She also works with energy and chemical companies on Jurong Island through the Energy and Renewables Division, supporting their transformation

as the island becomes a testbed for low-carbon solutions.

From March 2026, she will move into a new role within EDB in its Industry Manpower Development Division, helping to ensure economic growth continues to create good jobs and opportunities.

As with every new role, Germaine intends to approach it with the same openness and humility she started out with. The mission remains the same: laying the groundwork for a more sustainable Singapore.

Her mission: Building a society that cares for every generation

For Nur Syahidah Sahrom, the impact of her work shows up in the places where everyday life unfolds. Across Singapore, a nationwide network of over 200 Active Ageing Centres now supports seniors in their golden years, helping them stay active and connected within their neighbourhoods – a system she helped to shape earlier in her career.

During her posting at the Ministry of Health's (MOH) Ageing Planning Office from 2015 to 2019, the PSC scholarship holder worked on developing community-based services that help older residents age in place.

It also shaped her understanding of why policy work – sometimes decades in the making – matters.

"It makes daily life more manageable and dignified for the people it is meant to serve," says the 39-year-old, knowing the services will one day support her own parents.

"By working in the public service, we don't just respond to change; we help shape the future we want to grow into."

At age 18, Syahidah had no idea what working in the public service was like. Looking back now, she is grateful to have trusted her instincts. The PSC Scholarship not only opened the door to the public service but also placed her in environments that challenged her thinking and built her confidence.

She completed her undergraduate degree in biochemistry at Imperial College London in 2008 on the PSC



“By working in the public service, we don't just respond to change; we help shape the future we want to grow into.”

NUR SYAHIDAH SAHROM
Recipient of the PSC Scholarship

◀ Nur Syahidah Sahrom is at the forefront of Singapore's AI integration efforts and talent development at MDDI. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

scholarship. Her studies exposed her to diverse perspectives in a global setting, while living alone overseas taught her to embrace discomfort as part of growth. The scholarship also funded her master's in public policy at the National University of Singapore in 2010.

Besides MOH, Syahidah's career has also spanned postings at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Home Affairs and, most recently, the Ministry of Digital Development and Information (MDDI).

In her current role as director (ecosystem development) at the

Digital Economy Office and the National AI Group at MDDI, she oversees policies that guide Singapore's transition into an AI era. This includes finding ways to mitigate risks that come with adopting AI, encouraging responsible use and developing Singapore's AI talent.

As AI becomes more embedded in everyday life, Syahidah's work in AI governance – which will shape how future generations work and live – feels as purposeful as her earlier efforts in ageing policy.

"No one can fully predict how AI will evolve, but unpredictability does not mean we cannot prepare," she says.

"What really excites me is having a front-row seat at the intersection of AI and policy – it's amazing to be part of conversations that will influence how we integrate AI into our society responsibly."

Becoming a parent has also reinforced this policymaker's sense of responsibility.

"There are some things that AI cannot replace – what makes us human, our moral compass, our judgment and instincts, and our ability to connect with one another. Those are important skills we need to imbue in our younger generation," she says.

About the PSC Scholarship

▶▶ The Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholarship is Singapore's premier government scholarship, awarded to outstanding individuals with a passion to serve in the public service. It offers scholars the opportunity to pursue their studies at top universities worldwide, entry into the Public Service Leadership Programme (the central leadership development programme in the Singapore Public Service) and exposure to diverse experiences through structured rotations across government ministries and agencies.



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Turning code into community impact

From artificial intelligence projects to a Polynesian-inspired smart boat, this NUS scholar applies her skills to solve real-world challenges

Quieter waters, cleaner air and boats that coastal communities can rely on without paying the price of pollution. This is what a group of National University of Singapore (NUS) students envisions for South-east Asian coastal communities.

Among the team is Lim Jia Yi who is leading the fund-raising efforts for Project Roti Proa II.

Inspired by traditional Polynesian proas, the second version of the hybrid wind- and solar-powered sailboat is being designed to move efficiently while gathering real-time data on speed, endurance and energy use.

Being part of the nine-month, first-of-its-kind sustainability project to develop low-cost, carbon-neutral water vessels has been eye-opening for Jia Yi.

"It reminded me of my passion to use tech to create real, positive impact," says the 21-year-old student who is in her second year at the NUS School of Computing.

Her interest in technology was ignited when she picked up coding while taking computing as an additional O-level subject in secondary school.

"Solving problems through code was something I genuinely enjoyed," she recalls.

That curiosity soon took her beyond the classroom. She was the programme lead with a team of 11 project managers, who advised groups of young Singaporeans on launching their personal tech projects.

Along the way, she often found herself learning just as much - constructing program flows, engaging stakeholders, handling marketing and seeing first-hand how technology could turn ideas into solutions in the real world.

Jia Yi later co-founded an educational technology start-up with friends, reimagining STEM

(science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education through platforms such as the video game Minecraft.

To fuel her interests, she pursued a diploma in information technology at Singapore Polytechnic.

During a year-long internship at the Government Technology Agency of Singapore, she contributed to the development of BookingSG, a nationwide platform that allows Singaporeans to schedule appointments or book government facilities.

Making a difference with tech
Those experiences helped clarify what she was looking for next.

"I wanted to forge my own path and bring about positive change - which meant being comfortable with taking risks, adapting quickly and thinking critically about the social impact of technology," says Jia Yi.

This led her to apply for the NUS Global Merit Scholarship to pursue studies in computer science.

She points out that the scholarship has given her the space and support to explore bigger questions and test ideas that push boundaries.

Project Roti Proa II, for example, reflects the kind of hands-on, interdisciplinary projects NUS students are exposed to.

Together with her teammates, she now has a chance to apply technology to real-world problems that cut across borders, livelihoods and clean energy.

Jia Yi was also drawn to the scholarship's bond-free nature, which allowed her to keep her options open after graduation.

Supported by NUS' strong entrepreneurial ecosystem, she

says the freedom has given her the confidence to be "more intentional and fearless in chasing meaningful work".

As part of the NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) programme, she applied for an artificial intelligence (AI) engineer internship in Hanoi, Vietnam - despite having little experience in AI and never having lived abroad on her own.

The three-month stint at Hanoi-based software company Vitex pushed her out of her comfort zone. From building new features on an AI-powered event planning platform to overcoming language barriers, the learning curve was steep, she recalls.

While immersed in Hanoi's dynamic start-up ecosystem, she met entrepreneurs and digital nomads driven by purpose rather than prestige. Hearing their stories sharpened her resolve to think more deeply about the social and ethical impact of emerging technologies.

"The scholarship gives me the freedom to explore who I am and discover just how far I can really go," says Jia Yi.

"In the long run, I hope to build or lead ventures that combine AI, sustainability and community impact."

National University of Singapore computer science student Lim Jia Yi balances her studies and tech projects with varsity basketball. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

The scholarship gives me the freedom to explore who I am and discover just how far I can really go."

Lim Jia Yi
Recipient of the NUS Global Merit Scholarship



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Bridging minds and mission-critical tech

From studying her friends' brain waves to shaping new capabilities for the SAF, this DSTA scholar is preparing for the future of defence innovation

When Ng Xin Ru was in secondary school, she once attached electrodes to her classmates' heads to study their brain waves. "I wanted to experiment with the effect of different stimuli and measure how vigilant people were in different situations," she explains. "Doing such experiments was very innate to me as I knew that I was going to do more science study later on in life."

Now 20, the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) scholar is studying electrical and electronic engineering at Imperial College London where she enjoys applying engineering principles to solve real-world problems.

For her university projects, Xin Ru programmed a circuit board to test human reaction times.

She also worked with other students to design robots that could "talk" to each other using a combination of radio waves, infrared waves and ultrasonic waves.

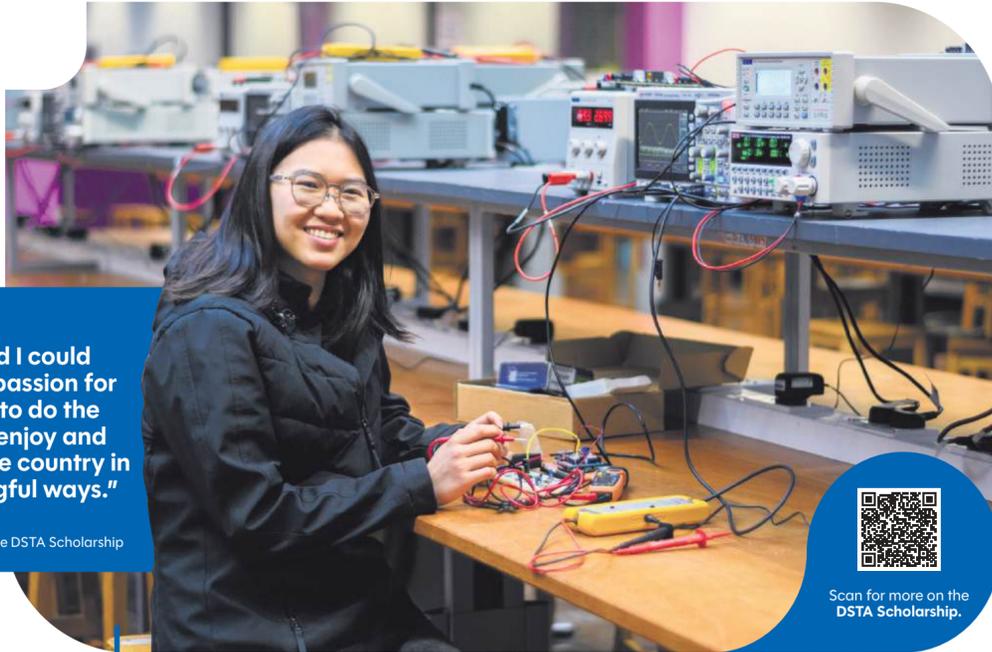
These experiments are laying the groundwork for her future work at DSTA, where engineers deliver technology for defence and security by designing, developing and integrating systems for the Ministry of Defence and the Singapore Armed Forces.

First introduced to DSTA at a scholarship talk, Xin Ru was struck by the sheer breadth of its work across Singapore's military and government agencies.

"I saw how their work spans from components such as sensors to large-scale solutions where software, hardware and

I realised I could use my passion for science to do the things I enjoy and serve the country in meaningful ways."

Ng Xin Ru
Recipient of the DSTA Scholarship



Where she once attached electrodes to her classmates' heads, DSTA scholar Ng Xin Ru now learns about using engineering principles to solve real-world problems. PHOTO: COURTESY OF NG XIN RU



Scan for more on the DSTA Scholarship.

engineering are brought together to deliver real operational capabilities," she says.

And it is not just DSTA that creates these solutions. DSTA is part of Singapore's wider Defence Technology Community (DTC), which works collectively to keep the nation at the forefront of defence innovation.

The DSTA Scholarship opens doors to a range of diverse career opportunities across the DTC.

"After my A levels, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do - I only knew I wanted to do something in STEM-

related fields," says Xin Ru.

She had assumed that she would complete her studies at a local university, but with the DSTA Scholarship, she realised that she could afford to dream bigger.

"I never thought of going overseas, but this scholarship gave me the opportunity to do so," she says. "I realised I could use my passion for science to do the things I enjoy and serve the country in meaningful ways too."

The scholarship also provided structured opportunities for growth, including internships, overseas

exposure and mentorship.

As part of the scholarship, Xin Ru did an internship with DSTA's Naval Systems Programme Centre. There, she discovered more about unmanned surface vehicles and evaluated how emerging maritime technologies could be adapted to support operational needs.

This gave her first-hand exposure to how DSTA engineers assess new innovative platforms that could be used for various defence capabilities.

In 2025, DSTA sponsored her summer school stint at Stanford

University in the US, where she immersed herself in clean energy as well as sustainability concepts.

She also saw how she could apply her electronic engineering skills to help address different environmental challenges.

"At Imperial, I learn theoretical things like pure circuits, while the Stanford course taught me not just theory but also the ways that theory could be used in the different types of renewable energy," says Xin Ru.

Broadening her horizons

The scholar has also enjoyed travelling around Europe. "Budgeting the scholarship allowance well has allowed me to take the occasional weekend trip to places I didn't even know existed," she says.

Her travels have also given her the opportunity to connect with other students in the scholar community.

"I have met many other scholars from different agencies like the Land Transport Authority and the Singapore Police Force," she says. "Sometimes we realise our agencies work together, and we joke about how we are going to be working together in the future."

Along the way, these newfound friendships and rich experiences are preparing her for the unknown challenges of the future.

"In defence, technology moves really fast, with new threats coming all the time," she says.

"I hope that my field of study will equip me with a versatile foundation in preparation for these potential changes."

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

From receiving aid to deploying it

Now working in the Ministry of Finance, this PSC scholar is part of the team that determines how grants, subsidies and tax incentives help Singaporeans in need

Public policy can feel distant – something debated in Parliament, announced in Budget speeches, discussed in the news.

But for Goh Choon Guan, it has always been a part of daily life, shaping his family's experiences and later influencing his decision to join the public sector.

Raised in a low-income household, Choon Guan saw how government support made a difference in easing everyday struggles.

As a beneficiary of the Community Health Assist Scheme, he received healthcare subsidies and other forms of support that helped his family manage day-to-day expenses.

Then, during the Covid-19 pandemic, policy touched his life again. His father, a blue-collar worker, benefited from the Job Support Scheme, which helped employers retain workers during the economic downturn.

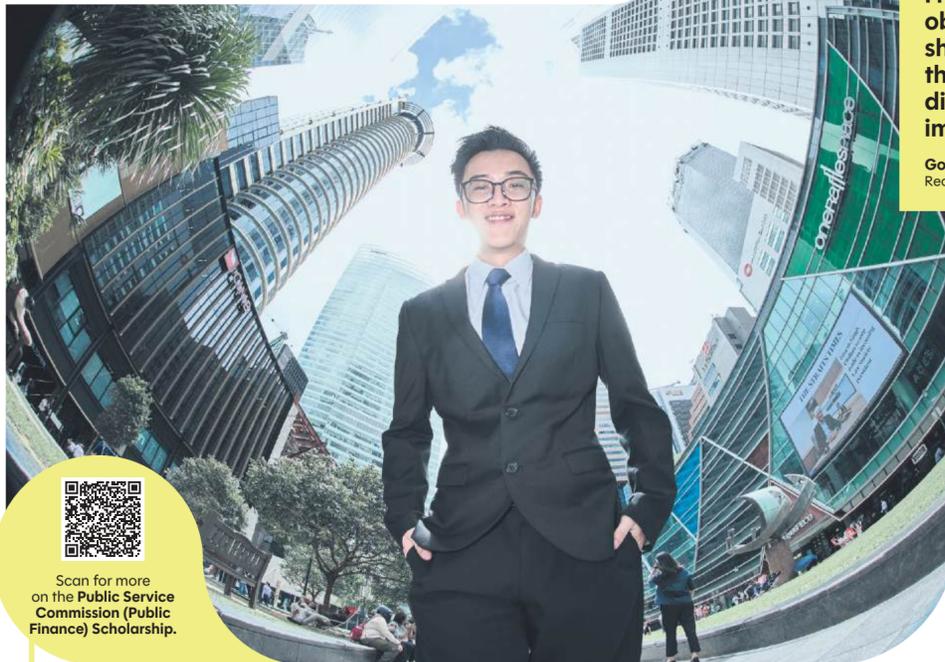
"Seeing how the government supports lower-income families through its policies really struck me," he says.

"I realised I didn't want to just observe those policies take shape – I wanted to be in the thick of it, contributing directly to the decisions that impact people's lives."

Working with numbers

Choon Guan completed a double degree in accountancy and business at Nanyang Technological University's Nanyang Business School in 2022 before pursuing a master's degree in business analytics at The University of Edinburgh in Scotland the following year.

His undergraduate and postgraduate studies were both supported by the Public Service Commission (PSC) (Public Finance) Scholarship.



An associate with the economic programmes directorate at the Ministry of Finance, Goh Choon Guan helps decide which projects and schemes can best spur economic development and enterprise transformation. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

His analytical strengths found their first application at the Auditor-General's Office, where he spent two years working on audits and internal policies.

"I have always been quite analytical and I like working with figures and data," he says.

Now 28, Choon Guan is eight months into his role as an associate with the economic programmes directorate at the Ministry of Finance (MOF), where he works on the Research, Innovation and Enterprise and digital economy portfolios.

The team helps shape how fiscal tools – such as grants, subsidies and tax incentives – are deployed across economic programmes to support Singapore's growth and transformation.

Today, his work involves reviewing proposed projects and existing schemes to assess whether they boost economic and ecosystem development or encourage companies to undertake enterprise transformation.

Much of this requires close coordination across various

government agencies, including the National Research Foundation Singapore, the Ministry of Digital Development and Information, as well as the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

At MOF, these discussions carry particular weight because of the ministry's role as a financial gatekeeper. "MOF holds the fiscal levers. We assess and prioritise projects to promote economic growth and transformation," explains Choon Guan.

His understanding of policymaking was further

I realised I didn't want to just observe those policies take shape – I wanted to be in the thick of it, contributing directly to the decisions that impact people's lives."

Goh Choon Guan
Recipient of the PSC (Public Finance) Scholarship

deepened during a six-week programme at the Civil Service College. The training included dialogue sessions with senior public service leaders and a study trip to Thailand.

"That was when I realised how complex policy coordination really is. Different ministries – and different countries – approach similar challenges in very different ways," he shares.

"Public policy isn't just about technical solutions; it's about understanding context and adapting accordingly."

As he continues his journey in public service, Choon Guan sees his role as one that bridges data, policy and purpose. He approaches it by applying evidence-based analysis while remaining grounded in the lived realities of the people affected by policy decisions.

For those who are considering a PSC Scholarship, his advice is straightforward and reflective of his own journey. "You really need to ask yourself whether you have the heart for public service," he says.

"The private sector can be attractive, but it is important to think about what you want to achieve in the long term. For me, being able to contribute meaningfully – and to be happy doing so – matters more."

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

The Mount Kinabalu story that changed him

Barely a year into his career, this SPH Media scholar learnt how empathy and trust can open the door to impactful storytelling

The assignment seemed straightforward enough: Interview a married couple about their vintage goods store, write about their entrepreneurial journey, then move on to the next story.

But Syed Muhammad Firdaus, 29, also chose to stay in touch.

That decision would prove pivotal when, a few months later, the couple reached out with something unexpected: Their son, Emyr Uzayr Mohamed Sadri, and his friend, Prajesh Dhimant Patel, were about to embark on a deeply personal journey in their attempt to summit Mount Kinabalu in Sabah, Malaysia.

Both former students of Tanjong Katong Primary School (TKPS), Emyr and Prajesh were part of a school expedition – with 29 students and eight teachers – to Mount Kinabalu a decade ago when a 6.0 magnitude earthquake struck Sabah on June 5, 2015.

It hit the group while they were on the Via Ferrata “Walk the Torq” trail, and claimed the lives of seven TKPS students and two teachers.

Emyr and Prajesh were among the survivors. Ten years on, they were returning to complete the climb that they never got to finish – and they wanted Firdaus, a reporter for Berita Harian Singapura, to tell their story.

Firdaus immediately understood the weight of what they were asking him.

“It was not just about conquering a mountain – it was about completing an unfinished chapter and honouring friends they had lost,” he says.

“They wanted me to document their journey to provide closure for their friends and the family members involved.”

That trust moved him profoundly. “Without their courage to go back to that mountain, I wouldn’t have been able to write this story in the first place,” adds Firdaus.

Published on May 22, 2025 – the same day the then-22-year-olds made the summit – the front-page piece resonated with Singaporeans.

It also won him a newsroom award, barely a year after he had started working full-time at Berita Harian in June 2024.

“I did not expect the story to be spread so widely on social media that even Senior Minister Lee Hsien Loong took notice,” he says.

“It is definitely among the stories I am proudest of.”

For Firdaus, it reiterated the fact that in journalism, relationships matter. One story can unlock another if you take the time to listen and stay connected.

Listening with empathy

Firdaus’ path to journalism began in 2022 when his father spotted a Facebook post about the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship and sent him a screenshot.

At the time, he was in his second year studying political science and government at the National University of Singapore, after having earlier completed a diploma in communications and media management at Temasek Polytechnic.

The scholarship application process included a three-month internship at Berita Harian, which allowed Firdaus to be sure that journalism was the right path for him.

Within days of stepping into the newsroom, he had his answer.

One of his first major assignments was to interview wet market vendors about how Malaysia’s chicken export ban was affecting their businesses.

As he listened to chicken sellers at Geylang Serai Market and Food Centre share their frustrations and worries, something clicked: Journalism was not just about writing but also about telling the human stories behind the headlines.

Since joining Berita Harian full-time, Firdaus has learnt

that empathy is central to meaningful storytelling.

He saw this clearly when interviewing Emyr and Prajesh for the Mount Kinabalu story. They were reliving a tragedy, opening old wounds.

“It is important to form connections with the people we interview and find common ground,” he shares.

“That connection is how we earn trust – and trust is how we get to the truth.”



Berita Harian Singapura journalist Syed Muhammad Firdaus believes effective storytelling begins with empathy first. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

It is important to form connections with the people we interview and find common ground. That connection is how we earn trust – and trust is how we get to the truth.”

Syed Muhammad Firdaus
Recipient of the SPH Media Journalism Scholarship



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As part of her year-long overseas stint, Renaissance Engineering Programme (REP) scholar Kimberly is at Imperial College London, immersed in hands-on industry exposure through projects with companies like Caterpillar and insights from global tech giants.

Pei Yi from the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKC Medicine) gained a rich international experience through doing research at the University of Cambridge and a clinical elective at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital in the UK.

Ee Khai will spend a semester at the University of California, Berkeley, under the Turing AI Scholars Programme (TAISP).

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Letting her AI training take flight

This CAG scholar is finding new ways to bring innovation to the airport that first sparked her childhood fascination

When airports fell silent during the pandemic, her bedroom turned into a makeshift laboratory.

Surrounded by bags of different sizes, plush toys, masking tape and camera gear, Elyn See worked on a proof-of-concept system to detect odd-shaped baggage.

Unable to visit the Changi Airport Group (CAG) office for her 10-week internship, she had to work remotely and make do with what she had at home.

"I used bags like my mother's duffel bag and tried various ways to configure them into different shapes," says the 25-year-old CAG scholar.

"I would put stuffed toy animals in and tape the corners down, tricking the camera into thinking it was a very big piece of oval-shaped baggage."

This was one of Elyn's many forays into the field of computer vision – a passion that took root when she was a student in the engineering with business course at Singapore Polytechnic.

After obtaining her diploma in 2020, she was awarded the CAG Undergraduate Scholarship and went to University College London in Britain to study computer science, with a minor in strategic thinking in engineering.

Today, Elyn is a senior associate with the newly formed artificial intelligence (AI) project management office at CAG. Based at Terminal X, the group's new innovation space, she and her team will develop new ways to

improve aviation operations and passenger experiences at one of the world's leading aviation hubs.

CAG has already begun trials using AI to detect prohibited items during security screenings. It is also trialling projects to improve airside efficiency, such as video analytics for quicker aircraft turnaround and autonomous vehicles that transport baggage under all weather conditions.

For Elyn, being part of these innovations feels like a full-circle moment. The technology she works on today will shape the very place that first captured her imagination as a child.

"Even when we weren't travelling, my parents would often take me to the airport to explore viewing galleries and watch planes take off," she says.

Problem-solving with AI

Using her experience in machine-learning algorithms over the years, Elyn hopes to help improve passenger experiences and back-end operations across the airport.

"In trying to make cameras smarter, I can take images and turn them into something useful," she says.

During her polytechnic internship with the Government Technology Agency of Singapore (GovTech), she worked on a smoking-detection system along Orchard Road, and collaborated with the Singapore Food Agency to develop object-detection systems to spot infected rotifers – tiny plankton used as fish feed.



Scan for more on the CAG Undergraduate Scholarship.

For me, the sky has always represented endless possibilities – a place where technology and human connection come together."

Elyn See
Recipient of the CAG Undergraduate Scholarship

Senior associate Elyn See's early experiments, internships and academic detours now inform her work in Changi Airport Group's new AI project management office.
PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

3D models and trained AI to recognise joint movements during performances.

In her current role at CAG, Elyn is thrilled to help improve the company's UI/UX (user interface and user experience) touchpoints – from external customer-facing platforms to internal dashboards and workflows used by airport teams.

"For me, the sky has always represented endless possibilities – a place where technology and human connection come together," she says.

"That early curiosity and sense of wonder have never left me, and they fuel my passion for building a career in aviation today."

These early projects sparked her fascination with how vision-based AI could help solve real-world problems, be it on the street, at a farm or at an airport.

Throughout her scholarship journey, Elyn says CAG gave her room to explore her interests. In her second year, she went to New York University for a summer programme in journalism, which CAG supported even though it was unrelated to computer science.

When she felt unsure about how to apply her theoretical learnings

to her future work, she was granted permission from CAG to take a leave of absence from school to pursue other opportunities in independent research and job shadowing at dance companies in London.

A competitive dancer since young, Elyn drew on these experiences for her undergraduate thesis on improving motion-capture technology for the performing arts. She studied the structure of the human foot, created

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

His classroom extends to the basketball court

For this NTU-NIE scholar, understanding what makes his students tick is the first play in his lesson plan – so that mathematics can truly come to life

The 19-year-old teacher stood before a classroom of teenagers who had little interest in mathematics. He quickly learnt that raising his voice got him nowhere.

Then a teaching intern, Brian Chew knew he needed a different approach.

So he asked himself: What do they enjoy and how can I inspire them to pay attention in class?

He started showing up at their after-school sports activities, chatting with them during breaks and sometimes passing a couple of balls or shooting hoops.

When a student became disruptive or looked downcast, he would pull them aside after class to better understand what was going on.

His patience paid off and gradually, he earned their respect.

The students noticed his efforts to befriend them and, in response, they tried harder in class. They showed up, paid attention and asked questions.

"They took a genuine interest in my lessons and understood what I was teaching them," shares Brian, now 24.

"When I had to leave after my internship, I had students saying they would miss me and my lessons.

"It helped me feel that this was indeed the right choice of career for me."

As a recipient of the Ministry of Education (MOE) Teaching Scholarship, Brian was able to enrol in the double major undergraduate programme at the National Institute of Education (NIE), conferred by Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

While pursuing a bachelor of science in mathematics and computational thinking and education, Brian is also concurrently in the NTU-NIE Teaching Scholars Programme (TSP).

Making connections

Now in his final year, Brian's long-term goal is to contribute to revamping Singapore's STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education.

He is rethinking how mathematics can be taught. Instead of jumping right into complex formulae and concepts, he would capture the students' attention with relatable context first.

"Kids have to see that what they learn can be applied to real-world problems," says Brian.

Take for instance, the design of soda cans and bottles, he says. In calculus, it is a more efficient use of space if a cylinder has a height that is equal to its diameter. Yet, why are most cans and bottles not designed this way?

"It is because they have to be designed with user-friendliness and practicality in mind," he explains.

By contextualising subjects like mathematics creatively, Brian hopes to get young people to be more interested in their lessons while strengthening their critical-thinking skills.

The TSP has given Brian and his fellow teachers-in-training opportunities to experiment with new pedagogies through teaching internships, including overseas secondments.

Brian had the opportunity to teach mathematics and English at a secondary school in Osaka, Japan, for five weeks in 2024.

There, he observed that the teachers excelled at weaving real-world contexts

into everyday lessons. English classes had students role-play as radio hosts, while mathematics lessons sent them calculating the perimeter and area of their school using scaled maps.

"It was exactly the kind of practical, engaging approach I had been advocating," says Brian.

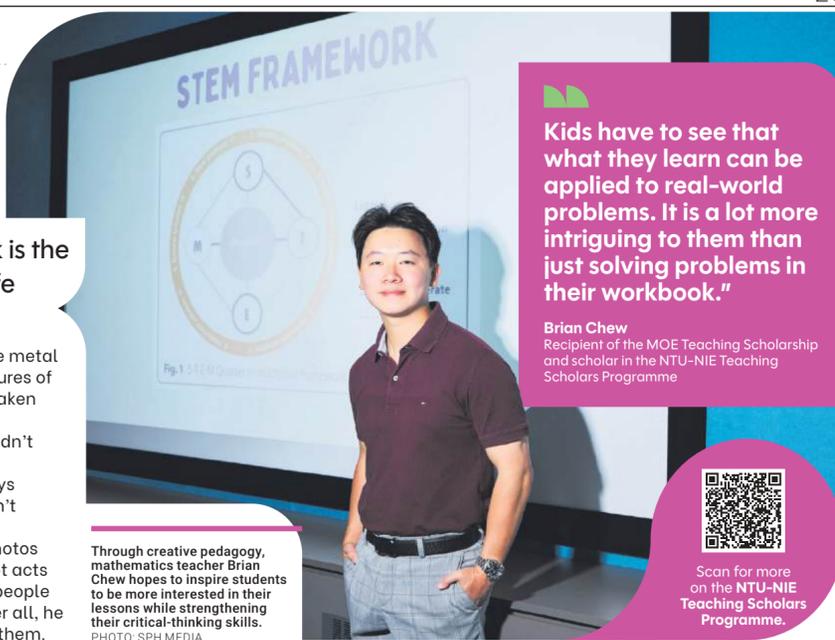
Through his various teaching experiences, Brian has learnt that education is as much about connection as it is about content.

At the conclusion of one of his internships, the students

presented him with an unexpected gift: a huge metal grille covered with pictures of him they had secretly taken during his lessons.

"Actually, they shouldn't have been using their phones in class," he says with a laugh. "But I didn't say anything."

He recognised the photos for what they were – not acts of defiance but young people showing they care. After all, he had done the same for them.



Kids have to see that what they learn can be applied to real-world problems. It is a lot more intriguing to them than just solving problems in their workbook."

Brian Chew
Recipient of the MOE Teaching Scholarship and scholar in the NTU-NIE Teaching Scholars Programme

Through creative pedagogy, mathematics teacher Brian Chew hopes to inspire students to be more interested in their lessons while strengthening their critical-thinking skills.
PHOTO: SPH MEDIA



Scan for more on the NTU-NIE Teaching Scholars Programme.

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GOH CHOON GUAN
Associate (Economic Programmes) at the Ministry of Finance

I work with integrity and curiosity, digging deeper for insights that matter. By being clear and open, I help build stronger systems for Singapore — and show how local action, lifelong learning, and care can spark global change.

VERA LIM
Associate (Treasury) at the Accountant-General's Department

Making a difference starts with purpose, people, and seeing the big picture. I've learned that careful choices bring lasting value. It's not just numbers — it's lives. Good policies can shape a better, kinder future for all.

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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

She questioned maritime – then she found herself

Once worried about finding her footing in the industry, this MaritimeONE scholar has since discovered the confidence to chart her own course

Drawn to history and literature in secondary school, Fatimah Zahra Ebnuarabi once expected to build her future around words.

Maritime entered the picture during a conversation with her elder brother. At first, the field felt worlds apart from her interests. She imagined massive vessels, technical jargon and intricate port operations – a specialised domain she feared might be complex to navigate.

Still, Zahra chose to take a leap of faith. She enrolled in a maritime business course at Singapore Polytechnic, telling herself she could always pivot if it did not feel like the right fit.

What she did not expect was how quickly that tentative choice would reshape her perspective.

Lessons on global trade and logistics revealed an industry far more dynamic, interconnected and people-driven than she had imagined.

"I thought maritime was too specialised," admits the 22-year-old. "But through my course I realised it is deeply woven into everyday life – from the food Singapore imports to the goods people buy online and use every day. Within the industry itself, there are so many sectors and opportunities.

"The more I learnt about global trade and how Singapore plays a vital role as a global hub in the shipping industry, the more interested I became."

Beyond the classroom, the MaritimeONE Campus

Connect series organised by the Singapore Maritime Foundation brought industry professionals to school campuses to share insights on their work.

Students also got to meet past and present MaritimeONE scholars who spoke candidly about university life and the mentorship they received.

Inspired, Zahra applied for the Bernhard Schulte – MaritimeONE Scholarship. It stood out for its financial support as well as the chance to learn through internships, mentorship and a structured management trainee programme.

In 2023, Zahra began her maritime studies with a second major in data analytics at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), with her sponsor – German shipowner Bernhard Schulte – guaranteeing her a job after graduation.

Exploring new horizons

Now in her third year at NTU, Zahra has completed two summer internships at Bernhard Schulte, rotating through departments from supply to operations. This experience has helped her understand maritime operations better.

During her time in the mergers and acquisitions department, Zahra also saw how data could be used to evaluate a company's profitability.



Third-year NTU undergraduate Fatimah Zahra Ebnuarabi has already completed two summer attachments with German shipowner Bernhard Schulte and will head to their Manila office this year for her first overseas internship. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

"That was when I realised how data analytics could widen my skill sets and allow me to contribute in more meaningful ways," she says, of her second major.

Zahra also got a chance to apply analytical tools to study

inefficiencies across the departments she had worked in, presenting her findings to senior leaders who were impressed with her well-considered ideas and in-depth understanding of the company.

People often think maritime is boring but, within the industry itself, there are so many sectors and opportunities."

Fatimah Zahra Ebnuarabi
Recipient of the Bernhard Schulte – MaritimeONE Scholarship

Her growth has also extended beyond the workplace.

Last December, she spent two weeks in Guangzhou, China, on an exchange programme at Sun Yat-sen University – her first extended experience living and learning overseas.

Being away from home in a country whose language she does not read or speak tested her independence.

"I had to use Google Translate to navigate daily activities such as ordering food or booking a taxi, but I am proud of myself for overcoming the language barrier and becoming more independent," she says.

That confidence will be tested again this year when she embarks on her first overseas internship with Bernhard Schulte in Manila, the Philippines, where she will work in the finance department.

She sees the posting as another opportunity to explore the breadth of the maritime industry.

Moving forward, Zahra is eager to work on data-driven ship operations and sustainability solutions. She credits the scholarship for motivating her to find direction in her life.

"I didn't think I would be able to find my footing in the industry, but I ended up finding my voice instead," she says.

ISEAS YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE

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- Successful candidates will serve a one-year bond with ISEAS following the completion of their studies

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Candidates should:

- Be Singapore citizens or permanent residents
- Be in possession of a good honours degree (or professional qualifications of equivalent standing) in a relevant subject
- Have a consistently good academic record
- Have a deep interest in Southeast Asia and are prepared to take up courses and/or carry out research on Southeast Asia

Requirements:

Candidates who have already obtained university admission for 2026 and meet the above requirements are also eligible to apply. Applicants should submit a cover letter, full CV, two letters of reference, educational certificates and transcripts, a research proposal and a statement of purpose in pursuing the MA degree, and a passport-sized photograph.

Submission:

Please send online applications through the Careers@Gov website. Please note that the two referees should email the letter of reference to ISEAS HR at HR@iseas.edu.sg separately.

Closing Date: 31 March 2026

Only shortlisted candidates will be notified

This scholarship is funded by the Tun Dato Sir Cheng-Lock Tan Trust Fund, Singapore

AGO Auditor-General's Office Singapore



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SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Shaping policy through South-east Asian research

Trained in political science, this ISEAS scholar's work informs policymakers on the region's most pressing issues

Fresh out of the National University of Singapore three years ago, Siti Suhaila Harith signed up for a three-month internship at the ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute. Her goal was simple: learn more about South-east Asia beyond what she had studied as an undergraduate in political science.

What happened next surprised her. "I genuinely loved the work environment and was given the chance to explore fascinating topics - from non-violent extremism to competing Islamic ideologies and trendsetters in South-east Asia," recalls the 26-year-old.

That three-month stint stretched into a full year at ISEAS' Regional Social and Cultural Studies (RSCS) programme. Suhaila assisted with projects on Islam and politics in the region, accompanied researchers on fieldwork covering Malaysia's 2022 General Election, and even co-authored commentaries on identity politics in Malaysia.

The experience was eye-opening. Suhaila realised her work was not just academic - it could inform government policy and even open doors to diplomacy.

When she came across the Tun Dato Sir Cheng-Lock Tan (TCL) MA Scholarship, she jumped at the chance to pursue a master's in political science at her dream university, The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) in Britain.

At LSE, Suhaila found herself in an entirely different learning environment. Students in Britain were passionate, unafraid to ask tough questions and eager to challenge ideas.

Taking modules in fields that were completely new to her - Latin American Politics, Political Violence and Terrorism - exposed her to diverse perspectives. She also formed close friendships with classmates from Kazakhstan, Sweden, Ukraine, India and the US, hearing first-hand about political upheavals and reforms in other countries.

"Interacting with people from around the world made me realise the importance of being culturally aware and sensitive," says Suhaila. "It's something I always keep in mind now during the course of my work."

Building bridges

Suhaila graduated from LSE in August 2024 and returned to ISEAS as a research officer. She had to manage projects on China and South-east Asia, and Youth and Civic Engagement.

At first, she was concerned about the language barrier for China-related work. However, she soon developed a genuine interest in the area. Her office is now filled with books on Chinese identity in the region, and she recently co-authored a commentary on the rise of Sinophobia in the Philippines.

What she did not expect, however, was the diplomatic dimension of her work. She has met politicians, ambassadors and ministry officials, and seen how ISEAS research directly informs policy.

Working with her supervisor on a book about non-violent extremism in South-east Asia was particularly illuminating. "It highlighted to policymakers the importance of monitoring issues such as intolerance

towards intra-religious minorities, which often go under the radar," she explains.

A year and a half into her role, Suhaila says the scholarship has opened more doors than she had imagined - potentially leading to careers in both academia and diplomacy.

"If given the opportunity, I would definitely want to pursue my PhD," she says. "But I am also very interested in a career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because I have been interacting

with officials from different countries through my work at ISEAS."

For those considering a research career, her advice is simple: Start exploring.

"Take on internships or assistantships, and see what aspects of research excite you," advises Suhaila. "The skills you develop - critical thinking, investigative skills, problem-solving, communication - are highly valuable in many careers. So just take the leap."



At the ISEAS - Yusof Ishak Institute, research officer Siti Suhaila Harith's work has the potential to help shape and define policy in the region. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

Interacting with people from around the world made me realise the importance of being culturally aware and sensitive."

Siti Suhaila Harith
Recipient of the Tun Dato Sir Cheng-Lock Tan MA Scholarship

Scan for more on the Tun Dato Sir Cheng-Lock Tan MA Scholarship.



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Megan Kwok Yu'En
Recipient of MOE Teaching Award

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Scan here for more information on the event highlights:








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The Teaching Scholars Programme is a signature programme by Nanyang Technological University and is administered by the National Institute of Education (Singapore).

SCHOLARS' CHOICE 2026

Teaching chemistry through pancakes and yarn

This scholar believes learning deepens through connection – so he uses relatable examples and hands-on teaching to spark curiosity that lasts beyond the classroom

At Yuhua Secondary School, a group of Secondary Two students are making pancakes during an after-school session as part of the Science Talent Development Programme.

As they switch between different types of flour, they observe how changes in composition affect texture and taste.

Nearby, a nutrition and food science teacher works alongside chemistry teacher Soh Ming Quan, helping students link molecular interactions to everyday cooking.

In this unconventional chemistry class, students are encouraged to test ideas, discuss observations and draw connections across subjects – reflecting Ming Quan's belief that learning deepens when teachers work across disciplines and students are given space to explore ideas rather than merely memorising facts.

"Science is not an isolated discipline," observes the 35-year-old. "It involves understanding how different subjects are interconnected – and applying that understanding to solve problems."

The programme itself grew out of Ming Quan's close observation of his students, some of whom showed a strong interest in chemistry.

Hoping to nurture their scientific thinking further, he brought the idea to the school management before working with colleagues to design lessons that blend scientific thinking with real-world applications.

Ming Quan traces his interest in teaching back to his own school days, when he found satisfaction in helping classmates understand complex concepts.

"What drew me to chemistry was its applied nature and how the concepts are interlinked," he explains.

This curiosity translated into a deeper pursuit of the subject. Under the Public Service Commission (PSC) Overseas Merit Scholarship (Teaching Service), Ming Quan pursued a bachelor of science in chemistry as well as a master of research with distinction in chemical biology of health and disease at Imperial College London.

After returning to Singapore in 2013, he completed the 16-month postgraduate diploma in education from the National Institute of Education as part of his teaching scholarship.

He also did an internship at the Ministry of Education (MOE) headquarters, where he saw how strategic decisions and school policies intersect across the education system.

From connection to confidence

Currently, as the head of department of information and communications technology, Ming Quan oversees the online learning processes as well as the technology ecosystem at Yuhua Secondary School.

Recently, he has been exploring how learning analytics and platforms such as the Singapore Student Learning Space – part of MOE's EdTech Masterplan 2030 – can be used to personalise learning and identify gaps early.

Ming Quan also knows that no computer dashboard can replace

My overarching philosophy is that teaching is about providing experiences that give learners the confidence and space to develop."

Soh Ming Quan
Recipient of the Public Service Commission Overseas Merit Scholarship (Teaching Service)

the empathy of a teacher in the classroom.

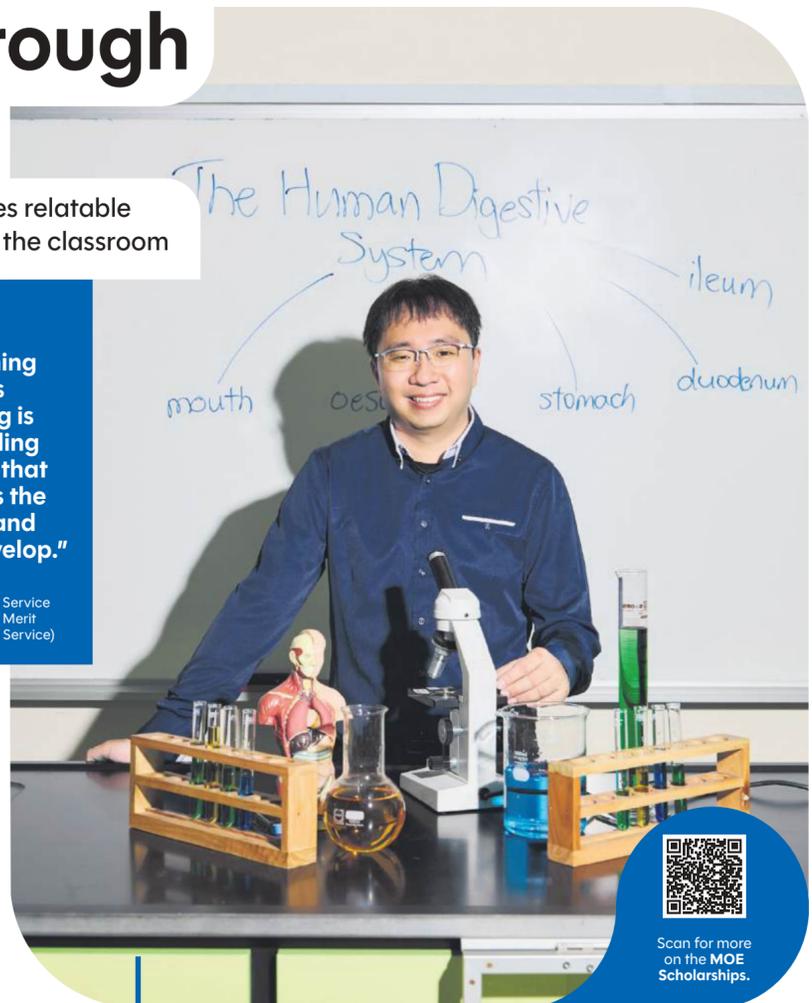
When a student struggles, his first instinct is not to reprimand but to pause and understand the situation.

"Rather than asking why they did not get their homework done, I wonder what might be getting in the way," he explains.

Taking the time to better understand his students helps to build trust and allow for more meaningful support.

By chatting about their hobbies, Ming Quan also finds ways to explain chemistry concepts in relatable terms.

"If a student enjoys crocheting,



Chemistry teacher Soh Ming Quan has been exploring how learning analytics and platforms like the Singapore Student Learning Space can be used to personalise learning. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA



Scan for more on the MOE Scholarships.

I might use cotton yarn to illustrate how molecular structure affects strength and flexibility," he says.

Besides making concepts easier to grasp, Ming Quan hopes to help students see that learning is within their reach – and that,

with the right support, they are capable of achieving more than they imagine.

As he sums up: "My overarching philosophy is that teaching is about providing experiences that give learners the confidence and space to develop."

She sees the land beneath the city

This SLA scholar tracks the invisible land boundaries most people never notice, ensuring every parcel is accounted for and optimised for Singapore's future

On daily bus rides through Singapore, Merlene Tan studies what others cannot see: the invisible geometry of land that underpins the nation's urban planning, growth and public interests. The 24-year-old would often whip out her phone to examine property boundaries nearby via the Government's OneMap app.

This is all in a day's work for the assistant manager at the Singapore Land Authority (SLA), who is part of a team that plans how land is allocated, developed and renewed to serve Singapore's evolving needs.

Through her job, she has also encountered maps dating back decades, charting a Singapore that looks markedly different from today.

"When you place older maps beside current ones, you can see how the city has constantly adapted to changing needs.

"It reminds me that land-use decisions are never static – they respond to how people live and what the country needs at each stage of development," she says.

Similarly, land decisions made today will influence how future generations live, connect and thrive – giving SLA officers like Merlene a direct role in shaping the nation's next chapter.

As the custodian of Singapore's land and state properties, SLA works with public agencies to optimise how each available space is used.

Every plot and parcel of land is thoughtfully planned and put to use in ways that help to meet evolving economic, social and community needs.

With Singapore's limited land, Merlene helps to ensure every square metre is accounted for.

For instance, when she receives feedback from the public about unmaintained plots with overgrown foliage, she will act quickly.

"Sometimes the owner may have died or the company may have become defunct," Merlene explains.

In such cases, she may need to search through microfilm archives to trace the rightful owner or determine which agency should step in.

Sometimes, she even pays a visit to the site for closer inspection.

Empathy in land work

Land acquisition work often brings Merlene into contact with landowners who are deeply attached to their property.

"Sometimes it's their home or business they had built," she says. Upon receiving news of an acquisition, some land owners are left unsure about what comes next.

"They worry about where they will go and how they will be supported," she adds.

Working with her colleagues, Merlene guides landowners through the process, explaining relocation details and available support – an aspect of the job that calls for empathy as much as policy knowledge.

Having acquired a double major in economics, and public policy

Whenever I pass by the sites I have been involved in, there is a sense of pride."

Merlene Tan
Recipient of the SLA Undergraduate Scholarship



Merlene Tan, assistant manager at the Singapore Land Authority, helps plan and manage land use to meet Singapore's changing needs. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA



Scan for more on the SLA Undergraduate Scholarship.

and global affairs from Nanyang Technological University, followed by a master's degree in public policy and management at King's College London in Britain – both under the SLA Undergraduate Scholarship – Merlene is as well equipped to tackle policy issues as she is working with the general public.

Since starting work at SLA in August 2025 after graduating, she has worked with officers from various ministries and

agencies across the civil service. "Colleagues from other agencies are also on the case and we figure out how to settle issues together," she shares.

Merlene's understanding of land work was also shaped during an internship at the Ministry of Law, where she served in the land policy department. "The internship allowed me to see the operations of SLA from a policy

perspective – and now at SLA, I am seeing things at the operational level," she says.

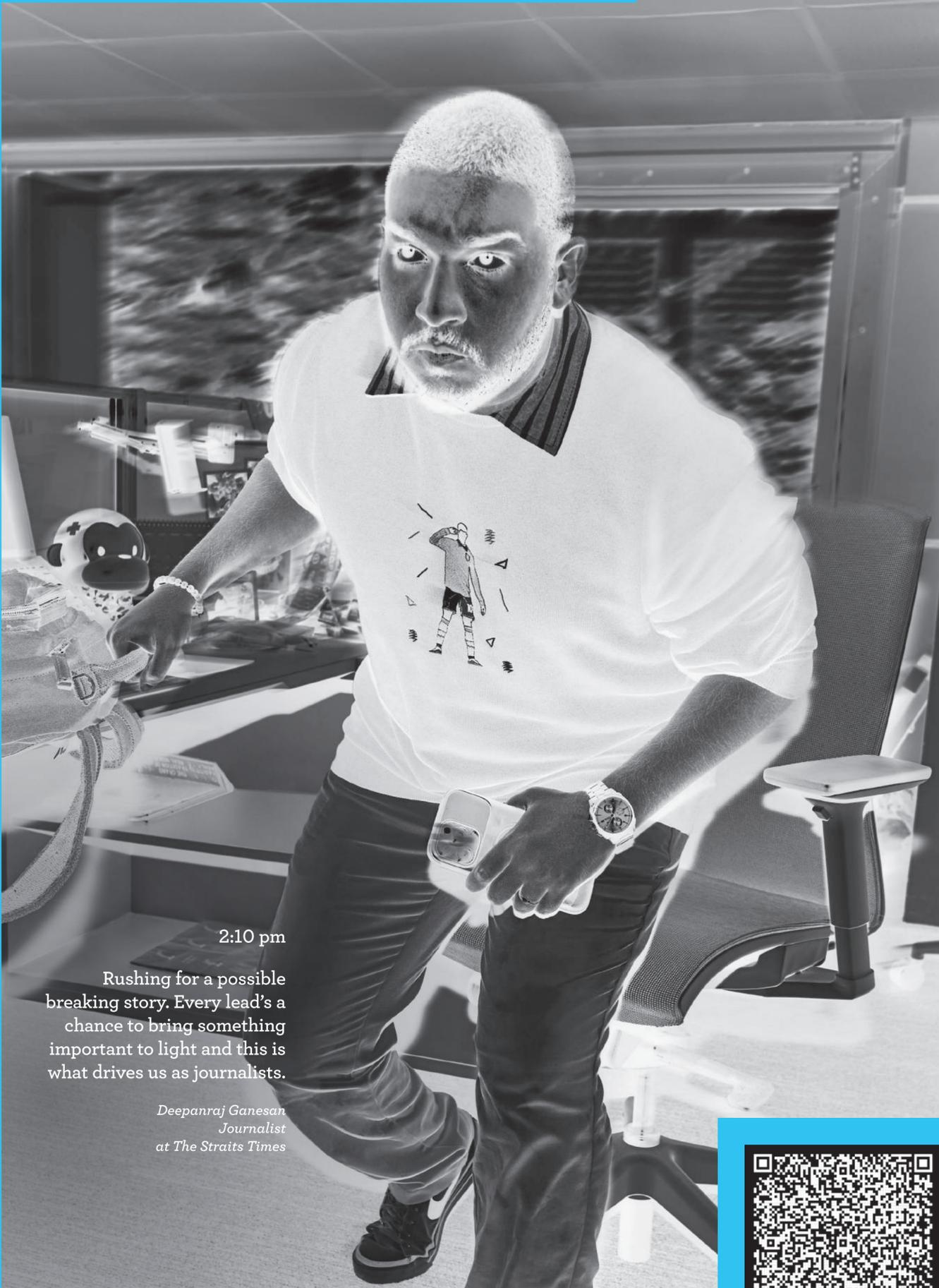
This collective wisdom has changed how she views Singapore and her role in shaping its future.

"Whenever I pass by the sites I have been involved in, there is a sense of pride," she says.

"I am helping to develop our country – and that makes me feel happy and accomplished."

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sph media



2:10 pm

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Journalist
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THE LOKE CHENG-KIM FOUNDATION

UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Loke Cheng-Kim Foundation invites students who have applied for admission to courses leading to first degrees conferred by established local and overseas universities in the 2026/2027 academic year to apply for scholarship awards.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants should be Singapore citizens or permanent residents and should not be current holders of other scholarship awards or grants. The Board is looking for applications to study the Natural Sciences (including Zoology, Botany, Physics and Chemistry), Environmental Sciences and Pure Humanities (including Geography and History). We hope to find applicants who are committed to pursuing a life path in conservation, sustainable development, advancement of our natural and cultural heritage or otherwise in the betterment of life on earth in all its aspects, whether as scientists, innovators, field workers, or other dedicated professionals. The scholarship is intended to provide outstanding young people with a unique opportunity to take their first steps along that path.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Candidates will 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. Applicants 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.

SCHOLARSHIP VALUE

A scholarship's annual value will cover fees and book allowances, maintenance allowance and in the case of an overseas award, an initial settling-in allowance and one-time return economy class airfare. This is tenable for the whole undergraduate course of study leading to a first degree, subject to satisfactory academic progress.

APPLICATIONS

Applications must be made on the prescribed form downloadable from the Foundation's official website (www.lokefoundation.com.sg) or obtainable from:

The Secretary
The Loke Cheng-Kim Foundation
c/o Vistra Singapore
9 Raffles Place, #26-01 Republic Plaza, Singapore 048619

CLOSING DATE: 6 March 2026

Applicants shortlisted for interviews will be notified by 30 April 2026.

The Selection Committee's decisions are final and cannot be appealed against or reconsidered.



THE LOKE CHENG-KIM FOUNDATION

POSTGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Loke Cheng-Kim Foundation invites applications from students who have applied for or secured admission to postgraduate programmes (Master's or Doctoral degrees) at established local and overseas universities in the 2026/2027 academic year to apply for scholarship awards.

ELIGIBILITY

Applicants should be Singapore citizens or permanent residents and should not be current holders of other scholarship awards or grants. An applicant should have received, where applicable, the consent of an academic faculty member as thesis supervisor. The Board welcomes applications from candidates pursuing advanced studies in the Pure Sciences (including Zoology, Botany, Physics and Chemistry), Environmental Sciences and Geography. We seek individuals who are committed to advancing knowledge and practice in conservation, sustainable development and the enhancement of our natural heritage. Whether as researchers, innovators, educators, or field specialists, applicants should demonstrate a clear vision for contributing meaningfully to the betterment of life on earth in all its aspects. This scholarship aims to support exceptional individuals in deepening their expertise and the impact of such contribution through postgraduate study.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Candidates must present a strong record of academic achievement and relevant research or professional experience. Selection will favour those who exhibit independent thought and intellectual curiosity, a sustained and demonstrable commitment to their chosen field, and engagement in activities, research, or initiatives beyond formal academic requirements. Applicants will be asked to submit a personal statement (maximum 500 words) outlining their research interests and career goals, and how their chosen postgraduate programme will support these aspirations.

SCHOLARSHIP VALUE

A scholarship's annual value will cover fees, book and research material allowances, maintenance allowance and where applicable, an initial settling-in allowance and one-time return economy class airfare. This is tenable for the full duration of the postgraduate programme, subject to satisfactory academic progress.

APPLICATIONS

Applications must be made on the prescribed form downloadable from the Foundation's official website (www.lokefoundation.com.sg) or obtainable from:

The Secretary
The Loke Cheng-Kim Foundation
c/o Vistra Singapore
9 Raffles Place, #26-01 Republic Plaza, Singapore 048619

CLOSING DATE: 6 March 2026

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COMMON SCHOLARSHIP INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (WITH HELPFUL ANSWER TIPS)

Scholarship panels want to see how you process, connect and respond in real time. Here are some questions that often come up – and how to answer them strategically.

Q1 "Tell me about yourself."

They're asking:
WHO ARE YOU BEYOND GRADES?

Do this: Start with what shaped you, highlight the turning point, then show how it guides your direction.

Example: "Through group projects, I realised I enjoy solving problems with teammates. That's why I'm drawn to roles that support decision-making under pressure."

Q2 "Why did you apply for this scholarship?"

They're asking:
WHY THIS ONE?

Do this: Link what it offers to what you want to learn. Avoid phrases such as "it is prestigious" and "for financial support".

Example: "The overseas exposure offered by this scholarship matters because I want to learn how other cities solve housing challenges before working on urban policy locally."

Q4 "Why do you deserve this scholarship?"

They're asking:
ARE YOU READY FOR THIS RESPONSIBILITY?

Do this: Focus on effort, growth and contribution. Don't say: "I deserve it", but instead, say: "I'm ready for it".

Example: "I may not top every subject, but I'm consistent and I follow through. I'm ready for long-term responsibility."

Q3 "What are your career goals?"

They're asking:
HAVE YOU THOUGHT THIS THROUGH?

Do this: Share a direction, not a fixed title. It's okay to say, "I'm exploring...".

Example: "I'm interested in healthcare systems and how policy affects access. I'm exploring whether to focus on design or implementation."

Q5 "Why this school or programme?"

They're asking:
DID YOU CHOOSE WITH INTENTION?

Do this: Show how you learn, not just what you want to study. One specific reason beats many generic ones.

Example: "The industry attachments matter because I learn best by applying theory quickly. That's how I improved most during my internship."

Q6 "Do you have questions for us?"

They're asking:
ARE YOU GENUINELY CURIOUS?

Do this: Ask about past scholars' experiences, the mentorship they received and how they transitioned into the workforce.

Example: "What separates scholars who do well from those who struggle in the first year?"



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Tay Zi Heng
Bachelor of Social Sciences (Hons) in Public Policy & Global Affairs
Nanyang Technological University

Let's get creative and bond with crocheting

Nurul Asyiqin Binte Shahmudin
Bachelor of Communication Studies
Nanyang Technological University

Making a tangible difference to lives gives me purpose

Prinita Mukherjee
Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology
Cornell University

Reading expands my knowledge to engage the community

Haikal Afiq Bin Mohd Rizal
Bachelor of Social Sciences (Hons) in Sociology
Nanyang Technological University

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As an independent organ of state and the national auditor, the mission of the Auditor-General's Office (AGO) 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.

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The Ministry of Home Affairs Uniformed Scholarship is offered to highly motivated individuals passionate about safeguarding our home. Apply for a uniformed service scholarship with the Central Narcotics Bureau (CNB), so that you can enforce, educate and engage for a drug-free Singapore.

You will join as a Direct-Entry Inspector, leading a team of officers in drug operation, investigation and intelligence work to achieve CNB's vision of a drug-free and safe Singapore.

Upon graduation from a local or overseas university, you can enjoy learning and developmental opportunities through a route map comprising staff and command appointments, including placement in the Home Team Leaders-In-Development Programme or the Public Service Leadership Programme where you will be prepared for appointment to key positions in the CNB or beyond.



Changi Airport Group

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 service.

Recipients of the Changi Airport Group Undergraduate Scholarship enjoy the flexibility to pursue their preferred course at top local and overseas universities. Scholars will also broaden their exposure through overseas student exchange programmes, summer programmes and internships.

Upon graduation, scholars will embark on a multifaceted career of diverse business functions in the dynamic and fast-growing aviation industry – where CAG makes magic happen in every aspect of the business, turning different airport touchpoints into seamless experiences with innovation and technology.



Defence Science and Technology Agency

Level up with the Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) Scholarship.

The DSTA Scholarship offers many opportunities to grow in a dynamic environment where innovation thrives. You will gain experience through internships with DSTA, DSO National Laboratories and The Centre for Strategic Infocomm Technology, as well as the Global Internship Programme. Upon graduation, you can look forward to working in exciting domains, from engineering to digital transformation and cybersecurity.

Apply for the DSTA Scholarship and join the quest to strengthen Singapore's defence capabilities.



Home Team Science and Technology Agency

Are you passionate about science and technology and seeking a meaningful career? Embark on the Home Team Science and Technology Agency (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 front lines of security. Leveraging its expertise in artificial intelligence, biometrics and profiling, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) defence, cybersecurity, data science, forensics and robotics, HTX augments the Home Team's (SPF, SCDF, ICA, SPS and CNB) capabilities in their mission to secure borders, save lives, solve crimes, enhance public safety and safeguard data and systems.

With HTX, you will be able to sharpen your capabilities and fulfil your potential.



Immigration & Checkpoints Authority

Under the Ministry of Home Affairs Uniformed Scholarship with Immigration & 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 will be 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.



Scan to discover available scholarships.



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.

Under IMDA, the Singapore Digital (SG Digital) Scholarship develops the next generation of leaders for Singapore's technology and media ecosystem.

The scholarship supports both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes across artificial intelligence, technology and media. Recipients have the autonomy to chart their own future and pursue a career in technology or media, across any organisation or industry that aligns with their ambitions (subject to IMDA's approval).

Push boundaries and make an impact with IMDA's SG Digital Scholarship. Apply now.



Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore

As Singapore's revenue authority, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) partners with the community to build our nation's future. We manage the nation's taxes and enterprise disbursements, represent Singapore in international tax matters, and provide expert property valuation advice to the Government.

By using technology, data analytics, and behavioural insights, we are making tax services simpler and more efficient. At IRAS, we believe our people are critical to our success, and we are committed to developing the potential of talented individuals.

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



ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute

The Tun Dato Sir Cheng-Lock Tan MA Scholarship supports local students with the opportunity to pursue postgraduate studies in South-east Asian studies, political science, international relations, economics, sociology, anthropology, history, geography, and other relevant subjects.

The scholarship, funded by the Tun Dato Sir Cheng-Lock Tan Trust Fund, is offered on an annual basis and administered by ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute.

So, if you are an aspiring scholar with a passion for South-east Asia and a hunger for knowledge, this scholarship might just be your door to a transformative academic journey.



Ministry of Defence / Singapore Armed Forces

The mission of the Ministry of Defence (MINDEF) and the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) 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 Singapore's defence and security, MINDEF and SAF continually seek talent who are willing to take up the challenge to defend Singapore's sovereignty and way of life.

There is a diverse range of scholarships to choose from:

- **Uniformed scholarships:** The SAF Scholarship, SAF Merit Scholarship, SAF Engineering Scholarship, SAF Medicine Scholarship and SAF Dentistry Scholarship
- **Non-uniformed scholarships:** PSC Scholarship (Engineering) – Defence and Security, and Defence Merit Scholarship

Taking up a scholarship with MINDEF is a lifelong mission to contribute to the peace and security of Singapore. It is your chance to answer a higher calling, to defend what matters.



Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (MOE) Teaching Scholarships and Teaching Awards offer an exciting opportunity to shape Singapore's educational landscape. MOE seeks purpose-driven individuals passionate about education and nurturing the best in every student.

As a recipient, you will benefit from financial support and customised programmes to broaden your perspectives and skill sets. You are encouraged to drive meaningful change via innovative teaching, technology integration in the classroom, and 21st century competency development. Career development opportunities could include key roles in schools or at MOE Headquarters.

These opportunities will allow you to grow personally and professionally, while enabling you to shape young lives as an educator and thought leader.



Ministry of Finance

Are you passionate about contributing to Singapore's future through sound financial stewardship? The Public Service Commission (PSC) (Public Finance) Scholarship offers you a unique opportunity to shape national policies and transform public sector finance.

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) – a forward-looking organisation at the centre of Government that advances leading ideas, drives synergies and ensures fiscal prudence and sustainability – will be your parent agency upon graduation.

Through postings to the MOF, the Account-General's Department and the Auditor-General's Office, you will gain exposure to strategic policy work that cuts across the entire Government, as well as functional domains such as finance, tax, investment and audit.

Apply for the PSC (Public Finance) Scholarship now and join MOF to shape Singapore, as you shape your career!



The Monetary Authority of Singapore

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.



Scan to discover available scholarships.



Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) offers a global education that helps students meet the challenges shaping tomorrow's world.

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

High achievers may also be selected for the prestigious NTU President Award, which provides personalised mentorship, talent development opportunities and a fully subsidised four-year hall stay.

Take your learning beyond borders and realise your potential with a scholarship designed for you.



National Institute of Education

The Nanyang Technological University-National Institute of Education (NTU-NIE) Teaching Scholars Programme (TSP) augments the four-year double major programme in an academic subject and education. The TSP aims to nurture a new generation of well-rounded, passionate educators who inspire and lead.

Individuals in the TSP focus on developing content mastery and pedagogical expertise, and participate in diverse educational experiences that stem the theory-practice nexus. TSP's interdisciplinary curriculum is intellectually rigorous and will develop your leadership skills while providing you with a global outlook and perspective.



National Parks Board

The National Parks Board (NParks) is the lead agency for greenery, biodiversity conservation, wildlife, and animal health, welfare and management. In addition to managing millions of trees and restoring habitats across Singapore to conserve our natural environment and biodiversity, NParks, through its Animal & Veterinary Service cluster, serves as the key touchpoint for animal-related matters and works to uphold high standards of animal health and welfare.

Beyond enhancing and managing Singapore's urban ecosystems, 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, individuals can study in Singapore, Australia, Canada, Britain or the US, develop specialised skills and gain exposure to professional portfolios, including horticulture, arboriculture, landscaping, conservation, policy, planning, veterinary science and wildlife management. Outstanding scholars may also work in other government ministries and statutory boards.



National University Of Singapore

The National University of Singapore (NUS) is Singapore's flagship university and a leading global institution known for its innovative and rigorous education, research and entrepreneurship.

Founded in 1905, it has produced generations of leaders across a wide range of industries and professions in Singapore and beyond. NUS scholarships are highly coveted awards presented to high-calibre individuals who demonstrate academic excellence, strong intellectual ability, sound character, leadership potential and a passion for creativity and innovation.

The university offers a range of scholarships for prospective students, including the NUS Global Merit Scholarship, NUS Merit Scholarship, NUS Undergraduate Scholarship, NUS AI Talent Scholarship, NUS Sports Scholarship, and NUS Performing and Visual Arts Scholarship.



People's Association

The People's Association (PA) is a statutory board that aims to spark and nurture community participation for a caring and united Singapore.

If you seek a purposeful career in youth, active ageing, sports, arts and culture, social development or community leadership, the PA Scholarship is for you.

As a PA scholar, you will gain valuable experience in community organisation and grow in leadership through participation in community projects, regular interaction with grassroots and PA leaders, strategic job placements, and overseas attachments and programmes.

Anticipate a rewarding and challenging career with numerous opportunities to reach your full potential and make a difference to create a nation that cares for our community.



Public Service Commission

Embark on an exciting journey with the Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholarship, Singapore's premier Government scholarship. Join the ranks of past and present public service leaders, including ministers, permanent secretaries, statutory board chief executive officers, military commanders, ambassadors and education leaders.

The prestigious PSC Scholarship offers financial support for your studies, leadership development programmes and diverse career pathways across 16 ministries and over 50 statutory boards. Whether your passion lies in policy formulation, engineering, technology, teaching, foreign affairs, legal service, or uniformed careers with the Singapore Armed Forces or the Singapore Police Force, the scholarship provides exceptional opportunities for career growth. Be the driver of change and shape Singapore's future through leadership in public service.



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 kick-start your leadership journey as an SCDF Fire & Rescue or Paramedic Officer. You will go through structured 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 and be a part of this noble mission. Join The Life Saving Force.



Scan to discover available scholarships.



Singapore-Industry Scholarship

Singapore citizens keen to contribute to leading organisations in Singapore's strategic sectors can apply for the Singapore-Industry Scholarship (SgIS), the only multi-industry scholarship in partnership with the Singapore Government. Full-term and mid-term (local and overseas) scholarships are available to support you at different stages of your university education.

Over 140 sponsoring organisations from industries ranging from arts to transport participate in SgIS and have a strong focus on nurturing talents. Kick-start your career and advance in personal and professional development through the SgIS Scholars' Development and Engagement Programme.

As next-generation industry leaders, hone your skills through induction programmes and internships, gain insights through interactions with leaders from different sectors at Leaders' Forums and expand your network through the SgIS Scholars' Network.



Singapore Land Authority

The Singapore Land Authority (SLA) is a statutory board under the Ministry of Law. SLA optimises land resources and data for the economic and social development of Singapore.

As an SLA scholar, you will play a crucial role in optimising the management of land resources and geospatial technology to generate greater value for state properties and assets to benefit the communities.

You will play a part in shaping Singapore's landscape with SLA's prestigious local and overseas scholarships. Embrace innovation, challenge the status quo and make a lasting impact on our homeland.



Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, Singapore Management University (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, 40 per cent of SMU's first-year students are 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 and the Yip Pin Xiu Scholarship that honours excellence in sports, amongst a wide range of scholarships and awards.



Singapore Maritime Foundation

Established in 2004, the Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF) fosters collaboration between the public and private sectors, promotes Singapore as an International Maritime Centre (IMC) and develops a strong talent pipeline to support the continued growth of Maritime Singapore.

The MaritimeONE Scholarship Programme is an initiative led by SMF and its maritime partners to nurture talent for Singapore's maritime sector. Sponsored by leading industry organisations, the scholarship supports a wide range of local diploma and degree courses. Beyond financial assistance, participating sponsors also offer MaritimeONE scholars potential internship and career opportunities.



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 at 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 and policy conceptualisation skills as well as command and leadership abilities.



SPH Media

Your journey into the media industry starts here. SPH Media Journalism Scholarships provide a head start in developing your craft, enabling you to tell meaningful stories and create impactful content that reflects the heart of communities.

You will work side by side with experienced journalists and editors, learning what it takes to craft compelling print features, produce multimedia content and engage audiences in thoughtful, innovative ways. As Singapore's trusted news organisation, SPH Media provides a strong foundation in journalism, with immersive internships, guided mentorship and diverse pathways to begin a meaningful career in the media industry.

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ADVERTORIAL

'I've got my finger on the pulse of financial markets'

This MAS scholar's role at Singapore's central bank allows him to tackle critical issues to benefit society



When he accepted the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) Undergraduate Scholarship after his A levels, Fan Jia Rong, now 32, knew he would be embarking on a unique and impactful career path.

"MAS stood out to me, given its multiple roles as a central bank, integrated financial regulator and developer of Singapore as an international financial centre," says Jia Rong.

With the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship, Jia Rong graduated with a bachelor's degree in economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and a master's degree in finance from Princeton University.

Today, Jia Rong is part of the Monetary and Domestic Markets Management Department which implements Singapore's exchange rate-centred monetary policy.

On a regular basis, Jia Rong closely monitors economic and financial market developments, gathers market intelligence, and buys or sells Singapore dollars in the foreign exchange market when needed. In doing so, he and his team help to keep Singapore's inflation low and stable, supporting sustainable economic growth.

"What I enjoy most about this job is having my finger on the pulse of financial markets every day," he says.

Beyond implementing monetary policy, Jia Rong was also given opportunities to work closely with MAS' leadership and to represent MAS internationally on a range of critical global issues. For instance, in 2023, Jia Rong helped prepare recommendations

on how the international financial system could be reformed to better mobilise financing in support of not just developmental outcomes but also global public goods, such as pandemic preparedness and climate mitigation.

"While Singapore may be small, we can play an important part in global discussions by exchanging ideas and experiences, building a shared consensus and helping to mobilise collective action," he points out.

Harnessing new technologies

More recently, Jia Rong learnt and applied generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in his work, through partnerships with leading financial institutions, as part of efforts to drive the adoption of quantitative analytics in MAS' Markets and Investment Group.

Jia Rong was also part of the MAS team that participated in Bloomberg's inaugural Code Crunch Singapore Hackathon in October 2025, winning both the Judges' Pick and the Most Popular Award for their GenAI-powered dashboard that analyses, quantifies and visualises market-moving news to help inform investment decisions.

"MAS' strong teamwork culture and collegial environment were especially conducive for our team's experimentation and ideation process, as we explored potential GenAI use cases for market surveillance and portfolio analysis," Jia Rong says.

Since joining MAS, Jia Rong has had numerous opportunities to learn and grow on the job. He started off as an economist in the Macroprudential Surveillance Department, where he analysed market

▲ Fan Jia Rong helps to maintain stability in the Singapore dollar, which is important for medium-term price stability and sustainable economic growth. PHOTO: SPH MEDIA

developments to assess the financial sector's resilience to economic and financial shocks.

He now applies and refines these analytical techniques in the Monetary and Domestic Markets Management Department, where he monitors the foreign exchange market.

The diverse background of MAS staff has helped to promote interdisciplinary learning, which is especially critical given the increasingly complex and cross-cutting nature of MAS' work.

Besides gaining technical knowledge, Jia Rong has also had opportunities to be mentored and be a mentor, as part of MAS' internal mentorship programme.

"As a student, I knew I wanted to apply my interest in economics and finance in a way which would have a tangible impact on Singapore," he says.

"Working at MAS continues to fulfil that aspiration. It has been an incredibly rewarding journey."

"I wanted to apply my interest in economics and finance in a way which would have a tangible impact on Singapore. Working at MAS continues to fulfil that aspiration."

FAN JIA RONG
Recipient of the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship

About the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship

▶▶ The MAS Undergraduate Scholarship offers outstanding individuals a fulfilling career that impacts the Singapore economy, supports regional development and connects global markets.



Scan for more on the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship.

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Monetary Authority of Singapore

Seeking an exciting and purposeful career?

The MAS Undergraduate Scholarship offers outstanding individuals a fulfilling career that serves the Singapore economy, supports regional development, and connects global markets.

As the central bank, financial regulator, and developer of the financial sector, MAS plays a critical role in shaping the future of finance, promoting financial stability and innovation, while greening the financial ecosystem.

As an MAS scholar, you'll have the opportunity to be part of this important work.

Apply for the MAS Undergraduate Scholarship now!



For more information on the MAS Undergraduate Scholarships, scan the QR code or log on to www.mas.gov.sg