

## Overview

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# COUNTRY: SINGAPORE

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Country Specific Guide

THE HEADMASTER

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## Singapore

### Singapore Educational System

The educational system in Singapore is highly regarded for its excellence and has been recognized internationally for its achievements. It places a strong emphasis on academic rigor, holistic development, and lifelong learning. Here is some detailed information about the Singaporean educational system:

#### **Pre-School Education:**

- Playgroup/Nursery: Typically for children aged 3 to 4 years, providing a nurturing and play-based learning environment.
- Kindergarten: For children aged 4 to 6 years, focusing on the development of foundational skills in areas such as language, numeracy, and social interaction.

#### **Primary Education:**

- Primary 1 to Primary 6 (P1 to P6): Compulsory education for children aged 6 to 12 years, where students develop core academic skills and a strong foundation in subjects like English, Mother Tongue (e.g., Chinese, Malay, Tamil), Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Art.

#### **Secondary Education:**

- Secondary 1 to Secondary 4 or 5 (S1 to S4 or S5): Compulsory education for students aged 13 to 16 or 17 years, where they continue to build on their academic knowledge and skills.
- GCE O-Level: National examination taken at the end of Secondary 4, usually by students aged 16 or 17. It assesses a wide range of subjects and serves as a benchmark for academic achievement.

#### **Post-Secondary Education:**

- Junior College (JC):
  - Pre-University 1 and 2 (P1 and P2): A two-year program for students aged 17 to 18 or 19, preparing them for university-level studies.



- GCE A-Level: National examination taken at the end of JC education, typically by students aged 18 or 19. A-Level results are crucial for university admissions and scholarships.
- Polytechnic:
  - Diploma courses: Three-year programs offering practical and industry-oriented education across various fields. Polytechnic graduates can enter the workforce or pursue further studies.
- Institute of Technical Education (ITE):
  - Nitec (National ITE Certificate): Typically a two-year vocational course providing hands-on training and practical skills.
  - Higher Nitec: A higher-level vocational course, usually taken after completing Nitec, offering more specialized skills and knowledge.

### **Tertiary Education:**

- Universities:
  - Bachelor's Degree: Undergraduate programs offered by universities such as the National University of Singapore (NUS), Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore Management University (SMU), and others.
  - Master's Degree: Postgraduate programs following the completion of a bachelor's degree.
  - Doctorate (Ph.D.): The highest level of academic degree, typically requiring independent research and a dissertation.
- Private Institutions: Various private educational institutions offer diploma, degree, and postgraduate programs in diverse fields of study.

### Understand your options for higher education in Singapore

In Singapore, higher education offers a wide range of options for students to pursue advanced studies and obtain qualifications at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Here is detailed information about the various options available:

#### **Undergraduate Degrees:**

- **Bachelor's Degree:** A bachelor's degree is an undergraduate degree typically completed in three to four years of full-time study. Singaporean universities offer a

wide range of bachelor's degree programs across various disciplines, including arts, sciences, engineering, business, law, social sciences, computer science, and more.

These programs provide a comprehensive education in a specific field and often include a combination of coursework, projects, and internships.

- **Honours Degree:** Some bachelor's degree programs in Singapore offer an additional year of study to complete an honors degree. Honors degrees provide students with a more in-depth understanding of their field of study and often involve research or a substantial project. They are typically awarded based on academic performance.

### **Postgraduate Degrees:**

After completing an undergraduate degree, students can pursue postgraduate study to further specialize in their chosen field or explore new areas of interest. The main types of postgraduate degrees in Singapore include:

- **Master's Degree:** Master's degrees are pursued after completing a bachelor's degree and provide an opportunity to specialize in a specific area of study. Singaporean universities offer a wide range of master's degree programs, such as Master of Arts (MA), Master of Science (MSc), Master of Business Administration (MBA), Master of Engineering (MEng), and more. The duration of master's programs can vary from one to two years of full-time study.
- **Ph.D. Degree:** Ph.D. (Doctor of Philosophy) degrees are the highest level of academic achievement and are pursued by individuals interested in advanced research and academia. Ph.D. programs in Singapore offer opportunities for original research and contributions to the chosen field. These programs typically require three to five years of full-time study and involve the submission of a doctoral thesis.

### **Type of Bachelor's Degrees**

- Bachelor of Arts (BA)
- Bachelor of Science (BSc)
- Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
- Bachelor of Engineering (BEng)
- Bachelor of Laws (LLB)
- Bachelor of Arts in Education (BAEd) or Bachelor of Science in Education (BScEd)

### **Types of Master's Degrees**

- Master of Arts (MA)
- Master of Science (MSc)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master of Engineering (MEng)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Master of Business Administration (MBA)
- Master's Degree in Law (LLM)
- Master of Fine Arts (MFA)

### **Types of Doctorate Degrees**

- **Edd** – Doctor of Education
- **MD** – Doctor of Medicine
- **Ph.D.** – Doctor of Philosophy

## Find the best college for you

Getting to understand your options for higher education in Singapore is the preliminary step to beginning your search for the perfect college!

There are several factors to consider when deciding which college or university is right for you: rankings and accreditations, academics and courses offered, location, size, and—most importantly—whether it accepts international students.

With the number of colleges and universities in Singapore, we recommend taking the time to explore all of your options. You may find that the best choice for you is not the most obvious.

### How to find universities in Singapore

Identifying colleges and universities that are a good fit for your academic and social needs is crucial to your college application process.

### **Research Online**

Conduct an online search using search engines like Google. Use keywords such as "universities in Singapore" or "higher education institutions in Singapore" to find



comprehensive lists and information about universities in Singapore. You can browse through the search results to explore different university websites and gather information about the programs they offer.

### **Speak to a College Advisor**

Speaking to a higher education expert, one who is properly trained and certified by an external organization, is a great way to understand which colleges match your academic interests, personal preferences, and professional goals. This can save time compared to researching online—and can help you quickly focus on the universities and colleges that have what you want.

### **Government Websites**

The Ministry of Education (MOE) in Singapore maintains an official website that provides information about universities, polytechnics, and other higher education institutions in Singapore. The website offers resources, links, and information about accreditation, scholarships, and educational policies in Singapore.

### **Attend a College Fair**

Attend education fairs and events that showcase UK universities. These events provide an opportunity to interact directly with university representatives, gather information about courses and admission procedures, and ask questions. Keep an eye out for education fairs in your country or online events organized by universities or education agencies.

### **College Websites**

One of the most reliable sources of information is the college's website. Almost everything you want to know – from the choice of majors and programs to dormitories to application details – everything can be found on the website. Not just this information, websites are generally illustrative of a school, its students, and its mission.

### **Web-Based Portal Programs**

Many high schools offer online portals that allow students to research, track, and plan their college admissions. These are usually free of charge to students and families. Ask your school if they have any particular online portals that can help you with your research.



### **Search Tools**

College search tools on the internet are an easy and fun way to do your research. These sites offer a large number of databases of comprehensive information on thousands of colleges and universities. Some sites also act as portals with direct links to the home pages of colleges. Other sites also allow students to help identify schools by inputting different criteria, such as location, academic interests, affiliations, GPA, etc.

### **Understanding a College's Academic Reputation**

#### **Rankings**

Many organizations, such as Times Higher Education, QS World University Rankings, and U.S. News & World Report, release annual rankings of colleges and universities in Singapore and globally. These rankings take into account factors such as research output, reputation, and student satisfaction.

#### **Subject-Specific Rankings**

Look for subject-specific rankings that evaluate universities in specific academic disciplines. These rankings provide insights into the strength and reputation of a college's individual departments or faculties. Examples include the QS World University Rankings by Subject and the Guardian University Guide Subject Rankings.

#### **Accreditation**

Singapore has several accreditation bodies, such as the Ministry of Education (MOE), Council for Private Education (CPE), Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC), and Joint Professional Accreditation Board (JPAB) that are responsible for ensuring that colleges and universities meet certain standards of quality and academic reputation.

#### **Reputation Surveys**

Surveys are conducted by different organizations and websites such as "The Good Universities Guide" and "Top Universities" asking employers, academics, and students to rate the reputation of different colleges and universities.

### **Graduate Employment**

The graduate employment rate and the average salary of graduates of a college or university can also be an indicator of the academic reputation of the college or university. Many universities and external organizations collect and publish data on graduate employment rates and outcomes. This information provides insights into the proportion of graduates who secure employment shortly after completing their studies and the types of jobs they enter. Universities often publish this information on their websites or through official reports.

### **Alumni Network**

A college or university's alumni network can also be a good indicator of its academic reputation. Many colleges and universities have active alumni associations and networks, which can provide valuable information about the college or university's academic reputation.

### **Factors to consider when choosing a university in the Singapore**

When choosing which schools to apply to, look at tests required (academic standardized and English proficiency tests), costs, scholarships, international student services, campus facilities, and internships and job placement rates. Based on your research, you can narrow your application list down to target only the colleges and universities that meet your needs.

If you are an undergraduate, you might look closer at campus amenities, while graduate students—who are living on campus or not—might consider the area's off-campus quality of life, too.

- **Academic Reputation and Rankings:** Consider the academic reputation of the university and its rankings in national and international league tables. Look at university rankings such as the QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education World University Rankings, and the Guardian University Guide. A higher-ranked university often indicates a strong academic standing and quality of education.
- **Course Offerings and Suitability:** Evaluate the range of courses and programs offered by the university. Ensure that the university offers your preferred field of study and specific programs or majors that align with your academic interests and



career goals. Look into the curriculum, module options, and any specialized or interdisciplinary programs that may be of interest.

- **Entry Requirements:** Check the entry requirements for the courses you are interested in. Ensure that you meet the academic qualifications, English language proficiency requirements, and any other specific criteria set by the university or department.
- **Location and Campus:** Consider the location of the university and the campus facilities. Think about whether you prefer a university located in a big city, a smaller town, or a rural setting. Evaluate the campus facilities, such as libraries, laboratories, sports facilities, accommodation options, and student support services.
- **International Student Support:** If you are an international student, investigate the support services provided by the university for international students. Look for programs that offer orientation, visa support, English language support, cultural integration, and guidance on accommodation and living in the UK.
- **Student Satisfaction:** Explore the student satisfaction ratings and feedback about the university. The National Student Survey (NSS) provides insights into the overall satisfaction levels of students at different universities. Consider factors such as teaching quality, student support, facilities, and the overall student experience.
- **Research Opportunities:** If you are interested in research or pursuing postgraduate studies, consider the research opportunities available at the university. Look into research centers, institutes, and the publication and funding records of the university's faculty. This can indicate the strength of research programs and potential opportunities for involvement.
- **Career Services and Employability:** Investigate the university's career services and support for students' employability. Look for information on graduate employment rates, career counseling, internship and placement opportunities, and alumni networks. Consider whether the university has strong connections with employers and industries relevant to your field of study.
- **Tuition Fees and Scholarships:** Consider the tuition fees and any available scholarships or financial aid options. Evaluate the cost of living in the location where the university is situated, including accommodation, transportation, and other living expenses.



- **University Culture and Student Life:** Take into account the university's culture, diversity, and extracurricular activities. Think about whether you prefer a more research-focused institution or a university with a vibrant social and cultural scene. Consider the availability of clubs, societies, sports teams, and other opportunities for personal growth and engagement.

### Questions for Undergraduate Students

As an undergraduate, you will likely spend a lot of your time on campus, so the campus experience is a crucial part of your decision. To narrow down the colleges on your application list, answer these questions:

- What do I want to study?
- Do I want to attend a large university or a small college?
- Should I go to a public college or a private college?
- Would I be happier at a college campus that is in the countryside, a small town, or a city?
- Which types of campus activities and student organizations do I want to join?

Colleges list their class size and average student-to-faculty ratio (i.e., how many students are on campus for every faculty member) on their websites so you can easily get a sense of the class sizes at the colleges that interest you. College websites will also list the programs available, as well as activities and student organizations.

### Applying to Colleges

#### Applying to colleges in Singapore

At this point, you may have a short list of colleges to which you want to apply—ideally, around five to ten universities in Singapore.

To streamline your application process, make sure you have everything you need to complete your applications ahead of time. Beyond filling out the application form, each university or college will have its own required application checklist. You will also need a valid passport, payment for your application fees, and, for some colleges, proof of financing.

### **Academic Certificates and Transcripts**

You will need to provide certified copies of your educational certificates and transcripts from your secondary and post-secondary studies. For undergraduate applicants, that means submitting transcripts from every institution you have previously attended: your complete secondary school academic transcripts, external exams, and (for transfer students) any prior colleges or universities.

### **English Proficiency Test Scores**

As an international student applicant, you will need to take at least one test to determine your English proficiency. You may also need to take other standardized tests to demonstrate academic proficiency. Ask in advance—a growing number of undergraduate colleges and graduate departments are now test-optional when it comes to the SAT/ACT or GRE/GMAT.

- Duolingo
- IELTS
- iTEP
- PTE Academic
- TOEFL

### **Undergraduate Academic Standardized Tests**

- ACT
- SAT

### **Personal Statement:**

Write a personal statement that showcases your interests, academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and reasons for choosing the specific course and university. The personal statement plays an important role in demonstrating your suitability and passion for the chosen field of study.

### **Letter of Recommendation**

Some selective colleges and universities will require you to submit Letters of Recommendation along with your transcripts and essays. Letters of recommendation should

be written by someone who has either taught you in a class and can speak to your academic abilities, or by an advisor who can provide a more well-rounded perspective on the kind of person you are.

### **Resume or CV**

Some colleges or universities would require you to submit your resume or CV outlining your work experience and achievements.

### **Interviews**

Once you have submitted your application, successful applicants will be shortlisted and sent out interview requests via email. The admissions team will travel to different cities in your home country to conduct these interviews or take remote/virtual interviews.