

# More options for SMU undergrads to explore

In new Exploratory Course, they can try out different courses without affecting grades

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In an effort to get students to move away from just focusing on scoring As, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is cutting the number of core modules for undergraduates, introducing six-month internships, and rolling out a new scheme where students can try out different courses without affecting their grades.

With the new Exploratory Course scheme effective immediately, a current law undergraduate could, for example, do a foreign language or pick up a psychology elective, and declare up to two of his passed grades for non-compulsory modules to be excluded from his cumulative grade point average (GPA) computation.

The SMU change comes after the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) introduced similar Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory (S/U) options some years back.

It is about nurturing students to be "what the world needs", SMU Provost Lily Kong said on Thursday in announcing the university's plans to enhance its undergraduate curriculum.

"It's a complex and volatile world out there - for our students to be able to navigate that world, to bring solutions to that world, they need the disciplinary and multi-disciplinary knowledge.

"They need intellectual and creative skills, and interpersonal skills. They need global citizenship and personal mastery," she added.

Professor Kong said the scheme allows students to try out those courses before deciding to commit fully to a second major or degree.

She added: "We expect that there will be some students who will try those courses and actually want to keep their grades when

they end up doing well because they've discovered a talent that they didn't know they had."

The scheme is similar to the S/U options in NUS and NTU, where students can have some courses excluded from the computation of their cumulative GPA.

In NUS, to have a module deemed Satisfactory and excluded from the GPA computation, a student must score a minimum C grade.

In NTU, students are allowed the option for up to 12 academic units (typically equivalent to three to four modules) worth of prescribed or unrestricted electives.

Students must exercise the option before the release of results.

The universities have other requirements before students are allowed to exclude the courses from their GPA computation.

Besides the Exploratory Course scheme, SMU is also revamping its core curriculum, which will be put in place for the next intake of freshmen next year.

Students will have to take 12 core modules, which include community service and an internship, down from the current 16 core modules. Internships and community service are also requirements now, though they are not credit bearing.

SMU is also introducing a work-study option where students can take up a six-month internship during a school semester. They will alternate between working at least four days and studying one day a week.

Typically, SMU students go on 10-week internships during the semester breaks.

The work-study option will be piloted selectively, starting with the health economics and management second major programme.

SingHealth will be one of the university's partners for this programme.

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## Options for students

Singapore Management University students are supposed to take six courses from Capabilities, four from Communities and two from Civilisations.

The options, which may be subject to further revision before the next academic year and do not reflect only new courses, include:

### CAPABILITIES

- Numeracy, which includes Fundamental Statistics
- Modes of Thinking, which includes Innovation and Creative Thinking
- Managing, which includes Business, Government and Society; and

- Entrepreneurship and Value Creation
- Writing and Reasoning
- Internship

### COMMUNITIES

- Economics and Society
- Technology and Society, which includes Artificial Intelligence and Society
- Cultures of the Modern World, which includes Foreign Languages
- Community Service

### CIVILISATIONS

- Ethics and Social Responsibility
- Big Questions