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Headline: How SMU transforms today's students for tomorrow

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SMU graduates are future-ready and highly employable.

PHOTO: SMU

Long before "future-ready" became a buzzword, Singapore Management University (SMU) set out to prepare its students for an uncertain time ahead.

The only local university located in the heart of downtown Singapore, SMU stands out for its broad-based curriculum, academic rigour and holistic experience. These prepare students with key skills for various careers and life journeys — not just for the present, but for the future.

Established to be a different university, SMU takes a transformative education approach. Instead of lectures, SMU employs seminar-style teaching and highly interactive learning in small-sized classes. Students become adept in critical thinking, innovation, communication and presentation skills.

In fact, 99 per cent of participants in the latest Joint Graduate Employment Survey (GES) indicated that their SMU educational experience has been impactful, while 91 per cent felt that SMU prepared them well in communications and presentation skills. The annual survey is conducted by Singapore's five autonomous universities.

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The university is currently home to 10,000 students in six schools in the disciplines of accountancy, business, economics, information systems, law, and social sciences.

## **SMU GRADUATES ARE HIGHLY EMPLOYABLE**

Graduates from Singapore's third local autonomous university have always had a robust employment rate and high starting salaries. Its graduate employment track record has been excellent, even during challenging economic times.

The latest GES shows that 93.8 per cent of SMU graduates in the labour force were employed within six months of completing their final examinations, with more than half being offered jobs before graduation. More than half of those in full-time employment received two to six job offers.

SMU also topped local universities on graduate employment rate, partnerships with employers and employer-student connections in this year's QS Graduate Employability Rankings. Such collaborations create more real-world experiences that enhance students' employability.

## **SMU'S INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM: EQUIPPING STUDENTS WITH HARD SKILLS FOR VERSATILE PATHS TOMORROW**

One of SMU's strengths lies in its broad-based yet specialised curriculum.

The university prepares students for a wide variety of professions and industries through its multi-disciplinary and forward-thinking curriculum. At the same time, students can deepen knowledge in one or two areas of study.

### **New programmes at SMU**

- Information Systems and Innovations
- Business Process Analysis and Solutioning
- Smart-City Management & Technology major
- Integrated Bachelor-Master programme

These are new offerings under the School of Information Systems' (SIS) revamped curriculum. Students will learn to translate and integrate consumer, enterprise, government and social requirements into innovative IT-enabled solutions, and understand challenges and opportunities arising from technology and how information systems can be used to create value and innovation.

- Politics, Law and Economics (Major)

The first-of-its-kind multi-disciplinary major offered by the School of Social Sciences inculcates a deeper understanding of global political and economic transformations within legal contexts.

- Entrepreneurship (Major)

Targeted at students who are interested in setting up their own start-ups or social enterprises. This is Singapore's first entrepreneurship major.

- Analytics specialisations across various disciplines

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These allow students to obtain insights into analytics — a much sought-after skill in today's marketplace. The Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB) offers new specialisations in Analytics, applied specifically to Finance, Operations Management and Marketing sectors. The School of Accountancy (SoA) offers a new Accounting Analytics track.

### **Revamped curriculum: School of Information Systems**

The School of Information Systems (SIS) has introduced a revamped curriculum and new courses. Strong applicants can admit directly into the integrated programmes, completing the Master of IT in Business or Master of Applied Information Systems in addition to the bachelor's degree, in four years.

Students can look forward to a new Smart-City Management & Technology major in August 2017. This interdisciplinary major is offered by the SIS in collaboration with the School of Social Sciences (SoSS). It aims to nurture graduates who innovate solutions to urbanisation challenges by applying interdisciplinary knowledge across technology, social sciences and management. There are experiential learning opportunities to apply the solutions in state-of-the-art smart city initiatives.

### **New major: Politics, Law and Economics**

A new major on Politics, Law and Economics (PLE) by SoSS is drawing keen interest from students – it was 25 times oversubscribed last year. Said Subramanian S/O Narayanan from the PLE major's inaugural cohort, "The PLE major combines three disciplines which I was extremely interested in, into one singular four-year programme, which is holistic and extremely unique for Singapore."

He added, "Employers everywhere are increasingly looking out for individuals who are competent in not one, but multiple areas. I hope that the PLE major will provide me with a wide variety of employment options once I graduate."

### **New major: Entrepreneurship**

The cutting-edge Entrepreneurship major by the Lee Kong Chian School of Business (LKCSB) enables students to create and grow business ideas through electives and entrepreneurship study missions to creative hives such as Silicon Valley. This is one of nine majors offered by LKCSB.

### **Solving real-world problems: SMU-X**

The innovative and award-winning SMU-X is lauded by an external education review committee as a world-class programme. The experimental and experiential learning pedagogy introduced by SMU challenges students to tackle real-world problems faced by actual organisations. The three-way interaction for students, faculty and organisations goes beyond classroom knowledge, accelerating innovative collaboration and learning through hands-on projects.

Over 3,500 students have worked with about 200 partners on 500 projects since SMU-X courses were first introduced in 2015. From this year, all SMU undergraduates will have the opportunity to take at least one SMU-X module during the course of studies. They also enjoy the new lyf@SMU co-study, co-work and co-living environment within SMU Labs.

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## **Preparing for a more digital world**

In response to the disruptive landscape, SMU introduced a compulsory core module called "Managing in a VUCA Context" in 2015. Its goal is to prepare students to deal with challenges and solve problems in a VUCA – short for Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous – world.

"The Internet of Things (IoT): Technology and Applications" elective is also new. Digital literacy skills have also been incorporated into the core curriculum to strengthen the digital and innovation capabilities of all students.

Students can customise their studies from the flexible and rigorous curriculum, choosing from 300 combinations of double majors and double degrees across 42 majors and tracks. Over 70 per cent of SMU students graduate with either double degrees or double majors.

Regardless of specialisation, all students must complete SMU's core curriculum, which prepares students with the breadth and depth in foundational and comprehensive skills and knowledge.

## **A DYNAMIC ENVIRONMENT DESIGNED FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

An innovative curriculum must be supported by world-class facilities for more conducive learning. Although SMU is only 17 years old, it is already enhancing its city campus. The university grounds are highly accessible and porous, and well-connected via the underground concourse and direct link to Bras Basah MRT station.

Incoming students can look forward to the brand-new seminar rooms, study spaces, an amphitheatre and jogging track in SMU Campus Green, and a three-storey fitness centre. The transformed SMU Campus Green will add new energy and activities to Bras Basah and the Civic District.

The newly-opened building for the School of Law (SoL) benefits current law students and the larger university population, and adds to the present six buildings on campus. A key feature is the Kwa Geok Choo Law Library, named in memory of the late Madam Kwa Geok Choo, wife of former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew. Located near the Supreme Court, the building also houses the David Marshall Moot Court and other research centres.

The university also leased the former Vanguard building to create SMU Labs — a 24/7 space for learning and collaboration. The new lyf@SMU is a dynamic and trend-setting co-study, co-work, co-living environment within SMU Labs. Jointly invested and managed by SMU and Ascott, lyf@SMU is also a 'living lab' where applied research simultaneously takes place. There are plans for a new SMU-X building by 2019.

Through the combination of a unique curriculum, innovative pedagogy and state-of-the-art facilities, students transform into well-rounded leaders who are versatile, bold, articulate and contextually aware, and who have better prospects to make a meaningful impact in a rapidly changing world.

Visit SMU's website at <https://admissions.smu.edu.sg/programmes> for more information.