



Media Release

SMU marks the opening of its new 2023 Academic Year with a freshmen orientation, a mega CCA Fair and a special opening ceremony

Singapore, 11 August 2023 (Friday) – The Singapore Management University (SMU) welcomes its latest cohort of about 2,500 freshmen. The 24th cohort will begin the Academic Year 23/24 from Monday, 14 August 2023.

To set the stage for an enriching university life, [SMU Freshmen Orientation ‘SMUniverse’](#) offered a valuable platform for incoming students to cultivate new friendships and be immersed in the vibrant SMU culture. The event also aimed to orientate new students to the SMU Curriculum and introduce the varied co-curricular activities on offer. The in-person programme provided many interactive opportunities, where freshmen navigated campus grounds and played engaging games centered around the [SMU CIRCLE values](#). Held over three days with three sessions in July and early August, the orientation involved 43 passionate student organisers, more than 190 student facilitators, game masters and staff trainers. A total of 1550 freshmen took part in the activities.

Watch highlights of Freshmen Orientation [here](#).

In addition, [Vivace, SMU’s annual CCA fair](#) with more than 150 student clubs, showcased the best of Student Life. These ranged from sports, performing and visual arts, community service, to entrepreneurial and international student organisations, all offering students invaluable opportunities to network and hone teambuilding, leadership and time-management skills. Held on 10 and 11 August, it featured an exciting lineup of CCA performances, interactive CCA booths and fringe activities such as a photobooth and games.

On 11 August, the **SMU Academic Year Opening** was held in the evening at the SMU Hall. About 580 guests comprising SMU Board of Trustees, senior management, faculty, staff, donors, alumni, freshmen (undergraduates and post-graduates) and student leaders ushered in the new Academic Year with a Grand Procession, a 4-course dinner, and themed student performances.

This year, SMU Academic Year Opening celebrates the remarkable capabilities of human intelligence amidst the rise of artificial intelligence. Students are encouraged to develop the various types of human intelligences through academic and co-curricular activities, and reminded of the importance of a well-rounded education that encompasses emotional intelligence, interdisciplinary collaboration and the integration of AI as a complementary force. The theme also draws parallels between the start of an academic year and the dawn of a new technological era; both are opportunities to celebrate the exploration of limitless possibilities.

[New curriculum and courses with effect from AY2023/24](#)

Starting 14 August, the university's 24th cohort of freshmen will pursue degree programmes in accountancy, business management, economics, computing and information systems, law and social sciences. Through the [Core Curriculum](#), SMU aims to nurture distinctive identities in its graduates. Via SMU-X offerings, the University will also enhance opportunities for real-world, hands-on work exposure and multi-disciplinary learning.

The Integrated Co-curricular Management System and [Co-Curricular Transcript](#), a first in Singapore, was launched in April 2023 to strengthen SMU's mission to develop graduates with career-ready skills. The co-curricular transcript complements the academic transcript students receive upon graduation. Other than documenting activities students have participated in, it offers insights into skillsets they have developed in the process. The Transcript will indicate the extent a graduate has developed [SMU's Graduate Learning Outcomes](#) through co-curricular involvement, according to three levels of learning – Exposure, Integration and Transformation, with each level indicating a progressively more impactful experience.

SMU undergraduates will also have the opportunity to take up new offerings introduced for the first time in Academic Year 23/24. These include:

1. New Tracks by Schools

[Entrepreneurial students with a passion for societal concerns form the first crop of students elected into the College of Integrative Studies \(CIS\)](#)

CIS will offer the [Deferred Declaration of Degree \(D3\) programme](#) and Singapore's first [Individualised Major \(IM\)](#) programme to its first cohort this academic year. More than 100 students have been recruited into the programme.

Several students in this first cohort have a demonstrated passion for societal concerns and a goal of serving the community. Jamie Yau, 20, co-founded Empathly, an app to fight cyberbullying, while Leon Lee, 21, empowers youth to make a difference in the community. Both have chosen the [Deferred Declaration of Degree \(D3\) programme](#), which allows students to take the first year to explore their intellectual interests, before they eventually choose to design and customise their own unique major via the IM programme. Please refer to Annex A for the profiles of Jamie and Leon.

Entrepreneurial students taking the [Individualised Second Major \(ISM\)](#) offered by CIS will harness their interdisciplinary major to glean action-oriented insights, with a goal of applying the knowledge to their existing enterprises or upcoming projects. Lauren Koek, 20, who is majoring in Innovation & Psychology, intends to encourage the uptake of technology within the law fraternity via her not-for-profit startup. Pranav Krishna, 20, has founded multiple agencies focused on resource optimisation and aims to assess the social value that sustainability delivers via his major in Sustainable Social Development. Rachel Han, 22, who co-founded a startup that champions responsible consumption, is majoring in Urban Sustainability and Innovation in line with her passion for preserving the environment. Please refer to Annex B for selected profiles of SMU undergraduates taking the Individualised Second Major (ISM).

The ISM allows students from other SMU Schools to design an unconventional major that supplements their primary degree programme. Every ISM student is assigned a faculty advisor

who advises them in the design of their study plan based on the student's identified industry or societal challenge.

2. Exciting new SMU-X Courses

In addition, the University continues to ramp up its offering of [SMU-X](#) courses in the new academic year, with at least 55 SMU-X courses that undergraduates across all years can choose from. New SMU-X courses include a focus on interdisciplinary topics, such as 'Corporate Deals', offered by Yong Pung How School of Law (YPHSL). This course provides students with contextual understanding of the major types of corporate deals and an opportunity to tackle problems arising from these deals. Students will learn the key legal, financial, and business issues arising in corporate deals, including public equity and debt financing, as well as mergers and acquisition; and work on a venture capital investment project under the guidance of an industry partner.

Another new SMU-X course offered by YPHSL, 'Advanced Legal Writing: Student Publishing', provides students with opportunities to develop their legal writing skills, and to communicate their analysis in a manner helpful to both lawyers and non-lawyers. Students will work closely with industry mentors and submit their legal articles to the Singapore Law Journal or other reputable publications by the end of the course.

Beyond Singapore, students will have the opportunity to travel and work on exciting projects with our overseas partner organisations located in Indonesia, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand; including a new SMU-X Overseas course offered by School of Social Sciences to Malaysia, 'Overseas Project Experience: Arts Management and Cultural Exchange in Asia'. This course will familiarise students with approaches, models and strategies of cultural exchange and mobilities within the arts and cultural industries. Students will also learn about key trends and issues faced by non-profit organisations, especially arts companies, in developing and delivering projects that involve exchanges, interrelations and partnerships.

Another new SMU-X Overseas course offered by Lee Kong Chian School of Business to Vietnam, 'Overseas Project Experience: Digital Business Transformation Across Asia Practicum', will allow students to focus on the role of digital marketing, and how this can be combined with other digital tools to help companies improve their competitiveness and business performances in the digital age.

The University will be working with at least 100 local and overseas partners across the public, private and NGO sectors to roll out the SMU-X courses through the academic year.

[Scholarship and Financial Assistance Schemes Available](#)

At SMU, we practise a 'needs-blind' admission policy where no deserving student will be deprived of an education because of financial hardship. In FY2023, we have made available a total of around \$11 million in [financial aid](#) for students, combining university resources as well as donor-supported schemes. This is an 11% increase compared to that of FY2022 (and 29% compared to FY2021). Over the past 5 years, there had been a significant 60% increase in financial aid since FY2019.

Students can gain access to the financial aid via the [SMU Study Awards](#), [SMU Access grant](#), [Work Study Grant](#), [SMU Education Loan](#) and [SMU Student Computer Loan](#). Furthermore, there are donor-supported bursaries, study awards and needs-based scholarships available to students.

With 269 scholarships and bursaries that freshmen can apply for in the new academic year, close to 45% of the new intake may receive a scholarship or award from the University. Some of these give preference to students with financial needs, and all of them are bond-free.

Additionally, tuition fee financing schemes – in the form of the Tuition Fee Loan and Study Loan (both supported by the government), as well as the CPF Education Loan, are available for students. The former two are interest-free during the course of a student's studies. Via the Work Study Grant, SMU offers students help in seeking part-time employment on campus so that they may earn additional income. Currently, more than 104 students are working with various Offices in the University.

The University is committed to delivering a high-quality SMU education that will develop its students into confident, well-rounded young men and women, who are capable of being trusted leaders and responsible global citizens, and whose contributions will make meaningful impact in Singapore and beyond.

About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative, and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU's education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative, and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 12,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU comprises eight schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong Pung How School of Law, School of Social Sciences, College of Integrative Studies and College of Graduate Research Studies. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters', and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with its schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU's city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government, and the wider community.

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