

# Singapore

## Demographics for Singapore

Population:	4,425,720 (July 2005 est.)
GDP (by PPP method):	US\$120.9 billion
Currency (inc code):	Singapore Dollar (SGD)
Language(s):	Mandarin, English, Malay, Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochew, Tamil, other Chinese dialects, others
Internet country code:	.sg

## Primary and secondary education

### *Primary education*

Consists of a four-year foundation stage from primary one to four and a two-year orientation stage from primary five to six. The overall aim of primary education is to give students a good grasp of English language, mother tongue (Malay, Mandarin and Tamil are the main mother-tongue classes offered) and mathematics. This compulsory stage of education lasts six years and culminates in a national examination – Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) at the end of primary school.

### *Secondary education*

Students are placed in the special, express, normal (academic) or normal (technical) course according to how they perform at the PSLE. The different curricular emphases are designed to match their learning abilities and interests.

Secondary education lasts four to five years and students sit national examinations – GCEs – at the end of this period. Some secondary schools are independent and charge fees for both local and overseas students.

*Pre-university education*

Prepares students for the GCE “A” level examination at the end of the two-year junior college or three-year centralized institute course. Students who complete their pre-university education will receive a School Graduation Certificate ([www.moe.gov.sg](http://www.moe.gov.sg)).

**Higher education**

*Universities and colleges*

Singapore’s two public universities, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), have initiated a number of innovative programs, including the broadening of undergraduate education, the introduction of a core curriculum, collaborations with top foreign universities, and the establishment of inter-disciplinary centers.

Singapore’s two privately funded universities are the Singapore Management University (SMU) and Singapore Institute of Management (UniSIM). The foreign universities with campuses in Singapore are University of Chicago Graduate School of Business (Chicago GSB) and INSEAD. University of New South Wales, Singapore’s first foreign university, will also open its doors to students come 2007.

The three Singapore universities NUS, NTU and SMU admit students mainly based on their “A” level results. There is a recent trend of admitting a growing percentage of diploma holders from polytechnics. Increasingly, potential students are also judged on their non-academic capabilities, such as having an entrepreneurial spirit.

UniSIM takes a different approach in catering more to the working population and takes in a large percentage of diploma holders who are already in the workforce.

*Polytechnics*

The polytechnics are also a significant provider of continuing education and post employment professional development programs and services.

Polytechnics were set up with the mission to train middle-level professionals to support the technological and economic development of Singapore. Reflecting the wide range of abilities, aptitudes and interests of their students, the polytechnics seek to train students with relevant and specific skills for the workplace to give Singapore a competitive edge as we move into a knowledge-based economy. Today, polytechnic graduates are valued as practice-oriented and knowledgeable middle-level professionals, much sought after by industry.

**Structure of business and management education**

Bachelor in business, MBA, English and Chinese executive education and PhD programs are available in all Singapore business schools, including the privately-funded UniSIM, with the exception of the relatively new SMU which

does not offer PhD programs yet. Each school has tie-ups with foreign institutions for MBA and executive programs.

These degrees are also available from INSEAD, MDIS and Chicago School of Business which have campuses in Singapore.

Due to market demand, the schools are moving towards the trend of offering double-degree programs to increase the versatility of the graduates. NUS recently launched a five-year double Honours degree in business administration and law in March, 2005. SMU also allows its best students to do a four-year double-degree in business and another course of their choice, such as social science or economics.

All Singapore business schools have recognized the importance of having a broad-based education in the new economy and are moving away from focusing upon training of specialized skills. Business undergraduates can take double areas of specializations, such as in finance and marketing. Business is also offered as a minor to undergraduates from other faculties.

### *Degree titles*

Degrees offered by:

- *NUS* – Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA), Master of Business Administration, International MBA, Asia-Pacific Executive MBA (APEX-MBA) Program, UCLA – NUS Executive MBA, PhD/MSc, Executive Education Management Programs (in English as well as in Chinese).
- *NTU* – Bachelor of Accountancy, Bachelor of Business, Nanyang EMBA (English), Nanyang EMBA (Chinese), Nanyang MBA, Nanyang Fellows Program, MSc (Financial Engineering), MSc (with a specialisation), PhD.
- *Joint university programs* – Berkeley-Nanyang Advanced Management Program, SJTU-MBA, Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management, NTU-Waseda Double MBA Executive Programs, Executive Education (English), Nanyang Executive Program (Mandarin).
- *SMU* – Bachelor of Accountancy, Bachelor of Business Management, Bachelor of Science (Economics), Bachelor of Science (Information Systems Management), Bachelor of Social Science, Double Degree Program, MSc in Accounting, Economics and Finance, MSc in Applied Finance, MSc in Wealth Management.
- *UniSIM* – Bachelor of Arts in Communication – Full-time/Part-time, Bachelor of Business (Accountancy) – Full-time/Part-time, Bachelor of Business (Economics and Finance) – Full-time/Part-time, Bachelor of Business (Management) – Full-time/Part-time Bachelor of Business

(Marketing) Full-time, Master of Finance – Part-time, Executive MBA – Part-time, MBA International Management – Part-time, Doctor of Education in Human Resource Development – Part-time.

- *Chicago GSB* – Executive MBA.
- *INSEAD* – MBA, Executive MBA, Executive Education, PhD.

*General curriculum structures and cycle times*

For NUS, NTU and SMU, business undergraduates are required to take business foundation modules in the first one or two years of their studies before choosing an area of specialization towards the final year. Because of the increasing emphasis on having broad-based knowledge and a wider outlook, it is essential for them to read a required number of modules outside their faculty.

While there are part-time and full-time MBA programs, all undergraduate business programs are full-time, with the exception of UniSIM which caters to the working population. Each academic year consists of two semesters and starts in about August of each year, aligned with the US school calendars. Each semester is three to four months with a mid-semester break.

**General student numbers and demographics**

*NUS Business School*

Table I provides an overview of student statistics at NUS Business School.

*Nanyang Business School, NTU*

Nanyang Business School has a student population of about 1,500.

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1 Number of undergraduates	1,200 About 400 per intake 20 percent are international students
2 Undergraduate programs	Bachelor of Business Administration Bachelor of Business Administration (Honours)
3 Total number of MBA candidates (see details below)	297 (full-time) 119 (part-time)
4 Number of MSc candidates	36
5 Number of PhD candidates	58
6 Teaching methodology	Classes employ a variety of teaching style, including lectures, case studies, group discussions and site visits
7 Number of Alumni (degree programs)	25,469
8 Number of participants in non-degree programs	16,000

**Source:** [www.bschool.nus.edu/AbtUs/QuickFacts.htm](http://www.bschool.nus.edu/AbtUs/QuickFacts.htm)

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**Table I.** *An overview of student statistics at NUS Business School*

### *SMU*

SMU is home to 3,000 students.

### *UniSIM*

Student numbers at UniSIM are:

- Total student enrollment: exceeding 10,000.
- Total teaching faculty: about 500.
- Total number of graduands: more than 63,000.
- Number of graduates in 2004: about 5,100.
- Number of students admitted in 2004: about 6,500.
- Number of individual members: about 17,400.
- Number of corporate members: about 1,300.
- As a general guide, the teacher-student ratio is as follows:
  - classroom teaching 1:40;
  - lectures 1:100 to 500 (depending on the capacity of the lecture theatre);
  - tutorials 1:20 [www1.sim.edu.sg/sim/pub/gen/sim\\_pub\\_gen\\_content.cfm?mnuid=26](http://www1.sim.edu.sg/sim/pub/gen/sim_pub_gen_content.cfm?mnuid=26)

### *Chicago GSB*

Chicago GSB in Asia has about 160 students.

### *INSEAD*

INSEAD's Asia Campus has about 500 students.

## **Accreditations**

*NUS* – AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business) accreditation NUS was ranked as Asia's top MBA Program in Asia Inc, 2004.

*NTU* – EQUIS (European Quality Improvement System) and AACSB accreditation. The Economist Intelligence Unit ranked NTU among Asia's top five Business Schools in 2004.

*UniSIM* – In 2002, SIM was only one of two educational organizations to receive the Singapore Quality Class (SQC) in recognition of its business excellence. In 2003, SIM attained the Singapore Quality Class for Private Education Organisations. SIM was also granted accreditation by The Open University of the UK.

*INSEAD* – EQUIS and AACSB.

## **Affiliations, governance and financial structure**

NUS, NTU and SMU are funded mainly by the government but they are becoming more autonomous in their operations. They have flexibility in

structuring their degree courses according to their discretion, and are not under the Ministry of Education (MoE) which sets the guidelines for education in Singapore up to the pre-university level.

To enable more students with the academic potential to pursue a degree course, the government subsidizes 85 percent of the cost of attaining the first degree for NUS, NTU and SMU (<https://team.nus.edu.sg/registrar/info/ug/UGTuition2005-6.pdf>).

For the remaining 15 percent of the tuition fees, zero-interest bank loans are readily available, and parents can also opt to pay for their children using their Central Provident Fund, savings of the working population as required by the government. The second degree, however, will have to be fully self-funded.

UniSIM degree education is not subsidized by the government. Nonetheless, SIM Scholarships and SIM International Scholarships for local and foreign students respectively are available, among other financial aids like the various bursaries.

UniSIM's organization structure consists of a governing council which is chaired by the CEO of Singapore Exchange and an advisory panel which is made up of professors from local and overseas universities, including the dean of Nanyang Business School in NTU.

Owing to the attempt to shift away from reliance on the government for funding such as to increase autonomy, tuition fees across all the business schools have been on a gradual rise in the recent years, a trend that is expected to continue.

### **Faculty characteristics**

In Singapore business schools, the faculty is highly qualified and many have graduated from the world's top business schools such as Yale and Stanford.

In NUS Business School, close to 100 percent (97 out of 103) of the full-time faculty members hold PhDs ([www.bschool.nus.edu/AbtUs/QuickFacts.htm](http://www.bschool.nus.edu/AbtUs/QuickFacts.htm)).

The figure is similar for NTU at about 90 percent.

For the relatively new SMU, already 84 percent of its full-time faculty members hold PhDs.

The percentage, however, is lower in the private educational institution UniSIM, 100 percent of Chicago GSB's faculty hold PhDs and a significant number are Nobel laureates. Similarly, 100 percent of INSEAD's faculty are PhD holders:

- Estimated number of institutions with undergraduate business degree programs: 5.
- Estimated number of institutions with business Master's degree programs: 6.
- Estimated number of institutions with business Doctorate degree programs: 5.

**Most important issues facing business schools in the country**

- To become increasingly globalized. (Through joint degrees with foreign business schools and exchange programs, etc.) Graduates will have greater exposure to the world and provide fresh insights to initiate changes into existing systems.
- To gain greater global recognition through international ranking, e.g. NUS aims to have more researchers publishing in the leading academic journals and to aim to be in the top ten universities in the world.
- Increased competition – local and international – for students, faculty, private-sector funds.

**Professor Lim Chin**  
*NUS Business School*

