



*National University of Singapore
Pharmaceutical Society*

SEP Booklet (for Incoming Students)



International
Pharmaceutical
Students' Federation



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1. Singapore

1.1 Brief history

The name “Singapore” originated from the Malay term “Singapura”, which means “Lion City”. The island was named after a prince of Palembang, Sang Nila Utama, saw a strange beast that resembled a lion. The island gradually became a British colony from 1819, with the arrival of Sir Stamford Raffles in January 1819 who transformed Singapore into a new port island. With the establishment of a trading post, Singapore became an important port in the South-East Asian region. During World War II, Singapore was invaded and occupied by the Japanese from 1942 to 1945. After the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, Singapore returned to British rule. In September 1963, Singapore became a state of Malaysia, before separating in August 1965, to officially become the independent Republic of Singapore, due to political, economic and racial strife.

1.2 Climate

The weather is generally warm and humid year-round, with occasional rain showers. Notably, Singapore experiences 2 monsoon seasons from December to March and from June to September bringing about heavier rainfall. It is recommended to always have an umbrella just in case of any unexpected rain showers. In general, people value comfort in the humid climate, opting for single layer T-shirts and shorts as they go about their day.

1.3 Culture

Singapore is a cosmopolitan city and has a melange of South Asian, Southeast Asian and Eurasian culture influence.

Ethnicity and Religion

Singapore is a multi-ethnic society where Chinese, Malay and Indian and various other traditions coexist in one space. The main religions in Singapore are Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.



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Languages

Many Singaporeans are bilingual and most of them speak English and their mother tongue language (Mandarin, Malay or Tamil). Over time, Singaporeans have developed our own style of English: Singapore Colloquial English (Singlish), intertwining various languages and dialects into our daily conversations. Singapore Standard English is similar and related to British English spelling and grammar.

Festivals

The major public holidays reflect the various racial diversity in Singapore. Usually, every major race and religion receives 2 public holidays each per calendar year. Additionally, concerts, parties and sporting festivals happen year-round locally.

Laws

On top of notable laws banning public drinking daily from 10.30pm to 7am, and littering in general, Singapore has a hard stance on drug use, which is mirrored by NUS' policies for vaping. As of 1 Sept 2025, enhanced measures include eviction of first-time offenders from campus hostels and being ineligible for future on-campus housing. Those found with vapes that contain drugs like etomidate face suspension and withdrawal of privileges, with exchange students being at risk of deportation.

In short, one is strictly not allowed to consume alcohol, smoke or vape (of any kind) on campus.



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1.4 Essentials

Currency

The Singapore dollar (Sign: S\$; Code: SGD) is the official currency of Singapore.

It is normally abbreviated with the dollar sign \$, or S\$ to distinguish it from other dollar-denominated currencies.

You may check the current exchange rates at:

<http://www.xe.com>

Note that foreign currencies will not be accepted, except for Brunei Dollar (Sign: B\$; Code: BND).

Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) can be found almost everywhere around Singapore, especially at MRT stations and shopping malls. Card payments such as Mastercard and Visa are very common in Singapore.

As Singapore transits towards a cashless society, most retail shops and stalls in hawker centres have the **SGQR label**, a single standardised QR code for e-payments and combines multiple payment schemes. There are also stores that are now fully cashless, so do set up the required e-payment applications (e.g. PayLah, NETS) or bring along a local friend to help.

Food

Around Singapore, dining options range from affordable hawker centres/food courts (\$3-\$10+ per person) to pricier restaurants which typically start at around \$10 for their cheapest dishes. Many people consume food from hawker centres, especially during lunch/dinner. In fact, there are neighbourhood gems that are worth trying nearby NUS, like Ru Ji Kitchen at Queenstown.

On campus, there are canteens located at the respective faculties, like Frontier for the Faculty of Science. Other prominent eateries include a few restaurants and stalls at University Town and Yusof Ishak Hall. Prices on campus are affordable and comparable to hawker centres.

Electronics

Singapore uses **Type G** power adapters (three rectangular pins), which is the same as the UK standard, with a standard voltage of 230V.

What is SGQR?

A single QR code that combines the QR codes of the different electronic payments

什么是SGQR?
SGQR是整合不同电子支付平台QR码的共用QR码

Apa itu SGQR?
Sebuah kod QR yang menggabungkan kod-kod QR bagi berbagai-bagai kaedah pembayaran elektronik

SGQR என்றால் என்ன?
SGQR என்பது பல்வேறு மின்னியல் கட்டணமுறைகளின் QR குறியீடுகளை ஒருங்கிணைக்கும் ஒரே QR குறியீடாகும்

How to pay?

如何进行电子付款?
Bagaimana untuk membuat bayaran?
எப்படிப் பணம் செலுத்துவது?

1. PICK
PICK and launch your preferred payment app
选择并启动您想使用的移动支付应用程序
PILIH dan gunakan aplikasi pembayaran pilihan anda
தேர்வு செய்து விருப்பம் கட்டணமுறையைத் தேர்ந்தெடுங்கள்

2. SCAN
SCAN the SGQR and check the merchant name
扫描SGQR码，并确认商家名称
IMBAS kod SGQR dan periksa nama penjual
SGQR குறியீட்டை ஸ்கேன் செய்து வணிகரின் பெயரைச் சரிபாருங்கள்

3. PAY
Enter the amount and PAY
输入所需支付的金额，进行电子付款
Masukkan jumlah dan BAYAR
கட்டணத் தொகையைக் குறிப்பிட்டு, பணத்தைச் செலுத்துங்கள்



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Healthcare

For medical help on campus, students can go to the University Health Centre (UHC). In more urgent or serious cases, you may consider going to the A&E at National University Hospital (NUH). On top of UHC and NUH, one may also visit General Practitioner (GP) clinics or public polyclinics from any of the 3 healthcare groups for consultation and acute care, with the nearest being Clementi Polyclinic.

1.5 Tourist Attractions

Singapore offers a great mix of activities you can explore! Ranging from refreshing walks in nature and exploring Singapore's diverse culture, you will be kept occupied with new and fun experiences during your semester in Singapore.

For more recommendations and information, visit <https://www.visitsingapore.com/en/>

1.5.1 Chinatown



Nearest MRT Stations: Chinatown (DT10 / NE4)

Chinatown is one of Singapore's iconic cultural treasures! Suited for lovers of culture, Chinatown provides endless opportunities for them to learn about and engage with Singapore's multi-cultural heritage. You can immerse yourself in the wonderful architecture of the Buddha Tooth Relic Temple & Museum, Sri Mariamman Temple and Masjid Jamae as you walk along the streets. Chinatown also boasts immensely good food, of both traditional and modern fusions, along its streets. Singapore's largest hawker centre is located there, where you can try out different tasty hawker food.



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If you are interested in looking within the temple compounds, please do take note of temple etiquette that typically apply to all temples and other places of worship. Wear conservative clothing that includes the covering of your shoulders, be it by a shawl or scarf. Visitors are advised not to wear form-fitting or revealing clothing. Pants or skirts should be at least able to cover the knees. Footwear is also typically removed and kept at the entrance where there will be a designated section.



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1.5.2 Little India



Nearest MRT Stations: Little India (DT12 / NE7)

Little India is another of Singapore's vibrant cultural troves. Their streets are full of unique and captivating architecture, attributing to historic buildings like the Sri Veeramakaliamman Temple, the Abdul Gaffoor Mosque and the Tan Teng Niah House, and creative street murals on the walls. A walk down Serangoon Road and in Little India Arcade will bring you through different elements of the rich Indian culture, both modern and historical, with stores selling a great variety of items like local treats, souvenirs and cultural clothing. Additionally, Mustafa Centre is also a famous shopping district in the area.

Likewise, if you wish to enter the temples, do take note of temple etiquette!



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1.5.3 Gardens by the Bay



Nearest MRT Station: Gardens by the Bay (TE22), Bayfront (DT16 / CE1)

Gardens by the Bay is an amazing place of nature in which nature lovers should visit! Its main attractions are the two huge flower domes, Cloud Forest and Flower Dome, both displaying wonderful floral exhibitions. You can enjoy an invigorating stroll in their picturesque gardens, and marvel at the iconic Supertree Grove, which becomes even more majestic at night when its lights are switched on. Nearby, you can also experience Singapore's hawker culture at Satay by the Bay, which sells many local delights.

You can buy the tickets to the two Domes online [here](#). Alternatively, you can buy it physically at the ticket counters next to the two domes. Other than the two domes, everywhere else in Garden by the Bays are free and open to the public.



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1.6 Transport

Public transport is the most accessible and affordable way to get around Singapore with the extensive Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) and public bus network connecting all parts of Singapore. Payment can be done via EZ-Link card or VISA/Mastercard (as long as the payment is in SGD, i.e. overseas payment is allowed). Alternatively, flagging taxis and private-hire vehicles booked through applications like Grab and Gojek are also alternative modes of transport around Singapore.



EZ-Link Card

Transport applications available for download on the Apple App Store and Google Play Store:

1. Getting around NUS: NUSNextBUS
2. Singapore Public Transport: MyTransport SG (for both bus and MRT with arrival timings)
3. Taxi / private hire car: Grab, GoJek, CDG Zig, TADA (Flagging a cab down on the road is still possible, but most people just use the app for reliability and convenience)



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1.7 Accommodation Options

NUS on-campus housing is not available for incoming IPSF-SEP students, and private accommodation is required. The estimated monthly cost for private housing typically ranges from SGD 1,500 to SGD 2,500. Refer to the following options.

- **Short-term private Hostel Rentals**
 - [Listing of Private Student Hostels](#)
 - [Hostels.com](#)
 - [Hostelbookers.com](#)
 - [Hostelworld.com](#)
- **Hotels**
- **Airbnb**
 - Be careful to check the listing and ensure proper and legal housing is provided. If in doubt, do contact the NUSPS SEO for assistance.
- **[Alternative Housing Options](#)**

Refer for more information in private accommodations: <https://nus.edu.sg/osa/student-services/hostel-admission/other-accommodation>

In the event of a dispute, you may consult CASE Singapore at <https://www.case.org.sg/> or contact them at: CASE Consumer Hotline: 6100 0315 (Hotline Operating Hours: Mon - Fri: 9am to 5pm).

Students are advised to understand the terms and conditions of the lease agreement and refer to the following housing scam advisories before signing any contract or placing a deposit:

- [Council for Estate Agencies \(CEA\) - Rental scams](#)
- [Singapore Police Force - Advisory on Resurgence of Rental Scams involving Scammers pretending to be Property Agents](#)



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2. National University of Singapore

2.1 Campus



NUS Campus



Navigating NUS



More about NUS



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2.2 Faculty of Science

NUS Faculty of Science (FoS) is a place for education and research on science. FoS offers around 12 primary majors such as Chemistry, Data Science and Analytics, Data Science and Economics, Environmental Studies, Food Science and Technology, Life Sciences, Mathematics, Pharmaceutical Science, Pharmacy, Physics, Qualitative Finance and Statistics. The department of Pharmacy is within the Faculty of Science.

In 2020, NUS has merged the Faculty of Science with the Faculty of Arts and Social Science (FASS) to deliver interdisciplinary education to students. Incoming students will first be admitted to the College of Humanities and Science (CHS) and they will study a carefully curated Common Curriculum before going on to select any major offered by FASS or FoS.

Although Pharmacy is within the Faculty of Science, Pharmacy students have a separate curriculum and are not required to take CHS modules.

2.3 Department of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences

The Department of Pharmacy remains the only tertiary education in Singapore that provides pharmacy education to nurture future pharmacists and pharmaceutical pharmacists. The primary aim of the pharmacy course is to equip graduates with the relevant knowledge and skills for entry into the pharmacy profession.

Mission

- To develop competent human capital for healthcare and pharmaceutical sectors that make a difference in human health.

Vision

- To be a leader in shaping healthcare through innovative pharmaceutical education, research and practice.



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2.4 National University of Singapore Pharmaceutical Society (NUSPS)

NUSPS is the official student body representing the core student population comprising undergraduates pursuing both Pharmacy & Pharmaceutical Science degrees in the NUS Department of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and Faculty of Science.

Mission

- To deepen the bonds within the Pharmily community, within and across different batches, by catering to a wide variety of needs and interests of the student body.
- To strengthen mutual cooperation between students and Department staff, by actively engaging staff in NUSPS events and similarly engaging students in Department events.
- To enhance the reputation of NUSPS within the local and international community to provide valuable opportunities for students to grow.

Vision: For Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science students to have a proud sense of belonging and identity to the Pharmily.

2.5 NUSPS International Relations Committee (IRC)

The IRC is one of the committees under the External cell of NUSPS and serves as the bridge between NUSPS and IPSF. Our committee plans or participates in events and activities that promote collaboration and friendship with student associations in other countries under the IPSF.

**NUSPS is a full member of the IPSF*

Committee Structure

- Student Exchange Committee: Organises the SEP and host international students from member countries
- Global Outreach Subcommittee: Supports the Contact Person in IPSF activities
- Internal Subcommittee: Responsible for increasing outreach among NUSPS students through internal events such as webinars and the Global Health Forum
- External Subcommittee: Responsible for increasing outreach with external organisations to create opportunities for international collaboration and promote IPSF activities
- Administrative Subcommittee: Supports all administrative tasks (e.g. Financial Claims)

Mission: Connect, Collaborate, Conquer

- To connect NUSPS students to international pharmaceutical associations through joint events hosted by IPSF and its Member Organisations



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- To provide avenues for pharmaceutical students to collaborate beyond borders and broaden their horizons
- To enable NUSPS students to conquer cultural barriers and build empathy, cultural awareness and open communication

Vision: Connecting NUSPS to the World, and the World to NUSPS



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3. Contact

3.1 Emergency

Emergency Ambulance & Fire	995
Non-Emergency Ambulance	1777
Police Emergency Emergency SMS (if it is not safe to talk)	999 70999
Dengue Hotline	1800 933 6483
Tourist Information Hotline	1800 736 2000

3.2 NUS Campus

Campus Security (Kent Ridge)	6874 1616
Drugs & Poisons (non-emergency)	6423 9119

4. Singlish phrases and practices

Stepping into a new country with a new set of practices and slangs can be daunting at times. Here are some commonly used Singlish phrases and practices to help you out!

4.1. Singlish

Aiyo - An expression of surprise/annoyance

Chope - Used to reserve or call 'dibs' on a place

Alamak - The Singlish equivalent of "Oh my gosh"

Sedap - Delicious

Makan - To eat

Shiok - Very enjoyable



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Dabao - Takeaway

Atas - High class

Lah/leh/lor/sia/meh - Filler words used to add emphasis (e.g. can lah! == yes, definitely)

Agak agak (pronounced agar agar) - Roughly

Kanchiong - In a rush, anxious/nervous

4.2. Practices

Calling an older person Uncle/Aunt - Although we may not be related, calling an older person Uncle/Aunt is a sign of respect!

Take off your shoes before entering someone's house/room - This applies to nearly every Singaporean household

'Chope' with a tissue paper - Don't be alarmed if you see tissue packets on tables during lunch hour, this just means that somebody has already reserved the table. Note: Please do **not** remove someone else's tissue packet!

Give up your seat - There are seats reserved for the elderly or handicapped on public trains and buses. While it is okay to sit on them, do give up those seats for someone who needs it more!

5. Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
IPSF	International Pharmaceutical Students' Federation
SEP	Student Exchange Programme
NUSPS	National University of Singapore Pharmaceutical Society
IRC	International Relations Committee
Host Organisation	A host is a pharmacist or any other professional related to the field of pharmacy who provides the work site. Potential hosts could be: - Hospital pharmacy and clinical pharmacy - Community pharmacy: Chain pharmacies or independent pharmacies are more likely to host students - University: Professors/ Lecturers



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Abbreviation	Description
	- Pharmaceutical industry: Pharmaceutical companies, Main areas of interest include clinical trials, regulatory affairs or quality control) - Pharmaceutical laboratories: Main areas of interest include quality control and research
Exchange Student	From any of the participating countries listed (https://www.ipsf.org/sep-countries)

6. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) (Adapted from IPSF)

- **Is there any employment pass required for these attachments?**

If the host organisation has allocated the student to be an observer only (i.e. no duties assigned), it is not required to obtain any passes.

However, if the host organisation wishes to provide work opportunities, there are 2 options in assisting their onboarding as students will not be on a student pass endorsed by NUS:

1. [Training Employment Pass \(TEP\)](#): Application by host organisation, duration of up to 3 months
2. [Work Holiday Pass](#): Application by student, duration of up to 6 months (*only limited to applicants from 10 countries as stated in the MOM website)

- **Visa & Insurance for the exchange student**

It is the responsibility of the exchange student to apply for their own visa to enter Singapore.

IPSF strongly recommends all exchange students to provide themselves with valid health insurance for the entire duration of the exchange and ensure that all proper visa and documentation papers are filled out correctly and on time.

- **Is there any internship allowance / remuneration?**

There is no internship allowance tagged to their internships.

However, the host organisation may offer allowance / remuneration, which should be discussed. Students are informed not to expect a salary from the exchange as it is not common practice. If the host decides to pay the student for their exchange, ensure that the amount and conditions are clearly outlined in the SEP Host Contract. It is advisable to have the exchange student sign a binding contract between the host, NUSPS IRC



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IPSF Student Exchange Officer and the student, so that the student is made aware of their obligations and requirements.

If any additional administrative fees are required by the host organisation, kindly inform us of the details and we can check if the applying students are agreeable with it.

- **What should be included in the contract between the host organisation and exchange student?**
 - a. Total working hours
 - b. Exact working hours (working days / week & number of hours / working day)
 - c. Any terms and conditions required by the host organisation

Does the host organisation provide accommodation for the exchange student?

It is not mandatory. IPSF guidelines on accommodation include a few options including student home stay, external accommodation (hostel, hotel, university dormitories, provided by host organisation). However, if the host organisation wishes to provide/pay for their accommodation, kindly inform us.

- **Must the exchange students be working full time in the office of the host organisation, or can they follow the “hybrid work arrangement” of the host organisation (if any)?**

The students may follow the "hybrid work arrangement" of the host organisation and are not required to be in office physically for every working day.

- **It is expected that there is a staff from the host organisation who will be mentor to the student intern. Is there an acceptable ratio of mentor to interns and compulsory in-person meetings expected every week?**

There are no guidelines on the mentor to student ratio nor compulsory in-person meetings given by IPSF. The host organisation may do what they are more comfortable with. Our past exchanges usually had 2 students to 1 mentor.



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- What is an example of a 4-week exchange for a student with a hospital placement?

Week	Department	Job Scope
1	Outpatient Pharmacy	- Controlled Drug Workflow - Screening of Prescription, 'Near misses and Interventions' - Observe counselling sessions
2	Women's Inpatient Pharmacy	- Attached to typist and packer - Observe checking and dispensing
3	Children's Inpatient Pharmacy Drug Information Services	- Accompany pharmacist to ward rounds - Observe medication reconciliation and dispensing processes
4	Children's Inpatient Pharmacy	- Follow up on discussion topics and questions asked in ward rounds - Observe counselling sessions