

## University Scholars Programme

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## University Scholars Programme

### What is University Scholars Programme?

The University Scholars Programme (USP) is a multidisciplinary, partially residential, academic programme for NUS undergraduates. An honours programme, USP is committed to providing a vast array of diverse opportunities for students to challenge themselves intellectually, socially, and personally. Students have the freedom to explore across disciplines, to pursue their passions and ambitions, and to lead and participate in a wide range of extracurricular and overseas programmes. Each year, 180 incoming undergraduates join our community of motivated and exceptional students.

### My Major + USP

Students admitted to USP are concurrently enrolled in one of seven faculties or schools in NUS – Arts and Social Sciences, Business, Computing, Design and Environment, Engineering, Law, and Science. They do 30% of their academic work in USP, and 70% in their home faculty or school. The total workload is the same as that of any other NUS undergraduate's.

### USP Curriculum

The USP curriculum focuses on developing analytical, reasoning, and thinking skills. Foundation modules focus on writing and critical thinking, and quantitative reasoning, and also help students situate their knowledge within the larger history of ideas. The inquiry modules provide opportunities to practise these skills—through multidisciplinary inquiry, independent research, overseas academic exchange and other out-of-the-classroom learning—and in so doing, inflect and refine them. The reflection module offers the space for synthesis, and encourages students to look back on their learning and ahead to post-university life. Many USP modules are inter- or multidisciplinary, while the curriculum as a whole (covering humanities, social sciences, sciences, and technologies) has a multidisciplinary structure. The USP classroom, in bringing together students from seven NUS faculties and numerous majors, has a multidisciplinary composition, thereby better preparing students for the modern workplace. All modules are conducted as small seminars and rely on strong interpersonal interaction and vigorous discussion. Having class sizes of 10 to 30 students facilitates a learning experience that is at once both targeted and collaborative, and brings about meaningful interactions with professors and among students.

### Overseas Experiences

USP encourages, and provides financial support for numerous overseas initiatives. These include exchange programmes at universities such as Delhi, Waseda, Sciences Po, Beida, Amsterdam, Bogazici, and the Australian National University; and study trips and expeditions to places such as the United States, Iran, Cambodia, India, and Turkey.

### USP Residential College

Multidisciplinary learning is richly integrated with residential living at the USP residential college. Located at NUS University Town, USP comprise of a residential block (Cinnamon College), two learn lobes with offices and classrooms, a multi-purpose hall, dining hall, reading room, multimedia laboratory and student lounges. Students take USP modules that are held in these premises. Facilities and programmes at the residential college are designed to cultivate an open and supportive environment that meets and develops students' needs and interests. Through organising and participating in the wide array of events and activities hosted at the residential college, interacting with diverse groups of people, and enjoying moments of solitude and reflection, USP students have the opportunity to create and develop close bonds of community and belonging.

All USP students will stay at the USP residential college in year one and a second year of their choice.

Some will stay on thereafter.

For up-to-date information, please visit [www.usp.nus.edu.sg](http://www.usp.nus.edu.sg)

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var url = jQuery(location).attr('href').split("#")[1]; if(url){ var numb = url.split("_")[1]; var rowpos =
jQuery('.views-table').eq(numb-1).position(); jQuery(window).scrollTop(rowpos.top); } jQuery(".views-
field-title").addClass("hideifnotable");

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## [3 Undergraduate Education](#)

### [3.1 Admission](#)

Students apply to join USP. Application is by academic and co-curricular transcripts, an essay, and an interview. Students are admitted based on their academic potential and co-curricular achievements, together with their passion, motivation, and curiosity.

Prospective students complete and submit separate applications to USP when they apply to NUS for admissions to any of USP's partner faculties or schools, namely, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), NUS Business School (BIZ), School of Computing (SOC), School of Design and Environment (SDE), Faculty of Engineering (FOE), Faculty of Law (LAW) and Faculty of Science (FOS). They can apply online through the USP admissions portal ([usp.sg](http://usp.sg)) by the closing date, which is typically on 2 April (or 1 day after the closing date for NUS application) each year. Shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview.

NUS students in their first semester may also apply to join USP during USP's second admissions exercise from 1 to 31 October each year.

USP is an academic programme and not a scholarship disbursement programme. USP students may however apply for NUS scholarships, or can be recipients of other scholarships. For details, please visit <http://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/scholarships>.

Students who are interested to pursue one of the double degree programmes available in NUS may also apply to USP, provided the two degrees are offered by our partner faculties or schools, with the exception of NUS Law. In most cases, students who are admitted to both programmes will need to extend their candidature in NUS in order to complete all the necessary requirements.

USP students can apply to change their course of study up to the end of their second year. The application will be subject to the review and approval of the Admissions Selection Committee in NUS, and the relevant faculties or schools involved.

USP students also live in a residential college – Cinnamon College (USP) in the University Town -- for two years, a key feature of USP since 2011. Upon acceptance to USP, students will proceed to apply to live in the residential college via the University Hostel Management System, administered by the NUS Office of Student Affairs.

## 3.2 Academic Structure and Requirements

An undergraduate in the University Scholars Programme takes 30% of his or her modules in USP and the remaining modules (70%) in his or her home faculty or school as well as from other faculties or schools. While in USP, the student is exempted from certain requirements that apply to students not in USP, such that all students, regardless of whether they are in USP or not, graduating with an honours degree, will have roughly the same overall requirements in terms of number of Modular Credits (MCs). In the event that the fit of the USP requirements with the home faculty or school is not perfect, it is possible that students may graduate with slightly more MCs compared to their non-USP peers.

### 3.2.1 For Students Matriculated Before 2012

USP students matriculated before Academic Year 2012/2013 are required to complete the First-Tier and Advanced curricula.

#### First-Tier Modules worth 32 Modular Credits

Students read eight First-Tier modules for intellectual broadening across three main Domains of skills and knowledge: (a) Writing and Critical Thinking, (b) Humanities and Social Sciences, and (c) Sciences and Technologies. Students can also opt to read the University Scholars Seminar module towards their First-Tier curriculum requirements.

See 3.2.1(A) for more details regarding the First-Tier Curriculum requirements.

#### Advanced Modules worth 16 Modular Credits

The Advanced Curriculum offers students sufficient choice and flexibility, whilst taking advantage of the best educational programmes available at NUS. Students will be able to fulfil the Advanced Curriculum requirements via one of the three options listed as follows:

1. Academic Inquiry, which allows students to pursue a Research-Intensive Programme or a Multidisciplinary Programme;
2. Cultural Immersion, upon completion of one of the specially designed programmes USP has with prestigious overseas partner universities, namely, Peking University, Waseda University and University of Delhi; and
3. Entrepreneurial Development, upon completion of the NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) programme or the innovative Local Enterprise Achiever Development (iLEAD) programme.

See 3.2.1(B) for more details regarding the Advanced Curriculum options.

USP strongly believes in developing students with a global mindset. A plethora of study-abroad opportunities are available to students through Student Exchanges, NUS Overseas Colleges, and joint or double degree programmes with prestigious overseas universities. Some of these opportunities are exclusive to, or primarily for USP students, such as:

- Ph.B./B.Sc. (Hons.) and Ph.B./B.A. (Hons.) Joint Degree Programmes (with the Australian National University)
- USP-Yuanpei Cultural Immersion Programme (with Peking University)
- NUS-in-Yale Summer Programme
- IARU Global Cross Disciplinary Tournament
- Student Exchange with the University of Oregon Clark Honors College

#### **3.2.1(A) First-Tier Curriculum**

Students in USP are classified as either

- Arts-based students (defined as students from FASS or BIZ), or
- Science-based students (defined as students from FOS, FOE or SOC)

Students from SDE may choose to be considered as Arts-based or Science-based students.

Compulsory module requirements:

Students must take

- the compulsory Writing and Critical Thinking module (students may choose from many sections offered under this module). They must read this module in their first or second semester of enrolment in USP, and
- one module from the list of modules designated as Singapore Studies themed modules within the USP curriculum.

Domain distribution requirements:

Domain	Number of modules required			
	Arts-based students		Science-based students	
	Option A	Option B	Option A	Option B
Writing and Critical Thinking	1	1	1	1
University Scholars Seminar	-	1	-	1
Humanities and Social Sciences	3	3	4	3
Sciences and Technologies	4	3	3	3
Total	8	8	8	8

The Humanities and Social Sciences as well as the Sciences and Technologies Domains are further divided into six areas of study:



<b>Areas of Study</b>	
<b>Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS)</b>	<b>Sciences and Technologies (S&amp;T)</b>
Literary Studies	Life Sciences
Visual and Performing Arts	Nature's Laws
Philosophical Inquiries	Quantitative Reasoning
Human Behaviour	Biological & Medical Technologies
Society, Economy, Polity	Physical & Chemical Technologies
Civilisational Studies	Information Technologies

At the beginning of each semester, students will register for USP modules along with their faculties' or schools' modules through the Centralised Online Registration System (CORS).

### [3.2.3 S/U Options](#)

Students may exercise the S/U option for up to 32MCs towards their degree requirements, of which 20MCs may be exercised during the first semester and the remaining 12MCs any time during the candidature. The S/U option will apply to Level 1000 modules and Level 2000 modules offered without other NUS modules as pre-requisites, unless otherwise stipulated by the faculties/departments.

USP modules at level 2000, with the exception of WCT and QRF modules will be eligible for S/U for USP students matriculated in AY2014/15 and onwards. USP students enrolled in either the writing and critical thinking (WCT) or the quantitative reasoning foundation (QRF) module in Semester 1 will be allowed to carry forward 4MCs of S/U options to Semester 2. Only unused S/U MCs from the 20 S/U MCs may be carried forward from the first semester. The number of S/U MCs carried forward varies for each faculty/programme. Up to 8 S/U MCs may be carried forward, regardless of any other additional faculty/programme provision. The carried forward S/U MCs are to be used only in the student's second active semester (not including

the Special Terms) and not beyond. Please refer to general guidelines of the respective faculties.

The University Scholars Seminar (USS) is read on a Completed Satisfactory/Completed Unsatisfactory (CS/CU) basis, and does not count towards the MCs limit of S/U options.

As a general guideline for those matriculed in AY2014/2015 and onwards, in order to graduate with a USP certificate, USP students must ensure that they have at least six USP modules which are letter-graded,

### [3.3 International Programmes](#)

#### [3.3.1 Student Exchange Programme](#)

USP has student exchange tie-ups with the following partner universities:

- Arizona State University – Barrett, the Honors College
- Carleton College
- Pennsylvania State University – Schreyer Honors College
- University of Arizona – Honors College
- University of Connecticut – Honors College
- University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill – Honors College
- University of Oregon – Clark Honors College
- Peking University – Yuanpei College
- University of Delhi – Lady Shri Ram College for Women
- University of Delhi – Hindu College
- Chinese University of Hong Kong – Morningside College
- Sichuan University – Wu Yuzhang Honors College
- Bilkent University
- Bogazici University
- American University of Cairo
- SciencesPo – Le Havre Campus
- University of Amsterdam – Amsterdam University College
- Utrecht University – University College Utrecht
- Jagiellonian University
- Freie Universitat Berlin

The approach to education of these partner universities or their relevant colleges is similar to USP: to inspire students to a lifetime of broad intellectual curiosity, self-sustained inquiry and personal growth through carefully-designed small classes, close advising, and a collegial environment. Students will be notified via email when applications for USP Student Exchange Programme open.

#### [3.3.2 Joint/Double Degree Programmes](#)

USP offers two joint degree programmes with the Australian National University (ANU).

The first is a four-year Joint Degree Programme (JDP) between Bachelor of Science (Honours) of NUS and Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) of ANU, which can be taken in three fields of study: Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics. It is only offered to Faculty of Science (FOS) students in USP.

The second is a four-year Joint Degree Programme (JDP) between Bachelor of Arts (Honours) of NUS and Bachelor of Philosophy (Honours) of ANU, which can be taken in four fields of study: English Literature, History, Philosophy, and Political Science. It is only offered to Faculty of Arts and Social

Sciences (FASS) students in USP.

USP also offers a five-year Double Degree Programme (DDP) between Bachelor of Arts (Honours)/Bachelor of Science (Honours) of NUS and Bachelor's degree of Waseda University. It is only offered to Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Faculty of Science students in USP.

Please refer to the Section R on "Other Multidisciplinary / Special Programmes" in Part II of the NUS Bulletin for more details of the above-mentioned JDPs and DDPs.

### 3.3.3 Other International Programmes

Besides the Student Exchange Programme, Joint Degree Programmes, and Double Degree Programmes, USP also offers a range of opportunities, which helps students become sensitive to, and familiar with, the modern world by initiating, leading and joining international academic and community programmes and projects.

Examples of recent opportunities include:

Overseas Study Programmes (may include summer programmes, module study trips, seminars, forums, symposia or conferences)

- Buddhism-in-Asia Study Programme (Thailand, India, Taiwan, Japan, Laos, Vietnam)
- Builders Connect Development Work Study Programme (Philippines)
- Global Cross-Disciplinary Tournament (Australia, China, others)
- Internship Exchange Programme with SP Jain Institute of Management & Research (India)
- Lee Shiu Summer Programme (China, Hong Kong)
- NUS-in-Yale Summer Programme (United States)
- Participatory Social Development in Southeast Asia Module Study Trip (Thailand)
- Politics of Heritage Module Study Trip (Cambodia)
- Princeton Interactive Crisis Simulation Conference (United States)
- State Minority Relations in Southeast Asian Module Study Trip (Laos, Thailand)
- Study Programme on Civilisation of Iran (Iran)
- Study Programme on Inter-Civilisational Dialogue (Turkey)
- Study Programme on Forgotten Communities (Malaysia)
- Theatre and the World Module Study Trip (Indonesia)
- Tufts University Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship Symposium (United States)

Overseas Youth Expeditions

- Step-Up Project Cambodia

Students are encouraged to propose and organise International Programmes, as well as take up leadership roles in the process. The aim is to create an environment in which students are exposed to a wide range of dynamic and interesting opportunities and are self-motivated to make the best of them.

## 3.4 Student Grants Programme

USP is committed to providing opportunities for its students to broaden their creative and critical faculties, to hone their intellectual and leadership qualities, and to cultivate a global outlook.

The objective of the USP Grants Programme is to provide funding for outstanding USP students to

pursue research and learning opportunities on an individual basis.

Funding is provided to enable students to:

- Present a paper in an academic conference
- Participate in a conference, course or workshop that has clear leadership (e.g. HPAIR, Global Village for Future Leaders) or research components
- Participate in internship or attachment
- Pursue research opportunity

### 3.5 USP Career Services

The USP Career Services is committed to supporting students at every stage of their career development process, from when they first enter USP as freshmen to their transition to USP alumni. In recognising the value of early exploration, the USP Career Services adopts an open and personalised approach with a focus on active engagement with students, industry partners, and alumni. This involves initiating discovery of students' self awareness and career desires, understanding the industry partners' recruitment needs, and inviting USP alumni to share career insights. We seek to help students make informed decisions about their futures - be it a career in the private sector, the public sector, non-governmental or non-profit organisations, becoming an entrepreneur or pursuing graduate studies - by providing them with comprehensive and individualised resources and counsel to support their career aspirations.

Among the recent graduates of the USP, more than one-third go on to pursue postgraduate studies at both local and overseas universities, including top universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, MIT, Imperial, Harvard, Berkeley, Stanford, London School of Economics, Tsinghua, Karolinska Institute in Sweden, and Duke-NUS Graduate Medical School. USP alumni have been recipients of the Fulbright scholarships and awards. Others find employment in major organisations in the private and public sectors, with many holding prestigious management associate appointments.

### 3.6 Certificate and Testimonial

The USP Certificate is awarded to the student at the Commencement ceremony upon:

1. Completing all USP academic requirements;
2. Completing the honours requirement of the home faculty or school; and
3. Receiving at least an Honours (Merit) degree

Outstanding graduates may be recommended for placement on the NUS President's Honour Roll and/or be awarded the Joanna Wong Gold Medal or NUSS Medal for Outstanding Achievement.

Each student is eligible to receive a testimonial, which documents his or her accomplishments - both academic and co-curricular - while at USP. The purpose of the testimonial is to help students highlight their participation in USP as they move within and beyond NUS in further academic or professional capacities. A student may request for a testimonial from USP when he or she graduates, having completed the USP requirements, or when he or she leaves USP for some other reasons.

### 3.7 Academic Advising

Each student in USP is assigned a faculty advisor and a peer mentor who will help guide the student's academic planning and personal development, especially within the USP. The faculty advisor is teaching or has taught in the USP, and can help students understand the USP curriculum, though he or she cannot provide detailed information about the home faculty or department's

curriculum structure. A peer mentor is a senior USP student who has been trained to help first-year students with their academic and curriculum matters. This peer mentor is usually from the same home faculty, and is therefore able to provide advice about the interface between USP and home faculty requirements.

The goals of the Academic Advising system and Peer Mentorship programme are:

- To help students understand the University and USP structure
- To guide students in choosing the USP modules that will challenge them intellectually while offering them a chance to expand their interests
- To help students think through and work towards their career and personal goals
- To help students with any problems that they may experience within the USP
- To put students in touch with others who may be of assistance concerning questions and problems outside the USP

Apart from approaching the Academic Advisors for advice, students can also seek assistance from administrative advisors at the USP office.

### 3.8 Academic Expectations

To graduate as a University Scholar with USP certification, students must complete the USP requirements and achieve at least an Honours (Merit) degree in the Home Faculty.

Each student whose cumulative average point (CAP) is below 3.5 for any semester will receive a warning that his or her academic performance is inadequate. Students with inadequate academic performance will be counselled. USP sees the internal CAP requirement of 3.5 as a stepping stone to the student's fundamental academic goal of achieving honours in his or her home faculty or school.

At the end of their second year, students are required to have completed at least three USP modules. Those who have not will be asked to produce justification, and a study plan on how they aim to complete the programme.

In addition, students are expected to participate actively in learning-beyond-the-classroom activities offered by USP. They are also encouraged to gain significant international experience through study abroad opportunities offered by USP, NUS, and others, including student exchanges, overseas internships and attachments, international summer programmes, overseas expeditions and community projects, and international conferences and leadership forums.

### 3.9 USP Dismissal Policy (applicable to 2014 cohort and onwards)

To graduate with a USP certificate, an undergraduate student must achieve at least an Honours (Merit) degree, i.e. have a minimum CAP of 3.5. USP students should note the following:

- should a student's CAP fall below 3.0 (but  $\geq 2.5$ ) for three consecutive semesters, the student will be dismissed from USP in the next semester of study; and
- should a student's CAP fall below 2.5 for two consecutive semesters, the student will be dismissed from USP in the next semester of study.

### 3.10 Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme (CTPCLP)

Launched in November 2011, the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme (CTPCLP), resides in USP and is supported by USP. Each year, a small number of NUS undergraduates, majoring in various disciplines and USP, will be admitted into the CTPCLP as fellows. The CTPCLP

aims to develop Singapore's next generation of community leaders. These future leaders will not only be intellectually engaged with social and community issues in Singapore, but will also be passionate about addressing social and community challenges. They will be tomorrow's change makers, driven by a sense of true calling to mobilise the community to collectively solve social problems.

Currently, the programme has partnerships with various government agencies, social service and welfare organisations that deal with differing societal challenges facing Singaporeans (e.g. Ren Ci Hospital, Singapore Hokkien Huay Kuan, Central SingaporeCDC, Boys' Town, Bizlink Centre, Simei Care Centre, The Helping Hand, Tsao Foundation, Communicable Disease Centre). These partnerships expose students to a range of societal challenges while also providing them with in-depth, on-the ground experiences of community development through various research attachments. Besides the research projects and attachments, students are required to participate in interest hubs where they can initiate and execute awareness and advocacy projects focusing on different social issues, and take two modules that examine social challenges and issues from a range of perspectives, including modules from USP