University Scholars Programme

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The University Scholars Programme (USP) is a multidisciplinary, partially residential, academic programme for NUS undergraduates. An honours programme, the 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. All USP students take USP classes at the USP residential college located at NUS University Town, and many live in the USP residential college (Cinnamon College) there. 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 earn 30% of their academic credits in USP, and 70% in their home faculty or school. The total workload is the same as that of any other NUS undergraduate.

**USP Curriculum**

USP offers a wide range of interdisciplinary modules, and students can choose from a wide selection of interdisciplinary modules on topics as diverse as Virtue and Leadership, Understanding Law and Social Change, Evolution and Nature's Threads. USP's interdisciplinary curriculum is designed to offer students support and flexibility at every stage of their interdisciplinary studies. To this end, the foundation modules focus on writing, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning skills, which form the framework for complex ideas and arguments to build upon. The inquiry and reflection modules further develop interdisciplinary inquiry by encouraging students to delve more deeply into their areas of interest through research, expeditions, overseas academic exchanges and entrepreneurial internships. All modules are held in 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 Yale, Delhi, Waseda, Princeton, Sciences Po, Beida, Amsterdam, Bogazici, and the Australian National University; and study trips and expeditions to places such as the United States, Himalayas, Cambodia, India and Turkey.

**USP Residential College**

Multidisciplinary learning is richly integrated with residential living at the USP residential college (RC). Located in the NUS University Town, the RC houses a residential block, two learning lobbies and offices, a multi-purpose hall, dining hall, reading room, multimedia laboratory and student lounges. Students take USP modules that are held in the RC premises. Facilities and programmes at the RC 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 RC, 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.
Key Contact Information

For up-to-date information, please visit www.usp.nus.edu.sg

Address:
University Scholars Programme
National University of Singapore
University Town
18 College Ave East
Singapore 138593

Email: usphelp@nus.edu.sg
Tel: (65) 6516 4425
Fax: (65) 6773 1012

Administrative Coordinators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title &amp; Name</th>
<th>Designation/Responsibility</th>
<th>Telephone (6516-XXXX)</th>
<th>Email (<a href="mailto:XXXX@nus.edu.sg">XXXX@nus.edu.sg</a>)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Anne YEO</td>
<td>Senior Manager, Academics</td>
<td>1340</td>
<td>uspykka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms TAN Cheryl</td>
<td>Manager, Recruitment and Alumni Relations</td>
<td>1572</td>
<td>cheryltan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms TAN Tun Ling</td>
<td>Assistant Manager, Admissions</td>
<td>8916</td>
<td>uspttl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms SYREETA Jun Searle</td>
<td>Assistant Manager, International Programmes</td>
<td>4730</td>
<td>Upspsjs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Josephine CAI</td>
<td>Assistant Manager, Career Services and Alumni Relations</td>
<td>4062</td>
<td>caijosephine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms ROS NIMI Saidin</td>
<td>Assistant Manager, Secretarial support to Director, Human Resources, Research and Examination Matters</td>
<td>4614</td>
<td>usprm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms TIO Gaik Hong</td>
<td>Assistant Manager, Finance</td>
<td>4610</td>
<td>usptiogh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms TAN Sin Yee</td>
<td>Assistant Manager, Community Life and Alumni Relations</td>
<td>8739</td>
<td>sinyee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr NG Yong Hao</td>
<td>Executive, Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme</td>
<td>4073</td>
<td>yonghao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms GOH Lan Lin</td>
<td>Executive, Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme</td>
<td>8737</td>
<td>gohlanlin</td>
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Management

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof John RICHARDSON</td>
<td>Director</td>
<td>4613</td>
<td>uspdir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc Prof TEO Albert</td>
<td>Deputy Director (Student Life)</td>
<td>4058</td>
<td>uspteoicy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc Prof Martin HENZ</td>
<td>Deputy Director (Residential Life)</td>
<td>4612</td>
<td>uspmjh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assoc Prof LO Mun Hou</td>
<td>Deputy Director (Academic Matters)</td>
<td>4077</td>
<td>usplomh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms SONG Peggy</td>
<td>Senior Associate Director</td>
<td>8298</td>
<td>peggysong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms TAN Ai Lian</td>
<td>Associate Director, Corporate Communications</td>
<td>1328</td>
<td>usptanal</td>
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3 Undergraduate Education

3.1 Admission

Students apply to join USP. Application is by transcript, an essay, a personal statement, 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 a separate application 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) by the closing date, which is typically on 2nd 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 the USP during USP’s second admissions exercise from 1 to 31 October each year.

USP is 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 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.

Since August 2011, USP includes a residential component where USP students live and learn together in the new USP residential college (also known as Cinnamon College) in NUS’s University Town. 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, so 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 at 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 whilst they are in the Programme.

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 Section A below 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;
3. Entrepreneurial Development, upon completion of the NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) programme or the innovative Local Enterprise Achiever Development (iLEAD) programme.

See Section B below 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-Yuenpei 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

(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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Arts-based students</th>
<th>Science-based students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Option A</td>
<td>Option B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing and Critical Thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Scholars Seminar</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences and Technologies</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
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The Humanities and Social Sciences as well as the Sciences and Technologies Domains are further divided into six areas of study:

<table>
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<th>Areas of Study</th>
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<tr>
<td>Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
<td>Sciences and Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary Studies</td>
<td>Life Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual and Performing Arts</td>
<td>Nature's Laws</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosophical Inquiries</td>
<td>Quantitative Reasoning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Behaviour</td>
<td>Biological &amp; Medical Technologies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society, Economy, Polity</td>
<td>Physical &amp; Chemical Technologies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civilisational Studies</td>
<td>Information Technologies</td>
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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).

(B) Advanced Curriculum

Students will be able to fulfil the Advanced Curriculum requirements via one of the following options:

1. Academic Inquiry, which can be pursued via one of the following two options:
   a. Research-Intensive Programmes – intended for students who are considering a career in research, the research-intensive option allows students to do in-depth and independent study in their major. Students are expected to play the primary role in identifying a research topic and developing a research programme, although guidance is provided by faculty mentors. For this, the students read research-focused Independent Study Modules (ISMs); this option also allows students to pursue double or joint degree programmes such as the ANU-NUS Ph.B./B.Sc.(Hons.) Joint Degree Programme;
   b. Multidisciplinary Programmes – intended for students who would like to further broaden their intellectual horizon and foster multidisciplinary insights, this option addresses both breadth and depth in academic inquiry by providing opportunities for students to engage in team-based undergraduate multidisciplinary research; this option also facilitates students to pursue double degree or concurrent degree programmes.

2. Cultural Immersion, intended for students who wish to develop substantial capability in a second culture (including history, society, and economy), this option allows students to pursue a specially designed programme in a prestigious partner university. In addition to cultural immersion, this option provides invaluable opportunities for students to network with future leaders of the host country. The available programmes under this option are:
   - USP-Yuanpei Cultural Immersion Programme (with Yuanpei College, Peking University, China)
   - USP-Waseda Double Degree Programme (with School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University, Japan)
   - USP-Delhi Student Exchange Programme (with Lady Shri Ram College for Women as well as Hindu College, University of Delhi, India)

3. Entrepreneurial Development, upon completion of one of the following university-level programmes:
   - NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) programme targets NUS undergraduates with the academic ability and entrepreneurial drive, who are keen to be immersed as interns in start-ups located in leading entrepreneurial and academic hubs of the world. At the same time, they will study entrepreneurship related courses at highly prestigious partner universities. The aim is for them to be developed into enterprising, resourceful, independent self-starters and eventually blossom into successful entrepreneurs. Currently, students can
pursue this at colleges in Silicon Valley and Philadelphia (USA), Stockholm (Sweden), and Beijing and Shanghai (China)

- The innovative Local Enterprise Achiever Development (iLEAD) programme offers NUS students an opportunity to intern at innovative companies and be exposed to the entrepreneurial challenges in Singapore. Students would be placed in companies that are innovative, knowledge-intensive and/or highly technology-oriented, and have demonstrated potential for growth and global expansion. The objective is to cultivate students with an entrepreneurial mindset and to develop their leadership and management skills.

3.2.2 For Students Matriculated in 2012 and After

From Academic Year 2012/2013 onwards, USP offers a revised three-tier structure. The three tiers build upon each other in an intuitive manner, so that each prepares students for the interdisciplinary work they encounter in the subsequent tiers.

**Foundation Tier** – consists of three modules. The first tier hopes to nurture a solid series of skills that will equip students for the interdisciplinary work they will encounter in the subsequent tiers.

**Inquiry Tier** – consists of eight modules balanced equally between the two domains. Students take interdisciplinary modules in two domains, Humanities & Social Sciences (H&SS) and Sciences & Technologies (S&T). The overall goal of the second tier is to promote interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary inquiry, so that students can make intellectual connections outside of their majors. The curriculum is thus designed to encourage students in broad intellectual inquiry beyond their chosen majors, and incorporates the requirement to take at least one independent study modules on topics of their choice.

We encourage students to have international experience, and indeed we aim to have all of our students undergo some form of study, whether formal or informal, outside Singapore. We thus allow the substitution of modules in a number of cases. Students going on USP and their faculties’ Student Exchange Programmes, subject to approval, can substitute two modules per semester. Those on a Double Degree Programme, USP Cultural Immersion Programmes in Japan, China, and India, and on NOC or iLEAD, can gain exemptions up to four modules in total. In each case, we consider that the intellectual experiences the students undergo, whether broadening across disciplines, cultural facility in a new academic environment entrepreneurship, partially fulfill the goals of the Inquiry tier modules in stimulating broad-based inquiry. In order to preserve the sense of USP as a learning community, however, we impose an overall requirement of eight modules across the three tiers.

**Reflection Tier** – consists of one module, the senior seminar. In this module, the issues of a particular topic are developed through seminar discussions, readings, and paper assignments in such a way as to allow students to reflect on the conditions of their own disciplinary knowledge and the assumptions fostered in disciplinary training, and to develop their own theoretical framework the nature of intellectual discourse in general rather than just within their own disciplines. The third tier thus builds both on the broadening of inquiry in the second tier, and upon the disciplinary knowledge that students have gained within their major.

A USP student, matriculated in 2012 and after, must read and pass:

- 3 compulsory foundation modules worth 12 MCs
  - Writing and Critical Thinking
  - Quantitative Reasoning Foundation
  - University Scholars Seminar

- 8 inquiry modules worth 32 MCs

- 1 reflection module worth 4 MCs.
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
- Bilkent University
- SciencesPo – Le Havre Campus
- University of Amsterdam – Amsterdam University College
- Utrecht University – University College Utrecht
- Jagellonian University
- Freie Universitat Berlin
- Bogazici University
- Sichuan University – Wu Yuzhang Honors College
- American University of Cairo

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)
- Builders Connect Development Work Study Programme (The Philippines)
- Global Cross-Disciplinary Tournament (Australia, China, others)
- Internship Exchange Programme with SP Jain Institute of Management & Research (India)
- Lee Shiu Centre of Intercultural Learning Summer Programme (China, Hong Kong)
- NUS-in-Yale Summer Programme (United States)
- 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, Malaysia)
- Study Programme on Forgotten Communities (Malaysia)
- Tufts University Education for Public Inquiry and International Citizenship Symposium (United States)
- USP - George Washington University Twin-City Dialogue (United States)
- Women as Global Leaders Conference at Zayed University (UAE)
- USP - George Washington University Twin-City Dialogue (United States)
- Women as Global Leaders Conference at Zayed University (UAE)
- Green Backpack Community Theatre project (Thailand)
Overseas Youth Expeditions
- Niem Vui Vietnam: Expedition to Danang, Vietnam
- Step-Up 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. Five USP alumni have received 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 a Second Lower Class of Honours

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

USP students are expected to maintain a Cumulative Average Point (CAP) of 3.5 and above throughout their course of studies.

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 Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme (CTPCLP)

Launched in November 2011, the Chua Thian Poh Community Leadership Programme (CTPCLP), resides in the USP and is supported by the USP. 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 Singapore CDC, Boys’ Town, Bizlink Centre, Simei Care Centre, The Helping Hand, Tsao Foundation, Communications 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 the USP.