

## Country and Education Guide : Singapore



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# Country Guide



## General Country Information

Singapore is Southeast Asia's most important seaport, financial centre, and manufacturing hub. Singapore is a multi-ethnic society which enjoys a high level of education. The standard of living is high, with a GDP comparable to that of Western Europe.

**Name of country:** Republic of Singapore

**Capital city:** Singapore

**Population:** 5,312,400 (2012)

**Languages:** English (language of administration), Chinese (Mandarin), Malay and Tamil

**Currency:** Singaporean Dollar (SGD)

# Time zones and climate

## Time zones

The Singapore time zone (SGT) is +8 hours of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) and UTC\*. There is no Daylight Saving Time (DST).

\* UTC = Coordinated Universal Time

Source: *Time and Date*, <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/city.html?n=236>



## Climate

Singapore is generally warm and humid all year round with an average temperature ranging between 23.1°C to 31.5°C (73.6°F to 89.6°F). There are two rainy seasons a year, from December to March and June to September.

Full year	Summer (Average Temp.)	Winter (Average Temp.)
23 - 32 °C	24 - 32 °C	23 - 30 °C

Source: National Environment Agency, <http://www.weather.gov.sg/wip/web/home/faq>

# Telecommunications

## Calling Singapore

IDD	Emergency numbers
country code : 65	Ambulance: 995
	Fire: 995
	Police: 999

Source: Country Code, <http://countrycode.org/singapore>

# Transportation

## Getting around

### Bus

Air-conditioned buses are a common means of transportation. Fares vary according to the distance travelled. Exact fares are required. Alternatively, you may purchase an ez-link card. The card may be bought or topped-up at any TransitLink Ticket Sales Office and General Ticketing Machines located in most MRT stations and bus interchanges. Most routes operate from 06:00–24:00.

### Train

The Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) is a modern, air-conditioned passenger train service. There are four main lines that run north-south, east-west, north-east and circle. Fares are based on distance travelled. You can buy a ticket at the station or use an ez-link card. The card may be bought or topped-up at any TransitLink Ticket Sales Office located in most MRT stations and bus interchanges.

Trains operate at regular intervals from 05:30–00:30. Drinking, smoking, chewing gum and eating are strictly prohibited in the trains or on the platforms.

For more information on fares and routes, please visit <http://www.transitlink.com.sg/>

### Driving

In Singapore, cars and other vehicles drive on the left side of the road. Foreigners who reside here for less than twelve (12) months must possess a valid foreign license and International Driving Permit (IDP) issued by an authorised body in their country of origin. If an International Driving Permit is not available, an official translation of your foreign license in English is required. Driver from ASEAN member countries only need to possess a valid driving license issued by the relevant driving license Authority in order to drive in Singapore without IDP.

The Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) is an electronic system that charges a fee based for road usage on congested roads and expressway and in the Central Business District (CBD) during peak hours. Fees are assessed through an ERP unit fitted in all Singapore registered vehicles.

Please visit the Singapore Traffic Police website, <http://driving-in-singapore.spf.gov.sg/> for more details.

### Taxi

Taxis are also widely available. Taxis entering the CBD go through the ERP gantry posts and passengers are required to pay the amount indicated on the In-Vehicle Unit. Bookings can be made by phone or you can hail one on the street or from authorised taxi stands at shopping centres or major thoroughfares. Registration number is displayed inside the taxi.



# Cost of living

The cost of living in Singapore varies, like most places, according to the lifestyle and aspirations of individual students.

## Average per month

		SGD	USD*
Accommodation (Rental)	Public Housing Apartment	1500 – 3000	1200 – 2400
	Room	400 – 1000	320 – 800
Transportation	Taxis	8 – 24 per trip	6.4 – 19.2 per trip
	MRT/Buses	0.71 – 2.80 per trip	0.57 – 2.24 per trip
Utilities (varying based on usage)		80 – 400	64 – 320
Meals	Low-end restaurants	15+per head, a meal	12+per head, a meal
	Hawker centres/food courts/fast food	5+per head, a meal	4+per head, a meal
Groceries (1 person)		150	120
Entertainment	Cable TV	30+per head, a meal	24+per head, a meal
Communications	Mobile phone plans	19.95 – 200	15.96 – 160
	Broadband	19.95 – 208	15.96 – 166.40

\* Exchange rate SGD1.00 = USD0.80

Above costs are indicative only and current.

Source: [http://contactsingapore.sg/students\\_graduates/why\\_singapore/about\\_singapore/cost\\_of\\_living/](http://contactsingapore.sg/students_graduates/why_singapore/about_singapore/cost_of_living/)

# Health and medical



## Student healthcare overview

Singapore's well-established healthcare system has seven public hospitals comprising five general hospitals, a women's and children hospital and a psychiatric hospital. Six national specialty centres provide specialist services for cancers, cardiac, eye, skin, neuroscience and dental care. There are also several private hospitals in Singapore and most offer executives or VIP suites; some also offer premium medical services such as Gleneagles Hospital's Elite Health Screening and the International Patients Centre at Raffles Hospital.

The Health Promotion Board takes charge of student health by providing quality primary health care through a team of health professionals and preventive health services such as health screening, immunisation and basic dental health care committed to the students' overall well-being.

The School Health Service (SHS) is dedicated to the health and wellbeing of children in Singapore. The SHS not only conducts annual medical checkups and immunisations children at schools but are also involved in health education and health promotion programmes to inculcate a healthy lifestyle.

Programmes on Nutrition, Physical Activity, Smoking, Mental Wellness and other health concerns in schools to achieve better health, growth and development for students in Singapore are also conducted by various youth health programme development and outreach departments.

Source: Singapore Health Promotion Board, <http://www.hpb.gov.sg/HOPPortal/>  
Contact Singapore, [http://www.contactsingapore.sg/professionals/why\\_singapore/living/healthcare/](http://www.contactsingapore.sg/professionals/why_singapore/living/healthcare/)





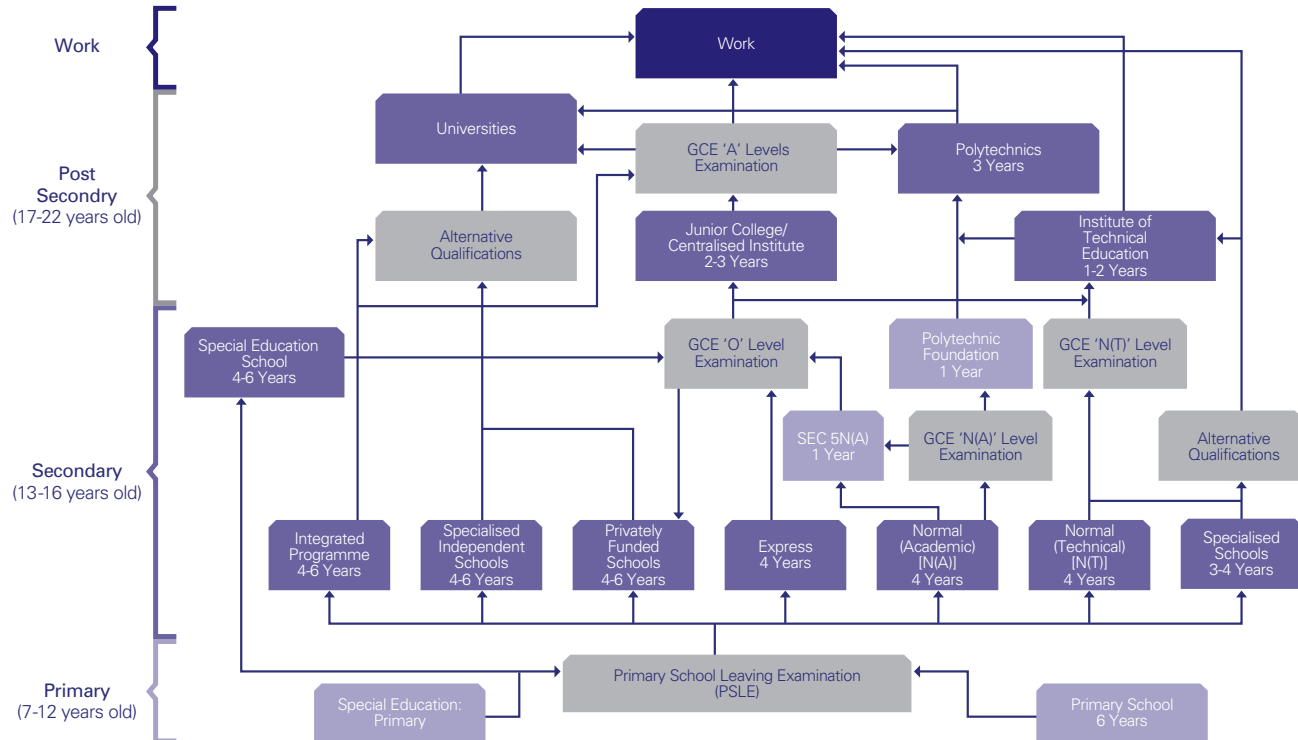
# Education Guide

## Education in Singapore

Singapore has over 350 schools for primary, secondary and post-secondary education with over 32,000 quality teaching force. The Singapore education system aims to help students discover their talents, realise their potential, and provide a passion for learning that lasts through life. Among the key strengths of the Singapore education system are the bilingual policy, emphasis on broad-based and holistic learning, focus on teacher quality and integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) into the classroom.

*Source: Ministry of Education, <http://www.moe.gov.sg/about/files/moe-corporate-brochure.pdf>*

# Education system overview



Source: Ministry of Education (MOE), Singapore (<http://www.moe.edu.sg/education/>)

# Education system overview

The Singapore education system evolves around the premise that every student has unique aptitudes and interests. The Singapore government adopts a flexible approach to allow students to develop their potential to the fullest.

Bilingualism is a key feature of Singapore's education system. All students learn the English language and an official Mother Tongue language. The bilingual policy is intended to equip students with the language competencies to access both eastern and western cultures, and to develop a global outlook. Schools also provide a rich diversity of experiences to help students grow holistically. Apart from the academic curriculum, students can develop themselves in music, arts and sports through co-curricular programmes. Participation in community service is also part and parcel of school life.

Primary school students learn four core subjects: English Language, a second language (Mother Tongue), Mathematics and Science. After 6 years of primary education, all students sit for the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE), which assesses their abilities for placement in a secondary school course that suits their learning pace and aptitude.

At the secondary level, students are placed in the Express, Normal (Academic) or Normal (Technical) course based on their PSLE scores. Students in the Express course typically offer 6 to 8 subjects at the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (GCE 'O' Level) Examinations. Those with exceptional academic ability may offer a ninth subject.

Students in the Normal (Academic) course will offer academically-based subjects while those in the Normal (Technical) course will follow a curriculum that is more practice-oriented and hands-on. Students will have to sit for the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Normal Level (GCE 'N' Level) Examinations. After the GCE 'N' Level examinations, students from the Normal (Academic) course who satisfy the requirements go on to a fifth year of study, where they will sit for the GCE 'O' Level examinations at the end of the year.

After taking the GCE 'O' Level examinations, students can choose to continue their education at technical institutes, polytechnics, or take on a pre-university course leading to the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (GCE 'A' Level) Examinations which are required for university entrance in Singapore.

# Tuition fees

Tuition fees have been subjected to review and are higher for foreign nationals than for Singapore citizens. Fees also vary widely according to the institution and the course. Tuition costs for professional courses in the universities can be considerably higher. Ranges are shown in the table below.

Average tuition fees per annum (for reference only)

Institution		SGD	USD*
International School		16,600 – 40,000	12,800 – 32,000
Secondary School		1,700 – 8,000	1,360 – 6,400
Junior College/Centralised Institution		2,200 – 12,000	1,760 – 9,600
Diploma		4,500 – 7,800	3,600 – 6,240
University	Arts/Business	7,500 – 15,500	6,000 – 12,400
	Medicine	9,000 – 40,000	7,200 – 32,000

\* Exchange rate SGD1.00 = USD0.80

Above fees are current as of the 2012 school year.

Source: Ministry of Education (MOE),  
<http://www.moe.edu.sg/education/admissions/international-students/general-info/#monthly-school-fees>



# Student accommodation

Below is a guide on types of accommodation available to international students:

Accommodation	Estimated cost per month (SGD)
University - Halls of Residence	155 - 800
Boarding School	6,000 - 15,000 per academic year
Private Hostel	750
Room in public housing	400 -1000
Whole unit in public housing	1500 - 3000

- Rental varies depending on geographical area, demand, facilities provided and the number of people sharing.
- Boarding fees cover lodging, meals, laundry, tutorials, pastoral guidance, 24-hour security, recreational facilities, orientation and development programmes.
- Public housing refers to government-subsidised flats developed by the Housing and Development Board, commonly called HDB flats.

The classified advertisements in the local newspapers are a good source of listing of rooms and apartments for rent.

Living on campus is probably the best option as it offers easy access to all school facilities, such as libraries, laboratories and sports centres. First-year international students are normally given priority when they apply for on-campus accommodation. Rooms can be single or shared. Some universities offer a range of living options and it is advisable that you find out what is on offer before making your decision.

On the other hand, living off-campus offers greater independence and convenient access to shops and restaurants. Students usually rent a room or apartment or house and share the costs of utilities such as electricity. Phone and transport costs should also be factored in when considering this option.

Source: HDB, <http://www.hdb.gov.sg/>



# Secondary education

The Singapore education system offers students of differing interests a chance to find their niche and realise their potential. Students in a Singapore public secondary school undergo either a four-year express or a five-year normal course of education with different curricular emphases. Some schools also offer the Integrated Programme (IP), which provides a seamless education where secondary school students can proceed to pre-university without sitting for the Singapore-Cambridge General Certificate of Education 'Ordinary' Level Examination.

Express and normal stream students who have completed their secondary school education may progress on to junior colleges, centralised institutes, polytechnics, and specialised independent schools based on their interests and academic results.

International Schools also offer secondary and post-secondary education for students, with the opportunity to pursue an education similar to the one in their country of origin. Registered with the Ministry of Education, they follow guidelines and curriculum identical to those in their home country. Some International Schools impose minimum requirements for admission, such as language proficiency or nationality. The criteria vary with each school.



# Higher education

Singapore university education is prized by many and admission to the top universities can be very competitive. Higher education constitutes of four categories: a two-year course at junior colleges, three-year course at centralised institutes, polytechnics and universities.

## Junior Colleges and Centralised Institutes

These courses of studies lead to the Singapore-Cambridge General Certification of Education 'Advanced' Level (GCE 'A' Level) Examination. If students do well, they can opt to continue with degree courses.

## Polytechnics

Polytechnics in Singapore offer three-year diplomas in various disciplines targeted at students inclined towards practice-oriented studies. Polytechnic graduates can choose to proceed on to local universities to take up degree studies.

## Universities

Singapore currently boasts four local universities that offer internationally-recognised degree programmes as well as research and scholarship opportunities to post-graduate students in various disciplines. From engineering to business to the arts and humanities, they encourage a high level of teacher-student interaction and classes are taught at a full-time faculty.

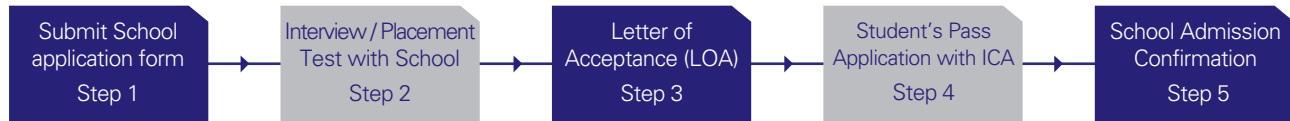
In addition to local universities, many of the world's leading foreign universities have also established their presence in Singapore. These leading foreign universities have either set up a physical campus (institutes of higher learning) or have joint collaborations/programmes with local universities.

Source: Ministry of Education, <http://moe.gov.sg/education>

# Applying to schools

## General process

Applicants may go through the following process:



## Documentation

- 1 Application fee draft
- 2 Application form
- 3 Academic documents
- 4 Passport copy
- 5 Birth certificate
- 6 Passport-size photos
- 7 Work experience letter (if applicable)

## Student's pass application

A foreigner needs to apply for a Student's Pass if he/she has been accepted by an educational institution to pursue full-time studies in Singapore, unless he/she is a:

- Dependant's Pass holder studying in a Government / Government-Aided / Independent school / Foreign System School / Kindergarten registered with MOE or Childcare centre licensed by MSF (Ministry of Social and Family Development)
- Immigration Exemption Order holder; or
- Visitor who has been granted a short term Visit Pass at the Singapore Checkpoint and wishes to attend a short course that can be completed within the validity of the initial Visit Pass granted to him/her at the Singapore Checkpoint or 30 days, whichever is shorter

Upon receiving the Letter of Acceptance from the school which is valid for 2 weeks, the applicant must proceed to the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) to apply for a Student's Pass. For applicants who require a visa to enter Singapore, please ensure that your application for the Student's Pass is submitted to the ICA at least 2 months and not more than 6 months before the commencement date of the course.

# Applying to schools

## Required examinations

### Primary and Secondary Schools

MOE conducts a centralised admissions exercise - Admissions Exercise for International Students (AEIS) - around Sep/Oct annually for new international students who wish to join the mainstream public primary and secondary schools in January of the following year.

AEIS involves a centralised test on English and Mathematics, and applicants who pass the test will be offered a place in a suitable school. The exercise is for new international students seeking admission into Primary 2–5 and Secondary 1–3. Primary 6 and Secondary 4 are critical levels where students sit for major examinations held towards the end of the year. Parents should be mindful that it would not be in the students' interests to be admitted to these critical levels of Primary 6 and Secondary 4.

### Undergraduate

- SAT Reasoning Test (SAT I)
- SAT Subject Tests (SAT II)
- ACT – American College Testing
- GMAT – Graduate Management Admission Test
- TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language (if English is not first language)
- IELTS – International English Language Testing System (if English is not first language)
- MUET – Malaysian University English Test (if English is not first language)

*Source: Immigration and Checkpoints Authority, [http://www.ica.gov.sg/services\\_centre\\_overview.aspx?pageid=256&secid=182](http://www.ica.gov.sg/services_centre_overview.aspx?pageid=256&secid=182)  
NUS, <http://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/apply/international/admissionreq/BYA-admissionreq.html#SAT>  
SMU, [http://www.smu.edu.sg/admissions/pages/apply\\_to\\_smu/Apply-to-SMU\\_Intl-Quali.asp#frame](http://www.smu.edu.sg/admissions/pages/apply_to_smu/Apply-to-SMU_Intl-Quali.asp#frame)  
NTU, <http://admissions.ntu.edu.sg/UndergraduateAdmissions/Pages/default.aspx>*

# Frequently asked questions

## 1. How much security deposit is required upon approval of student's pass application?

When the application for a Student's Pass is approved, an In-Principle Approval (IPA) letter will be issued for the applicant to complete the formalities and collect the Student's Pass card at ICA. The Security Deposit if required, would be indicated in the IPA letter to the applicant.

The amount of Security Deposit required is listed in the table below:

Country	Form of Security Deposit	Rate per person (SGD)
Bangladesh, Myanmar, People's Republic of China and India	Banker's Guarantee from any established bank in Singapore or Cashier's Order	5,000
Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand	Banker's Guarantee from any established bank in Singapore or Cashier's Order or NETS	1,000
Others	Banker's Guarantee from any established bank in Singapore or Cashier's Order or NETS	1,500

With effect from 1 April 2013, the applicant will have to furnish the Security Deposit (if required), to ICA in the form of a Banker's Guarantee only, in order to complete the formalities for the issuance of a Student's Pass.

Applicants are not required to furnish a Security Deposit if they are

- Nationals from Malaysia and Brunei;
- Holders of valid Dependant's Pass, long term Visit Pass and work pass;
- Children/Spouse of Singapore Citizens/Permanent Residents;
- Foreign students who pursue a full-time university degree (Graduate/Post-Graduate) programme, except for the University of London (UOL) tuition programme, at an approved PEO; and
- Below 16 years old at the point of application.

# Frequently asked questions

## 2. As a foreign student with a student's pass, can I do part-time work during school or term time?

Foreign students are not allowed to engage in any form of employment in Singapore, whether during school term or term time, unless they are granted Work Pass exemption under the Employment of Foreign Manpower (Work Pass Exemptions) Notification. The details of the exemption notification, which includes foreign students on vacation and part time employment of foreign students, are shown below.

Exemption Notification: Foreign Students on Vacation

A Work Pass is not required for a foreign student if he/she is of 14 years of age or above, on vacation, and a full-time matriculated or registered student in one of the institutions approved by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).

Exemption Notification: Part-time Employment of Foreign Students

A Work Pass is not required for a foreign student if he/she works a maximum of 16 hours a week and is a full-time matriculated or registered student in one of the institutions approved by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).

## 3. Are there any special support services for international students?

Educational institutions generally provide special support services for international students. Some even have an International Students Office to cater to your specific needs. Assistance rendered range from helping you look for accommodation to advice on financial, social and other matters.

For more information on education in Singapore, please visit <http://www.moe.edu.sg/about/files/moe-corporate-brochure.pdf>

Source: *Immigrations and Checkpoint Authority*, [http://ica.gov.sg/services\\_centre\\_overview.aspx?pageid=256](http://ica.gov.sg/services_centre_overview.aspx?pageid=256)

[http://www.ica.gov.sg/data/resources/docs/Visitor%20Services/STP\\_Notes1f.pdf](http://www.ica.gov.sg/data/resources/docs/Visitor%20Services/STP_Notes1f.pdf)

*Ministry of Manpower*, <http://www.mom.gov.sg/foreign-manpower/working-in-singapore/Pages/employment-of-foreign-students.aspx>

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