

SMU PhD IN PSYCHOLOGY

Cutting-edge insights into individuals,
organisations and societies



SMU
PhD



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Our research-oriented PhD programme prepares students to gain both content knowledge and hands-on skills for being a competent and ethical researcher in psychology. **Through participating in interactive seminars and engaging in independent research projects, students are well trained for research-related professions after graduation. In this programme, students work closely with a faculty mentor on research projects that are of interest to them. Our faculty are prolific scholars in their fields of study and some of them hold leadership positions in professional organisations, including journal editors and elected fellows.** Our School of Social Sciences is frequently visited by research scholars both within and outside of Singapore. That creates excellent opportunities for students to build up their professional networks and to explore ways for pursuing collaborative research in psychology as well as in interdisciplinary areas.

Associate Professor Angela Leung
School of Social Sciences

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One of the things that I appreciate most about the Psychology PhD programme at SMU's School of Social Sciences (SOSS) is the mentorship from the faculty members. In SOSS, there is a very positive and nurturing environment where faculty members are dedicated to helping PhD students develop their potential. The PhD programme is a form of apprenticeship; the opportunities provided by the School's environment to work with various professors enable students to acquire important knowledge and skills for a career in psychology. I am very glad that faculty members have always opened their doors to me when I approach them with a research idea!

SOSS faculty members produce high-quality and impactful research, and several of them are leaders in their fields and enjoy international recognition. It is therefore not surprising that the Psychology programme attracts regular visits by international scholars. For a PhD student, this is an excellent environment because I get to meet top scholars in diverse areas at our doorstep. This allows me to build collaborative relationships with researchers from different countries. Thanks to this environment, I am now working on collaborative research with prominent American and Dutch researchers.

Lay See Ong
4th Year Student of PhD in Psychology
School of Social Sciences

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Having worked in various research units in the Singapore Public Service, I developed a keen interest to advance my knowledge and skills in psychology and behavioural sciences research methods. I decided to pursue a doctoral degree with the SMU Psychology PhD programme because it was evident that it would provide me with the appropriate training. **The quality of the psychology faculty and the research climate in the programme provide excellent opportunities for my scholarly development.**

Chou Chuen Yu
1st Year Student of PhD in Psychology
School of Social Sciences

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Message from the Dean

Our Psychology PhD programme offers an excellent research and learning environment that equips students with critical knowledge and skills to conduct rigorous psychological research.

Our programme, which emphasises interactive learning and integrative evaluation of diverse perspectives, prepares students for psychology-related careers in academia and industry, both locally and globally.

The programme is led by a group of dedicated psychology professors, including top scholars with international reputations.

Professor James T. H. Tang

Dean

School of Social Sciences



Message from the Programme Director

Our psychology professors jointly provide a diverse range of expertise, with specialisations in social, cultural, industrial and organisational, personality, cognitive, developmental and evolutionary psychology.

We are fully dedicated to mentoring PhD students through research apprenticeships, facilitating their acquisition of knowledge and skills from research formulation and study design to measurement, data collection, data analysis and interpretation of results.

We believe in research that is both rigorous and relevant, which provides evidence-based approaches to address real-world problems.

Assistant Professor Chi-Ying Cheng

Programme Director, PhD in Psychology

School of Social Sciences





Programme Structure

A PhD student will typically focus on coursework in the first one to two years, followed by a Master's thesis and the dissertation research in subsequent years.

The PhD framework is as follows:

- 6 Foundation Courses (6 Course Units)
- 2 Electives (2 Course Units)
- Empirical Research Project (1 Course Unit)
- Master's Thesis (12 Course Units)
- 3 Advanced Research Topics (ART) Courses (3 Course Units)
- PhD Dissertation (28 Course Units)

The coursework is intended to lay the groundwork in preparation for the dissertation research. A student in the programme will be required to finish a Master's thesis by submitting the written thesis and orally defending it. The student will then have to sit for a PhD Qualifying Examination (QE), which will assess his or her mastery of the foundation required for the next stage of the PhD programme – the dissertation. The dissertation is a student's original work in his or her specialised area through independent research. The dissertation is marked by two major milestones listed below.

ORAL DEFENCE OF THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

This is an oral presentation of the proposed topic to a Dissertation Committee. A written dissertation proposal will have to be submitted before the presentation. A supervisor, with the expertise in the chosen topic, will be appointed. He or she guides and mentors the student throughout the dissertation work.

ORAL DEFENCE AND COMPLETION OF THE PhD DISSERTATION

This is an oral presentation of the written dissertation report to the Committee. After possible revision(s) to the report and upon fulfillment of all necessary requirements, the Committee will recommend to the University to award the PhD degree. Students will also attain an MSc degree upon completion of the PhD programme.



(Left) **Katherine Valentine** (joined in 2010)
(Right) **Jin Chuan Yong** (joined in 2012)
Students of PhD in Psychology

The PhD in Psychology programme is designed to equip students with doctoral-level knowledge in research methodology and substantive content knowledge in psychology, with a focus on areas in experimental, social, personality and organisational psychology.



Admission and Application

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Good Bachelor's degree in Psychology or a relevant Bachelor's degree.

Graduate Record Examination (GRE) results.

Both the General and Psychology subject examinations taken within five years prior to application.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

The PhD in Psychology is a full-time programme. The University's application window is listed below.

Intake	Opening Date for Application	Closing Date for Application
August	1 November (of prior year)	31 January (of intake year)

Details of programme fees and application procedure can be found at <http://smu.sg/phdpsychology>



Financial Assistance Schemes

SMU awards two types of scholarship on a competitive basis. We assess applicants for different award schemes at the time of admission based on qualification and suitability for these schemes.

SMU SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarship covers registration and subsidised tuition fees. This scheme also provides successful recipients with monthly living stipends.* The scholarship is renewed yearly, conditioned on good academic performance, for a maximum duration of four years. Beyond the scholarship duration, students who have been on the scholarship may receive continued support through research and teaching assistantships or industry grants.

SMU PRESIDENTIAL DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

The SMU Presidential Doctoral Fellowship* is awarded to exceptionally qualified students who are offered candidatures into SMU's PhD programmes as well as to existing PhD students who are outstanding in their academic performance. The Fellowship is a one-year award that is renewed annually, for up to four years.



* The stipend rates are published on SMU's postgraduate research programmes' site at www.smu.edu.sg/pgr and are subject to changes.

A Unique University in Vibrant Singapore



SMU has been designed to provide a different model of university education in Singapore.

A STRONG AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH CULTURE

Internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching conducted by faculty members who joined us from top universities.

Faculty members collaborating in cross-disciplinary work to generate impactful and real-world relevant ideas, over and above research in their own disciplines.

Faculty members establishing research centres and institutes to conduct problem-driven research and influence industry practice across a wide range of topics.

A DIFFERENT LEARNING APPROACH

Students shaping their own syllabuses.

Faculty members encouraging an interactive learning environment through inquiry, participation and teamwork.

Seminar-style teaching in small classes for optimal student-instructor interaction.

STATE-OF-THE-ART INFRASTRUCTURE

- Small MBA-style seminar rooms.
- Research facilities including proprietary and published databases.
- SMU's library (for access to many publications and other necessary materials).
- Professional skills development programmes.

Being in the heart of the city, students will have easy access to industry partners who provide research data and validation platforms.

Each School has dedicated personnel to take care of students' administrative needs. Furthermore, many SMU research centres and institutes provide post-doctoral fellowships and/or research assistantships that add value to students' research experience.



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