

# INFORMATION FOR EXCHANGE AND FOREIGN STUDENTS



This brief guide provides Exchange and Foreign students in NUS Business School with basic information to aid in your employment search in Singapore.

The information contained herein is by no means comprehensive and you are strongly encouraged to research fully on your own. There are some links contained in this pack to help with your research.



## 1. OVERVIEW OF SINGAPORE EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

### Singapore's salary and job trends for 2017

<http://www.humanresourcesonline.net/singapores-salary-job-trends-2017/>

#### Key findings for 2017 include:

- Strong hiring activity in the technology and e-commerce field, especially for user experience and user interface designers, and cybersecurity professionals.
- As employers focus on staff retention, strong recruitment demand is anticipated for roles in talent management, leadership & development and compensation & benefits.
- Rising demand for quality sales people and digital marketing candidates across all sectors.
- In the accounting and finance market, tax, treasury and internal audit professionals will be highly sought after, leading to higher salaries for job movers.

---

### Singapore's top 10 recruitment trends

by Miklos Bolza

<http://www.hrdmag.com.sg/news/singapores-top-10-recruitment-trends-for-2016-210199.aspx>

Next year will also keep HR on its toes according to the experts at Hays who predict that the following recruitment trends will emerge in 2016.

#### 1) Localisation of the workforce

With the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) continuing its push to restrict foreign employment in Singapore, employers will still find it difficult to take in staff for both low and high paying roles from overseas in the coming year.

"As [MOM] targets not only those foreigners with low salaries, but those higher salaried roles, localising the workforce will become a focus for many companies in 2016 to sustain their growth in the local and regional market," said Lynne Roeder, managing director of Hays in Singapore.

#### 2) Increasing wage pressure

In a tighter labour market, the demand for skilled local professionals will drive up wages in select occupations and industries where competition is most fierce. Past reports by Hays have said that wage pressure is currently worst in sectors such as engineering and technology.

#### 3) Greater focus on talent retention & internal mobility

Stricter foreign employment regulations and increasing wage pressure means companies will put the spotlight on staff retention and internal mobility. Not only will this enable firms to gain greater value from their existing employees but it also cuts down on re-hiring and re-training costs.

#### 4) More recruitment of junior and mid-level staff

During 2015, many companies outsourced and restructured their lower level roles, meaning their workforce was top heavy with mid and senior-level staff.

This imbalance, plus the added wage pressure, will encourage companies to shift their focus to recruiting more staff in the junior to mid-level range instead.



## 5) More M&A consolidations in commodities

With the weaker market of 2015, more multinational corporations undertook mergers and acquisitions of smaller businesses. This means there will be an increased focus on recruitment as these firms try to boost their newly expanded operations.

“Powerful international firms now need to invest in human capital to consolidate their footholds here in Asia’s leading financial and commodities trading centre,” Roeder said.

## 6) Focus on internal controls & compliance

With the Singapore government enforcing stricter penalties for non-compliant firms – as well as bringing in greater costs from a reputational standpoint – 2016 will see senior management, including HR, focus on bringing internal and external procedures into line with these tighter regulations.

## 7) Increased innovation

Singaporean businesses are in the middle of an innovation drive, strengthened partly by the government’s push towards a more “manpower lean” economy. 2016 will continue this trend with firms embracing innovation through better talent acquisition and internal operating processes. HR will need to look out for new initiatives that help differentiate their company from the competition while getting the most out of the existing workforce.

## 8) Higher digital demand

Big data and analytics has been one of the major trends for 2015 and this does not look like slowing down in the coming year. For many senior managers, the primary issue will be using this data for better problem solving and strategy execution. Getting the most out of the available information and using this in a proactive manner will ensure that businesses can make a bigger impact in 2016 than ever before.

## 9) Greater need for engineers

The construction industry will continue to experience solid growth in the coming year thanks to the expansion of the MRT network. There will be a higher demand for engineers and project managers, particularly those with experience in tunnelling, signalling design and permanent way design.

## 10) Singapore’s continued importance

As the gateway to Southeast Asia, Singapore will continue to play a vital role in the region throughout 2016. With growing trade and investment relations between Singapore and emerging market economies such as Myanmar, Indonesia and Vietnam, recruitment will be stimulated in the professional services sector. Demand will be greatest for those with regional experience.

---

## Singapore overview

<http://www.michaelpage.com.sg/content/salary-centre/2017-singapore-salary-employment-outlook/>

The outlook for Singapore is expected to remain largely unchanged from 2016. Recruitment activity levels are expected to be comparable with last year.

Hiring patterns will be consistent with the region — 93% of the Singapore companies surveyed have said that they will be increasing or maintaining headcount, in line with the Asia average.



# NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

Digital, **technology** and **healthcare** are likely to be the country's fastest-growing sectors, with the Singapore government pledging to boost investment in these sectors. Recently, for example, a funding scheme was put into place to support locally-based fintech (financial technology) trials, setting the path for the sector's growth. Employers across these three sectors are likely to continue hiring actively, though recruitment efforts will largely focus on filling niche roles.

Against this backdrop, contracting continues to increase in popularity among Singapore-based employers with nearly 70% of companies surveyed already using contractors, especially in the areas of operations, technology and business support. Contracting offers employers flexibility in terms of headcount and budget. Through contracting, employers are also able to select from a larger pool of potential candidates than would otherwise be available to them.

Unsurprisingly, searching for the perfect candidate to fill in-demand roles will still be an uphill battle for many companies, who require candidates with specific skills, including broad geographical knowledge and clearly determined levels of experience. Employers might not be willing to compromise, displaying a strong preference to recruit only the perfect candidate.

While this raised talent bar is logical from a business perspective, such an approach may not be sustainable in the long run. Not only do longer hiring processes leave potential employees frustrated, positions that are left open for extended periods may compromise business growth. Employers may need to adopt a more open-minded approach, hiring a candidate with most – not all – the required skills and invest in his/her training and development instead. Employers also need to be aware that candidates may be more risk averse in a cautious environment and potentially reluctant to make a job change. Such an approach not only builds up the talent pool, but also sets the stage for employee retention and employer branding.

---

## 2. SINGAPORE – BUSINESS AND WORKPLACE CULTURE

- As many Asian countries do, Singapore has a formal business culture with quite a few rules concerning etiquette. The etiquette itself can vary between the different Chinese, Malay and Indian members.
- Networking is an essential part of conducting business in Singapore, as is cultivating personal relationships with co-workers and potential business associates. Workshops, conferences, training events, and even luncheons are all popular networking venues in Singapore.
- It is also important to show respect to elders and those in senior management since status and hierarchy are very important. Business decisions are usually reached by a consensus and in the overall scheme of things, the group's interests are more important than the individual's.
- Business attire is important and will depend on the occupation itself. In most cases, regular business attire includes long sleeved shirts, dark trousers, and ties for men. Women tend to wear blouses, skirts, or dressy slacks.
- It is very important to be punctual. If you're unsure of what to do in a certain situation, following the lead of the senior member can be helpful.

<http://www.expatsfocus.com/expatriate-singapore-business-culture>

Guide to Singapore Work Culture for Newcomers - <https://www.guidemesingapore.com/blog-post/singapore-life/singapore-work-culture-for-newcomers>





## 3. NETWORK PLATFORMS

### Chambers of Commerce

- American Chamber of Commerce [www.amcham.org.sg](http://www.amcham.org.sg)
- British Chamber of Commerce [www.britcham.org.sg](http://www.britcham.org.sg)
- European Chamber of Commerce Singapore [www.eurocham.org.sg](http://www.eurocham.org.sg)
- Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Singapore [www.jcci.org.sg](http://www.jcci.org.sg)
- Singapore Indian Chamber of Commerce [www.sicci.com](http://www.sicci.com)
- Singapore Business & Professional Women's Association [www.sbpwa.org.sg](http://www.sbpwa.org.sg)

### Other Business Networks

- ASEAN Bankers Association [www.aseanbankers.org](http://www.aseanbankers.org)
  - Institute of Banking and Finance [www.ibf.org.sg](http://www.ibf.org.sg)
  - Information Technology Management Association (Singapore) [www.itma.org.sg](http://www.itma.org.sg)
  - Indian Women's Association [www.iwasingapore.org](http://www.iwasingapore.org)
- 

## 4. POPULAR JOB WEBSITES IN SINGAPORE

- Contact Singapore Job Portal (<https://www.contactsingapore.sg>)
  - LinkedIn(<https://www.linkedin.com/>)
  - Career Resources Center for Expatriates (CRCE) (<http://www.aasingapore.com/>)
  - eFinancialCareers (<http://www.efinancialcareers.sg/>)
  - JobsDB (<http://sg.jobsdb.com/SG>)
  - Jobstreet (<http://www.jobstreet.com.sg/>)
  - Monster (<http://www.monster.com.sg/>)
  - Recruit.net (<http://singapore.recruit.net/>)
  - Top Financial Jobs (<http://www.topfinancialjobs.com.sg/>)
  - Top IT Jobs (<http://www.topitjobs.com.sg/>)
  - Work Singapore (<http://worksingapore.com/>)
- 

## 5. SINGAPORE SALARY GUIDES

- Jobstreet (<https://myjobstreet.jobstreet.com/career-enhancer/basic-salary-report.php>)
  - Payscale (<http://www.payscale.com/research/SG/Country=Singapore/Salary>)
  - Hays (<https://www.hays.com.sg/salary-guide/index.htm>)
  - 2016 Salary Guide (Kelly Services: <https://goo.gl/UO8ySy>)
  - Michael Page (<http://www.michaelpage.com.sg/salary-centre/salary-employment-outlook>)
  - Ministry of Manpower (<http://stats.mom.gov.sg/Pages/Income-Summary-Table.aspx>)
  - Robert Walters (<https://www.robertwalters.com.sg/hiring/hiring-advice/salary-survey.html>)
  - Job Central (<http://community.jobscentral.com.sg/articles/jobscentral-salary-calculator>)
  - Salaries in Singapore (Glassdoor: <https://goo.gl/dG8GKK>)
  - Jobiness (<https://jobiness.com.sg/salary>)
  - Salary.sg (<http://www.salary.sg/>)
- 



## 6. GETTING AN INTERNSHIP IN SINGAPORE:

As an exchange student on **student pass**, you are NOT allowed to work during study modules in Singapore. Please refer to Singapore's MOM site for detailed information: <http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits/work-pass-exemption-for-foreign-students>

Otherwise, foreign students and trainees coming to Singapore for internships can consider the **Training Work Permit**, the **Training Employment Pass** or the **Work Holiday Programme**. Please refer to Singapore's MOM site for more information: <http://www.mom.gov.sg/passes-and-permits>

## 7. SERVICES OFFERED BY BIZ CAREER SERVICES:

Services	Exchange Students	CEMS/MSc Students
Career Advising (Singapore market, CV and CL critique) (only available from May-July & Dec)	Max. 30 mins (1 session only)	30mins – 60mins
Mock Interview	x	√
Recruitment Presentations	x	√
Workshops	x	√
Networking events	x	√

## 8. RESUME CRAFTING CHEAT SHEET

### REMEMBER:

- The reader has less than **10 secs** to read and no less than **10 resumes** to look through.
- The reader is specifically looking for the person with the precise skills and traits that is missing in his/her organization. Your resume should help the reader pick out those **precise skills and traits quickly**.
- Your resume should show a hint of your **personality** (eg. through your interests or personal statement) in order for you to be memorable.
- Your resume should tell the **same 'story'** that you will be sharing in your interview.

### CONTENTS OF A RESUME

- Name and Contact
- Career Objective / Personal Statement (optional unless it is very unique and eye-catching)
- Education – the ONLY listing section
- Scholarship or Awards
- Final Year Project and Research Projects
- Work Experience
- Co-curricular Activities
- Voluntary or Social Work Experience
- Technical Skills
- Professional Membership
- Interests / Additional Information



# NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

## GENERAL TIPS

- Clear and uncluttered layout
  - One page is ideal; no more than 2
  - Name and contact details prominent
  - No photo unless required
  - Simple formal and readable font (Arial, Times New Roman , Verdana – 10 or 11 point)
  - Regular and consistent format (paragraphs, bullet points, tabs are all aligned)
  - Black font with white background
  - Good balance of text and white space
- Consistent and accurate punctuation
  - Capitalize a word ONLY if it is a proper name such as the name of a major, a title, or a department. Examples: Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance and Marketing or Bachelor of Business Administration (Accounting). Do not capitalize additional words within a phrase or sentence for emphasis.
  - Spell out degrees such as Bachelor of Business Administration. Abbreviate or use acronyms only if they are more appropriate than using the full name, i.e. IBM not International Business Machines. In the case of companies like TCS – spell out Tata Consultancy Services, as some employers may not be familiar with the abbreviation. Months can be abbreviated Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, etc.
  - You do not need periods at the end of bullets unless they are multiple-sentence bullets. However, whether or not you use periods, be consistent with punctuation throughout the entire resume.
- Clear and precise language
  - Correct grammar and spelling
  - Succinct; not verbose (do not be too technically detailed)
  - Appropriate professional tone (no colloquialisms like ‘clinched’); avoid the passive voice with personal pronouns, such as “I, me and my, they, them, their”.
  - Use current industry-specific language (make reference to any technical skills)
- Education, work experience and CCAs should be listed in reverse chronological order.
  - Place dates along right margin in plain text. Present all years fully: Dec 2014-Jan 2015, rather than 2014-15, in the same line directly across from the job title and at the right margin. Put the full length of service detailing month and year. If appropriate, explanation of employment periods may be indicated in parenthesis in italics after the job title: for example: (Part time during academic year).
  - Place locations of universities and companies flushed to the right margin in plain, lower and upper case letters. Spell out both city and country. To enter multiple locations with the same employer, enter all on the same line with the employer’s name, flushed to the right margin.
  - Optional: Brief Description of Employer - to provide the reader with a brief description of the employer, put on the line directly to the right of the employer’s name in upper and lower case letters. This is particularly helpful if the company’s name is not recognized.
  - Italicize position titles in lower and upper case. Place in EXPERIENCE section directly under the company’s name.
- Updated and prepared references (no need to list but ensure that your referees are prepared to receive a phone call )



# NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

## IMPORTANT TIPS

- Target your resume to the specific employer
  - Find out the values, historical milestones and notable characteristics of the organization
  - Go beyond website - use alumni, network, seniors, Careers Advisors, LinkedIn
- Demonstrate insight and knowledge about the role/position
  - Use JD or comparable JD from another company
  - Understand skills and qualities specified (refer to them specifically in your resume)
  - Understand the industry trends
- Show some personalization/personality
  - Mention interesting hobbies, passions, experiences
  - Craft specific personal statement / career objective
- Showcase specific and transferable skills
  - Review and examine your experiences fully
  - Use P.A.R. statements – each statement tells a story of achievement
  - Do NOT write out a task list / list of responsibilities
  - Use different experiences to demonstrate different skills/ strengths to avoid repetition.
- Your file should be saved with your full name and date of draft (eg. Mary Mee 5 Sep 2017)

## HOW TO WRITE AN ACHIEVEMENT STORY / BULLET POINT

### PROBLEM

- List down the skills required for this job
- Find the corresponding action verb; avoid passive verbs
- Use strong action words like “Planned, Conceptualized, Proposed, Spearheaded, and Initiated”. They should all be in past tense too. This website will help you: [http://www.quintcareers.com/action\\_skills.html](http://www.quintcareers.com/action_skills.html)

### ACTION

- Talk about what you did.
- How you did it.
- Who you worked with or tools you used.

### RESULTS

- Talk about your achievement
- Quantify them, where possible. %, \$, Hrs, Grades, Turnout of event
- If not, show that you understand the purpose of what you were doing (be specific)

#### PROBLEM

Led a group of 8 members to organize

#### ACTION

the annual event through detailed brainstorming sessions and by working closely with external vendors, such that

#### RESULTS

the event successfully attracted a breakthrough attendance of 500 participants and more than 20 industry representatives.

## OTHER RESOURCES

Evisors Career Webinars <https://apps-bschool.nus.edu.sg/aspnet/bizcso/portal/login.aspx>

Jobscan <https://www.jobscan.co/#>

Gradsingapore's website: <http://www.gradsingapore.com/career-advice/careeradvice.aspx?#Applications>



## 9. COVER LETTER WRITING CHEAT SHEET

### THE PURPOSE OF A COVER LETTER

- To explain in greater detail your reasons for applying and how this fits with your career plans and interests.
- To explicitly answer why the company should choose to hire you by demonstrating how you meet the key criteria for the post and what sets you apart from other candidates
- To provide evidence of your written communication and language skills, including the ability to be clear, succinct and articulate.
- To give you another opportunity to market yourself and can strengthen your chances

### IS IT ALWAYS NECESSARY TO SEND A COVER LETTER?

- Have one just-in-case; even if you don't send it because writing it provides good practice to be able to provide relevant information at an interview.
- Most HR do not read cover letters because of time constraints but the line managers sometimes do.
- Don't send a cover letter if you are posting your CV on a database/ with an agency where it will be seen by numerous employers – this fundamentally prevents you from tailoring your cover letter to a specific employer (which you must ALWAYS do for a cover letter).

### FORMAT OF A COVER LETTER

- Cover letters should be no longer than a page.
- Keep paragraphs short and use clear fonts (eg. Arial, Verdana, Calibri) with font size at 11 or 12.
- You can write in a paragraph format, use bullet points and/or bold to highlight key points.
  1. Address and salutation: Address the letter to a named person if possible - a quick email or check of the organisation's website should elicit this information. If not possible, address it to 'The Hiring Manager'.
  2. First paragraph: An introduction, explaining which job you are applying for, how you heard about the post, and some brief background on who you are e.g. in terms of your academic projects or previous internship experience.
  3. Middle section: Evidence of how you meet the top 3 or 4 criteria for the role, with brief descriptions of your experience and your achievements.
  4. Final section: Explain what attracts you to this role in this organisation and how the role fits in to your career plans.
  5. Concluding paragraph: A conclusion summarising what makes you suitable for the job and a statement expressing interest in an interview.

### WHERE TO START?

- Do your research on the organization, the role and the industry – use the job description, conversations with the HR, alumni, Careers Advisors, discussions at networking events, internet (organization website, interest group websites, Glassdoor, LinkedIn and others)
- Select
  - The top three or four criteria for the role and focus your evidence on these.
  - The key soft skills which are relevant to the job.



# NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

- Think of your Unique Selling Points in relation to the key job criteria - what differentiates you from the competition.
  - Greater depth of expertise in this field
  - A particular blend of experiences which give you a unique perspective (e.g. having worked in both academic research and industry)
  - Specific achievements in your current and previous roles
  - A qualification which is highly relevant to the role, but which not all the other applicants will have
  - A passion for and commitment to this industry or working for this organization.

## SITTING DOWN TO WRITE...

- Put your most convincing evidence first. You need to make an impact in the first few sentences. Talk about your current or most relevant job first.
  - Illustrate your achievements with brief but specific examples, explaining why these are relevant to this role. You can refer the employer to the CV for more detail. Do not attempt to summarise your CV or give too much detail – you need to be selective about the points that you highlight.
  - Concentrate on the areas which differentiate you from the competition rather than the basic job criteria.
  - Demonstrate how well you have researched the role and the job context when explaining your career motivation. Never send the same or a similar letter to more than one employer. Never 'cut and paste' as employers will suspect a lack of research and career focus.
  - Focus on what you can do for the organization and not what the organization can do for you. Especially do not write trite statements about why you want to join the organization (eg. a top 100 global organization)
  - Explain your rationale if you are seeking a career in an industry not related to your studies or experience.
  - Be succinct. Do not use technical jargon which the employer might not understand.
  - End on a note of enthusiasm and anticipation.
- 



**10. RESUME AND COVER LETTER TEMPLATES**

(Template files in MS Word version are attached separately)

## Cover Letter Template

**[Your Name]**

[Mobile No]

[Email Address]

---

[Date]

[Mr/Ms/Dr. Name of recruiter]

[Designation]

[Organisation]

[Address]

**Dear** (write each letter to a specific person and try to avoid “Dear Sir/Madam”)

**APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF \_\_\_\_ (specify) \_\_\_\_**

The **opening paragraph** should state the position you are applying for and how you knew about the vacancy.

The **middle paragraph(s)** should summarize the aspects of your background that will interest the employer. Explain how your abilities, background and qualifications will enable you to contribute to the organisation. This demonstrates that you have done some research about the employer’s organisation and its requirements.

Explain why the position is attractive to you and describe how your specific skills, strengths or personal attributes are relevant to the position.

The **closing paragraph** should pave the way for the interview. Reiterate your interest and ask for an interview at the employer’s convenience. You should leave a contact number or email for them to call you up for your interview. Thank the employer for his/her time and consideration.

Yours sincerely

***Your signature***

Your name

Enclosure (your resume)



# NUS BUSINESS SCHOOL CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

## Name

Mobile: xxxxx | Email Address: xxxxxxxx

## EDUCATION

### NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

Aug 2011–May 2015

*Bachelor of Business Administration: Major*

- CAP Score
- Honours, noteworthy coursework or Professional Certification (for example, CFA Level 1)
- Expected date of graduation

### UNDERGRADUATE INSTITUTION, STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

Jan 2013–Jun 2013

- Achievements, honours, GPA

### JUNIOR COLLEGE

Jan 2003–Nov 2008

- GCE 'A' Levels
- Achievements and awards

## EXPERIENCE

### COMPANY NAME 1 (Optional: briefly describe company, useful for local or small firms)

May 2014–Aug 2014

*Job Title (Optional: Division)*

- Each bullet should describe results and achievements. Quantify how well you did the job.
- Bullets can be 1-3 lines long, and can include multiple sentences.
- List bullets in the order starting with the most significant, the one that is most impressive.
- Group responsibilities and activities in a way that is logical for the reader.
- Recent internship and work experience bullets are critically important, and must demonstrate leadership, teamwork, skill, drive, results, or your ranking in relation to your peers.

### COMPANY NAME 2 (Optional: briefly describe company, useful for local or small firms)

Jan 2013–Apr 2014

*Job Title 1 (Optional: Division 1)*

- Each position should contain between 2-4 bullets. Readers lose interest if sections are too long.
- Proceed with additional bullets that drill down to key achievements, describing the activities with action verbs, avoiding passive tense). Try to include numbers and results to quantify your achievement.
- Note of caution: make sure that your bullets do not sound like a job description, a list of all the tasks that you are required to complete. Describe specifics of what you worked on – your results and impact. For example, if you created daily reporting or analysis, how many people was it circulated to and what kind of impact did it have?

*Job Title 2 (Optional: Division 2)*

Jun 2012–Dec 2012

- Text of the body is all set at 10.5 point font. If you need less space, you can raise it to 11 point.
  - Minimum is 10pt. Leave the category (Educ, Exp, Skills and Activities) and contact info at the preset size.
- It is often best to list awards and recognition within the bullets for a particular position – it reinforces the point that you have excelled in that role. Also helpful to provide relative comparison, “project was showcase as Best Practice for SEA region markets” or “one of only three Booz interns selected for this annual award” – context is key.

### COMPANY NAME 3 (Optional: briefly describe company, useful for local or small firms)

Jun 2011–May 2012

*Job Title (Optional: Division)*

- As the position becomes less recent, it makes sense that you would have fewer bullets for the position. You might condense what were 3 bullets into one. The assumption is that over time you have advanced in your career, and the interesting content is at the more recent point.

## ORGANISATIONAL AND COMMITTEE EXPERIENCE

- Use this section if you need an area for information on your Co-curricular activities in sports and/or community work such as: Hall participation, clubs, positions and titles held, publications, volunteerism work.

## SKILLS SET

- Language skills - for languages, indicate level of proficiency as one of the following: basic, conversant, proficient or native.
- IT Skills
- Lump personal hobbies or activities into one line, and choose items that are interesting and true – possible conversation starters.