

PhD in Psychology

Cutting-edge insights into individuals,
organisations and societies



SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT
UNIVERSITY

POSTGRADUATE

SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES

Message from The Dean



Our doctoral programme in Psychology is designed to prepare students to conduct original research that will lead to the award of a PhD degree.

The programme is designed and taught by scholars who are themselves professors of psychology, many with a breadth of experience teaching in different parts of the world, and all experts in a variety of fields of psychological research.

Students who complete this course of study undertake a rigorous training programme that involves learning from their professors and each other. The programme prepares them well not only for careers in academia but also for work in government and industry wherever having research skills, as well as an understanding of psychology, is an advantage.

Chandran KUKATHAS

Lee Kong Chian Chair Professor of Political Science
Dean, School of Social Sciences

Message from The Programme Director

Psychology is one of the most versatile and fascinating disciplines, allowing students to gain a wide range of skills, flexibility, and understanding of how people think, act, feel, and ultimately adapt to an ever-changing world. The Psychology PhD programme at SMU is at the forefront of generating, communicating and applying psychological science. We have a thriving and diverse intellectual community that is committed to excellence in research and scholarship.

The primary goal of our graduate education is the training of the next generation of researchers for academic and applied settings. To this end, our programme offers a vibrant and supportive research environment that equips our students with the necessary skills, resilience, and intellectual rigour to fulfil their lifetime ambitions. We also have a strong mentorship model that provides individualised training experiences and constructive guidance. Our programme reinvigorates itself by recruiting the most outstanding and promising students we can identify.

Our faculty members represent the cutting edge of research and scholarship in social psychology, evolutionary psychology, cultural psychology, cognitive psychology, developmental psychology, industrial/organisational psychology, environmental psychology, and personality psychology. We are deeply committed to graduate education and are eager to collaborate with students and help them develop a broad competence in critical research and analytical skills and expertise in one or more research specialisations.

We hope that you will consider our PhD programme and look forward to welcoming you in the future.

YANG Hwajin

Associate Professor of Psychology
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 conducting the Master's thesis and PhD 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 Qualifying Examination and 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 the following two major milestones.

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 fulfilment of all necessary requirements, the Committee will recommend to the University to award the PhD degree. Students will also attain a MPhil degree upon completion of the PhD programme.

* The Graduate Research Professional Development (GRPD) programme (1 Course Unit) is compulsory.

The PhD in Psychology programme is designed to equip students with doctoral-level knowledge in contents areas in psychology and research methodology, focusing on areas in cognitive, cultural, developmental, 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 taken within five years prior to the application.

TOEFL/IELTS

Applicants whose medium of instruction at the Bachelor's level was not in English.

Applicants who graduated with a Bachelor's degree (in any discipline) from the Singapore autonomous universities are exempted from this requirement.

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 August (of prior year)	31 January (of intake year)

Details on the application procedure can be found at <http://smu.sg/phd-psychology>.

College of Graduate Research Studies (CGRS)

UNLOCK OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

The College of Graduate Research Studies (CGRS) trains students to **uncover new knowledge and develop novel solutions that are relevant to some of today's most challenging issues.** This will be undertaken at the intersections of disciplines, cultures and industry.

Our community of learners benefit from **the diversity of expertise, disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and perspectives** so that they are well-equipped to create significant impact.



CREATE
Significant Impact
Across Disciplines



TACKLE
Challenging Issues
With Confidence



BUILD
Strong Connections
Within Our Community

Transformative & Holistic Learning

- Through Interdisciplinary Programmes.
- Through the Graduate Research Interdisciplinary Topics (GRIT) comprising the training in curated topics spanning across two or more disciplines, to ensure students are well grounded.
- Through the Graduate Research Professional Development (GRPD) programme which consists of a suite of credit-bearing courses, workshops and seminars to ensure career-readiness.

Fostering a Sense of Belonging

- Through the Graduate Research Student Society (GRSS) to deepen interactions among students with academic exchanges and social activities.
- Through Graduate Research Alumni Chapter (GRAC) to enhance lifelong engagement and affiliation among the graduates.
- Through meaningful engagement events and activities between students and graduates.

Financial Assistance Schemes

SMU awards three types of scholarships and fellowships on a competitive basis. We assess applicants for different award schemes either at the time of admission based on qualification and suitability for these schemes or during their PhD journey based on their outstanding academic performance.



SMU RESEARCH 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 existing PhD students who have outstanding academic performance. The Fellowship is a one-year award.

SMU INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP

The SMU Interdisciplinary Doctoral Fellowship* is awarded to existing PhD students who have shown exemplary pursuit of research that crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries. This Fellowship is also a one-year award.

* The stipend rates are published on the SMU PhD website and are subject to change.



Norman LI
Professor of Psychology

In today's rapidly changing and increasingly competitive world, people need to significantly differentiate themselves in order to stand a chance at having a successful and interesting career. Perhaps this is why many top students come to the SMU psychology PhD programme, where the environment is very friendly, engaging, and rigorous. SMU psychology PhD students work closely with top faculty who collaborate internationally, as well as other students, to learn the ins and outs of conducting interesting research in psychology and becoming a unique expert in their chosen area of specialty. The education, experience, and accomplishments obtained in this unique programme are invaluable and last a lifetime.



Kimin EOM
Assistant Professor of Psychology

Our PhD programme provides a rigorous research training. We offer a training in a broad scope of basic and applied areas in psychology – social, cultural, personality, evolutionary, developmental, cognitive, and organisational psychology. Our faculty members are leading experts internationally recognised in their respective fields. Under the supervision of a designated mentor or mentors, our students tackle theoretically and practically significant research questions and grow as an independent researcher who can contribute to their respective fields as well as the broader society.



Jacinth TAN
Assistant Professor of Psychology

The PhD programme at SMU provides a rigorous training in both basic and applied research, which gears students towards generating important knowledge and using them to solve real-world problems, be it in the communities, organisations, or the broader society. Our faculty research backgrounds and portfolios are diverse and strong. As such, our students are exposed to a variety of research areas and are equipped with fundamental research skills, based on the best and most current research practices. Although students work primarily with one faculty mentor, a number of them are also actively engaged in projects with other faculty members, which helps to broaden their perspectives and skills. The faculty members are also warm, supportive, and committed to training students to become competent and innovative scholars.



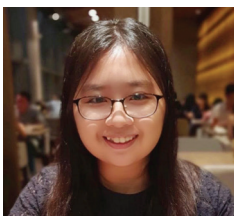
Bryan CHOY Kwok Cheng

Attaining a PhD is not easy, but SMU's programme has made the journey more enjoyable and fruitful. The faculty comprises of well-regarded academics who produce both theoretically important and socially relevant research. Classes are small in size and center around student-facilitated discussions, allowing for organic and stimulating discussions that sharpen our intellectual toolkits. Our exposure to diverse fields of psychology also creates an environment where collaboration involving different faculty members and students – and thus diverse knowledge and ideas – is not just a possibility, but often a reality. Finally, everyone – including my advisor, the faculty and other graduate students – is generous in sharing their knowledge about doing good research and how best to navigate academia. All in all, the programme offers a conducive environment for fledgling researchers like myself to find their way in the academic world.



QUEK Yi Xuan, Frosch

Having heard of the rigorous and holistic training one may receive here, I decided to apply for and was fortunately accepted into the SMU PhD in Psychology programme. Within my first year, I had already been exposed to multiple subfields in Psychology such as: cognitive psychology, social psychology, and industrial and organisational psychology, simply by nature of the diverse background of our esteemed faculty members. Beyond theoretical knowledge acquisition, our practical skills in research and writing are also tested and honed at high levels in each class. Furthermore, the approachability of our faculty members has fostered an inviting environment for us to seek from them guidance and opportunities to collaborate on research projects. Overall, the programme is highly nurturing of capable researchers and has prepared me well to take on future academic challenges.



OH Hui Si

The PhD in Psychology programme at SMU is a high-quality programme that prepares students for the future; the content knowledge and research skills have enabled me to effectively develop and conduct innovative research that promotes the thriving of individuals in today's workplace. The professors provide rigorous content knowledge, research methodologies, and cultivate a positive learning environment. It felt at home at SMU because my advisors were enthusiastic and supportive of my research and provided excellent feedback to hone my research skills.



TOH Wei Xing, Noah

A key appeal of the PhD programme at SMU is the rigorous and comprehensive training that focuses on synthesising knowledge from diverse psychological domains, such as cognitive, social and personality psychology. Additionally, I feel fortunate to be part of a closely-knitted and supportive network of peers and faculty members who provide stimulating discussions and frequently engage in cross-disciplinary research collaborations. Through the well-rounded coursework and research training, my time at SMU has prepared me with the necessary skills and knowledge to tackle real-world problems with an interdisciplinary approach.



Singapore Management University
School of Social Sciences
General Office #05-01
10 Canning Rise
Singapore 179873



<http://smu.sg/phd-psychology>



phd_psy@smu.edu.sg



(65) 6828 0643

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