

PhD in Business

Advance knowledge at Asia's leading business and management university



RESEARCH
DEGREES



LEE KONG CHIAN
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Message from PhD Programme Director

DEVELOPING WORLD-CLASS RESEARCHERS AND FUTURE THOUGHT LEADERS

Greetings from the Lee Kong Chian School of Business at Singapore Management University (SMU)!

Our PhD in Business programme is designed for individuals who aspire to become serious scholars, independent researchers, and thought leaders in business. The programme provides rigorous doctoral training across five areas of specialisation: Finance, Marketing, Operations Management, Organisational Behaviour and Human Resources, and Strategy and Entrepreneurship.

We are looking for intellectually ambitious candidates from many different academic and professional backgrounds. While some applicants may come from business, economics, or the social sciences, we also strongly encourage applications from those trained in technical and analytical fields such as engineering, computing, mathematics, statistics, data science, and related disciplines. Strong intellectual ability is central to success in doctoral study. For this reason, evidence of academic excellence, including strong performance on standardised tests where relevant, is considered carefully together with research potential, motivation, prior accomplishments, and fit with faculty research interests.

Located in Singapore, SMU offers an exceptional environment for doctoral education. Students benefit from access to a dynamic business ecosystem that includes multinational corporations, entrepreneurial ventures, public agencies, and non-profit organisations. They also have opportunities to draw on SMU's wider intellectual community, including faculty and research strengths in accounting, economics, computing and information systems, law, and the social sciences. This interdisciplinary setting enables students to pursue original research on important problems facing firms, markets, consumers, organisations, and policymakers.

Doctoral training at LKCSB combines depth, discipline, and close faculty mentorship. Students build a strong foundation through coursework in the early years of the programme and then advance toward independent dissertation research. Throughout this process, they learn how to identify meaningful research questions, develop sound theory, apply rigorous methods, and contribute new knowledge to their fields.

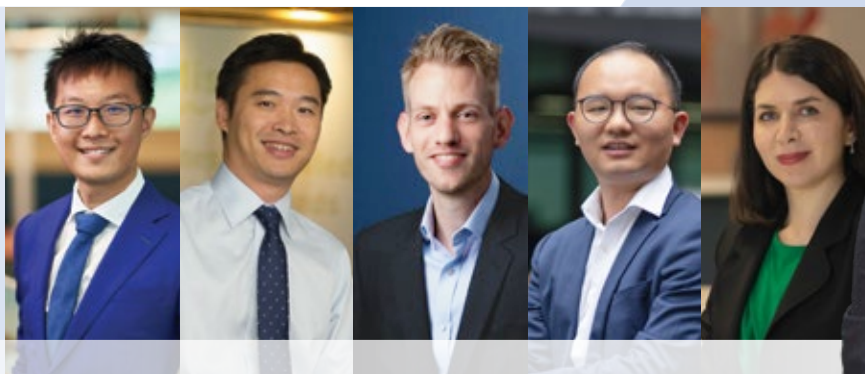
Admitted students receive substantial support for full-time doctoral study, including tuition coverage, stipends, and funding for research and conference participation. Additional opportunities may be available through fellowships, grants, teaching, and research assistantships.

Admission to the programme is highly selective. We seek candidates with curiosity, analytical strength, perseverance, and the capacity to produce research that matters. Our graduates have gone on to build successful careers in leading universities, research institutions, and organisations in Singapore and internationally.

I invite you to learn more about the PhD in Business programme on our website or join one of our upcoming online information sessions. We look forward to receiving your applications.

Dr Reddi KOTHA

Lee Kong Chian Professor of Strategy & Entrepreneurship



PhD Programme Coordinators

(From left to right) Associate Professor Kenneth TAI, Associate Professor Joe ZHANG, Associate Professor Ernst OSINGA, Associate Professor Liang (Leon) XU, Assistant Professor Niloofar ABOLFATHI.



Dr Reddi KOTHA

Lee Kong Chian Professor of Strategy
& Entrepreneurship

Lee Kong Chian School of Business

PhD IN BUSINESS (FINANCE)

This rigorous and intellectually stimulating programme emphasises advanced study in the areas of finance, economics, statistics and quantitative research methods. The programme is taught by a group of dynamic faculty who consistently publish in top finance journals.

At the end of the programme, graduates will have the skills needed to conduct in-depth research into a specific sub-field in finance such as asset pricing, corporate finance and market microstructure. Graduates will also have a broad appreciation of the key research issues that resonate with the field. Given the tremendous relevance of finance to the global economy, a graduate of this programme will be well prepared for diverse careers in academia, industry, international organisations and the public sector.

Research Areas Include:

Asset Pricing, Corporate Finance and Governance, Institutional Investors, Market Microstructure, Hedge Funds, Private Equity, Financial Technology, Household Finance, Real Estate Finance, Sustainable Finance

For more details, please visit:

<http://smu.sg/phd-business-finance>

PhD IN BUSINESS (MARKETING)

The PhD in Business (Marketing) programme trains students to conduct rigorous and relevant research focused on understanding and modelling the behaviour of consumers and managers and their interactions in the market. Students receive rigorous training in consumer behaviour, marketing strategy, quantitative marketing, and beyond. Throughout the programme, students conduct their research in close collaboration with marketing faculty. Our faculty and PhD students conduct top-level research and publish in prestigious journals such as the Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Consumer Research, Marketing Science, and Management Science. This highly selective programme is geared towards helping students in their journey to becoming scholars and leading marketing faculty.

Research Areas Include:

Applications of AI in Marketing, Behavioural Pricing, Decision Making, Digital and Mobile Marketing, Financial Impact of Marketing Actions, Offline and Online Retailing, Sustainability and Prosocial Behaviours

For more details, please visit:

<http://smu.sg/phd-business-marketing>



PhD IN BUSINESS (ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR AND HUMAN RESOURCES)

This programme equips graduates with the knowledge, skills and abilities to conduct highly rigorous research in Organisational Behaviour and Human Resources (OBHR) in major research universities worldwide. The programme, taught by an international group of faculty members who consistently publish in the field's most respected journals, will provide hands-on training in research right from the onset as well as a stimulating curriculum emphasising psychological foundations of organisational behaviour and human resources, statistics and research methods. A nurturing approach will be adopted by faculty to help students succeed in the job market and in their careers.

Research Areas Include:

Affect and Emotions, Creativity and Innovation, Culture and Cross-Cultural Management, Diversity, Ethics and Justice, Economic Cycles, Followership and Leadership, Groups and Teams, Job Attitudes and Job Performance, Judgement and Decision Making, Mindfulness, Negotiation, Organisation Climate, Personality, Psychology of Workplace Technology, Recruitment and Employer Branding, Social Hierarchies, Talent Acquisition and Talent Assessment, Trust, Well-being and Job Stress, Work Design and Work Motivation

For more details, please visit:

<http://smu.sg/phd-business-obhr>

PhD IN BUSINESS (STRATEGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP)

The PhD in Business (Strategy and Entrepreneurship) programme is designed to equip students with the knowledge, research skills, and analytical capabilities needed to conduct rigorous, high-impact research in strategic management and entrepreneurship. Students pursue original research across a broad range of topics, including business and corporate strategy, entrepreneurship, innovation, technology management, and corporate governance. The programme offers rigorous methodological and theoretical training under the mentorship of internationally recognised faculty who regularly publish in leading academic journals. Through close collaboration with faculty and active engagement in the global research community, students develop the expertise and independence needed to build successful academic careers at leading universities worldwide.

Research Areas Include:

Entrepreneurship, Innovation, International Business, Organisation Theory, Strategic Management, Digital Business, Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainability

For more details, please visit:

<https://business.smu.edu.sg/strategy-and-entrepreneurship-research>

PhD IN BUSINESS (OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT)

The programme prepares students to become independent scholars who develop rigorous and impactful research on the most pressing problems in operations management. Through intensive training in optimisation, analytical modelling, empirical methods, and emerging areas such as AI and sustainable operations, students build the methodological depth and intellectual independence needed to produce research of the highest quality. The programme emphasises research with real-world relevance, encouraging students to address important challenges faced by firms, markets, supply chains, healthcare systems, and society. Students work closely with our faculty, participate in regular research seminars, and engage with leading visiting scholars and journal editors from around the world. The programme aims to place its graduates in faculty positions at leading universities, as well as in research-oriented leadership roles in industry, the public sector, and international organisations.

Research Areas Include:

AI in Operations, Business Analytics, E-Commerce & Marketplace Analytics, Healthcare Analytics and Operations (including Medical AI, Population Health, and Public Policy), Inventory, Logistics & Transportation Management, Operations Planning, Scheduling & Control, Operations Strategy, Product, Process and Service Design and Improvement, Project Management, Purchasing & Sourcing Management, Supply Chain Management, Sustainable Operations including Agri-business

For more details, please visit:

<http://smu.sg/phd-business-om>

SMU Lee Kong Chian School of Business is one of the youngest business schools in the world to achieve 'triple crown' accreditation by AACSB (the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business), EQUIS by European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD), and by AMBA (the Association of MBAs) for MBA programmes.



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Programme Structure

A PhD student will typically focus on coursework in the first one to two years, followed by the dissertation research in subsequent years.

The PhD framework is as follows:

- 6 Foundation Courses (6 Course Units)
- 2 Elective Courses (2 Course Units)
- 4 Advanced Research Topics (ART) Courses (4 Course Units)
- PhD Dissertation (28 Course Units)

The coursework is intended to lay the ground in preparation of the Qualifying Examination and dissertation research. The student will have to sit for a PhD Qualifying Examination (QE). It will assess his or her mastery of the foundation required for the next stage of the PhD programme – the dissertation. This is the student's original work in his or her specialised area through independent research. On successful completion of the QE, the student will be ready to embark on the dissertation. If he or she feels comfortable with the PhD curriculum along the way, the dissertation research can commence even before the coursework is completed. The dissertation is marked by two major milestones, as follow.

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.

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

Admission and Application

GENERAL ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- At least a good Bachelor's degree.
- A Master's degree is useful but not required.
- Good GRE or GMAT results.
- Good TOEFL or IELTS scores.
For applicants whose medium of instruction at the Bachelor's/Master's level was not in English.

Submission of the following documents:

- Identity Card/Passport
- Cover Letter and Latest Curriculum Vitae with a recent photograph
- Degree Certificates and Transcripts
- Statement of Purpose
(Please include your purpose for getting a PhD in our programme and also list faculty members you are most interested in working with.)
- Referee Report*
- Writing Samples[^]

APPLICATION INFORMATION

All the PhD programmes are full-time. The University's application window is listed below.

Intake	Opening Date for Application	Closing Date for Application
August (all programmes)	1 August (of prior year)	31 December (of prior year)

A successful candidate who applies early may be provided with an early offer.

Details of application procedure can be found in the respective programmes' website. Please check the websites for updates.



* All programmes require two referee reports with the exception of PhD in Business (OBHR) where three referee reports are required.

[^] One to three writing samples (such as a published paper and/or undergraduate report) is/are required for applications to PhD in Business (OBHR) only.

College of Graduate Research Studies (CGRS)



CREATE
Significant Impact
Across Disciplines



BUILD
Strong Connections
Within Our Community



TACKLE
Challenging Issues
With Confidence



UNLOCK
Opportunities
Through Interdisciplinary Research

The SMU College of Graduate Research Studies (CGRS) enhances and facilitates integration and interdisciplinarity across its various postgraduate research (PGR) programmes, enabling students to gain a holistic learning experience and well-grounded approach to their research, supported by a like-minded community of fellow researchers and faculty mentors. This is achieved through interdisciplinary programmes, shared courses, and professional training workshops.

The College also serves as a second home to students by strengthening networking, cohort-building and providing collaborative opportunities for PGR students across the various programmes, facilitated through student and alumni groups. Ultimately, students will be poised to tackle challenges affecting businesses, societies, and institutions across boundaries with confidence, and create significant impact.



Financial Assistance Schemes

SMU awards four 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 to 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 a one-year award.



IMPACT DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP (IMDF)

The SMU Impact Doctoral Fellowship* is awarded to existing PhD students who demonstrate strong research potential or impact in and/or beyond academia. This Fellowship is a one-year award.

For more information, please visit:

<https://graduatestudies.smu.edu.sg/cgrs-fellowship-awards>

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

“ I joined the PhD in Business (Finance) programme at SMU for its rigorous training, close faculty mentorship, and strong support for impactful research. It has given me the freedom to explore interdisciplinary questions in behavioural finance, household finance, sustainable finance, and financial technology, while equipping me with the necessary theoretical and empirical tools. I have benefited greatly from regular seminars, generous travel support for international conferences, and extensive data resources. Just as importantly, the faculty and my fellow PhD students have created a collaborative environment in which ideas are openly exchanged and refined. The programme nurtures PhD students not only as independent researchers but also as members of the academic community, who are prepared to advance academic knowledge and address real-world questions in financial markets. ”



Bao Yanlin (Finance)



“ I decided to pursue the PhD in Business (OBHR) because I wanted to deeply explore questions around gender, leadership, and workplace dynamics that I had only scratched the surface of before. What drew me to the programme was the chance to work closely with faculty who are not only renowned in their areas of expertise but also generous mentors. Over the course of my studies, I have gained rigorous training in theory development, research design, and advanced data analysis, which has sharpened my ability to approach complex organisational issues systematically. This journey has prepared me to contribute both to academic scholarship and to conversations that matter for organisations and society. ”

Tian Yixin (OBHR)

“ I chose the PhD in Business (Operations Management) at SMU because it offers rigorous academic training and encourages us to pursue research with real-world impact. The programme has given me a strong foundation in research methodology, from analytical modelling to empirical analysis, and taught me how to bridge theory with practice. Beyond coursework, the faculty have been incredibly supportive, providing close guidance and mentorship throughout my PhD journey. The collaborative peer environment has also been invaluable, providing opportunities to exchange ideas, share feedback, and support one another. Together, this open and supportive community has made the PhD experience intellectually enriching and personally fulfilling. ”

Lai Jiayi (OM)



“ Before joining the PhD programme in Strategy & Entrepreneurship at Singapore Management University (SMU), I worked as a management consultant, where I was exposed to a wide range of business challenges. While solving these problems was rewarding, I became increasingly curious about the “why” behind them, inspiring me to pursue research. Drawn by SMU’s strong reputation in management research and Singapore’s vibrant business environment, I saw an opportunity to pursue research that is both academically rigorous and closely connected to practice. The programme’s two years of foundational coursework support my transition from industry to academia. Beyond the classroom, the programme offers workshops, conferences, and a mentorship scheme that have given me valuable opportunities to exchange ideas with both established and emerging scholars, broadening my perspectives on research. More importantly, the programme has fostered an environment that nurtures qualities, not just qualifications, where I have learned to trust the process and build resilience – qualities that I believe will stay with me throughout my future journey. ”

Ngo Thu Trang (S&E)

“ Running my first online business revealed how emerging technologies and marketing can influence consumer behaviour, thereby kindling my curiosity about the complex factors behind their decisions. During my undergraduate studies at Singapore Management University (SMU), I was fortunate to be taught by professors who were both domain experts and dedicated mentors. This inspired me to enter the PhD programme at SMU, where that same academic rigour and support continue to shape me into a more independent researcher and thinker. In an era where AI is redefining the brand-consumer relationship, SMU has trained me to translate these academic insights into real-world impact, helping brands and consumers navigate an ever-evolving technological landscape. ”

Joyce Chua Ko Hwee (Marketing)





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