SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

DESIGN YOUR FUTURE

SUTD CAREER GUIDE 2027

Published by gradsingapore.com

MDDI (P) 030/05/2026

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MESSAGE TO THE STUDENTS

Preparing for a Career Yet to Be Defined

Technology, artificial intelligence, globalisation and sustainability are today's hot topics! Yet evolving business models are transforming industries and creating roles that may not yet exist. Employers increasingly value not only academic qualifications, but also the capacity to learn, adapt, solve problems, communicate effectively, and collaborate across disciplines. LifeSkills (see Pg 10) are therefore more important than ever — and your preparation begins from your first day at university.

Whether you join an MNC, SME, startup, or the public sector, pursue further studies, or build your own venture, there is no single "best" path. Each offers distinct opportunities for growth and impact. What matters is the intention with which you develop your skills, relationships, experiences, curiosity, and resilience (see Pg 62-64). Begin documenting your experiential journey using MyJourney, SUTD's new portfolio platform where you can showcase your innovative projects, internships, leadership contributions, reflections, skills, achievementss, and aspirations. Over time, it will become a meaningful record of your development and help you articulate your value to employers, collaborators, investors, and graduate schools.

This guide also provides practical guidance on navigating your first 90 days at work, understanding today's hiring landscape, exploring entrepreneurship and alternative careers, and considering opportunities across different organisations. As LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman observed, "The fastest way to change yourself is to hang out with people who are already the way you want to be."

Seek insights from professors, industry leaders, alumni, mentors, employers, and peers. I especially encourage you to read the profiles of our alumni founders and co-founders (see Pg 74). Their journeys are shaped by curiosity, setbacks, perseverance, calculated risks, and continuous learning. These demonstrate that success is rarely linear. Their entrepreneurial journey is exciting! Look beyond the companies they have built and reflect on the habits, values, skills, and choices that have sustained them. Read their stories. Learn from their journeys. Then begin shaping a story of your own.





Angelvin Parma
Head, Career Development Centre

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Produced by

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MEET THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE TEAM

Reach out to the dedicated Career Development Centre (CDC) team, who are committed to supporting you on your path to career success.



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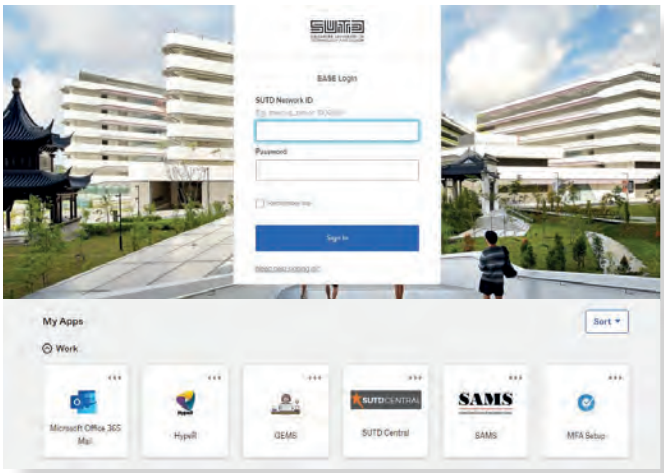
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START YOUR JOURNEY WITH US

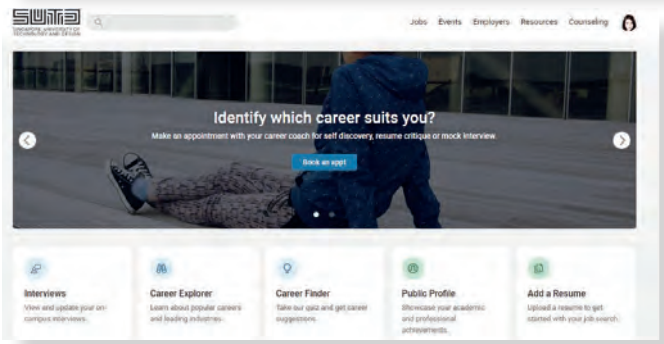
Graduate Employment Management System (GEMS)

Whether you are a freshmore deciding on your pillar choice, a junior seeking out company information and internship, or a senior finding the first full-time job, GEMS will be an essential platform for you to rely on here at SUTD. Packed with useful insights and resources to keep you updated on hiring trends, GEMS also serves another important purpose — booking appointments with your career coach. To get started, simply log in to GEMS via your EASE page at https://ease.sutd.edu.sg.



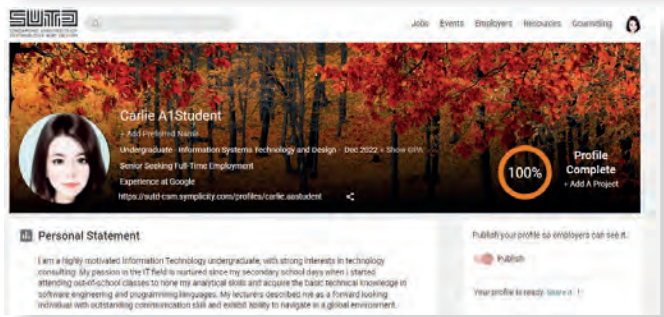
An overview of GEMS

Once you have logged in, you have access to all the features GEMS has to offer, which can be seen and accessed via the menu bar on the left. Any information on the latest news and upcoming events can be found on the 'What's New' dashboard. Want to research a particular industry or company? Useful resources like Vault.com are included for you to access insightful write-ups and articles.



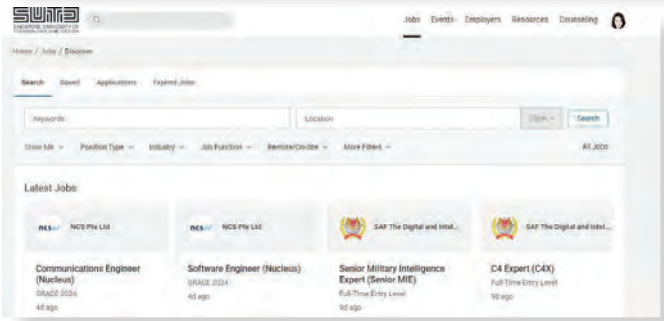
Profile

What better way to show off your uniqueness as a candidate than with a professional profile? GEMS not only provides you with your own customisable profile page, but you can also add links to your LinkedIn and technical portfolio. To maximise the efficiency of your profile, be sure to upload a copy of your resume and fill in all the sections provided, such as Personal Statement, Work Experience and Projects.



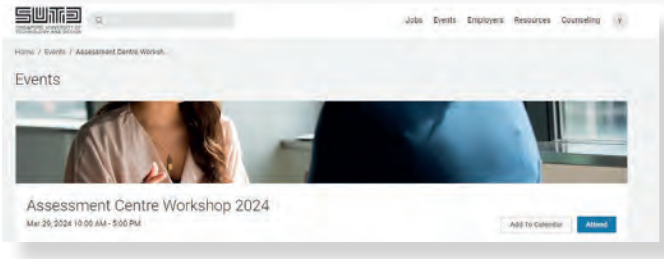
Jobs

If you are looking for job opportunities, you can access this page to stay up-to-date on the most recent job listings. From which companies are hiring and what qualities they are looking for, you can raise your awareness of the current job market and fill in any gaps you have to best match your ideal employers.



Career Events & Workshops

Attended any campus company visits and recruitment talks organised by CDC? Many students have found these sessions to be immensely useful, providing them an opportunity to interact with career professionals and hiring managers to learn more about the work culture and the types of career prospects available to them. If you find yourself unsure about your own career path, you can simply sign up for any upcoming career events via the Career Events tab.



Career Resources

With plenty of useful tips and resources, this is the place to turn to if you need a final check on your resume or are looking for tips on how to ace your upcoming job or internship interview. Want to know the best way to answer the dreaded 'Tell me about yourself' question? You can find the best answers for it here.

Document Library

Working on your resume but unsure of where to begin? You can find a sample cover letter and resume here, provided by CDC, which you can simply download and edit as you deem fit. Do not just copy from the samples word-for-word though, lest you find your applications to be too similar to that of your peers. Moreover, when writing your resume, be sure to apply the AAA (Action, Amplify, Achievement) format that you have learnt in UPOP!

Mock Interview

Online interviews have become increasingly popular among companies, particularly through platforms like HireVue. The Mock Interview feature can help you get familiar and more comfortable with these by letting you try out practice interviews for different job positions. If you want to get a second opinion on your interview performance, you can even share your attempts with anyone, including your friends and family!

Motivational Appraisal of Personal Potential (MAPP)

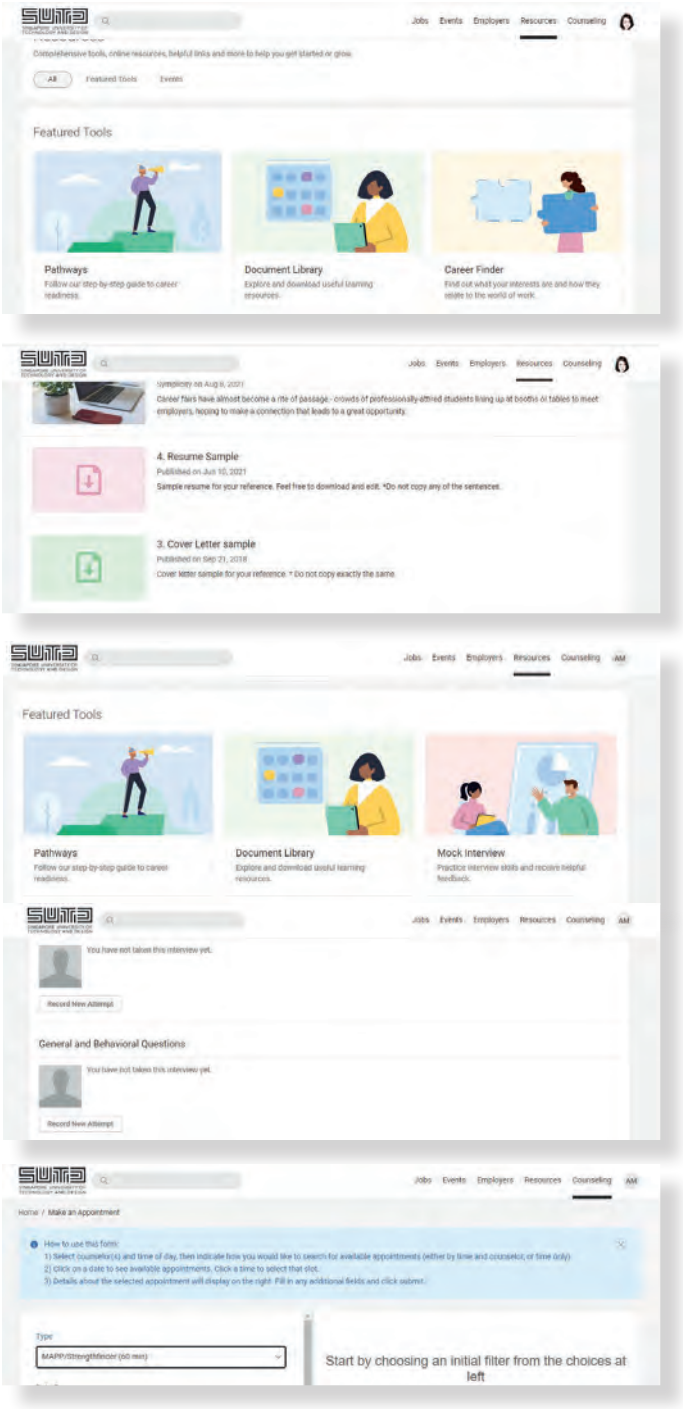
Have you ever wondered why you might find yourself struggling to do one task, but breeze through others? This is because we are all wired differently, with different interests and values shaped by our own experiences. Using MAPP helps to identify your true motivations towards work and allows you to match yourself to job categories to see where you best fit. You may book one session with the Career Coach for an assessment.

Set a "date" with your Career Coach

Apart from their resume critique or mock interview sessions, you can collaborate with your coach to get their insight and strategies on how you can kickstart your career planning. Looking for feedback on your LinkedIn profile? We have this service for our students as well.

Still on the fence about that appointment? Contrary to popular belief, using the services at the CDC is not seen as being 'needy'. In fact, more than 500 appointments were made in 2025 — meaning that at least one session was held for a student every day!

Also, if you are on the go, you can download GEMS' mobile app on your iOS/Android phone by searching "Symplicity Jobs and Careers" on the app store.



Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

TAILORED FOR FRESHMORES!

Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Programme (UPOP)

The Undergraduate Practice Opportunities Programme (UPOP) is designed to develop career readiness among SUTD undergraduates. With a wide range of practical and experimental sessions, taught by Career Coaches and Professional Consultants, students can acquire the relevant career skills they need to navigate the job market upon graduation. All students are required to complete nine UPOP Essential Modules to be better prepared for upcoming internships and the corporate world.

UPOP Essential Modules and Advanced Modules			
Year	**Jan - Apr**	**May - Aug**	**Sep - Dec**
			Freshmore (Term 1) • Freshmore Welcome Tea **Essential Module:** • E01: DYSUTD • E02: Power Pitch
01/02	**Freshmore (Term 2)** **Essential Module:** • E03: Brand YOU/ Storytelling	**Vacation / Summer Programme**	**Sophomore (Term 3)** **Essential Module:** • E04: LinkedIn Up
02/03	**Sophomore (Term 4)** **Essential Module:** • E05: Showcasing Your Skills: Resume & Technical Portfolio • E06: Ace Your Interview • E07: The Super Intern with the X-cultural Factor **Activity:** • Career & Internship Fair	**Junior (Term 5)** **Advanced Module:** • Nailing the Assessment Centre • Breaking the CASE	**Exchange/Internship (Local / Overseas)** **Activity:** • Industry Night
03/04	**Junior (Term 6) Internship / Exchange** **Activity:** • Career & Internship Fair	**Vacation / Internship / Summer Programme** **Essential Module:** • E08: Job Search Strategies **Advanced Modules:** • Nailing the Assessment Centre • Breaking the CASE	**Senior (Term 7)** **Activity:** • E-Resume Book for Graduating Seniors • Industry Night
04	**Senior (Term 8)** **Activity:** • Career & Internship Fair • GRACE: GradConnect& eResume Book Exercise		

UPOP 9 Essential Modules

- **DYSUTD:** Design thinking is a widely-used process for product and service designers to create user-centric solutions. Find out how you can apply these concepts to yourself by building, designing and creating a meaningful journey here at SUTD and beyond!
- **Power Pitch:** This online module is an assessment of your pitching skills. It would determine if you are heading to Brand You or Storytelling workshop.
- **Brand YOU:** This workshop will help boost your confidence so you can network more easily and enjoy doing it! Meet and connect with people who could be pivotal to your career — be it a potential hiring manager, knowledgeable mentors and even investors for your future start-up!
- **Storytelling:** A good story can be both moving and inspirational. Learn how to tell compelling stories that not only create an impact but convinces your audience to take the desired action.
- **LinkedIn Up:** Become your own career influencer! Enhance your professional presence online and harness the power of LinkedIn. Develop a plan to connect with influential people within your discipline an establish your brand, opening up opportunities to get into your dream career!
- **Showcasing Your Skills:** Build an impressive resume and technical portfolio to wow recruiters and hiring managers by showcasing the best of your skills and strengths of yourself.
- **Ace Your Interview:** With technology, interviews are no longer just conducted face-to-face. At times, it does not have to be real time too! Understand the different dynamics and expectations from each type of interviews. Learn how to stand out and pick up the best practices to help you win in any kind of interviews.
- **The Super Intern:** Utilise tips and strategies to become the best intern you can be! Develop techniques on how you can break the barrier of diverse cultures in a multi-cultural environment.
- **Job Search Strategies:** Looking for job does not have to be a daunting and time-consuming task. Learn how to better invest your time in activities that can help you maximise results. Knowing effective strategies for job-hunting will go a long way in getting that job you want.

Advanced Modules often have smaller class sizes; thus registration is based on a first-come-first-served basis and a nominal fee of $30 is payable upon registration. UPOP Advanced Modules are strategically introduced to enhance students' career readiness.

Freshmore Welcome Tea

All new freshmore students are invited to attend this session during Term 1 to learn more about the services that CDC offers as we believe that career planning is best done early. This includes sharing the timeline of our UPOP, internships and how to start preparing for career hunt. In addition, they are encouraged to approach the Career Coaches to discuss their future career plans.



Forerunner

This opportunity is open to all students and CDC will connect you to the mentors of your chosen industry. This would be an event where you will gain insider information on your chosen industry, and advice and guidance on your preferred career path. You may even potentially expand your professional network with help from your mentor, such as referrals to jobs or internship positions. With all these benefits, Forerunner can provide you with a clearer career trajectory and better confidence for the journey ahead. Applications start in January, so do not miss the chance to sign up!



JOB OPPORTUNITIES ARE CREATED FOR YOU



Career and Internship Fair

The Career and Internship Fair (CIF) is a key highlight in SUTD's annual calendar, offering valuable opportunities for students to explore career pathways and engage with employers. Held each year in the first quarter, shortly after the start of the academic term.

The fair brings together over 100 employers from a wide range of sectors, including technology, engineering, financial services, healthcare, and more. This diversity provides students with exposure to a broad spectrum of career opportunities across various industries and functions.

CIF also enables employers to showcase their organisations and connect meaningfully with SUTD students. With representation across multiple sectors, students from all pillars and areas of interest can discover relevant opportunities and interact with recruiters actively seeking new talent.

Overall, CIF serves as a dynamic platform where ambition, talent, and opportunity converge—supporting students in their transition into the professional world while fostering meaningful employer connections.

To make the most of CIF, students are encouraged to prepare in advance:

- **Research participating employers**

Review the list of companies attending the fair and understand their business, culture, and available roles. This will help you ask meaningful questions and stand out in conversations.

- **Refine your resume**

Consult Career Coaches to optimise your resume. Your resume should highlight skills relevant to the roles you are applying for, and students are encouraged to arrange for mock interviews.

- **Prepare your portfolio/Update MyJourney**

If your field requires a portfolio, bring along samples of your work, such as projects or design portfolios, to showcase your skills effectively.

- **Craft your personal introduction**

Prepare a concise introduction covering your name, pillar, key strengths, and career interests to confidently engage employers.

- **Dress professionally**

Dress in professional attire, as first impressions matter. Ensure you look polished and well-groomed.

- **Demonstrate enthusiasm**

Show genuine interest and curiosity when interacting with employers.

- **Follow up proactively**

Reach out after the fair where appropriate, as recruiters value proactive and engaged candidates.

GradConnect & E-Resume Compilation Exercise (GRACE)

The GradConnect & e-Resume Compilation E xercise (GRACE) is specifically organised for graduating students seeking full-time employment opportunities before graduation.

To gain access to the platform, students are required to register for GRACE and book a 'Resume Critique' session with a Career Coach. These one-to-one consultations are tailored to help students refine their resumes and technical portfolios, to help secure their dream job.

At the conclusion of the exercise, participating students' resumes are compiled and shared with employers who are actively recruiting fresh graduates.

By taking part in GRACE, students can enhance their visibility to employers and increase their chances of being matched with relevant job opportunities.secure your dream job.

Do not miss out on this opportunity to connect with potential employers.


Industry Connect



Industry Connect

Held annually in September, Industry Connect is SUTD's premier networking event organised by the Career Development Centre, connecting students with new industry partners.

The event offers valuable insights into current hiring trends and emerging opportunities in the job market, including those presented by newly onboarded industry partners. It is an excellent platform for students to broaden their awareness of potential career pathways and industry developments.

By engaging with employers during Industry Connect, students can build meaningful connections and expand their professional networks. The event also provides a practical setting to develop key professional skills such as active listening, asking relevant questions, and communicating confidently.

Employers consistently express strong interest in interacting with students to better understand their interests and career aspirations. Students are encouraged to participate actively and make the most of these conversations.

Do look out for event publicity and registration details and take advantage of this opportunity to connect with potential employers.

Recruitment Talks and Company Visits

Each year, the SUTD Career Development Centre collaborates with industry partners to host recruitment events that bridge the gap between academic learning and professional opportunities. These events may be held either at the company's location or on the SUTD campus, offering students insights into different workplace cultures and environments.

Participating organisations include Xiaomi, AI Singapore, HP Inc, etc. Sessions typically feature a combination of networking opportunities and updates on current job openings. Through these engagements, students gain a deeper understanding of organisations, their work culture, and available career opportunities.

Dedicated Q&A segments are included to allow students to ask relevant and thoughtful questions following the sessions. Employers have also provided positive feedback on the hands-on approach of SUTD students in their learning experiences, both on campus and during internships.





Recruitment Talks and Company Visits

IN THE AGE OF AI, WHAT MAKES YOU IRREPLACEABLE?

Over the past few years, AI has rapidly reshaped the way we learn and work. Tasks that once defined technical roles — writing code, analysing data, designing systems — can now be done faster and, in some cases, better by machines. But this does not mean humans are becoming less valuable. It means our value is changing.

In this new landscape, success is no longer about competing with AI — it is about working alongside it. Just like how we are advocating it at SUTD.

AI can execute. But humans decide, connect, and lead. And that is why life skills are no longer optional — they are what make you irreplaceable.



AI + Human Skills: A New Partnership

Think of AI as a powerful tool. It can generate ideas, automate tasks, and accelerate work. But its effectiveness depends entirely on the person using it. This is where some of the life skills come in:

- **Communication** — Turning AI outputs into ideas that people understand and act on
- **Critical Thinking** — Questioning, refining, and validating what AI produces
- **Creativity** — Asking better questions and imagining possibilities beyond the obvious
- **Collaboration & Leadership** — Bringing people together to drive outcomes

In other words, AI handles the execution, humans provide the direction.

Employers are not just looking for technical expertise, they are looking for individuals who can bridge the gap between technology and people — those who can think, communicate, and lead in an increasingly AI-enabled world.

Why Small Actions Matter More Than Ever

Building life skills can feel overwhelming. But the reality is, growth does not happen overnight — it happens through small, consistent actions.

Each step you take builds on the last. Over time, these experiences compound into something much greater. For example:

- Speaking up once in class builds confidence
- Confidence leads you to present more often
- Presentations open doors to leadership roles
- Leadership experiences strengthen your ability to work in teams and influence others

This is the power of ***compounding growth.*** What starts as a small effort today can shape who you become a year, two years and four year from now.

Start Small, Build Momentum

You don't need to overhaul your life to start building these skills. You can begin right where you are:

- **Join a Fifth Row or student group**

Take on roles that require you to collaborate, organise, or lead.

- **Practice public speaking**

Volunteer to present, record yourself, and reflect on how you can improve.

- **Participate in competitions**

Push yourself in team-based or pitching environments where you can develop creativity and problem-solving.

- **Participate in Overseas Opportunities**

Broaden your perspectives and learn to see through the lenses from people across the globe and cultures.

Each of these actions may seem small on its own — but together, they create momentum. Over time, you will see a noticeable shift in your confidence, awareness, and capability.

Pause, Reflect, Grow

Growth is not just about doing more — it is about understanding how you are growing.

The LifeSkills Survey was introduced as a way for you to reflect on your development at key stages of your journey:

- Before your first term — to understand your starting point
- In Term 4 — to assess your growth
- At your final term — to evaluate your readiness for the workplace

This is not a test. It is a tool for reflection — helping you identify your strengths, uncover gaps, and take ownership of your development. Because the truth is, you cannot improve what you are not aware of.

Designing Your Growth

To guide this journey, the university has developed a 16 LifeSkills Framework — a set of capabilities that reflect what it means to thrive as a student and as a future professional.

These skills are not built in a single moment. They are built through experiences — in classrooms, in projects, in internships, and in everyday interactions.

Every conversation, every challenge, every opportunity is a chance to grow.

Looking Ahead

In a world where AI continues to evolve, the question is no longer: "What can you do?" But rather: "What can you do that AI cannot?"

Your ability to think critically, communicate clearly, collaborate effectively, and lead with purpose — these are the qualities that will set you apart.

Start small. Stay consistent. Keep reflecting. Because over time, these small actions will compound — shaping not just your skills, but your future.

LifeSkills Competencies

S/N	LifeSkills Competency	Description
1	**Innovation**	• Understand and consider challenges or problems from a user perspective. • Brainstorm ideas and formulate options, including drawing from multiple skills and disciplines • Explain and test ideas and potential solutions with users to see if they are a feasible and provide significant value and generate the right outcomes.
2	**Curiosity and Independent Learning**	• Take charge of learning by exploring new areas of knowledge and skills, and proactively asking questions (e.g. from faculty, colleagues, internship supervisors, team-mates). • Able to develop practical career and study plans. • Share knowledge and feedback for collective and personal self-reflection and learning.
3	**Critical Thinking**	• Analyse facts, data and different viewpoints to make sound decisions and judgments in complex situations. • Share opinions supported by logical evidence clearly and rationally. • Draw connections between different disciplines to solve problems. • Explore and adopt search strategies and tools to find the relevant and most credible information for making an informed decision.
4	**Personal Values and Professional Ethics**	• Build on strong interpersonal relationships and treat others with respect and honesty. • Show empathy and solve conflicts by communicating openly. • Involve others when working on projects and keeping communication open. • Demonstrate and be professional in behaviour and appearance. • Be responsible and manage risks well, especially with regard to safety and security.
5	**Self Awareness and Mental Resilience**	• Understand your own emotions, feelings, and how they might affect you. • See challenges as opportunities to learn and grow at your current stage of life. • Know your emotions, behaviours and what you are good and not so good at. • Identify work and life stressors. • Knowing whom you can approach for help and how to manage the stressors.
6	**Personal Effectiveness**	• Build and manage your personal well-being (in areas such as physical, financial, mental and social). This includes reviewing and reflecting on your personal vision and purpose in life. • Participate actively in sports and other physical activities. **[Physical Health]** • Develop good financial management skills. **[Financial Resources]** • Manage your time effectively. **[Time Management]** • Use challenging times of stress to strengthen your ability to cope, and through such experiences, become more resilient. **[Mental Health]** • Continuously improve through through seeking feedback and advice – from peers, professionals, etc..
7	**Interpersonal and Collaboration Skills**	• Work in teams and not in silos. • Good understanding of team dynamics and able to manage and resolve conflict. • Mindful of how your words and actions affect others, including when interacting virtually. • Able to adapt and work effectively with people from a wide range of personalities and backgrounds.
8	**Communication and Engagement Skills**	• Engage readers through effective writing skills; convey the right messages well. (Writing) • Able to engage audiences through effective oral presentation skills and digital tools. (Speaking) • Actively listen and be able to understand non-verbal messages and intent. (Listening) • Strong persuasive skills, leveraging a wide portfolio of techniques and domain understanding that has been developed over time.
9	**Global Perspectives**	• Be aware of and have a good understanding of global and regional issues impacting your life/career. • Embrace and be mindful of cultural differences, including when communicating or working with others. • Be keen and committed to collaborating with people across diverse geographies, cultures and backgrounds.
10	**Responsibility to the Community, Nation, and the World, and appreciation of role as a Global Citizen / Volunteering**	• Understand the challenges facing Singapore – whether security, industry, social, etc.. • Have a good appreciation of the challenges for the world, including areas such as sustainability and social justice. • Be civic-minded and be involved in supporting community development and nation-building. • Weave community service into your way of life.

11	**Domain Expertise**	• Possess a deep understanding of your course, academic areas and achieve a high level of technical proficiency. • Have a broad understanding of the industries you are interested in working in, including through internships, engaging industry professionals and doing research. • Able to apply what you have learnt to solve problems – whether in school, at home, in the community or at work.
12	**Multidisciplinary/ interdisciplinary Knowledge & Skills**	• Knowledgeable across multiple different fields of study. • Hungry to learn new things, even if it is not in your area of expertise. • Combine insights from different fields to solve problems.
13	**Digital Literacy**	• Strong digital skills; able to code quickly and well. • Cyberphysical skills: Understand how software, hardware and the physical world interact with each other. • Responsible and ethical user of technology, including AI systems and platforms.
14	**Design Thinking**	• Be a well-practiced human-centric design thinker. • Proficient with the design thinking process and able to apply it to multiple domains and industries. • Harness the power of a team to solve problems together.
15	**Entrepreneurial**	• Resilient and adaptable and able to face challenges with confidence. • Very good at calculating risks and make an informed decision, even in new areas. • Have a good understanding of business fundamentals and able manage various aspects of a business or initiative.
16	**Leadership**	• Able to develop a vision, align with the organizational mission and lead others. • Empower others to develop their capabilities to enhance their performance. • Actively build strong teams which work effectively together – harnessing diverse skills and backgrounds.

QUALITIES THAT GET YOU HIRED

To thrive in today's workplace, it is important to develop the right skills to adapt and stay relevant as industries, employers and technologies change.

As industries evolve and new technologies emerge, graduates need the resilience to adapt and stay relevant throughout their careers. However, long-term career resilience is not about mastering a single job, but rather building up transferable skills and mindsets that will remain valuable in an ever-changing workplace.

Here are the most important career resilience skills for today's workforce:

01 Learning Agility

What is it:

The ability to learn, unlearn and relearn skills quickly, while also being able to apply them in different contexts.

Why it matters:

Employers increasingly value candidates who can adapt to change and pick up new skills quickly. Rather than relying solely on existing knowledge, learning agility allows you to stay relevant as industries evolve and new technologies emerge.

How to develop it:

- Take online courses or attend workshops to build new skills
- Seek stretch assignments outside of your comfort zone
- Develop a habit of self-reflection and asking for feedback
- Stay up to date on the latest industry developments

02 Digital and AI Literacy

What is it:

Being able to utilise both technology and AI tools effectively to support your work is what digital/AI literacy is all about.

Why it matters:

As AI becomes increasingly integrated into the workplace, it is no longer enough to simply know how to use these tools. Graduates must also understand when to rely on AI and when human judgement is needed to ensure quality and accuracy. As such, digital fluency is quickly becoming a baseline expectation among employers.

How to develop it:

- Experiment and familiarise yourself with different AI tools and platforms
- Stay updated on the latest technological developments
- Always verify AI-generated content for accuracy, bias and relevance
- Develop basic data literacy by learning how to interpret and present information

03 Critical Thinking and Judgment

What is it:

The ability to evaluate information, identify patterns, and make well-informed decisions rather than accepting it at face value.

Why it matters:

While AI and other digital tools can help generate ideas and process information, they are unable to replace human judgement. When faced with complex or ambiguous situations, employers value individuals who can weigh different perspectives, consider potential outcomes, and make informed decisions.

How to develop it:

- Verify information before accepting or sharing it
- Challenge assumptions and consider different perspectives
- Ask questions when faced with unclear situations
- Reflect on your decisions and learn from the outcomes

04 Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

What is it:

The ability to understand and manage your own emotions while building strong relationships with others.

Why it matters:

While technology can help automate some tasks, human interaction remains an essential part of work. As such it is important for graduates to be able to cooperate with others and handle conflict gracefully, whether that is with colleagues, clients or stakeholders.

How to develop it:

- Practise active listening, and consider the perspectives of others
- Develop self-awareness by reflecting on your emotions and reactions
- Learn to give and receive constructive feedback
- Approach conflicts calmly and work towards solutions

05 Communication and Influence

What is it:

Communication is more than just being able to speak well; it is about expressing ideas clearly, building understanding, and encouraging others to take action.

Why it matters:

Having strong technical skills is important, but they can fall short if you are unable to communicate your ideas clearly. Being able to adapt your communication style for different audiences can help you stand out and make a stronger impact at work.

How to develop it:

- Practising presenting your ideas clearly and confidently
- Improve your written communication via emails and reports
- Learn to explain complex ideas in a more simple way
- Seek opportunities to lead discussions or share your ideas/ perspective

06 Adaptability and Change Management

What is it:

The ability to stay effective when faced with challenges, uncertainty or changing circumstances.

Why it matters:

With restructures, automation implementation and economic shifts becoming increasingly common, career paths have become more unpredictable than ever. Being able to adapt and adjust to new situations will be crucial for graduates looking to thrive at work.

How to develop it:

- Be open to new responsibilities and experiences
- Stay calm when faced with change or uncertainty
- Take the time to get used to new tools, systems and processes
- Use past experiences as opportunities to grow

07 Network and Relationship Building

What is it:

Being able to develop and maintain meaningful professional relationships with people within the industry and beyond.

Why it matters:

Who you know can play an important role in shaping your career journey. Beyond opening doors to new opportunities, a strong network can provide valuable industry insights, guidance, and support as you navigate different stages of your career.

How to develop it:

- Start by connecting with classmates, colleagues and professors
- Join industry communities and attend networking events
- Seek out mentors who can offer advice and guidance
- Keep in touch with your network over time

08 Career Self-management

What is it:

Taking ownership of your employability and shaping your own career development, rather than waiting for opportunities to come by.

Why it matters:

While employers can provide opportunities for growth, the onus is still on graduates to determine their career progression. This is especially crucial as industries continue to change and evolve, allowing you to stay competitive.

How to develop it:

- Check in on your career goals regularly, and take note of any skill gaps
- Keep your resume and LinkedIn profile updated
- Document your achievements and experiences, ideally using a portfolio
- Stay informed about industry trends and updates

09 Problem-solving and Innovation

What is it:

Being able to identify challenges, analyse situations and develop practical solutions.

Why it matters:

As automation takes over more routine tasks, employers now have a stronger preference for workers able to handle complex challenges that require creativity, good judgment and critical thinking. The ability to spot problems and solve them will make you a valuable asset no matter the role or industry.

How to develop it:

- Look for ways to improve existing processes or workflows
- Take part in cross-functional projects
- Learn and apply problem-solving frameworks like design thinking
- Explore different solutions when problem-solving

10 Resilience and Growth Mindset

What is it:

Resilience is the ability to recover from setbacks and the strength to continue moving forward, while viewing these challenges as learning experiences.

Why it matters:

Career paths in recent years will increasingly involve transitions, disruptions, and reinvention. Those who are able to reflect and learn from these experiences tend to be better equipped to navigate uncertainty throughout their careers.

How to develop it:

- Treat your mistakes and setbacks as learning experiences
- Be open to feedback and differing opinions
- Focus on continuous improvement
- Stay persistent when facing challenges

MOTIVATED APPRAISAL FOR PERSONAL POTENTIAL (MAPP)

Discover Yourself. Design Your Future.

What if you could gain a clearer understanding of who you are, what drives you, and where your future could take you? That is exactly what the MAPP Assessment and 1-to-1 Coaching session is designed to help you achieve.

More than just another personality assessment, MAPP is a powerful self-discovery journey that helps students uncover their strengths, understand their behavioural patterns, explore career possibilities, and develop a meaningful plan for their future. Every student who completes the assessment receives a personalised one-to-one coaching session with a professional career coach to unpack their results and translate insights into action.



More Than a Test — A Conversation About You

Many students enter the session expecting a simple review of their assessment results. What they often leave with is something much more valuable.

During the coaching session, your coach will help you:

- Understand your unique strengths and talents
- Identify areas for personal growth
- Explore your interests and motivations
- Discover careers that align with your profile
- Reflect on your life skills and development areas
- Build your own 5-Year Career-Life (Odyssey) Plan

The session is personalised to you. Rather than giving generic advice, our coaches help students connect the assessment findings to their own experiences, aspirations, and future goals.

What Students Are Saying:

"It was a remarkable session! I am still in awe of how accurate it was." ***— Isha Deshpande***

"I have a clearer picture of myself." ***— Buraporn Ruangchaem***

"This coaching session is good. It gives me a deeper insight about myself. I am really looking forward for the next coaching session." ***— Alexander***

"I was able to get a better understanding of the pillar I am interested in and planning to go towards." ***— Sng Zhenhao***

"The information shared was relevant and thought-provoking." ***— Kayalveli Chandra Givany***

"This was really helpful. Maybe because the coaches are overbooked I feel like we won't be getting enough one-on-one time with them and I would like to meet them more often." ***— Manya Mehra***

"I know my strengths and weaknesses, and I am aware of my weaknesses. My innovation, leadership and entrepreneurial skills might not be there yet, but I'll work on it." ***— Thong Zi Qi***

Your Future Starts with Self-Awareness

Choosing a career pathway can feel overwhelming. With so many options available, it is easy to feel uncertain about what direction to take.

The MAPP coaching session helps bridge that gap between uncertainty and clarity. By understanding your strengths, interests, and aspirations, you can make more informed decisions about your studies, career goals, and personal development. The session also encourages you to think beyond your next semester or internship and start designing the future you want to build.

Come Curious. Leave Inspired.

Your MAPP session is a dedicated opportunity to pause, reflect, and have a meaningful conversation about your future with someone who is there to support your growth.

Whether you already have a clear career goal or are still figuring things out, your coach will help you gain fresh perspectives and uncover possibilities you may not have considered before.

Your Future is Too Important to Leave to Chance.

Take the opportunity to discover more about yourself, gain clarity on your next steps, and start building a future that is uniquely yours. We look forward to seeing you at your MAPP Coaching Session!



THOUGHTS ABOUT THE CAREER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Discover the impact of our Career Coaches on the professional journey of SUTD students.

UPOP MODULE 1 — DISCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS (DYSUTD)

- **Aliya Yerkinbek - Freshmore**
Broaden your view — as a computer science student you often feel obliged to work somewhere related to coding. I'm not sure if I want to code. Maybe I'll want to design, lead, manage, model or draw.

- **Joy Tay Rui En - Freshmore**
When you are too focused you tend to lose sight of everything else — I tend to focus too much on one thing and take on a very narrow-minded perspective on the world.

- **Oviya Pradeeshkumar - Freshmore**
We should tap onto each other's strengths when performing tasks to help efficiency — it changed my perspective that for one person to succeed, the other doesn't have to lose; we can help each other out.

- **Ho Shang Luen Owen - Freshmore**
I should set goals for myself and avoid tunnel vision, using peripheral vision and thinking about the end in mind — ensuring I don't simply coast through university.

- **Zhu Zihui - Freshmore**
There is no fixed path for success — it allowed me not to fixate on certain paths before I even walked on them, as it is often unexpected.

UPOP MODULE 2 — ART OF COMMUNICATION

- **Lee Cheng Yong - Freshmore**
Nervousness cannot be avoided, but can be hidden. I always lacked confidence presenting in front of a large audience, but I learnt that I can appear confident even if I feel anxious inside.

- **Mika Lim Wai Ruan - Freshmore**
Keeping presentations short and simple creates more engaging presentations and prevents you from losing your audience.

- **Nicholas Yow Jun Hui - Freshmore**
Your words have impact — they can hurt or heal — depending on how they are used.

- **Ang Cheng Yi - Freshmore**
Active listening is key to communication. I realised I was not as active a listener as I thought I am.

UPOP MODULE 3 — BRAND YOU

- **Felicia Liau Yan Yi - Freshmore**
AIR framework: you won't be remembered for knowing everything but for caring.

- **Muk Chen Eu Zachary - Freshmore**
I gained a deeper understanding of perception and reality, and how to take control of my personal brand.

- **Escabas Joyce Baldos - Freshmore**
I learnt how to build a personal brand without bragging or underselling myself, helping me create a reputation that attracts potential employers.

- **Phyo Kyawt Khine Tun - Freshmore**
DISC helped me understand myself better, while the elevator pitch activity restored my confidence in public speaking.

- **Janice Chua Hui Qing - Freshmore**
Perfect! Make connections and build relationships before selling yourself — I usually dive into selling first, and that can come off too aggressive and annoying.

UPOP MODULE 6 — SHOWCASE YOUR SKILLS

- **Aliya Yerkinbek - CSD**
A technical portfolio is almost a necessity rather than just a bonus to your resume today. I realised I need to add more projects to my portfolio and should start working on it today.

- **Gabriel Tay Yu Jie - CSD**
It gives me more confidence in applying for positions where I do not meet all the requirements.

- **Chan Jun Da Edward - CSD**
I had not really learnt how to build a portfolio before, so having proper guidelines on how to build one is really helpful!

- **Sandra Johnson - ESD**
I always thought it was not so important, but now I know it is better to have one and I am motivated to work on it.

UPOP MODULE 7 — ACE YOUR INTERVIEW

- **Nguyen Quoc Dung - CSD**
This one is the best module of UPOP.

- **Teo ZhiXian - ESD**
It was excellent to learn how to answer frequently asked questions and have guidelines on how to prepare for them.

- **Ryan Tan Rui Ann - ESD**
The STAR method is a great framework for responding to technical questions.

- **Vincentius Markandeya Santosa - EPD**
Great to develop in-depth interview answers.

UPOP MODULE 8 — THE SUPER INTERN

- **Mohammad Saif Zia - CSD**
Overall — my favourite module. Perfectly timed, helpful and catered to students' needs.

- **Nguyen Quoc Dung - CSD**
I learnt a lot about internship and corporate life, and how to manage and strategise them.

- **Foong Jingxuan Janelle - CSD**
The alumni sharing provided practical lessons on documentation and handover, highlighting the importance of clear record-keeping and effective knowledge transfer to ensure continuity of work.

- **Muhammad Ibrahim - ESD**
Internship is an opportunity to learn.

- **Timothy Seah Kai Le - CSD**
Always ask for feedback throughout the internship journey. The alumni panelists were great!

UPOP MODULE 9 — JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

- **Mohana Selvakumar - CSD**
I know how to modify my resume to make it more attractive.

- **Jone Chong Jin - CSD**
I liked how we referenced other UPOP modules — it helps us see how it all links together.

- **Mahima Sharma - CSD**
Knowing what interviewers expect of us was very helpful.

- **Eshaan Jakhmola - ESD**
It helped me learn more ways to widen my network and job search.

- **Wong Zi Yi - ASD**
It was useful to learn about upcoming opportunities, improving our resumes and networking with industry mentors.

UPOP ADVANCED — ASSESSMENT CENTRE

- **Hetavi Shah - CSD**
The different group activities, especially the simulated case discussion and feedback sessions, were extremely valuable.

- **Marcus Tan Zong Wei - ESD**
The instructor was very engaging throughout the workshop.

- **Janelle - EPD**
The workshop gave me valuable insights into human behaviour and group dynamics.

- **Enric Sng - CSD**
I learnt to speak and conduct myself more confidently at the group discussion.

- **Soumyadeep Mahata - EPD**
The mock assessment centre provided a realistic and practical learning experience.

STEPS TO GRADUATION

The earlier you start planning your career, the more prepared you will be when you graduate. Here is a step-by-step guide to start figuring out your career while at SUTD.

FRESHMORE YEAR

Increase self-awareness

1. Make it a point to attend the Freshmore Welcome Tea during your first term.

2. Develop your career readiness and learn the importance of self-discovery by attending the mandatory UPOP modules and the 1-to-1 MAPP/Lifeskills session.

3. Take stock of your personal values, interests, strengths, skills, and areas of improvement.

4. Schedule appointments with your Career Coaches via the GEMS platform if you want help in planning out your career path and discussing your odyssey plan.

5. Keep a lookout for weekly e-Newsletters and emails from the SUTD Career Development Centre for upcoming career events and job opportunities.

6. Connect with people – from your family and friends to school faculty and staff, and ask them about their job and work experience.

7. Consider applying for Undergraduate Research Opportunities Programme (UROP) during your first summer.

8. Explore and actively take part in fifth row, fireside chats, Residential college or DIVE activities.

9. Attend pillar information sessions to have a better idea of which pillars best suit your interests.

10. Start a mini project or join a competition to develop a clearer understanding of each field and identify the pillar that best suits your aspirations.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

Explore and identify professions of interest

1. Gain insights on various industries through career talks and workshops, and network with potential employers at the Career and Internship Fair (CIF), recruitment talks and other career-related events.

2. Get started on your resume on VMock and optimise it by practising with the role of your interest to understand the skills gaps.

3. Kick start MyJourney to reflect your projects, fifth row activities, UROP and other technical skills proficiency.

4. Explore external opportunities, such as participating in hackathons.

5. Set up your LinkedIn account and connect with SUTD alumni. Identify and apply to companies where you would like to do your internship.



JUNIOR YEAR

Preparing your applications

1. Embark on an internship (or a few) over the course of your study.

2. Make an appointment with your Career Coach to consult them on the industries you are keen on joining.

3. Narrow your search by eliminating areas you are uninterested in and focus on your top three industries.

4. Read up on the various application requirements and hiring timelines of your interested industries and organisations.

5. Check out full-time job opportunities on eNews/GEMS weekly.

6. Update MyJourney and your resume as you complete each UROP, Project, Competition, etc.

7. Optimise your resume on VMock to ensure it is tailored to match the job and industry you want.

8. Research more company & industry insights via Vault.

9. Start compiling testimonials and references.

10. Practice mock interviews on VMock and also with Career Coaches at the Career Development Centre.

11. Work on and practise a personal elevator pitch.

12. Leverage on your network – family, friends, and alumni – to seek out job opportunities.



SENIOR YEAR

Be proactive and prepare for life post-SUTD

1. Be proactive. Follow up and apply early, as applications are often reviewed on a rolling basis.

2. Customise your resume, MyJourney, and cover letter for each job you apply for.

3. Schedule a mock interview with your Career Coaches or practice it on VMock.

4. Send a thank-you note after each interview, and follow up on any active applications.

5. Aim to get a job six months prior to graduation.

6. Actively partake in as many recruitment events as possible (such as Graduate Connect and GRACE) if you have yet to secure employment.

7. Once you have successfully secured a job, update your Career Coach and take part in the Graduate Employment Survey.

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INTERNSHIPS

Internships go beyond just being a source of work experience; they can also be a stepping stone to your future career.

Many students see internships as a way to pass the summer, but they are valuable opportunities for learning and career growth. Furthermore, they can have a lasting impact on your career, from providing real-world experience to building up your professional network.

However, making the most of these opportunities will require deliberate effort on your end. Here are a few things you should absolutely do before, during and after your internship.



Have a game plan

Most internships last between four to six months. That may sound like a lot of time, but it can also go by in a blink, making it important to plan ahead.

To start, think about what your ideal job might look like, or if there are any industries/jobs that you might be interested in. There is no wrong answer here, but having clear goals will help keep you motivated throughout your internship.

Next, review job descriptions on career portals to identify in-demand skills, and compare them with your current skillset. This can help you determine where you should focus your upskilling efforts during your internship.

When in doubt, you can easily check in with the Career Development Centre (CDC) for advice!

Engage in networking

Networking is an invaluable skill to have in the corporate world. There are plenty of opportunities to connect with not just your colleagues, but clients, vendors and even potential future employers, all of whom can help you out in the long run, even after your internship wraps up.

These include company functions, training workshops or even after-work dinners. Every invitation is a chance to expand your network. So, take the initiative to put yourself out there and make the best out of it!

Learn from your mistakes

Your internship will likely be your first introduction to working in a corporate setting. In a typically fast-paced, high-pressure environment, you will have a lot to learn in a short amount of time, which can also mean making mistakes every now and then.

Do not let them discourage you; making mistakes is perfectly normal, more so when you are still unfamiliar with everything. The important thing is to learn from them by taking in feedback, reflecting on your efforts and staying curious about everything.



Document your work

The work you accomplish during your internship is arguably the most valuable thing you will take away from the experience. It is not only tangible proof of your practical skills, but it is also a crucial bargaining chip during job applications.

The days of securing a job with just good grades are over, and employers are now seeking holistic employees from the get-go. This is why you need to keep track of your successes, the impact you have made in the company, and the skills you have developed for future reference.

Having a well-curated portfolio on MyJourney and resume can mean the difference between securing a full-time position and losing out to a more competitive applicant.

Wrap up your internship on a high note

At the end of your internship, close it out on a high note by expressing gratitude to your supervisors and colleagues. You may also consider requesting testimonials or a letter of recommendation, if they are willing, as this can help strengthen your profile for future applications.

In addition, use LinkedIn to your advantage: connect with those you have worked with during your internship to maintain and grow your professional network.

Finally, take time to reassess your career direction after the internship, including whether you would like to continue in the same field or explore a different path moving forward.

STUDENT TESTIMONIES



Richard Calvin Yong

Engineering Product Development (EPD)

MedTech Catapult, A*STAR

"You never know where life will take you. If you are ever hesitant about something — school project or work, big or small — just give it a try."

My role

I interned at MedTech Catapult as a product engineering intern within their electrical team. My primary role was to develop the hardware and software of a testing rig for medical device design verification.

My challenges

At SUTD, especially during our early years, our focus is always on idea generation and prototyping. Of course, 14 weeks is nowhere near enough time to cover the entire product development process. My internship experience exposed me to the broader picture of the effort required to bring a medical device to market, from fundraising to clinical trial and regulation compliance.

It was a challenge to jump into a project at its later stages and there were many technical and non-technical aspects I had to learn on the fly. Fortunately, I worked closely with my supervisors and colleagues and was able to obtain many new skills and knowledge.

My biggest takeaways

My biggest takeaway is that the experience we obtain from doing numerous projects in SUTD is our biggest asset. You never know which projects employers may take interest in. I included at least one project per term in my portfolio and during my interview I was asked about one of the projects. Throughout my work I was also able to combine many techniques I had learned through projects across different terms.

Advice for my juniors

Internships are the time to explore. I had not originally considered working in the medical device field, but I am glad I was able to experience it. Do not be afraid to try things at work and ask questions. Your supervisors are there to help and even many of your colleagues may be willing to share their expertise with you. Do not hesitate to voice your opinions as they may bring in fresh perspectives.



Justin Then Kunda

Architecture and Sustainable Design (ASD)

Broadway Malyan

"Passion gives you the drive to begin, but an open mind allows you to keep learning, absorbing and growing."

My role

During my internship at Broadway Malyan, I supported design teams across projects of different scales, from individual buildings to large urban masterplans. My work involved supporting architectural projects across different scales through digital modelling, visualisation and graphic communication. I contributed to developing design proposals and presentation materials, while gaining exposure to professional workflows involving Rhino, SketchUp, AutoCAD and emerging AI-assisted design tools.

My challenges

One of my main challenges was adapting to unfamiliar tools and workflows. Although I was more accustomed to Rhino from university, many projects required me to work with SketchUp, AutoCAD and AI-assisted visualisation processes. Producing effective AI-generated images also required more than writing a simple prompt. I had to understand composition, architectural accuracy and iterative refinement. Through experimentation, feedback from the project teams and independent learning, I gradually became more confident in producing project-specific outcomes.

My biggest takeaways

My biggest takeaway was learning how important adaptability is in architectural practice. Every project came with different requirements, software and ways of working, so I had to remain open to learning and adjust quickly. The experience also showed me that technical ability is only one part of professional practice; communicating ideas clearly, responding constructively to feedback and collaborating with others are equally important.

Advice for my juniors

Approach your internship with curiosity and do not be afraid of unfamiliar tasks. Ask questions, observe how different team members work and take the initiative to learn beyond what you already know. You may not be confident with every tool at the beginning, but being receptive to feedback and willing to adapt will help you grow. Most importantly, treat each task — large or small — as an opportunity to understand how architectural projects are developed and communicated in practice.



Vaishavi Venkatesh

Computer Science and Design (CSD)

Lauretta.io

Being honest about what you do not know and showing your eagerness to learn is far more valuable than struggling in silence to get the work done.

My role

I worked at Lauretta.io as a Machine Learning Intern. Working with the research team, I helped develop internal tools to make data annotation faster and more efficient. My role involved researching computer vision approaches, building and improving solutions based on user feedback, and evaluating their effectiveness.

My challenges

One challenge I faced was balancing exploration with execution. Research often presents many possible directions, and it is easy to spend too much time refining ideas instead of delivering a practical solution. Over the course of the internship, with guidance from my mentors, I learned to better evaluate the practicality of different approaches and prioritise solutions that met the project's goals while staying realistic about time and resource constraints.

My biggest takeaways

This internship changed the way I approach problem-solving. I realised that understanding users, gathering feedback, and continuously iterating are just as important as technical ability. I also learned that in industry, success isn't measured by how technically impressive an idea is, but whether it solves the problem effectively, even if it means simplifying my approach.

I also learned that in a fast-moving field like computer vision, learning never stops. Keeping up with new research and emerging models are just as important as applying existing knowledge, making continuous learning a core part of professional growth. Most importantly, this experience solidified my interest in pursuing a career at the intersection of AI research and engineering, and gave me greater confidence in the direction I want to take in the future.

Advice for my juniors

Being honest about what you do not know and showing your eagerness to learn is far more valuable than struggling in silence to get the work done. Your supervisors do not expect you to know everything, and they appreciate interns who are honest, willing to learn, and proactive. My mentors were always happy to share their perspectives, and those discussions helped me make better decisions, communicate better, and become more confident throughout the internship.

Do not be afraid to take on projects where you know very little at the start. Take initiative, communicate with your team, and remember that understanding users and business needs is just as important as developing technical skills. Finally, do not be discouraged when an idea fails to work out; knowing when and how to adapt or change direction is an important skill that employers value just as much as technical ability.

INTERNING OVERSEAS

An internship abroad can be incredibly rewarding in more ways than one – but only if you come prepared.

Opting for an internship overseas can be an exciting prospect. Not only do you gain valuable work experience, it is also a unique way for you to step out of your comfort zone, build global connections, and grow immensely as both a professional and a person.

At the same time, preparing for this requires careful planning. From visas and accommodation to finances and cultural differences, there are several factors to prepare and consider before you go.

THINGS TO RESEARCH ON

Apart from seeking out internship listings, there are also other important factors that you will need to look into.

1. Visa and work permits

Every country has its own rules regarding visas and documentation, and can take a lot of time and money to apply and obtain. As such, you should prioritise getting this out of the way and plan ahead.

Different visas and permits will cater to different lengths of stay and work hours, so make sure that you are applying for the right ones!

2. Lodging

While some companies may provide accommodation or offer sponsorships, this is not always guaranteed. As such, you may need to arrange housing on your own.

When house-hunting, consider factors such as cost, distance from your workplace and safety, especially if you plan on living alone. As internships are usually short-term, places like student housing, shared apartments or short-term rentals can be considered to keep costs manageable.

It is also important to note that rental processes can vary by country and may differ for international students, so be sure to research the requirements in advance.

3. Costs of living

Before accepting any offers, familiarise yourself with the cost of living in the country you plan to work in. While you might be offered a higher salary, your overall expenses could also be much higher abroad compared to home.

For example, apart from lodging expenses, there are also other factors to consider, such as costs for transport, food and groceries. As a rule of thumb, set aside a few months' worth of living expenses.

4. Healthcare and insurance

Make sure you have enough insurance to cover your entire period overseas. Some companies may provide some coverage, but its range can vary depending on the country and firm.

It is also important to understand how healthcare works in your host country. Find out where to go if you fall sick, what services are available, and whether you will need to pay upfront for treatment.

5. Culture awareness

Before you arrive, take time to learn about your host country's customs, etiquette, and daily life. This could include workplace norms, communication styles, or simple social behaviours. Having a basic understanding can help you adjust more smoothly, avoid misunderstandings, and feel more confident in your new environment.

THINGS TO PREPARE FOR

Be prepared for the following during your time abroad:

Language barriers

You may need to adjust to accents, local slang and jargon.

Consider reading up on the language ahead of time. Even just knowing a few common phrases can make a world of difference.

Learning curves

Apart from navigating an entirely new work environment, you will need to get used to living on your own too. Suddenly, simple tasks like budgeting for groceries or figuring out transport may take some time for you to be familiarised.

Accept that things are now different, so give yourself time whilst you figure things out. Remember: it is okay to ask for help and guidance when you need it!

Homesickness

Even if you are enjoying your time abroad, you may feel bouts of homesickness every now and then. To help combat it, make sure to set aside time to catch up with your loved ones. Additionally, it is also a good idea to make new friends in your new environment, whether it is by attending local events, making small talk with your colleagues or introducing yourself to your neighbours.

AVAILABLE FUNDING SUPPORT

Financial support options to help you go global for your internship

Enterprise Singapore Global Ready Talent (GRT) Programme

Destination:
SE Asia, India, Greater China, Latin America & Caribbean, Russia, Central & Eastern Europe, Central Asia, Middle East & Africa

Funding:
Up to $1,000 monthly subsistence allowance + $1,200 lump sum travel

Eligibility:
SC and SPR; cleared IHL selection; no repeat support for same organization; exemplary conduct

Apply:
Eligible students will be notified by CDC

Singapore International Chamber of Commerce (SICC)

Destination:
ASEAN, Europe & USA

Funding:
Each award valued up to $10,000

Eligibility:
SC and SPR ; CGPA ≥ 3.0; priority for to those in financial need; active in Fifth Row/community service; exemplary conduct

Apply:
Eligible students will be notified by CDC

Singapore Valley Awards

Destination:
China

Funding:
Each award is $2,000

Eligibility:
Singaporeans & exemplary conduct

Apply:
Only open during the application period

PSEA (by MOE)

Destination:
Worldwide

Funding:
Withdrawal from your own PSEA funds

Eligibility:
Singaporeans

Apply:
Administered by OSA. Write to CDC to use PSEA funds; details provided thereafter.

STUDENT TESTIMONIES



Lim Han Yang

Shanghai

Computer Science and Design (CSD)

V-Capital

"Be willing to go out and take a risk outside Singapore."

About my overseas internship

I embarked on an internship at V-Capital in Shanghai through the Singapore Valley Awards (SVA). It was my first time living on my own, where I had to take responsibility for myself, and manage my finances. These taught me independence as I adapted to my new life. During my stay, I gained insight into China's fast-paced investment ecosystem and had first-hand exposure to how institutional investors identify, evaluate, and support technology-driven enterprises. I now know what VCs look for when deciding who to invest in and what companies want from their investors. My Mandarin and understanding of Chinese culture significantly improved, helping me win the YES-Tanoto Foundation Award.

My role

I interned at Dynatech's technology department under the Vice President, working alongside other interns on semiconductors and industrial digitalisation. My responsibilities involved analysing M&A case studies and summarising key financial ratios and synergy rationales into slides for internal meetings, as well as sourcing data on the firm's portfolio and companies. On the technical side, I helped the web team refine the company website's layout and fix onclick and header behaviours using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, and built a mock English website to showcase the group's achievements.

I also translated Chinese corporate presentations into English and produced the group's English promotion video, handling the effects, editing, and voiceover. I built up my financial knowledge, learned the inner workings of VCs in China's industrial and technology sectors, also picked up new media and content creation skills. I also saw my Mandarin improve significantly through presenting research, communicating with the team and using it frequently in my social life.

My challenges

I struggled with communication a lot at the start due to my learning disabilities, ADHD and dyslexia. I improved this by choosing to visit more local businesses, which forced me to speak Mandarin and increased my exposure to the language. It also gave me a better understanding of the local culture that I could not get as a tourist. This helped me understand the language better.

My biggest takeaways

My time in China has taught me to believe in myself more. At first, applying for the SVA was quite worrying as my Mandarin was limited. However, by trying and putting myself out there, I was given the opportunity to intern in Shanghai, and a chance to work on something I have always struggled with. Now I am confident in my abilities, having lived alone and improved my technical and social skills.

Advice for my juniors

Be willing to go out and take a risk outside Singapore. My Mandarin was weak, I had never lived alone before, and I did not come from a Chinese Language Background. None of that disqualified me from going. The application form does not care how you feel about your odds, so do not be afraid to try. You may surprise yourself with your achievements!



Yang Si Jun

Taiwan

Computer Science and Design (CSD)

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC)

I discovered a deep appreciation for the peace and tranquility of living independently, perfectly balancing a steep learning curve at work with weekends spent exploring the beauty of Taiwan.

About my overseas internship

During my three-month overseas internship at Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), I worked as a DevOps intern with the Intelligent Engineering - System Mask Team. As someone deeply passionate about infrastructure, reliability, and large-scale systems, interning at the world's leading semiconductor foundry was an eye-opening milestone.

Beyond the technical exposure, the experience allowed me to completely immerse myself in the Taiwanese workplace culture, connect with professionals from diverse backgrounds, and grow both professionally and personally. In many ways, it felt like a natural progression from my earlier exchange programme in Finland, reinforcing the immense value of adapting to unfamiliar environments and embracing new perspectives.

My role

As a DevOps intern, my core focus was on elevating observability, reliability, and automation practices for complex distributed systems. One of my primary projects involved developing the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) and integrating distributed tracing across our entire mask detection system. This enhanced monitoring and context propagation for a critical system deployed in over ten Fabrication Labs across Taiwan, giving me first hand exposure to enterprise-scale observability.

In the second phase of my internship, I utilised this trace data to develop customised dependency maps, which were then used to generate extensive test scenarios at the distributed-system level. By integrating this into the automated testing pipeline, I helped save our engineers more than 50% of their time, allowing them to focus on higher-value tasks. This solution remains in use today.

Developing the tracing SOP for their highly specific systems was incredibly challenging. However, through sheer resilience, I pushed through the roadblocks and became the first person on the team to successfully implement it. Achieving this within a short three-month window was immensely fulfilling and a powerful lesson in perseverance.

My challenges

Navigating a completely unfamiliar environment was undeniably daunting at first. Having to communicate in professional Mandarin during daily stand-ups, or while trying to open a bank account, pushed me far outside my comfort zone. Arriving in a country where I knew no one meant I had to ask questions boldly and proactively. Even routine tasks, like visiting a doctor or dentist by myself in a language I wasn't entirely confident in, tested my independence.

A uniquely iconic challenge of working at TSMC is their strict security protocol where personal phones are not allowed inside the company. This meant I essentially disappeared from the digital world from 9 to 5 every day. While surprisingly refreshing, being entirely disconnected from my usual social space was an adjustment I had not anticipated earlier.

My biggest takeaways

Initially, I worried that accepting this internship might mean missing out on opportunities back home in Singapore or disrupting my career progression. In reality, it did the exact opposite. Gaining international work experience and exposure to vastly different work cultures and systems made my resume stand out even more.

I also used to believe that working overseas would be intimidating and far less enjoyable than a typical university exchange. This experience completely changed my perspective. I discovered a deep appreciation for the peace and tranquility of living independently, perfectly balancing a steep learning curve at work with weekends spent exploring the beauty of Taiwan.

Advice for my juniors

Honestly? YOLO. Taking on an overseas internship is one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. You experience a unique blend of personal freedom, fun, and accelerated growth that is hard to replicate with a local internship.

To my fellow SUTD juniors: just take the leap of faith. When I went, I did not have predecessors to guide me. I had no idea how I would navigate through the bank setups, the language barrier, or even keeping in touch with my family without my phone during the day, but I figured it out once I was there. You will always be rewarded for stepping out of your comfort zone. Just do it. It is absolutely worth it!

WORKING ACROSS CULTURES

Adapting to a new workplace is challenging, especially in a different country—but the right preparation can make it easier.

In today's inter-connected world, it is important to understand how to communicate with people from all walks of life, including differing countries. After all, even if you do not plan on working abroad, you might still have to collaborate with global partners and clients – the last thing you want is to cause friction due to ignorance!

Here are a few ways work cultures can differ around the world:

High-context vs low-context cultures

High-context cultures rely on verbal cues and shared understanding. As such, messages are often implied rather than stated directly.	Low-context cultures prefer clear and direct communication; meanings are typically expressed explicitly through words.

Direct vs indirect communication

Direct communication values clarity and transparency. Even when disagreeing, opinions are usually expressed openly. Countries that adopt this approach include the United States and the Netherlands.	Indirect communication prioritises harmony, and opts to soften or imply feedback to avoid conflict. Common among companies in South Korea, Japan and Thailand.

Verbal and non-verbal cues

- Body language, tone and gestures can carry different meanings across cultures.
- For example, direct eye contact might signal confidence in some countries (such as America or Germany), but confrontational in others like Japan or Egypt.

Hierarchies and power distances

- In some countries, open communication across all levels is encouraged, where employees can speak freely with their managers.
- Other places may place greater emphasis on hierarchy, where communication is more formal and respectful of seniority, such as in Japan and China.





Navigating work cultures

Being a brand-new hire far from home, getting used to your host country's workplace culture can be quite the experience. But with time and practice, it is possible to learn and thrive in this new environment.

1. Do your research

Before your internship, take time to learn about your host country's customs, beliefs, and values. Having a basic understanding can help reduce culture shock and make it easier to adjust.

At the same time, remember that not all companies operate in the same way. Familiarising yourself with your workplace's communication styles, expectations and daily practices can help you adapt more smoothly and avoid misunderstandings at work.

2. Consider learning the language

Even if you are only there for a few months, make an effort to learn the local language. Even knowing a few common phrases can make everyday interactions with colleagues much smoother. You can study by using apps like Busuu, or by attending physical language classes.

3. Keep an open mind

Living and working in a new country requires an open and adaptable mindset, so give yourself time to adjust, both at work and in your daily life. Embracing new experiences, whether it is trying local food or learning about cultural practices, can make the transition smoother. You can also seek advice from colleagues to better understand local customs and expectations.

4. Make some friends

Making an effort to connect with your colleagues can help you settle in faster. Simple actions like joining team lunches or engaging in small talks make collaboration easier.

MASTERING PERSONAL BRANDING AND NETWORKING

The right connections can open doors to opportunities you may not find on your own.

While it is important to have the right qualifications and skills at work, knowing the right people matters too. A strong professional network can be incredibly valuable. It can provide industry insights, support and guidance, as well as open doors to opportunities that may not have been accessible otherwise.

While networking helps you get noticed, a strong personal brand is what keeps doors open by sustaining interest in you and what you can bring to the table.



Building your personal brand

Your personal brand is how people perceive you as a professional. Not only does it help you stand out from other applicants, it also makes it easier for both employers and potential connections to understand what you offer.

1. Determine your unique selling points

Ask yourself: what makes you special? This could be a specific set of skills, relevant experiences, or personal strengths. If you are unsure where to start, consider asking your friends, family or lecturers. Their perspectives can give you an idea of how others see you, and highlight areas you may have overlooked.

2. Draft your statement

This should be a short summary of what you do and what makes you unique as a professional. Not only does it serve as a reminder of what you are working towards, it also provides a strong foundation for your LinkedIn profile, cover letters, and even elevator pitches.

3. Be consistent about your branding

To really solidify your brand, just making a few posts online or attending the odd networking event is not enough. Consistency is key here – this means regularly sharing your insights, engaging with others, and ensuring that all your professional platforms share the same idea about yourself.

In-person networking: a primer

1. Make a plan ahead of time

Always attend any event with a goal in mind. Are you prioritising job opportunities, industry insights or professional relationships? Knowing what you want will help guide your actions and fine-tune your networking strategies.

2. Take advantage of your existing network

From classmates and lecturers to family friends and ex-colleagues, they can all be part of your professional network too! Since they already know you, they will generally be more likely to vouch for you, recommend opportunities or provide advice/insight.

As such, make sure to keep in touch with them, and keep them in the loop on your professional life.

3. Prepare a compelling elevator pitch

Unsure about how to break the ice? An elevator pitch – a short yet powerful introduction about yourself – can help you out.

Research on what makes a good elevator pitch – this should include a clear summary of your professional identity (remember your personal statement!) and be engaging enough to spark interest and encourage further conversation.

4. Follow up and follow through

After making a connection, be sure to follow up with them post-event, such as by swapping business cards or sending them a message via LinkedIn. It is also a good idea to mention any memorable parts of your conversation, and if you promised to share anything with them (like your resume), now is the time to do it.



Understanding virtual networking

When it comes to professional networking, LinkedIn is one of the best platforms to be. Take advantage of its features.

1. Join industry-specific groups

LinkedIn groups serve as hubs for professionals in your field to exchange ideas, share expertise, and foster connections. Joining these groups can open avenues for mentorship opportunities, collaborations, and insider knowledge that might not be available elsewhere.

2. Stay consistently active

Regular engagement through posts, comments, or sharing relevant content helps increase your visibility and establish your presence within your field. When you show up consistently, you remain on the radar of recruiters and peers while also staying informed about the latest industry trends.

3. Optimise your profile

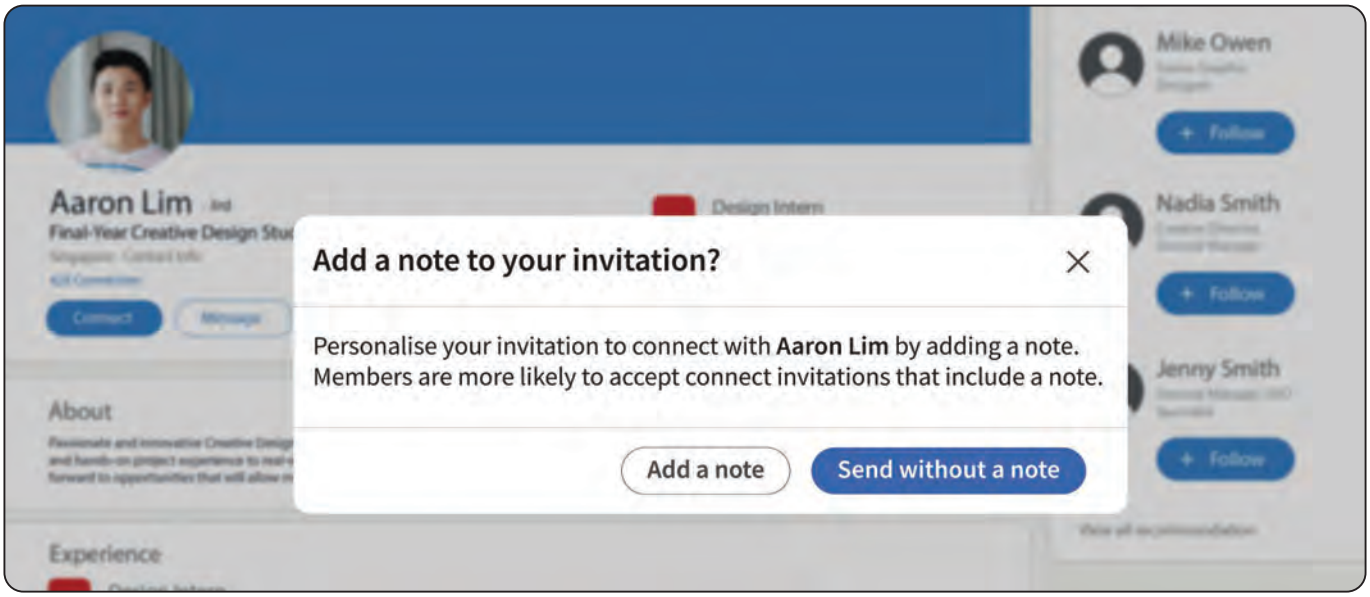
Boost your discoverability by incorporating relevant keywords into your profile, especially in your headline, summary, and experience sections. Terms like “digital marketing specialist” or “UX/UI designer” help recruiters and algorithms find you faster.

4. Make use of endorsements

Endorsements act as professional testimonials, validating your skills through peer recognition. Proactively endorsing others often leads to reciprocation, strengthening your profile’s credibility and attracting more opportunities.

Making connections on LinkedIn

01 Avoid sending generic connection requests without notes, as these are often overlooked, especially by users who receive many from unfamiliar people. Instead, add a brief personal note to make your message more genuine and increase the chances of it being accepted.



02 The short message can state a brief explanation of why you want to connect, such as exploring job opportunities, seeking advice, or hoping to collaborate in the future.

Sample

Hi Aaron,

I am a student currently exploring career paths in product design, and I really admire your experience in this area. I would love to connect and learn from your journey as I build my own.

Thanks,
Elaine Ng

03 If you have met the person before, briefly remind them of where and how you met. Mention the event, setting, or context of your previous interaction to help jog their memory. A simple reminder makes your message more personal and increases the chances of your connection being accepted.

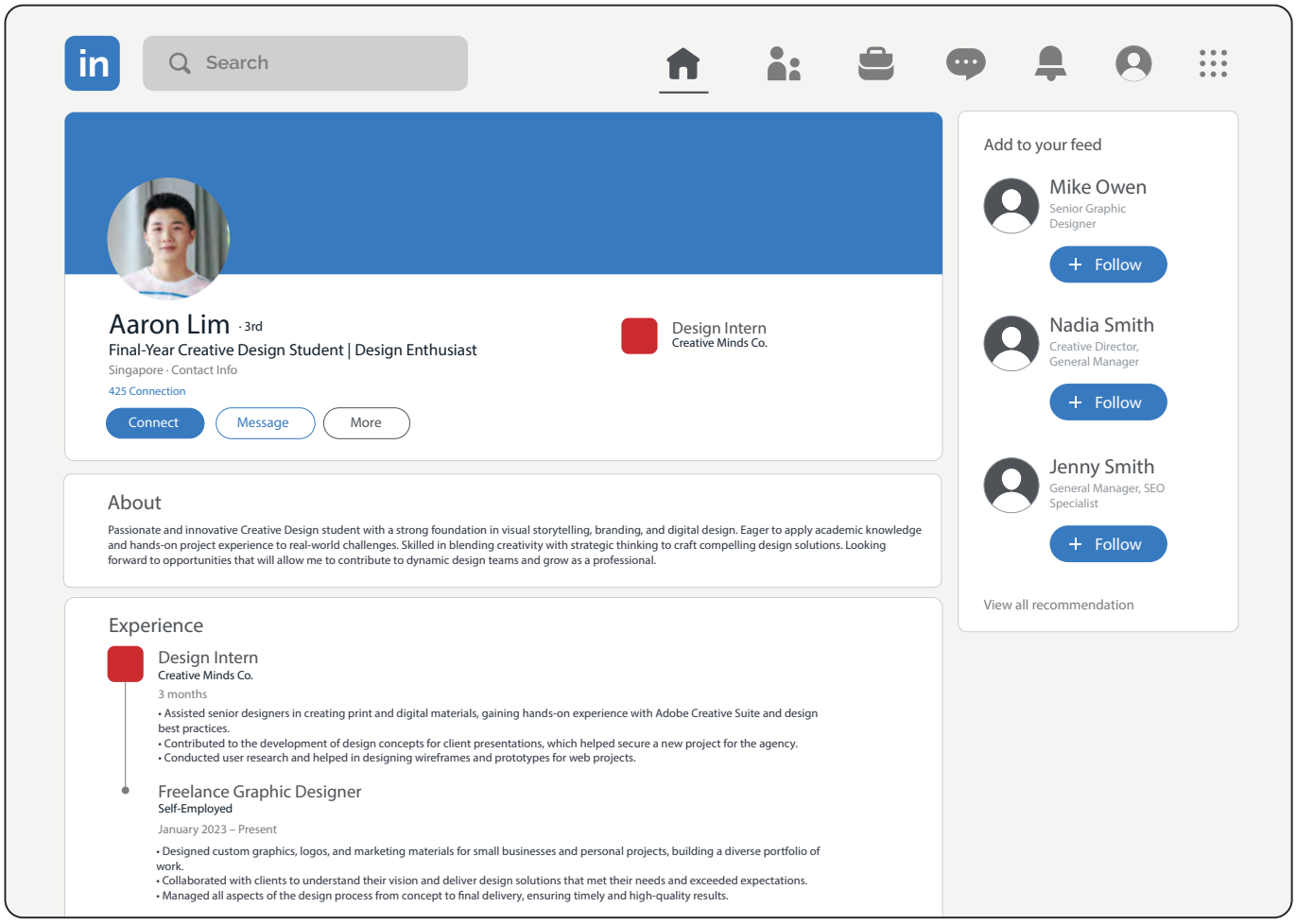
Sample

Hi Aaron,

It was great meeting you at SUTD Career Fair recently. I enjoyed our conversation about the cybersecurity industry and would love to stay connected as I explore opportunities in this field.

Thanks,
Elaine Ng

04 If you do not know the person well, take a moment to review their profile and look for shared interests or experiences. A LinkedIn profile provides plenty of useful information, including past roles and recent achievements, which can help you find common ground and start a more meaningful conversation.



Networking is not just about finding job leads; it is also about building meaningful relationships that will support your growth over time. By starting early, staying genuine, and actively nurturing your connections, you will lay the groundwork for opportunities that extend well beyond your first job. Investing in your network early helps build a strong foundation for long-term career success.

DECODING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Get familiar with the language recruiters are using in their listings

When job hunting, you will likely sift through countless job listings and descriptions. While some are clear, others can feel cluttered with jargon, long lists of requirements, and vague explanations of the role.

But once you understand what to look for in these job descriptions, not only will it be easier for you to pick out the ones that fit you, you will be better equipped to tailor your application and resume for them. Here is a breakdown of the key parts of a job description, and what they might reveal

1. Job titles

While usually straight-forward, some job titles might mean different things for different companies. For example, an account manager might be a literal managerial position in one firm, while being an entry-level position in another!

As such, do not be deterred by the job's title, especially if it looks unfamiliar or intimidating: you will likely find your answers from reading the rest of the job description.

2. Job summaries

This usually includes an overview of what the role entails, as well as information on the company itself. Pay attention to the verbs used here; words like "manage" or "develop" may suggest more responsibility, while "assist" or "maintain" may imply a more supporting role. This can give you a good sense of what the company is looking for, so look for patterns that match your interests and career goals.

3. Job duties and responsibilities

This section outlines the specifics of what the job entails. This section can appear as a long list in some cases, which can feel overwhelming at first. A helpful tip is to focus on the first few items: these are typically considered the more important tasks to the employer. Additionally, note the wording used; "must-haves" are usually listed with words like "required", "must" or "responsible". On the other hand, "good-to-have" qualifications usually use words like "preferred" or "advantageous".

Consider the range of responsibilities listed, too. A narrower scope may suggest the company is looking for a specialist, while a broader list could mean they want someone more versatile.



4. Qualifications and skills

Typically, employers will list their dream candidate, but the reality is that very few people will meet all their requirements. As such, they will instead prioritise candidates who possess as many of their "must-have" skills when reviewing applications, so keep this in mind when job-hunting.

It is also a good idea to focus on transferable skills. Even if you do not meet every requirement, highlighting them in your resume can help make up for your skill gaps in some cases.



5. Compensation and benefits

Not all listings will provide a salary range – some may offer a "competitive salary" or have it "based on experience". In the case of the latter, look for clues about other benefits, such as flexible work arrangements, professional development opportunities, bonuses or other incentives. These can provide a more complete picture of the overall value of the role.

6. Additional details to note

Beyond the content itself, the language used in a job description can offer clues about the company's culture and what the role is really like. For example, phrases like "a fast-paced, dynamic environment" may suggest a high-pressure setting, while a "self-starter" role could mean you are expected to work independently with minimal supervision.

The way a company describes itself also matters. The words and phrases they use can provide insight into their values, priorities, and overall work culture. This helps you assess whether the organisation is a good fit for you.

CRAFTING AN ATS-OPTIMISED RESUME

Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS) are the gatekeepers of modern hiring, and understanding how they work puts you one step closer to landing interviews.

Used by most mid- to large-sized companies, ATS software helps hiring managers streamline candidate screening. It scans resumes for key qualifications, ranks applicants based on job-specific criteria, and filters out those who do not meet the requirements before any human review.

While designed to improve efficiency, these systems can be a hurdle for jobseekers. The good news? With the right approach, you can make them work in your favour.

Behind the scenes of an ATS screening

An ATS system is binary, meaning it sticks to a set of guidelines and specifications set by the hiring manager. This makes it incredibly efficient in its parameters-based sorting framework, and favours potential applicants who fit the job description as closely as possible.

The system scores a resume based on several indicators: keyword matches, skills alignment, and experience relevance. By closely building your resume according to these elements, you will stand a better chance of getting sifted by the system, and placing you on the list of desired candidates to be reviewed by a hiring manager.



Process of elimination

Resumes that fail to meet ATS requirements are often rejected before a human ever sees them. To avoid this, keep your formatting clear and straightforward. Use standard headings and fonts—overly designed layouts can be difficult for the system to process.

As a general rule, avoid anything that disrupts readability. Skip graphics, tables, and complex formatting, and stick to a reverse-chronological format for your work experience.

Strategic use of keywords

Keywords are essential for optimising your resume for ATS. However, just slotting them in is not enough – you will need to use them strategically. Refer to the listing's job description and mirror its language in your resume, while blending the keywords naturally into your resume – your resume will be read by a human recruiter at the end, after all.

Focus on two areas: Hard/soft skills, and using quantifiable terms to highlight your achievements. For example, instead of "proficient in coding and part of a small team", you could say "Python certified systems and data analysts working in a five-man cross-functional team".

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Adjust your resume for the job

Generic applications rarely make the cut. Instead, tailor your resume for each role; you can start with a master resume which contains all your experiences and achievements, then strategically select the most relevant ones to use according to each job you are applying to.

For example, a marketing role may highlight campaign results, while one in project management will want examples of leadership and collateral management. This customisation ensures that both the ATS and hiring managers' expectations will be satisfied.

Use the right format

Unless stated specifically, Word documents are the best format to submit your resume to an ATS, as they parse .docx files more accurately. This small but critical step prevents your resume from being lost in translation.

Make it reader-friendly

Even if your resume passes the ATS, it still needs to impress a hiring manager. Striking the right balance between optimising for the system and appealing to a human reader is key.

Keep your content concise (ideally one page), results-driven (e.g. "Boosted sales by 30%"), and easy to scan. Use bullet points and white space to highlight key achievements, and avoid dense paragraphs.



NAVIGATING TODAY'S JOB HUNT

Job-hunting can feel like one big grind, but with the right strategy and a positive mindset, you can improve your odds of finding the right opportunities for yourself.

The act of job-hunting is like running a marathon; while it might take some time to get to the end, having the right strategy can make the process a lot easier. As you prepare to enter the workforce as a fresh graduate, here are a few things you can do to help yourself.



Mapping your industry's landscape

Before you start, look into hiring trends in the sectors you are interested in, such as what skills are in-demand and if there are any pain points to consider. This due diligence helps you target the right opportunities, and avoid wasted effort while allowing you to find the job that best suits you and your professional growth.

Harness the power of early action

The best prospects favour the prepared. Start your job hunt early (at least 6 months before graduation), allowing time to upskill, network, and refine your application materials. This allows you to transform what could be a stressful scramble into a strategic campaign.

Craft your professional identity

Skills alone are not necessarily enough to open doors; instead, being visible and presentable to recruiters will. Actively showcase your expertise through LinkedIn, portfolios, or industry events to position yourself as a sought-after candidate. In addition, tap into your network to leverage connections and gain access to opportunities that may be difficult to secure alone.



Capitalise on digital tools

Platforms, like LinkedIn, the university's job portal, and other online platforms, help bridge talent with employers. By optimising profiles with relevant keywords, engaging with industry content, and setting job alerts to stay ahead, you can help insulate yourself from being obsolete and maintain relevance.

Balance ambition with realism

As you search for a job, it is not uncommon to face rejection time and again. However, the important thing is to not be discouraged by them or take them as a reflection of your capabilities. Instead, learn from these setbacks; adapt your approach based on feedback. In the meantime, you can also consider interim opportunities like freelancing, internships or professional certifications to build experience, strengthen your profile and maintain momentum.

KICKSTART YOUR APPLICATION PROCESS WITH VMOCK

In today's job market, using AI in your job search is no longer optional—it is essential. Employers are increasingly relying on AI to screen resumes and conduct video interviews, meaning your application is often assessed by technology before it reaches a hiring manager. At the same time, many candidates are already using AI tools to refine their resumes, tailor applications, and prepare more effectively. This shift has made the job search more competitive, where those who leverage AI can stand out with stronger, more targeted applications. Conversely, candidates who do not use AI risk falling behind—not because they lack ability, but because they are not competing on a level playing field. To help you prepare for this new reality, SUTD is equipping you with the VMock platform.

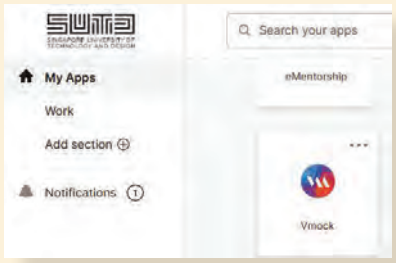
To help you prepare for this new reality, SUTD launched the VMock platform in 2025 for all students. VMock is designed to help you:

1. Optimise your resume to meet industry standards and pass AI screening
2. Practice answering common interview questions in a simulated AI interview format
3. Improve your delivery and confidence on camera

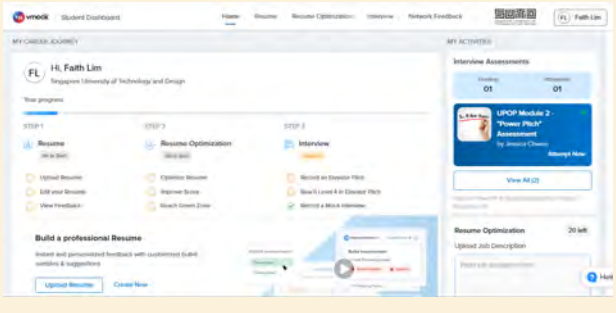
Whether you are applying for internships or full-time roles, VMock gives you the tools to stand out in a tech-driven hiring landscape.

Here's how you can get started with VMock and make the most of your preparation.

1. Login to Ease and select VMock to access VMock:



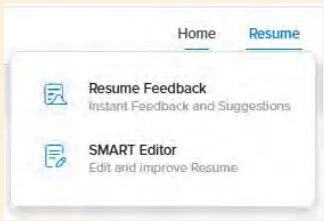
2. Once you have logged in, you will arrive at the landing page, where you will see your personal dashboard.



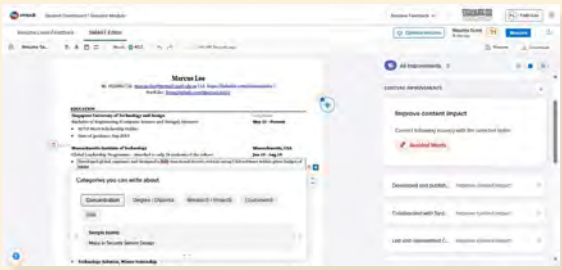
3. Your UPOP Assignment (Term 1: Power Pitch, Term 4: Interview) would be at the right hand side.



To get started on your resume



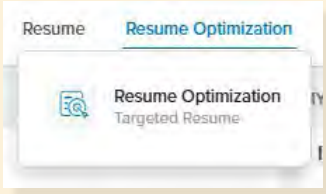
1. If you have not created your resume yet, the SMART Editor is a great starting point. It offers an ATS-friendly template and provides real-time suggestions to help you phrase your sentences more effectively and professionally.



2. Once your resume is ready, upload your resume to "Resume Feedback". VMock would analyse your resume and provide a score based on formatting, impact, and relevance.



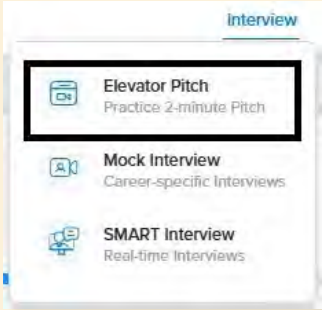
3. For a more customised review based on a specific job description, you can use the **Resume Optimization** function:



4. VMock would then score the resume based on keyword and skills relevance. It would provide suggestions to improve clarity, impact, and alignment.



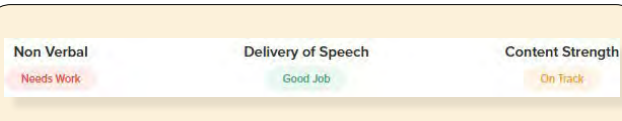
5. Heading to a networking session? Make use of VMock' s **Elevator Pitch** to prepare for your elevator pitch.



6. Elevator Pitch module helps you to refine your self-introduction to engage the company representative effectively.

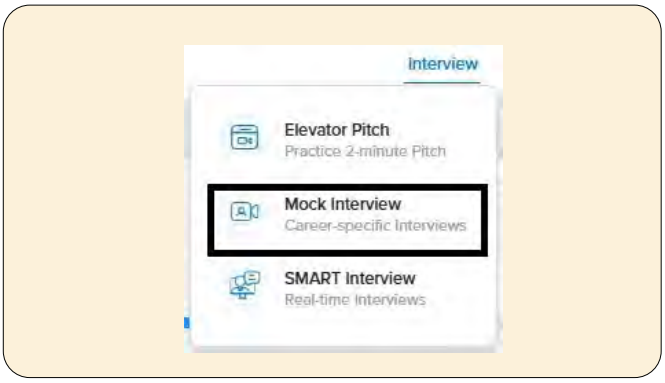


7. Your elevator pitch would be given a score from 1-5. You would also get detailed feedback based on these 3 areas: Non-Verbal, Delivery of Speech and Content Strength.

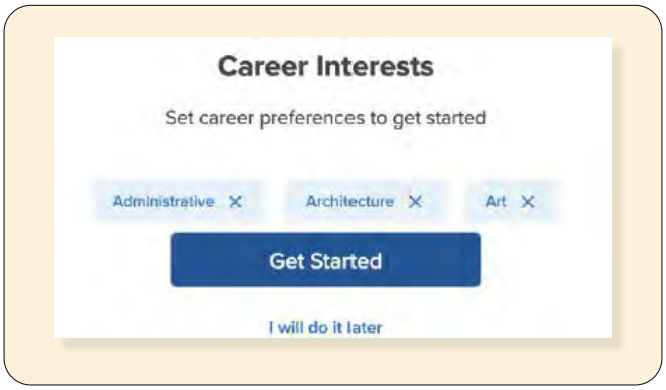


8. There are indicators to reflect which area needs work, on track or doing well. There are also suggestions offered to help you enhance your delivery.

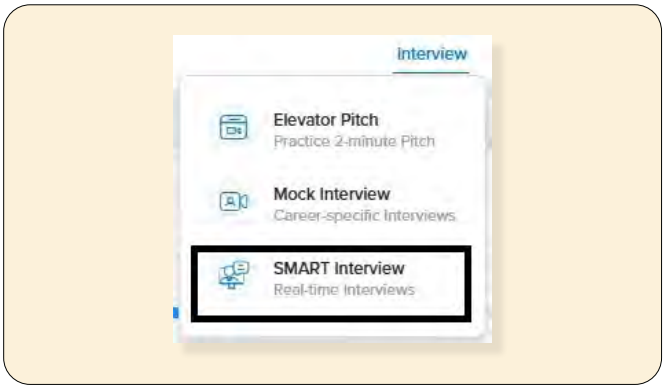
9. If you would like to prepare for an interview. You can utilise the VMock **Mock interview** function.



10. You can choose the role / industry of your interests and VMock would present sample questions for your interview practice.



11. If you find that the questions could be too general for your preparation, you could get a more customised mock interview by using the **SMART Interview** function:

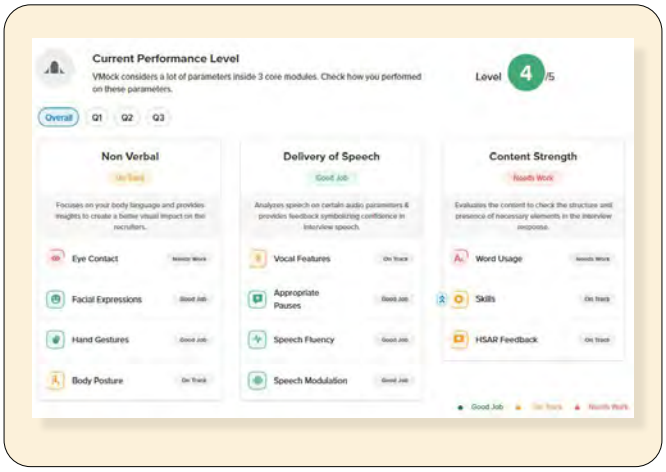


12. The VMock AI will generate customised questions based on the job description that you have uploaded to the SMART interview.



13. Upload your resume for VMock to generate customised questions based on the uploaded job description and your resume.

14. Similarly, for both the Mock Interview and SMART Interview, you would also be given a score from 1-5 and be assessed in the 3 main areas.



15. You can view the feedback to obtain actionable suggestions to improve your next interview.

As you can see here, VMock is a versatile career development platform whether it is crafting your first resume for your first internship or refining your elevator pitch or interview skills. By offering personalised feedback and practical tools, it helps you strengthen your applications and build confidence in a competitive market. Using features like resume optimisation and interview practice allows you to present your best professional self and stay competitive in today's AI-driven hiring landscape.

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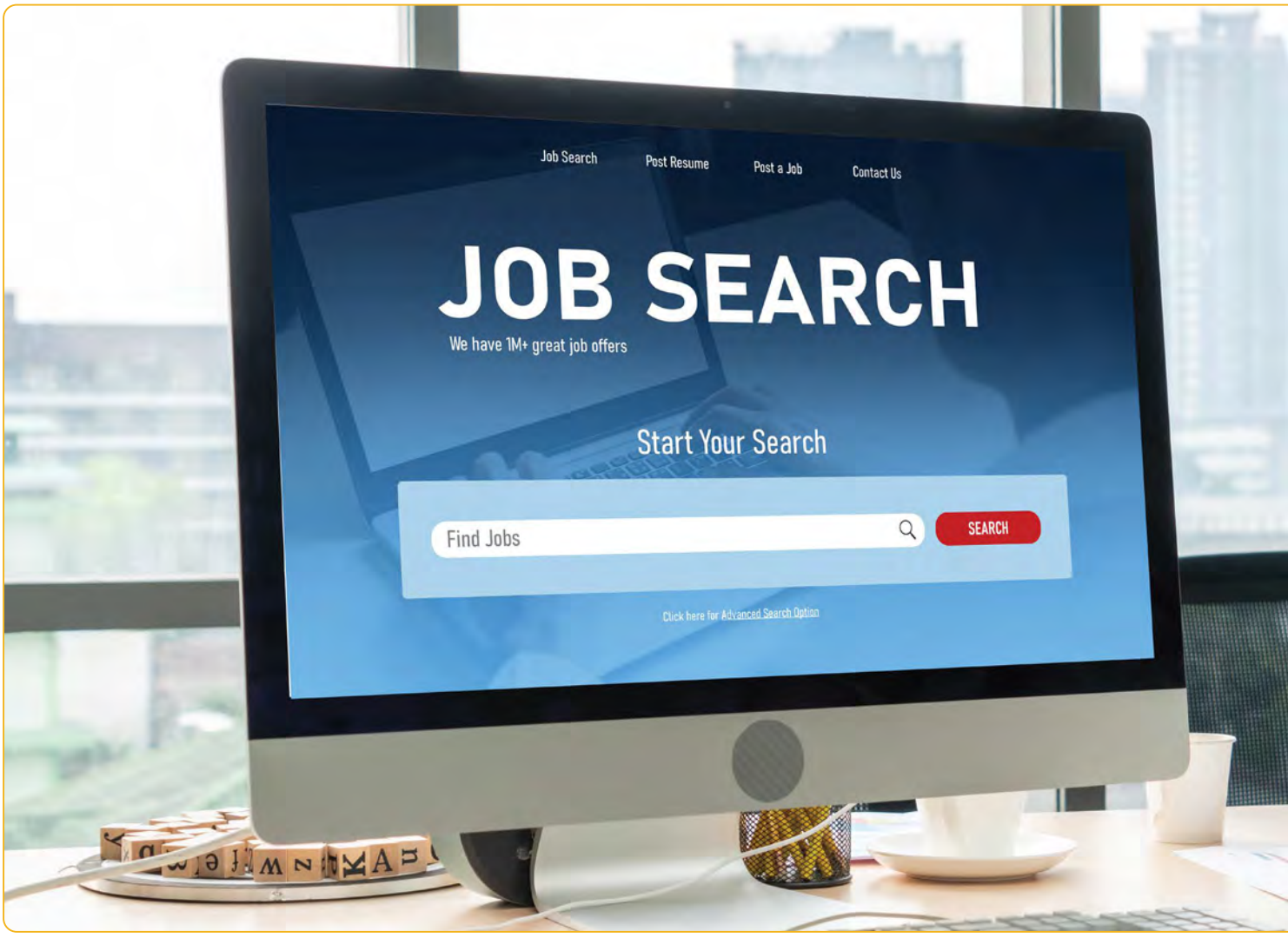
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USING AI TOOLS IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

While AI can help you, it is also important to be mindful about your usage when job-hunting.

Job-hunting is no easy feat, especially for fresh graduates just starting out. From figuring out your resume to preparing for interview questions, there is a lot to navigate, and it can be difficult knowing where to begin.

The good news is that with the introduction of AI tools, like ChatGPT and Gemini, much of the process can now be streamlined. But while it is a useful tool, it is also important to know how to use it appropriately.



How can AI help your job search?

Researching for jobs and/or companies

- While it is important to do extensive research on the kinds of jobs/companies you are interested in, not every aspect of it can be easy to find, such as accurate salary ranges.
- AI's ability to parse and analyse large amounts of data can come in handy here – by doing the deep diving for you.
- With this information, it makes it easier for you to make more informed decisions about their next steps.

Automating job applications

- Searching and applying for jobs can be time-consuming, especially when tailoring applications for multiple roles.
- AI tools can help by scanning job listings based on your preferences and suggesting relevant opportunities.
- Some tools can also assist with auto-filling applications or adjusting resumes to better match job requirements.

Building and refining resumes

- Writing a strong resume can be challenging, especially when tailoring it for different industries or roles.
- AI tools can help you draft, edit, and improve your resume structure and wording, making the process faster and more efficient.
- They can also suggest ways to better highlight your skills and experiences.

Interview preparations

- Knowing what to say in an interview is one thing, but expressing it clearly is another.
- AI can act as a practice tool by generating sample questions and helping you structure possible answers.
- This can help you refine your responses and become more confident in how you communicate to the interviewer.



Precautions when using AI

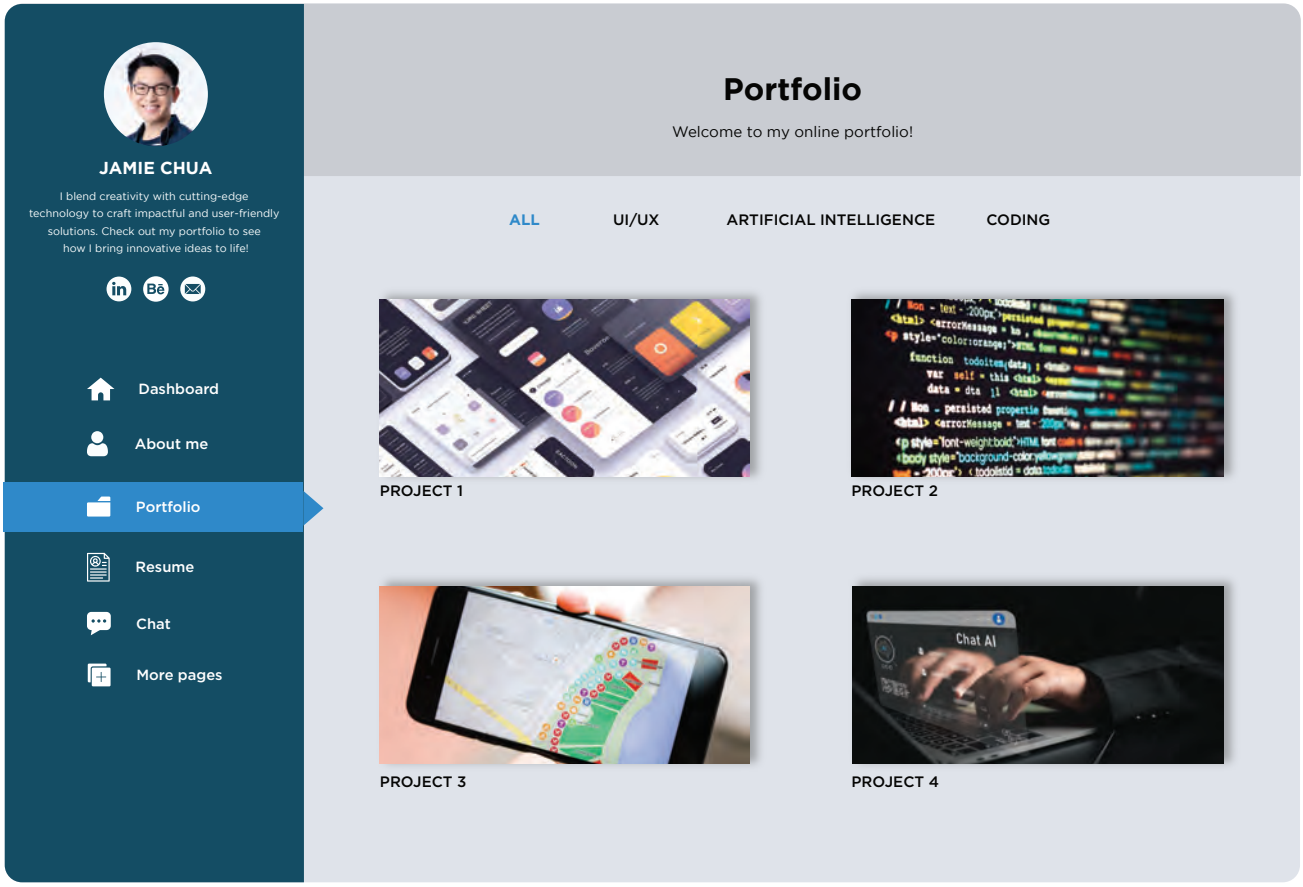
While AI tools may be a valuable ally in your job search, it is a bad idea to blindly rely on them. These tools are not infallible, and do come with flaws that are noticeable by recruiters, which can jeopardise your chances at getting hired. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- Use AI-generated content as a starting point or as a point of reference. Avoid copying the generated results word-for-word as much as possible.
- AI can sometimes exaggerate or hallucinate its results, so make sure to fact-check everything before putting it to use.
- Remember, you are the one getting hired, not the AI. Make sure to tweak the results the AI generates to sound like you!
- For resumes and other written content, consider running them through a plagiarism checker before submitting them.

TECHNICAL PORTFOLIOS: WHAT TO INCLUDE

A clear and well-organised portfolio is the best way to show employers what you are capable of.

When job-hunting, most people tend to focus on their application, resume and occasionally their cover letter. But if you want to show employers real proof of your abilities, having a portfolio – a compilation of your best work – is one of the best ways to do it.



Crafting the perfect portfolio

Highlight your best work

Focus on including only your best and most relevant work in your portfolio. Always keep the target employer and position in mind when building your portfolio; they will guide your decisions on which areas to focus on.

Be mindful when selecting projects—if your work involves past clients or organizations, ensure you have the appropriate permission before sharing it publicly. If you lack any professional work to include, consider creating your own projects instead. For example, you can contribute to open-source projects or develop mock-ups for dream clients to demonstrate your skills and creativity.

Pick the right format

While there is no fixed format for portfolios, a good starting point is to research common styles in your field. For technical roles in particular, platforms like GitHub and Kaggle are popular options, while some applicants may opt to build personal portfolios hosted on Vercel or GitHub Page.

Of course, if a company requests a specific format, it is best to follow their instructions to avoid any accidental disqualifications.

Keep things organised and neat

While you are free to design your portfolio however you like, make sure it looks professional and is easy to navigate. For example, having well-organised repositories, clean documentation and links to live deployed applications will make it much easier for employers to find what they are looking for.

Boost your credibility

Having achievements like hackathon wins, open-source pull requests and endorsements from your professors and/or internship supervisors can help you build up credibility, which can tip the scales in your favour. If you have some, allocate some space to include them in your portfolio.

Keep your portfolio updated

Just like how you should update your LinkedIn and resume regularly, your portfolio is no exception. As a rule of thumb, try to refresh it at least once every few months, or when you have something new to add. At the same time, feel free to phase out any old works too.

SUIT UP FOR SUCCESS

If you want to show recruiters that you are a top-tier candidate, you need to dress the part.

First impressions matter, and what you wear can say a lot about you! Knowing how to dress right for the occasion will show that you are confident, capable, and ready to impress.

ASSEMBLING THE ULTIMATE WORK WARDROBE





• For women, professional dresses, skirts, dress pants, and blouses are classic, versatile options • A jacket or blazer can help complete your look. Opt for neutral colours, like black, grey or navy • If opting for skirts, make sure they are knee-length, even when sitting down or bending over	**OUTFITS**	• A well-fitted shirt, suit and tie is ideal for men's work fashion • Classic colours like navy or gray are both work-appropriate and versatile
• Go for a neat hairstyle like a simple ponytail or a sleek bun • Keep makeup minimal, opting for natural tones • Bring along a small makeup kit in case you need to touch up	**HAIR AND MAKEUP**	• Keep your facial hair tidy, and trim regularly to avoid stray hairs • Make sure your hairstyle is neat and well-groomed
• Stick to simple jewellery like a small necklace, stud earrings, or a bracelet • Wear closed-toe flats, low heels (2-3 inches), or court shoes for a polished look	**ACCESSORIES**	• Choose clean, smart leather shoes in black or brown • Loafers or boots can work too, depending on how formal the interview is • Finish off your look with subtle accessories like a matching belt, cufflinks, a tie clip, or a classic wristwatch

DECODING THE DIFFERENT DRESS CODES



SMART CASUAL

This dress code is generally more relaxed while still remaining neat and presentable. It is commonly seen in start-ups, SMEs, tech companies and creative industries.

For Her

- Dress (can be in fun colours or prints)
- Button-down shirt or blouse
- Skirt or jeans
- Wedges, flats, or low-to-medium heels, loafers, sneakers

For Him

- Polo tee or shirt
- Pants, jeans, chinos
- Dress shoes or loafers





BUSINESS CASUAL

This dress code maintains a professional appearance without requiring full formalwear. It is commonly adopted in corporate offices, finance, consulting and administrative roles. Client-facing roles typically require this dress code.

For Her

- Dress (neutral colours)
- Blouse or shirt with three-quarter or long sleeves
- A-line or pencil skirt
- Dress pants
- Wedges, flats, or low-to-medium heels

For Him

- Long-sleeved shirt
- Pants
- Dress shoes
- Cufflinks, tie, and jacket if desired





BUSINESS FORMAL

The most professional and polished dress code, typically requiring formal office attire like suits and dress shoes. It is commonly expected in industries such as law and banking, and is often recommended for professional events, like networking sessions and job interviews.

For Her

- Work dresses
- Blouses or shirts with long- or three-quartered sleeves
- Pencil skirts
- Dress pants
- Flats or low-to-medium heels

For Him

- Long-sleeved shirts
- Pants
- Dress shoes
- Plain ties
- Dark-coloured suit jackets



MASTERING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Thorough preparation for various interview styles, potential questions, and hiring procedures is essential to presenting yourself effectively and improving your likelihood of securing the position.

The interview can be considered one of the most important phases when job-hunting. More often than not, this is your make-or-break opportunity to secure the position you have invested so much time and effort pursuing.

As such, preparation is essential. Beyond demonstrating your suitability for the position, you will also need to present yourself professionally and communicate your strengths effectively.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS



Robot interviews

Some companies have begun implementing AI or robot-assisted interviews. In this format, candidates interact with an automated system that presents predetermined questions and records their responses. Using AI technology, the platform may analyse aspects such as your tone, inflection, and body language as part of the evaluation process.

Preparation tips

- Familiarise yourself with the AI platform in advance.
- Look directly into the camera rather than at your screen. This helps simulate eye contact with the interviewer, making your responses appear more genuine and engaging.
- Express your thoughts clearly and concisely. Avoid mumbling or speaking too quickly.
- There may be a time limit or limited attempts for each response, so stay calm and do your best within the time allowed.
- Remember that the AI cannot detect nuance in its analysis, so be direct in your responses.



Face-to-face interviews

Arguably the most popular type of interview used, in-person interviews allow employers to directly assess their candidates' interpersonal skills in real time. They also encourage a more natural flow of conversation, making it easier for both parties to ask follow-up questions, clarify details, and engage in more meaningful discussions about the role and the company culture.

Preparation tips

- If possible, find out more about your interviewer. This can help you understand their perspective and tailor your answers and questions accordingly.
- Check whether your interview is one-on-one or panel-based. Knowing this beforehand can help you mentally prepare, especially if you will be speaking to multiple interviewers.
- Pay attention to the interviewer's body language and tone. Subtly matching them can help you build better rapport and show that you are a good culture fit.



Live video interviews

Due to their convenience and flexibility, video interviews have increased in popularity in recent years. Common platforms for this include Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet. Alternatively, candidates may be requested to submit pre-recorded interviews for review instead.

Preparation tips

- Make sure that all your devices (like your webcam and microphone) are working. Make sure your internet connection is stable as well.
- Choose a quiet, well-lit location for the interview. You may use a virtual background or do a quick scan of your surroundings beforehand to remove anything distracting or inappropriate.
- Make sure your device is fully charged or plugged in.
- Have your documents ready with you just in case you need to refer to them.
- Even if the meeting is online, professionalism still matters, so dress for the occasion.
- Sit upright, maintain eye contact by looking into the camera, and speak clearly. Virtual interviews can sometimes feel less personal, so it is important to make an extra effort to ensure you are seen and heard clearly.

TYPES OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Competency	To assess a candidate's personality, these open-ended questions are asked to determine their fit for both the job and the company. To prepare efficiently, it is a good idea to research common competency-based questions, and prepare your answers accordingly. At the same time, make sure you stay informed about current developments in your chosen field. **Use the STAR method:** • **Summarise the Situation** • **Outline Your Task** • **Explain your Action** • **Present the Results**
2. Situational	These are often hypothetical, and can seem too complex or challenging at first glance. This is often intentional: the real aim of these questions is to see how candidates handle ambiguous situations, as well as their thought process. **Examples** • ***How would you approach a project with a tight deadline?*** • ***What steps would you take to manage a challenging client?*** • ***How would you deal with obstacles if you had limited resources at your disposal?***
3. Technical	These evaluate a candidate's depth of understanding and competence in key technical areas. It also tests their problem-solving skills and logical reasoning in practical, real-life scenarios.

Assessment Centre

Assessment centres are utilised by some employers to screen potential hires. This involves a combination of back-to-back group and individual exercises which mimic what work will be like at the company.

What to expect from assessment centres

While the tasks can vary depending on the job role and company, you can expect at least a few of the following:

- **Group exercises:** Evaluates your cooperation and adaptability when working with others
- **Written exercises:** Assesses your writing skills and critical thinking
- **Live presentations:** Tests how well you organise and present information in front of others
- **In-tray exercises:** Measures your aptitude for time management and task prioritisation under pressure
- **Case studies:** Analyse a given scenario and propose solutions based on it
- **Psychometric tests:** Gauges your aptitude, personality and soft skills



Preparing for assessment centres

Strike a balance between standing out and collaborating

Many tasks at the assessment centre will involve teamwork, providing an opportunity to demonstrate your ability to work with others. At the same time, taking the initiative can also showcase your leadership potential to employers.

However, being too dominating or passive will leave a poor impression, so aim to strike a balance between the two.

Speak up when needed

It is important to be an effective communicator at work, so do not hesitate to voice your thoughts or seek clarification if you need to. Doing so shows your ability to engage proactively and handle challenges constructively – qualities that employers highly value.

Stay professional

Remember that an assessment centre aims to mirror real workplace scenarios, so act like you are actually at work. With this in mind, treat every interaction and task seriously; the recruiters will be observing not just your skills, but also your attitude and behaviour.



YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT AND YOU

When evaluating candidates, recruiters do not rely solely on your application and resume; your online presence is often part of the review as well.

In today's digital age, your online presence plays a bigger role in your job search than you might expect. Recruiters often look beyond your resume to gain a fuller picture of who you are, which means your social media profiles and online activity can influence their impression of you. As such, managing your online presence carefully can help you maintain a professional image and avoid potential red flags.



CLEANING UP YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

1. Do a quick search of yourself

To get a better idea of what employers might come across, consider doing a quick Google search on yourself, as well as on other social media platforms. This will give you a clear picture of your current digital footprint and help you decide on your next steps.

2. Delete your old accounts

Delete any inactive social media accounts or email addresses you no longer use. Even if they are currently inactive, they can still appear in search results and reflect poorly on you if they contain any unflattering content of you.

3. Adjust your privacy settings

For personal accounts (such as TikTok and Instagram), consider setting your accounts to private so that only followers can view your content. But if you want to keep them public for any reason, remove any content you would not want employers to see. Additionally, check for tagged posts from other users, and un-tag yourself from anything inappropriate.

4. Manage your digital presence

After cleaning up your profiles, continue to manage them carefully. Before posting, consider whether you would be comfortable sharing it with a potential employer. Aim to present yourself in a positive and professional light – you want recruiters to have a positive impression of you, after all.

IMPROVING YOUR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

Now that you have cleaned up your online presence, it is time to build on it and strengthen your visibility as an emerging professional. But apart from professional platforms like LinkedIn, how else can you build up your digital presence?

Build up your personal brand

- This will be your professional identity: a mix of your skills, experiences and personality. This will shape how people perceive you online, so it is important to be intentional about this.
- Think about what you want to be known for – this could be a specific skill set or industry interest. A clear direction will make it easier to decide your next steps.
- Keep this consistent over your profiles and the content you share. This includes your tone and what topics you engage with. Over time, you will be able to build a stronger and more credible presence.

Showcase your work online

- How you should present your work can vary depending on the industry and role you want to join. For example, tech students may use GitHub to host their projects and past works, while media or design students might build a personal website or MyJourney portfolio.
- Quality over quantity: Show only your best projects, and provide some brief details on each one, such as your role, process and results.
- Remember to update frequently; aim to refresh your portfolio once every few months at minimum.

Contribute to online communities

- Take part in forums, open-source projects or professional groups related to your field/role.
- For example, you can join LinkedIn groups and add to conversations meaningfully by sharing your thoughts, asking smart questions and engaging with others.
- By doing so, you not only gain access to potentially new insights, but also build up your network by connecting with like-minded professionals.

EVALUATING JOB OFFERS

Learning to evaluate and negotiate job offers is key to making informed career decisions and setting yourself up for long-term success.

Congratulations! After all your hard work, you have received a job offer. While this is worth celebrating, it is important to stay focused. Before making a decision, take the time to carefully review the offer and, if necessary, negotiate the terms of your contract.

For fresh graduates, this process can feel intimidating. There are many factors to consider, from salary and benefits to growth opportunities and work expectations.

After weighing your options, you will also need to decide whether to accept or decline the offer, which can come with its own challenges. Here are a few things to keep in mind when reviewing your job offer.



Negotiation

When you receive a job offer, you generally have three options: accept it as is, decline it, or negotiate the terms. If you choose to negotiate, preparation is key. Do your research beforehand and keep the following points in mind to help yourself manage this process effectively:

- **Research market rates**
  Look into the market rates for your role; this gives you a realistic benchmark for your expected salary and benefits. When negotiating your remuneration, anchoring your expected salary within the market's mid-range generally increases your chances of a favorable outcome.

- **Evaluate your value**
  Speak with friends or peers in the same field who are open to sharing their offer details. Comparing your offer to theirs can help you assess your market value more accurately.

- **Understand the company culture**
  Some organisations, especially larger or more traditional ones, may expect a more reserved approach to negotiation. Tailoring your strategy to align with the company's culture is essential.

- **Salary is not everything**
  While pay matters, other factors such as annual leave, health benefits, and work-life balance are equally important. Be sure to consider and include these in your negotiation.

- **Know what is negotiable**
  Not every aspect of an offer can be negotiated. For example, if the role is clearly stated as on-site, pushing for remote work might not be well received. Focus on elements not explicitly defined in the job description or during the interview.

Do's	Don'ts
• Be polite and professional at all times • Try to understand the employer's point of view • Share a reasonable salary range instead of a fixed amount • Practise answering difficult questions confidently • Know your strengths and be ready to highlight them • Be open to walking away if the offer truly is not right for you	• Demand that your terms be accepted • Negotiate just because you feel you should • Ignore the employer's limitations or concerns • Ask for benefits or terms that do not match your level of experience

When to accept or hold off on an offer

When to accept	When to hold off
• The role offers valuable experience • You are in immediate financial need • You are still exploring your long-term goals • The job presents strong growth opportunities • The company's values align with your own	• The role offers limited learning or growth • The commute is overly long or impractical • The terms and conditions are unclear • The company has a poor reputation or culture

Handling multiple job offers

Being presented with several job offers is undoubtedly an encouraging position to be in, as it clearly demonstrates your marketability and the high regard potential employers have for your skills. Yet, this favourable circumstance requires thoughtful navigation. What initially appears to be a position of strength can backfire if managed poorly.

- **Handle with tact**
Managing multiple offers with care will help you maintain good relationships, preserve your professional reputation, and keep future opportunities open.

- **Choose the right fit**
Do not be swayed by flashy perks. Evaluate the offer holistically to ensure it truly supports your career path.

- **Consider long-term growth**
Choose a role that not only meets your current needs but also supports your long-term career development.

- **Be transparent**
You do not have to share everything, but being upfront about your situation shows integrity and professionalism.

- **Honour your commitments**
If you have made any agreements, stick to them. Failing to do so can damage your reputation as a dependable professional.

NAVIGATING YOUR FIRST 90 DAYS AT WORK

The first 90 days (or three months) at a new job are crucial, so make sure you make the right impression from start to finish.

Starting your first job can feel both exciting and overwhelming. In the first few months, much of your time will be spent learning and adjusting to working life. This phase, often known as the probation period, is your chance to settle in and find your footing.

This period is also a crucial one: how you approach these early months can shape your experience and set the tone for your time at the company. Here are a few ways to set yourself up for a smoother transition.



MONTH 1

Objective: Learn, observe and get used to the company

- **Understand your role and expectations**

On your first day, make it a point to ask your manager about the specifics of your role, including your daily tasks, key performance indicators (KPIs), and any other expectations. You can also take things a step further by scheduling check-ins with your manager to discuss your progress over time.

- **Get familiar with the office**

Everything is going to be new to you, so take some time to learn the systems, platforms and workflows used by your team. While you will likely be introduced to them during onboard, it is still a good idea to ask questions when needed. The sooner you get up to speed, the easier and quicker it will be for you to settle in.

- **Get to know your colleagues**

Your first month is a great time to get to know your coworkers, so make an effort to connect, whether through small talk during breaks or by joining team lunches. Building these relationships can help you settle in faster and make it less intimidating to ask for help.

- **Ask questions and take notes**

As you settle into your new role, it is normal to have questions or need help. Take notes during training so you can avoid having to ask the same things repeatedly. At the same time, do speak up if you are unsure about anything. Asking thoughtful or smart questions shows initiative and can help you pick things up faster.

MONTH 2

Objective: Contribute and build confidence

- **Take ownership of your work**

As a newcomer, focus on getting used to your main responsibilities first – being able to produce consistent, quality work shows that you are reliable and can be trusted with your role. Once you feel like you have a handle on things, you can then look for opportunities to contribute outside of your immediate tasks, provided you have the bandwidth.

- **Keep working on your network**

Apart from your immediate team, consider connecting with people from other departments, whether through cross-departmental events or shared interest groups. This can give you a better understanding of the company's workflow, as well as make it easier for you to reach out to other teams for future collaborations.

- **Track your achievements**

As you take on more responsibilities, start keeping a record of your work and accomplishments. Note down key contributions, results, and any positive feedback you receive. This makes it easier to reflect on your progress, update your resume, and prepare for performance reviews.



MONTH 3

Objective: Show initiative and make an impact

- **Get out of your comfort zone**

Now that you should be comfortable with your job role, this is the perfect time to start challenging yourself. Begin with small contributions, like assisting on projects or proofreading work, before gradually taking on more independent tasks or new responsibilities. Stepping up in this way shows initiative and helps you grow beyond your core role.

- **Work on your professional development**

If you are eligible for them, take advantage of the company's resources to upgrade yourself, such as workshops, seminars and networking events. These opportunities can help you bridge any skill gaps, grow as an employee, and show your initiative to your manager.

- **Check in on yourself regularly**

Apart from meeting with your direct supervisor, take the time to reflect on your own as well. Ask yourself: what have I learned this week? Is there anything else I can do to improve? Self-reflections like these can not only give you a sense of progress (which can improve your motivation), but also helps to set yourself up for the next week of work.

FINDING THE RIGHT FIT:
MNCs VS SMEs VS START-UPS

Every workplace comes with its own set of benefits and challenges. As such, it is important for you to find one that aligns with your personal values, professional goals and working style.

Companies come in different shapes and sizes, each with distinct organisational cultures, compensation models, and development opportunities, requires thoughtful consideration.

Aside from the public sector, which generally offers stability and structured advancement, the private sector offers greater diversity. These typically fall under one of three categories below:



Multi-national Corporations (MNCs)

Large organisations that operate across multiple countries. They are typically well-renowned with a strong and reputable brand value. Notable examples include Apple, Toyota and Samsung.

Advantages

Global exposure and opportunities

- MNCs offer the chance to work in international settings, allowing employees to gain cultural intelligence and form a global professional network

Robust career development

- With substantial resources, MNCs provide extensive training and clear career progression pathways

Attractive compensation and benefits

- Employees often enjoy competitive salaries, healthcare, bonuses, and other incentives

Factors to Consider

Bureaucratic structure

- Decision-making may be slow due to hierarchical layers and administrative protocols

Cultural and time zone challenges

- Coordinating with global teams can be complex and may require adjusting working hours

High performance expectations

- Demands can be intense, and advancement may be slow despite consistent performance

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

SMEs typically employ fewer than 200 people and focus on regional or national markets. Their size allows for greater agility but may limit available resources.

Advantages	Factors to Consider
Varied responsibilities • Employees often handle diverse tasks, gaining broad experience across different functions	**Limited advancements** • Smaller teams mean fewer leadership roles and slower vertical mobility
Visibility and impact • Contributions are more noticeable and can lead to quicker recognition and responsibility	**Fewer training resources** • Employees may need to take initiative in developing their own skills
Workplace flexibility • Many SMEs are open to hybrid or remote arrangements and adapt quickly to change	**Modest benefits** • Compensation and benefits may not match those offered by larger companies

Start-ups

Start-ups are newly established businesses, often operating with limited resources and focusing on innovation. Their informal structure and fast pace appeal to individuals who thrive in dynamic environments.

Advantages	Factors to Consider
Creative freedom • Start-ups foster innovation and often encourage unconventional thinking	**Job instability** • Start-ups are particularly vulnerable to market fluctuations and funding challenges
Entrepreneurial experience • Employees gain insight into business building and strategic decision-making	**Demanding workloads** • Long hours are common as the team strives to grow the business
Flat hierarchies • Close collaboration with founders and leadership is common, offering unique mentorship opportunities	**Unclear career paths** • Progression is often informal and may lack structure or consistency

Ultimately, the ideal workplace will reflect your priorities and stage of professional development. Whether you thrive in the structure of an MNC, the flexibility of an SME, or the fast-paced energy of a start-up, understanding the pros and cons of each can guide your decision and set you on a path towards a meaningful and rewarding career.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ALTERNATE CAREER PATHS

Not keen on following a conventional career path? There are other routes worth exploring.

Traditional 9-to-6 careers are not the only option for graduates entering the workforce. In fact, there is value in exploring alternative career paths, especially for those who value flexibility, independence and creative freedom.

These alternative paths offer a different way to build a career outside of traditional full-time employment. While they can provide greater autonomy and opportunities to pursue your own goals, they also come with their own challenges and responsibilities.

Here are two options that you can consider:



Freelancing

Rather than working for a single employer, freelancers take on projects from multiple clients. If you have marketable skills, like graphic design or software development, freelancing can be a flexible way to earn an income. For some, it can even serve as a stepping stone towards starting their own business.

Benefits	Challenges
Flexibility • You have greater control over your schedule and workload, making it easier to balance work around other commitments. **Skill and portfolio development** • Working with different clients exposes you to a variety of projects, helping you develop new skills and build a stronger portfolio. **Work from anywhere** • Most freelance roles can be done remotely, allowing you to work from wherever you want.	**Irregular income** • Freelance income can fluctuate depending on the number of clients or projects you have. **Self-management** • As a freelancer, you are responsible for everything from finding clients and managing your time to handling invoices and finances. **Work-life boundaries** • Managing clients, responding to messages, and handling administrative tasks can make it difficult to separate work from your personal life.

Entrepreneurship

Have a business idea you want to turn into reality, or dream of building something from the ground up? While entrepreneurship shares some similarities with freelancing, it involves creating and growing a business around a product, service, or idea, rather than simply providing services to clients.

Benefits	Challenges
Creative freedom • Bring your own ideas to life and shape the direction of your business however you want. **Growth potential** • As your business grows, so do your opportunities to increase your income and expand your reach. **Sense of ownership** • Building something from the ground up can be highly rewarding, both personally and professionally.	**Increased risk** • There is no guarantee that your business will succeed. Building a business takes time, and there is always the possibility that it may not perform as expected. **Steep learning curve** • Running a business requires a wide range of skills, from managing finances and marketing to customer service and operations. You may need to learn many of these skills as you go. **Long working hours** • When starting out, your working hours can bleed into weekends and holidays, which can also eat into personal time.

Ultimately, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to building a successful career. Every career path comes with its own opportunities and challenges, so take the time to consider your interests, strengths, and preferred working style before making a decision. As you grow, remember that your career is not set in stone; you are always free to explore new opportunities and change direction as your goals and circumstances evolve.



Gautam Param

Engineering Product Development

Co-founder of Sustyfood

My job

I am the co-founder of Sustyfoods, a startup that produces meal replacement shakes made from freeze-dried fruits, vegetables, and other organic ingredients. Our goal is simple: to make it easier for people to get the nutrients they need in a convenient way, especially when they are busy.

My role primarily involves overseeing the business while ensuring operations run smoothly. Over time, I have worked to systemise the company so that the day-to-day can be managed by a small team, including a warehouse manager and contractors. This allows me to balance the business alongside my full-time job in a US hardware tech company, where I work on backend automation.

Although Sustyfood is not a typical "high-tech" startup, it solves a real, everyday problem — helping people maintain a healthy diet with minimal effort. That practicality is what makes the work meaningful to me.

How I got started

I started Sustyfood while working a full-time job. The idea came from my personal interest in fitness and nutrition, and my frustration with how difficult it was to get enough protein and fibre through regular meals — especially during busy workdays or while travelling.

Instead of raising funding or going all-in immediately, I took a gradual, low-risk approach. I began by sourcing off-the-shelf ingredients, creating simple prototypes, and packaging them in unbranded sachets. The goal was not perfection, but validation — to find out whether people would actually buy and use the product.

We launched a basic website and started selling to early adopters. The initial feedback was not great — many customers did not like the taste — but that was part of the process. We continuously iterated based on feedback, improving the product step by step until it reached a standard customers enjoyed.

Over time, what started as a side project grew into a sustainable business.

The highs and lows

Like most startups, the journey has been a mix of highs and lows.

One of the biggest highs came during the COVID-19 period. With more people staying at home and focusing on health, demand for our products surged. We experienced rapid growth and strong sales during that time, which was incredibly encouraging.

On the other hand, there have been significant challenges. For example, we once received a defective batch of raw materials contaminated with heavy metals. We had to discard an entire production run, which took days and resulted in substantial financial loss.

More broadly, entrepreneurship comes with constant uncertainty — fluctuating revenue, supplier issues, and the emotional ups and downs of running a business without a guaranteed paycheck. Learning to manage these uncertainties and stay consistent has been one of the biggest challenges.

My happiest moment at work

Rather than one single moment, what I find most fulfilling is seeing the business gradually take shape and grow over time.

A particularly meaningful milestone was when the business reached significant scale while still being run on the side. At one point, we were able to grow the company to strong annual revenue through a fully bootstrapped approach, without external funding.

Moments like these validate the idea that solving a real problem — even in a simple, non-glamorous space — can lead to meaningful impact. It is rewarding to know that something I built from scratch is helping people improve their daily lives.

Some advice

First, be persistent. Most ideas do not work immediately, and success often comes from revisiting and refining the same idea over a long period.

Second, solve a problem you personally understand. It is tempting to chase trends like AI or whatever is popular at the moment, but the best ideas come from problems you experience firsthand. This gives you deeper insight and long-term motivation.

Third, start small and validate early. Do not invest heavily upfront — test whether people actually want what you are building before scaling it.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, consider starting your startup alongside a full-time job. This gives you financial stability and a longer runway to experiment, fail, and improve without taking excessive risks. It also allows you to play the long game, rather than making short-term decisions out of pressure.

Entrepreneurship is a long journey. If you can stay patient, keep learning, and continue showing up, you give yourself the best chance of success.



Tanvi R Thombre

Engineering Product Development, Design Innovation

Founder of Greenairy

My job

I run Greenairy, a deeptech sustainability startup based in Singapore. We build smart plant towers that supercharge plants' natural ability to clean the air.

Most air purifiers use HEPA or carbon filters. They trap dust well. But they cannot remove toxic VOC gases (like formaldehyde, benzene, toluene), CO2, and excess humidity - which are the main pollutants in offices in Singapore. In fact, some air purifiers even give off harmful byproducts like ozone.

Remember that sick feeling you get when you step into a stuffy meeting room? Then remember the freshness of the forest air. We harness plant root microbes to break down pollution with no harmful byproduct, and speed it up using technology.

My day-to-day covers a lot of ground. I lead product development and strategy. I test air quality in offices and spaces around the world. I pitch the company at events in Singapore and abroad. And I work closely with my team across engineering, research, and social media side.

How I started

This began in the fabrication lab. During my robotics bachelor's, we spent hours in there with 3D printers, laser cutters, band saws, and soldering machines, which were giving out toxic gases. None of us noticed, and there were pumps inside to remove air.

Then my best friend fainted and went to the hospital. It made us see indoor air pollution as the invisible health risk it really is. We started looking into how people clean indoor air, and we found that the conventional options fell short.

Our very first product was simple. We stuck a smiley and sad face onto a plant pot to show people their air quality. We called it Bud. The only goal was awareness.

A mentor pushed us to think bigger. He asked what someone in an office could even do with that information. They cannot open a window. They cannot bring in a purifier. So why not make the plant itself clean the air? That question moved us toward biofiltration, and Greenairy grew from there.

I did my Master's thesis on it under the amazing Prof Lucienne Blessing. The research on plant-based air purification existed all over the world, but it sat in silos. I wanted to bring it together, find the right conditions, and see if we could make it work at scale. It was a gamble. But I knew I would regret not giving it a chance.

It worked. That is what gave me the confidence to start a startup. We are also building a microgreen tower and a sustainability education app for schools, so kids can grow their own greens and feel that connection to nature. I still remember the joy of growing taogay in class. I want more kids to have that.

The highs and lows

The hardest part is that we build hardware. Getting from an idea to a prototype is one jump. Getting from a prototype to something you can actually manufacture is a much bigger one. It takes planning, a huge investment, and the courage to commit to a final design.

So, we kept iterating, 8 versions in total, each totally different. Every pilot gave us feedback. We incorporated that feedback into the next prototype. One thing I would tell other hardware founders: retrofit an existing product first if you can. We built everything from scratch with our own CAD models. If we had started by retrofitting something like a hydroponic tower, we might have learned the same lessons much faster.

The second challenge is on the business side. People have bought air purifiers their whole lives. So when you tell them plants can clean the air better, you meet some resistance.

To get past that, we make the invisible visible. We bring our air quality monitor everywhere. We test offices before and after the tower goes in, and we show them the live results. We even leave a note in the space asking people to write how the air feels. They tell us it is stuffy, humid, or has a smell. Seeing that on paper is what makes the problem real for them.

My happiest moment at work

I do not get nervous about pitching anymore. I have done it so many times. What I love most comes after. When the pitch ends, people come up to talk. They ask which plants to buy for their home. They offer to connect me to someone who needs this. They want to know how the technology works. Hearing how people connect with the idea is the best part. Funding is great too. But that moment of real interest from a stranger is what stays with me.

Of course, the first time we got back the positive results showing our tower had successfully cleaned the air is a moment I will always remember.

Some advice

First, build a community around your work. You go faster alone, but you go further together. One founder I met empowered indigenous communities to plant millions of trees by tapping into the values they already held. Find people who care about the same problem, or are smarter than you, and bring them in.

Second, you will fail. Many times. James Dyson built thousands of prototypes over years before his product worked. We only see the success at the end. We never see how many times someone failed to get there. So every time I fail, I treat it as one step closer. Give yourself the grace to fail, get back up, and try again. If you are truly building something novel, this is part of the process. As they say, "Rome was not built in a day."



Ng Tze Liang

Engineering Systems and Design

Founder of Windee

My job

I am the founder of Windee, a startup that improves ventilation and quality of life at home by developing window panels that are soundproof while keeping out pests and smoke. We started the company in July 2024, right after graduation.

My role today revolves mainly around business development, sales, and marketing, while still being involved in product development when needed. In the early days, I handled everything—from brainstorming and prototyping to engaging customers. However, as the company grew, I realised that I was not the best person to do everything. I shifted my focus to areas where I could add the most value: building relationships, representing the brand, and earning customers' trust, while relying on my team of engineers to lead product development.

Today, I lead a small team and ensure that different parts of the business come together—from product to operations to customer engagement.

The highs and lows

Startups are full of ups and downs—often within the same day. The highs usually come from interacting with customers. Seeing their faces light up when they understand how the product solves their problem is incredibly fulfilling. It is even more rewarding when satisfied customers become advocates and share the product with others.

However, there are also many challenges. Product failures are part of the journey, and it can be discouraging when things do not work as intended. There are also difficult customer interactions—cases where expectations are mismatched or where clients are sceptical or even hostile. These moments are uncomfortable but also serve as learning experiences—teaching resilience, communication, and the importance of managing expectations.

Over time, I have learned that even negative situations can be turned around through patience, clarity, and empathy.

My happiest moment at work

One of my most meaningful moments was installing the product in my parents' home. They had long struggled with noise from traffic and nearby activity, which affected their sleep and overall well-being.

After installing the window panels, they experienced a noticeable difference—it was quieter, yet still well-ventilated. They slept better and felt more comfortable at home. Knowing that something I built could directly improve their daily lives made the journey deeply personal and fulfilling.

Another memorable moment came from a customer who urgently needed the product installed before bringing home a newborn baby. Seeing how the solution could create a more comfortable environment for a family—and even for an infant—was incredibly meaningful.

Moments like these remind me why we started the company in the first place.

Some advice

Start by solving a problem that you personally experience—something significant enough that you would be willing to pay for a solution yourself. This gives you a strong reason to keep going when things get difficult.

Equally important is validating your idea with paying customers, not just users. While users may provide feedback, customers who pay will give the most honest and valuable insights. Their feedback reflects real demand and highlights what truly needs improvement.

Many students hesitate to charge for their product early on because they feel it is not perfect. However, free users are often less invested and may not give meaningful feedback. Finding the right customers—even a small number—is far more valuable than reaching a large audience without commitment.

Ultimately, entrepreneurship requires resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to learn continuously. Focus on solving real problems, listen to your customers, and keep iterating.



Tushar Mohan

Engineering Product Development

Co-founder of Rolo

From experimenting with food automation in a dorm room to building robotic microkitchens deployed across Singapore and beyond, Tushar's journey offers a candid look into entrepreneurship—its realities, lessons, and possibilities. We speak with him about his path, challenges, and advice for students considering entrepreneurship.

Q: Could you tell us what you are currently doing?

I am a co-founder at Rolo, where we are building what we call "microkitchens"—automated systems that can cook food with minimal or no human intervention.

At a high level, we are trying to solve problems in the food industry like labour shortages, high rental costs, and limited accessibility to food. Our goal is to make food more affordable and available, while also helping brands reach customers in places they typically cannot.

Q: What sparked your interest in this space?

I used to experiment with cooking automation in my dorm room in SUTD — simple things like scrambled egg systems or ingredient dispensers.

At the same time, I was working part-time in the food service industry. At 6PM, I could make sandwiches perfectly. By late evening, I was exhausted — and the quality dropped. That was where I saw how repetitive and physically demanding the work was, and how difficult it was to maintain consistency.

That experience created a connection to the problem. For me, entrepreneurship starts there—you need to care about what you are solving.

Q: You started a company right after graduation. What was that experience like?

Yes, my first startup was called Sous Chef. We raised about $1.5 million and ran pilots with big clients like Changi Airport Group and hotel groups like Fullerton.

But eventually, we had to shut it down. The biggest issue was that our product was a "nice to have," not a "must have." Customers were not willing to pay for it at scale.

That was a tough lesson, but it taught me something important: building a great product is not enough—you need to build a company that solves a real, urgent problem.

Q: What were your biggest learnings from that first startup?

Two key things stand out. First, the team matters more than the product. A strong team can adapt and evolve as the problem changes.

Second, you have to stay obsessed with the problem, not the solution. Solutions evolve—but the problem is what keeps you grounded.

Q: What did you do after that?

I joined LionsBot, a robotics company, and spent about five years there. I was part of the early team, and we scaled from under 10 people to over 100 engineers globally.

That experience taught me how to build products properly, how to scale a company, and how complex global markets really are. Every country is different—you cannot just build something once and expect it to work everywhere.

Q: How did Rolo come about?

After that, I took some time to travel and study how the food and robotics industries were evolving globally, especially after COVID.

We saw a big shift—people were comfortable ordering food online without knowing who and how it is prepared. That opened up opportunities for automation.

So, we started Rolo with a simple idea: instead of automating kitchens, what if we built a completely new way to prepare, produce and serve food?

Q: What makes Rolo different from other food automation solutions?

Most companies try to put robots into existing kitchens. We took a different approach—we built the kitchen itself into a compact, automated system. That is how our microkitchens came about.

They can operate 24/7, require minimal manpower, and can be placed in locations where traditional restaurants would not work—like campuses, army camps, or remote areas.

Q: What has the journey been like so far? Any highs and lows?

Honestly, I do not think about things as highs and lows anymore. There were moments when we could not make payroll for months, and times when we raised more funding than we expected. But both situations come with their own pressure.

At the end of the day, it is all the same—you are just trying to survive another day and keep solving the problem.

Q: That sounds intense. What keeps you going?

What motivates me is being able to see the impact of my work. I enjoy creating things that make a positive impact, and that is what keeps me going.

I also find satisfaction in building tangible products—things that people can touch, use, and interact with. There is something special about seeing an idea become a physical reality that improves someone's experience.

Q: How is your team structured at Rolo?

We are a lean team—about 16 people—and we try to keep it that way.

We do not have very rigid roles. Everyone is involved in different aspects of the product. Engineers do not just build—they also handle customer complaints, clean machines, and fix issues on the ground.

It is important to feel the pain of the user. That is how you build better products.

Q: What does your role look like day-to-day?

I see myself as someone who translates problems into direction for the team. For example, when I came back from Sydney, one of my first thoughts was that Australians might find our portions too small and had to adapt to that. I spend time understanding what is happening externally—market changes, customer behaviour—and then align the team on what we should build next.

I also try to stay hands-on. I enjoy building, so I spend quite a bit of time experimenting with new AI tools. I also try to stay hands-on by owning at least one product from start to finish.

It is important not to lose touch with the operational side of things.

Q: How has AI changed the way you build and run a startup?

AI has fundamentally changed everything. Today, you can test ideas much faster and at a much lower cost. What used to take months can now take days or even hours.

It also means teams can be much smaller but more productive. So being AI-native is no longer optional—it is to be expected.

Q: Do you think entrepreneurship is easier today than before?

In some ways, yes.

The tools available today make it much easier to build and test ideas. But that also means competition is higher—everyone has access to the same tools. So, what really matters now is how you think, how quickly you execute, and what unique insights you have into a problem.

Q: What advice would you give students interested in entrepreneurship?

First, understand how to build and operate in an AI-native way. That will be the default moving forward.

Second, do not focus on building something perfect. Focus on finding product-market fit—something people are actually willing to pay for.

And most importantly, just start. You do not need to have everything figured out.

Tushar's journey reminds us that entrepreneurship is not about perfect ideas, but about persistence, learning, and staying close to real-world problems. For students exploring alternative career paths, it is a path full of uncertainty—but also possibility.


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SHOULD YOU WORK ABROAD?

The prospect of working overseas can sound fun, but is it truly for you?

With how interconnected the world has become, a career abroad is no longer just a pipe dream. But while it can sound like a grand adventure on paper, making the move to work overseas comes with its own considerations and challenges. Here are a few questions to ask yourself first:



01 What do I want out of this experience?

Before making the move, it helps to reflect on your personal motivations. Are you hoping to grow your career, gain international exposure, challenge yourself, earn a higher salary or simply experience a different lifestyle? Having a clear understanding of your goals can help you make more informed decisions and set more realistic expectations for yourself.

02 Does this align with my long-term career goals?

On paper, working abroad comes with plenty of benefits, including gaining global experience and skills that can appeal to future employers. However, its actual value can depend on the jobs or company you intend to apply to. For example, multinational corporations (MNCs) may greatly value international experience, while some local companies or SMEs may prioritise candidates who are familiar with the local market instead. Consider whether the skills, projects and networks you gain overseas will strengthen your long-term

03 How long do I intend to stay abroad?

Do you plan on working overseas for a few months, years or even long-term? Your answer can affect everything, including career planning and finances (especially if you have obligations back home). Having a better idea about your timeline can also help you decide if this aligns with your long-term goals and expectations.

04 Am I financially prepared?

Moving and living in a new country, even just for a few months, can be costly depending on your destination, lifestyle, and if you have secured a job before arriving. As such, it is important to research your expected expense beforehand so you can plan accordingly. Additionally, do check if the companies you are applying to can provide financial support in any way, such as accommodation, relocation allowances or other subsidies.

05 Can I cope with the stress of adapting while working?

Not only are you getting used to a new job, you will need to adapt to a new living environment too. Apart from your professional responsibilities, you will need to manage domestic matters like your finances and daily errands by yourself. Without your usual support system, it will be on you to become more self-reliant and proactive.

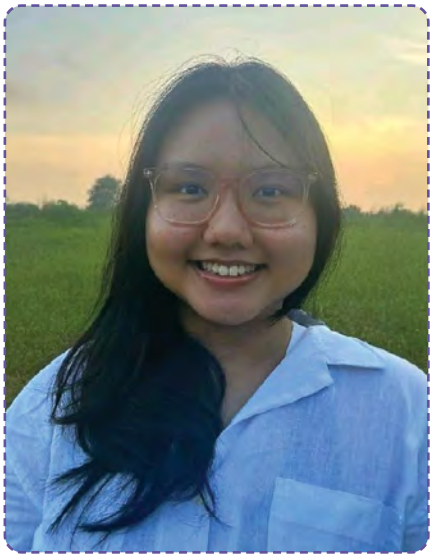
06 What if things do not go as planned?

Sometimes, even with your best efforts, life abroad may not go as well as you hoped. Maybe the role is different from what you thought, or you might realise this may not be for you after all. Either way, having backup plans will make it much easier to handle them should they arise.

Whether you choose to remain local or work abroad, there is no right or wrong answer. Rather, the best choice is the one that best aligns with your personal and professional goals. If you are sill unsure about your options, consider speaking to the CDC for further guidance and insights as you explore the best fit for your career journey.

ALUMNI SPEAKS

Profile 1: Building a Future in the Semiconductor Industry



Eaint Nandi Win Naung

Class of 2025
Engineering Product Development

Test Application Engineer
ASC Singapore

> **"Rather than focusing on a specific title, I prioritised opportunities where I could learn, grow, and develop valuable skills for the future."**

My job

I am currently a Test Application Engineer at ASC Singapore, a company in the semiconductor industry. Specifically, we operate in the OSAT (Outsourced Semiconductor Assembly and Testing) sector, focusing on the testing of semiconductor chips. My role involves working with both software and electrical engineering systems to ensure semiconductor devices perform according to specifications.

One of the things that surprised me most about this role is how different it is from what I studied and even from my internship experience. During my internship, I worked in a mechanical engineering environment, but my current role involves much more coding, software applications and electrical engineering concepts. Despite the differences, the problem-solving and analytical thinking skills I developed through engineering studies have remained highly relevant and transferable.

How I got my job

Landing my first full-time role was far from easy. While I eventually secured my position through a walk-in interview at a career fair, the journey involved perseverance and resilience. During my job search, I applied for more than 200 positions and received interview invitations from only around 10 to 15 companies. In the end, just a few companies made job offers.

My job-hunting journey lasted about seven months in total—beginning five months before graduation and ending two months after graduation when I finally secured a role.

One strategy that proved especially useful was attending career fairs. Unlike submitting resumes online and hoping someone notices them, career fairs provided opportunities to speak directly with employers. At one such event, I received an application form from ASC Singapore and was invited to participate in a walk-in interview. That opportunity eventually led to my current position.

Looking back, I was open-minded about the type of role and industry I wanted to enter. Rather than focusing on a specific title, I prioritised opportunities where I could learn, grow, and develop valuable skills for the future. That mindset ultimately led me to the semiconductor industry.

The highs and lows

One of my proudest moments came less than a year into the job when I was entrusted with training newcomers. In my company, training new hires is a significant responsibility because the semiconductor industry is highly technical and filled with company-specific knowledge. Being selected to mentor others made me realise that my supervisor trusted my capabilities and saw me as an important member of the team.

Another memorable achievement was being involved in the introduction of a major new semiconductor product. The project required long hours and considerable effort, but it was also a rare learning opportunity. The device was more complex than what we typically handled, and being part of the team gave me exposure to cutting-edge technology while reinforcing the trust that my supervisor placed in me.

However, not every experience was positive. One challenging period occurred when my supervisor called me into his office to discuss my progress. At that time, I felt I was learning more slowly than expected because I had not been exposed to enough projects and devices. The conversation was stressful because it highlighted the gap between expectations and my development.

Fortunately, that experience became a turning point. My supervisor helped me establish clearer goals and taught me an important lesson about workplace learning. In school, I was used to learning independently, but at work I needed to actively seek help, ask questions, and learn from more experienced colleagues. Looking back, I realise that the discussion was not criticism—it was guidance that helped me grow and improve.

My happiest moment at work

While exciting projects and achievements are rewarding, the happiest part of my job is actually the people I work with.

My team has created a supportive and enjoyable environment where everyone knows when to focus on work and when to relax. Simple moments, such as going out for lunch together, have become some of the highlights of my workday. The workplace feels less like an office and more like a community where colleagues are also friends.

Even though some of my teammates are about ten years older than me, we have built strong relationships and enjoy spending time together. After particularly intense work periods, the team often gathers for meals to celebrate our achievements. These moments help us recharge, strengthen relationships, and remind us that success is a shared effort.

Some advice

For students and fresh graduates interested in manufacturing or semiconductor careers, I believe mindset is just as important as technical knowledge. The industry moves quickly, and there is always something new to learn. Be prepared to embrace challenges, adapt to change, and take on responsibilities even when they seem intimidating.

Strong analytical and problem-solving skills are valuable because manufacturing environments often require quick thinking when issues arise. More importantly, be open to feedback from supervisors and colleagues. Learning from experienced professionals can accelerate your growth significantly.

If I could go back to my university days, I would pay more attention to coding and electrical engineering modules—ironically, the subjects I enjoyed the least are now among the most important aspects of my work. This taught me that you never know which skills may become useful in the future, so it is always worthwhile to learn as much as possible.

I would also encourage students to develop the habit of asking questions. In the workplace, curiosity and communication are critical. Speaking up, seeking clarification, and sharing your ideas can help you learn faster and contribute more effectively.

Finally, for graduates who are still searching for a job, do not be discouraged by rejections. Every application and every interview is an opportunity to improve. My own journey involved over 200 applications before I secured a role. What helped was continuing to apply, attending career fairs, taking every interview seriously, and treating each experience as a learning opportunity. Persistence pays off, and sometimes all it takes is one conversation or one opportunity to open the right door.

Profile 2: From Data Science to Advanced Manufacturing: My Journey in Innovation



Jordan Lim

Class of 2025
Engineering Systems and Design

R&D Operational Planning Engineer
Micron

> **Sometimes, the opportunities you least expect can become the most rewarding ones.**

When I was studying Engineering Systems and Design (ESD) at the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), I imagined myself working in a role that involved data, optimisation and problem-solving. What I did not expect was that those interests would eventually lead me into the manufacturing industry.

Today, I work as an R&D Operational Planning Engineer at Micron, supporting the development of next-generation NAND memory technology. Looking back, my experience has shown me that data science and manufacturing are far more connected than many students realise.

My job

I am part of Micron's Technology Development (R&D) organisation, specifically within the operational planning team. Our team focuses on planning activities that support the development of new semiconductor products.

My role involves working closely with different teams, including process integration, process development and engineering functions. I act as a bridge between these groups to ensure that our R&D products move efficiently through the development process.

On a day-to-day basis, I analyse operational data and monitor key performance indicators such as cycle time, cost and operational efficiency. My goal is to ensure that new products stay on schedule, remain cost-efficient and can be introduced to the market as quickly as possible.

One thing that surprises me about this role is how data-driven it is. Data analysis forms the foundation of much of my work. However, generating insights is only part of the job. I also spend a significant amount of time presenting findings and recommendations to stakeholders, including senior leaders, to support decision-making.

How I started

What attracted me to this role is the opportunity to be part of Micron's R&D pilot line in Singapore. The idea of contributing to cutting-edge innovation and helping to develop future products is incredibly exciting to me.

As an ESD student, I was always interested in optimisation and using data to solve complex problems. When I learned that this new R&D team would be responsible for developing products from research and development all the way through to manufacturing, I saw enormous opportunities to apply data-driven thinking in a meaningful way.

Importantly, I had no prior experience in manufacturing before joining Micron. What I brought with me were transferable skills: analysing data, solving problems systematically, thinking from a systems perspective and using data to support decisions. These skills turned out to be highly relevant in the manufacturing environment.

In fact, one of the biggest lessons I have learned is that manufacturing today relies heavily on data. Whether we are optimising operational performance, reducing costs or improving efficiency, data is at the centre of many decisions we make. For students studying data science, analytics or related disciplines, manufacturing offers far more opportunities than you might expect.

The highs and lows

One of the biggest challenges I faced as a fresh graduate was learning how to communicate effectively with senior stakeholders.

I was comfortable analysing data and identifying trends, but presenting insights to directors and vice presidents was something I had very little experience with. Early on, I realised that producing good analysis was not enough. I also needed to communicate the key messages clearly,

organise information effectively and help leaders quickly understand what actions should be taken.

At first, this was intimidating. However, I gradually changed my mindset and stopped viewing these experiences as low moments. Instead, I began seeing them as opportunities to learn and grow. Every presentation became a chance to improve my communication skills and become more confident in engaging senior leadership.

Looking back, I am grateful for those challenges because not many engineers get regular exposure to senior leaders so early in their careers. The experience has accelerated my development in ways that I never expected.

My happiest moment at work

One of my proudest moments happened shortly after I joined Micron.

About a week into my role, our R&D pilot line began operating. At the time, I was one of the first local members of the team, while many of my colleagues and mentors were still based in the United States. Despite the steep learning curve, we successfully achieved a major project milestone and delivered our first pilot-line output on schedule.

That achievement gave me a strong sense of accomplishment, especially because we overcame significant challenges and tight deadlines along the way.

Over time, however, my definition of success has evolved. Today, my happiest moments do not necessarily come from major project milestones. Instead, I find satisfaction in continuous learning. Whether it is discovering a new way to automate tasks using artificial intelligence, learning a new analytical technique, gaining fresh perspectives from colleagues or finding a better solution to a problem, these daily learning experiences have become the most rewarding part of my work.

Some advice

If I could share one piece of advice with students and fresh graduates, it would be to keep an open mind.

When I was job searching, I started applying for positions early and spent months exploring different opportunities. To be honest, I never imagined that I would end up working in the manufacturing sector. Yet this opportunity turned out to be one of the best learning experiences I could have asked for.

My advice is not to focus solely on the industry. Instead, pay attention to the role itself. Ask yourself what skills you will gain, what exposure you will receive and how the experience will help you grow. Learning opportunities often matter more than finding the “perfect” role/position, especially in your first job.

For students studying data science, analytics or systems-related disciplines, do not rule out manufacturing. Modern manufacturing companies generate enormous amounts of data and need people who can analyse information, optimise processes, communicate insights and drive better decisions. The skills you learn in data science can be highly valuable in this environment.

My own journey is proof of that. I entered the industry without a manufacturing background, but by applying the data-driven mindset I developed at SUTD, I found a role where I can contribute to innovation while continuing to learn every day. So, trust the process, stay curious and keep an open mind. Sometimes, the opportunities you least expect can become the most rewarding ones.

CAREER PATHWAYS A - Z

As the number of sectors and industries expand over time, so will the amount of opportunities you can consider for your career journey.



Architecture and Sustainable Design

Professionals in this field are tasked to curate and develop structures that are not only functional, but innovative and aesthetically impressive. Utilising a wide range of tools and skills, graduates here will rely on their analytical thinking, attention to detail and creativity to help influence and shape future communities.

Potential roles:
- Architecture and Future Cities Researcher
- Civil Engineer
- Digital Fabrication and Design Engineer
- Urban Design Engineer



Computer Science and Design

This sector combines technological innovation with artistic and practical design concepts, with the goal of solving problems and creating ground-breaking solutions. These can include new and/or improved software and applications, as well as websites that are both functional and visually appealing to its target consumers.

Potential roles:
- Digital Product Designer
- Game Designer
- Software Engineer
- User Experience (UX) Designer



Corporate and Management Consultancy

Professionals here aim to maximise their company's profitability by analysing financial statements and operational data, as well as understanding the company's needs. They work closely with upper management by providing unbiased, professional insight and recommendations for improvement.

Consultants can be found in many industries, with some operating as generalists while others may opt to specialise in one area of expertise. Regardless of path, however, strong analytical abilities, as well as a willingness to keep an ear on industry will be crucial for success here.

Potential roles:
- Human Resources Consultant
- Financial Advisory Consultant
- Management Consultant
- Internal Consultant



Cybersecurity

As companies become increasingly reliant on technology, protecting their systems and data has become more important than ever. Cybersecurity professionals help defend organisations against cyber threats by securing networks, systems, and digital assets through a combination of technologies, processes, and best practices.

While some roles may prefer a background in computer science, it is more important for graduates to secure the right certifications to strengthen their resume, along with soft skills like problem-solving and adaptability.

Potential roles:
- Cybersecurity Specialist
- Digital Forensic Examiner
- Incident and Intrusion Analyst
- Security Operations Centre Analyst



Design and Artificial Intelligence

Using the power of AI, professionals in this sector help to elevate and refine current and future digital platforms. Having a good understanding of specific AI platforms across different interfaces will be required, as well as being able to apply them to various fields, such as in the medical field, the finance sector and more.

Potential roles:
- Applied Machine Learning (ML) Engineer
- Business Intelligence Developer
- Data Scientist
- Design Innovator



Digital Media and Public Relations

There are a wide variety of roles one can undertake in this field – from journalism and marketing to managing public relations and graphic design.

Likewise, the required skills to thrive here also vary. These may include technical abilities such as video post-production techniques, photographic composition, content creation, and fundamental writing skills, along with the adaptability to apply these talents across different media platforms.

Potential roles:
- Broadcast or Digital Journalist
- Content Strategist
- Public Relations Specialist
- Social Media Manager



Engineering and Product Development

This sector focuses on identifying emerging trends and developing solutions and products with the potential to shake up the market. These can include robotics, consumer electronics and other items that have a heavy emphasis on cutting-edge technology. Graduates interested in this sector must not only possess technical expertise, but also the creative capacity to design, produce and manage their creations from start to finish.

Potential roles:

- Design Engineer
- Management Consultant
- Project Engineer
- Research Engineer



Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)

As implied from its name, this field of work focuses on consumer products with a high turnover rate, such as processed foods and cosmetics. Due to its fast-paced nature, the FMCG sector will require graduates to adapt and problem-solve quickly to prevent significant profit losses and disruptions in the chain in order to keep up with consumer demand.

Potential roles:

- Brand Manager
- Distribution Manager
- Key Account Executive
- Quality Assurance Manager



Finance and Banking

Careers in this sector range from global investment banks to corporate finance and trading. There are also niche positions in asset management and private banking to consider, which can be both challenging and rewarding compared to other conventional roles.

Graduates aiming to join this sector are recommended to build up their professional qualifications through practical experiences, such as internships and finance-related extracurricular activities.

As a rule of thumb, jobs here can be listed as one of three categories:

- **Front Office:** Client-facing roles are found here, and focus on generating revenue. Jobs include private wealth management, equity research and sales.
- **Middle Office:** Supports the front office by managing risk and ensuring regulatory compliance. Tasks include financial analysis, risk management and treasury.
- **Back Office:** Provides support for both the front and middle offices via administrative and operational upkeep. Common responsibilities include data management, IT support and human resources.



Healthcare

The essential nature of healthcare and medical services, especially amid an ageing population, ensures a continued demand for skilled professionals across a wide range of specialties.

However, many roles here require specific qualifications, such as under- or post-graduate medical degrees, as well as several years of residency training. Alternatively, graduates may also consider non-clinical pathways after completing relevant certifications or courses, including roles in supportive care, administration and patient services.

Potential roles:

- Biomedical Engineer
- Medical Product/Equipment Designer
- Medical Technologist
- Pharmaceutical Technologist



Logistics, Transport, and Supply Chain

Serving as the backbone of nearly every other industry, this sector focuses on the arrangement and transportation of goods and services across the world. This includes supply chain management, inventory control and warehouse management, which has since been enhanced by technology such as AI and the Internet of Things (IoT).

Professionals here place a high priority on efficiency, with responsibilities including planning projects, negotiating with contractors and overseeing processes.

Potential roles:

- Demand Planning Analyst
- Distribution Centre Supervisor
- Procurement Manager
- Supply Chain Consultant



Manufacturing

Today, modern manufacturing goes beyond traditional factory work; industries such as semiconductors rely on advance technology, automation and precision engineering to produce the components that power much of the machines used today, such as smartphones and electric vehicles. In particular, as demand for AI and other emerging technologies continues to grow, so does the need for semiconductors.

While technical roles will require a relevant degree in engineering or science, soft skills like analytical thinking, attention to detail and a willingness to learn are also well-valued by employers.

Potential roles:

- Process Engineer
- Production Engineer
- Quality Assurance
- Supply Chain Executive

Public Administration and Defence

As one of Singapore's largest employers, the public sector includes major organisations like the civil service, non-departmental public bodies and other government entities.

This complex ecosystem of public institutions requires skilled professionals capable of navigating bureaucratic systems while maintaining a commitment to serving the public interest across multiple domains of civic life.

- **The Civil Service:** Supports the government through policy formulation and execution, ensuring that the country continues to run smoothly. Roles vary depending on the ministry and statuary board.
- **The Armed Force:** Consists of the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF), the Republic of Singapore Airforce (RSAF) and the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN). Each one offers a large variety of roles, including combative and administrative positions to choose from.
- **The Home Team:** Functions as a comprehensive security network under the Ministry of Home Affairs. Entities include the Singapore Police Force and the Immigration and Checkpoint Authority, which each one assuming different responsibilities in protecting Singapore's security framework.

Scientific Research and Development

Through clinical trials and regulated lab experiments, this sector is dedicated to developing solutions for not just national, but potentially global benefit. The scope of these scientific investigations can span across a wide variety of disciplines, from aeronautical systems to breakthroughs in biomedical studies.

For graduates aiming for a career in this vigorous field, graduates will need to be equipped with the necessary qualifications, skills and work experience. In particularly, post-graduate qualifications will be required for research-based jobs, as these roles can be data-intensive and require strong analytical abilities.

Potential roles:

- Lead Research Scientist
- R&D Engineer
- Research Analyst
- Research Chemist



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LOCATION(S)
- Singapore

BUSINESS FACTS

At DSTA, we turn ideas into breakthroughs and harness technology to reshape what is possible. From robotics, autonomous systems and advanced defence platforms to artificial intelligence and cybersecurity, we develop capabilities that strengthen Singapore's defence and security.

DSTA is recognised as one of the top employers in the Engineering & IT sectors, where our engineers and digital technologists deliver work that matters.

Build your edge by taking on meaningful challenges, deepening your technical expertise and growing across diverse domains. Discover how far your potential can take you at DSTA.

DEGREE DISCIPLINES

Open to all disciplines. Explore opportunities across our engineering and digital tech domains.

CAREER SECTOR(S)
- Engineering, Design and Manufacturing
- IT and Technology
- Public Sector

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Scan the QR code or visit https://go.gov.sg/dstacareers to explore and apply for DSTA job opportunities.

APPLICATION PERIODS

Applications for jobs are accepted throughout the year.

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LOCATION(S)
- Singapore

BUSINESS FACTS

DSO National Laboratories is Singapore's largest defence research and development (R&D) organisation with the critical mission of developing technological surprises to sharpen the cutting edge of Singapore's defence capabilities. Established in 1972, DSO has more than 1,800 defence engineers and scientists today pushing the boundaries of science and technology, transforming ideas into reality across the domains of land to space, cyberspace and biological defence. This is where you can make a real impact and shape the future of defence.

MEANINGFUL

You are not just developing tech and solutions. You are making a real difference by solving difficult problems for the nation.

EXCITING

There are endless possibilities for you to push the boundaries of science and technology, and develop cutting-edge solutions that are not available in the market.

FULFILLING

A rewarding career goes beyond pay and benefits. It's about levelling up your mindset and skill set. This is why we have a whole suite of learning opportunities specially curated to support your personal and professional growth.

DEGREE DISCIPLINES
- Engineering
- Computer Sciences
- Information System

CAREER SECTOR(S)
- Engineering, Design and Manufacturing
- IT and Technology
- Scientific Research and Development

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Career: https://dso.x0pa.ai/public/microsites/dsorecruitment

Internship: https://dso.x0pa.ai/public/microsites/dsointernship

Alternatively, you may apply directly on our DSO LinkedIn Page.

APPLICATION PERIODS

Graduate jobs: All year-round

Internships: All year-round



DRIVING THE FUTURE WITH AI

NAME: Clarence Lee Sheng
DEGREE: Bachelor of Science (Design and Artificial Intelligence), 2024
ROLE: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Researcher
EMPLOYER: DSO National Laboratories

MY JOB

As AI's capabilities grow stronger, so do the risk of gatekeeping frontier models. As such, there is a need for Singapore to maintain indigenous capabilities to sustain the full Large Language Model (LLM) development. This is my current role in DSO and I have been involved in the research to develop pretraining infrastructure and data curation pipelines. Through collaborating with fellow colleagues from the Information Division, we deliver in-house state-of-the-art performances from models trained from the ground up.

HOW I GOT MY JOB

I was offered a position via the DSO Merit Scholarship after my internship with DSO, where we were expected to demonstrate independent thinking and conduct research on some challenging problems. In my case, I was assigned to tackle uncertainty estimation in open-ended generations in LLMs.

An internship is ideal for gaining firsthand exposure to research problems, and relating your experiences to real-world challenges can help you stand out. Beyond technical ability, demonstrating that you hold yourself to high standards, can communicate clearly, and have a deep, precise understanding of your own work are all strong indicators that you have the potential to conduct rigorous, high-quality research.

THE HIGHS AND LOWS

Compared with Big Tech companies, one challenge is having a smaller pool of resources. However, said limitations also push us towards more innovative solutions, such as finding more efficient methods to pretrain LLMs. DSO is also supported by high-quality collaborations with both academic and industry partners. These include Mistral AI (to co-train a model) and professors from Stanford University and the University of Washington, among many others. Interacting with them has definitely helped me to grow tremendously in my perspectives on the current AI landscape.

MY HAPPIEST MOMENT AT WORK

Working together with my colleagues to solve problems always inspires and excites me, especially when our efforts translate to visible outcomes. For example, we were able to pretrain from scratch LLMs that could out-perform existing models, which was a huge achievement. Delivering state-of-the-art AI capabilities to Singapore is something that will remain relevant for years to come, and I am fortunate to be part of this journey in DSO.

SOME ADVICE

In research, there is no one-size-fits-all solution, and it is crucial to maintain the highest quality in the work you do. Actively seeking feedback from experts in the field can help you develop the taste required to conduct good research. This could mean speaking to engineers at DSO, but also professors in your various universities. As AI evolves, learning how to leverage AI agents as a force multiplier for your work can also be valuable.

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