

# PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

SINGAPORE



## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Integrity · Impartiality · Meritocracy

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# CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

## GROWING STRONGER IN ADVERSITY

2021 is best summarised as the year COVID-19 continued to test our nation's psychological resilience. There were days we thought the end of the pandemic was near, and others when we feared the worst was yet to come. The COVID-19 situation continued to evolve from 2020 in unexpected ways, with the emergence of the Delta variant and then Omicron. As a people, we experienced cycles of relaxation and tightening of safe management measures, which raised expectations and brought disappointments with new worries. We are slowly adjusting to what this 'new normal' will mean for us as we resume our work and lives.

The challenge of navigating, recalibrating, and making sense in order to build confidence is common across all sectors. The public sector too, has had to reconfigure structures, policies, and processes quickly, to help our public officers work smarter and better cope with the increased demand and pressures. Amidst these challenges and uncertainties, our Public Service has learnt to go back to first principles, and often re-examine the rationale and principles behind its decisions. It is no longer just about being innovative, but having the strength of heart to move on and try again when things don't work out right.

## RESUMING LIFE AMIDST COVID-19

Throughout these last 2 years, in adapting and re-adjusting to disruptions, PSC has continued to help build our leadership pipeline in the public sector, and to fully support our scholarship holders in their developmental journey.

In 2021, we made a deliberate effort to resume many of our key events and engagement activities, at a scale close to pre-COVID, many of them virtually. Among these were scholarships information sessions, selection interviews, award ceremonies and preparatory programmes. The annual Preparatory Course for new scholarship holders and the PSC Scholarship Award Ceremony are key milestone events for the scholarship holders. These provide opportunities for them to build bonds and create shared experiences and memories for future teamwork and collaboration. While the pandemic did restrict in-person activities, we created new opportunities through virtual platforms and introduced alternative team building activities such as virtual Escape Room challenges. Our Scholarship Award Ceremony was also held virtually, to celebrate the proud moment for our 75 scholarship holders, their parents and families.

We continue to put our hearts and minds to find better ways to support our scholarship holders in their education and development amidst the disruption and restrictions. Such support takes different forms depending on circumstances. For example, we provide financial support for the additional tests and quarantine requirements



for scholarship holders who are commencing or resuming their studies overseas. For scholarship holders who were uncertain about whether to undertake an overseas master's program immediately after their undergraduate studies, we made available various options, from studying locally to a Gap Year work attachment, or in some cases to complete their National Service before embarking on their master's course.

We have also strengthened our support systems to enhance the safety and well-being of all our scholarship holders. We make available timely medical and security assistance to all overseas-based scholarship holders should the needs arise, and counselling services to address their mental well-being.

### **BUILDING A RESILIENT PUBLIC SERVICE**

Learning to live with COVID-19 and thrive as a nation requires adaptation. We have learnt that what worked well for us in the past may not be enough to prepare us for the future. The better understanding of existing gaps and emergence of new needs requires solutions to meet these challenges. Recognising the diverse needs across our communities and stakeholders, the Public Service must be agile and adapt quickly in policy development and operational implementation.

I am heartened that many of our public officers and leaders have risen to the challenge. In 2021, the PSC resumed many of our official engagements with ministries and agencies, through a combination of on-site and virtual meetings, to better understand their work and how it has been changing. These have strengthened our understanding of the Public Service and the strategies moving forward, as well as the characteristics and skills of the talent that is required. We have had the chance to speak to public officers, many of them at the forefront of the fight against the pandemic or building our initiatives to emerge stronger together. Many of these officers are building new capabilities and creating new solutions in working hard to keep our economy and our society going forward.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

As Singapore and the world around us continues to increase in complexity, the Public Service will always need to refresh its range of perspectives, skill sets and experiences to effectively anticipate challenges and seize opportunities. While we seek out officers and leaders with a common desire and calling to serve, we will not have a strong Public Service if the members have similar life experiences and thinking in an increasingly complex environment. A truly resilient Public Service must be built upon an ability to tap differences and strengths and unite the best in every officer in the mission to create a better Singapore. To this end, the PSC will continue to intensify our efforts to foster diversity in our leadership pool by seeking out more talents not only in the pre-tertiary education level, but also from both the local as well as overseas universities.

I would like to express my appreciation to my fellow Commission members and our Secretariat team for your contributions. We have overcome unusual challenges this past year and helped many others, and I salute your efforts. I am confident that as we continue to adapt and innovate, we will be well positioned for the challenges and unknowns that lie ahead.





# THE SINGAPORE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (PSC)



# THE PSC'S ROLE

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is constituted under Part IX of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore.

## THE FUNCTIONS OF THE PSC UNDER THE CONSTITUTION ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- a) Appoint,
- b) Confirm,
- c) Emplace on the permanent or pensionable establishment,
- d) Promote,
- e) Transfer, and
- f) Dismiss and exercise disciplinary control over public officers\*.

*\*These categories of officers do not fall under the PSC's purview: Singapore Armed Forces personnel, officers in the Judicial and Legal Services, Police Officers below the rank of Inspector, and daily-rated employees.*

Under the Public Sector (Governance) Act 2018, which came into effect on 1 April 2018, the PSC's concurrence is required for the appointment, promotion and discipline of Chief Executive Officers of Statutory Boards.

## WITH EFFECT FROM 1 JANUARY 1995, THE FOLLOWING PERSONNEL FUNCTIONS WERE DEVOLVED TO THE PERSONNEL BOARDS IN THE MINISTRIES:

- a) Recruitment and appointment to the Civil Service except the Administrative Service and Auditing Service,
- b) Confirmation and emplacement of officers on the permanent or pensionable establishment,
- c) Appointment and promotion of officers up to Superscale E1/Grade 8 (except for the Auditing Service), and
- d) Transfer of service among services other than transfers to the Administrative Service.

Following the devolution, the PSC serves as the final appellate body to consider appeals against decisions of the Special Personnel Board.

## THE PSC ALSO RETAINS THE FOLLOWING KEY NON-CONSTITUTIONAL ROLES:

To recruit and develop talent for the Singapore Public Service through PSC Scholarships, as well as coordinate the efforts of scholarship-awarding public sector agencies.



# MEMBERS OF THE PSC

The Constitution provides for the PSC to have a Chairman and at least five but not more than fourteen other Members. As of 31 December 2021, the PSC comprised the Chairman, two Deputy Chairmen and seven other Members.



**Mr Lee Tzu Yang**  
*Chairman*



**Mr Kwa Chong Seng**  
*Deputy Chairman*



**Ms Chua Sock Koong**  
*Deputy Chairman*



**Mr Po'ad Mattar**  
*Member*



**Mr Edward D'Silva**  
*Member*



**Professor Lily Kong**  
*Member*



**Mr Alan Chan**  
*Member*



**Dr Sudha Nair**  
*Member*



**Associate Professor  
Benjamin Ong**  
*Member*



**Ms Euleen Goh**  
*Member*  
*(appointed on 1 April 2021)*

# APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTIONS, APPEALS AND DISCIPLINARY CASES



## APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS

The PSC is the approving authority for the appointment of candidates to the Administrative Service and the promotion of these officers to Grade 7 and above. The PSC also appoints/promotes officers to Superscale Grade 9 and above in the Auditing Service, and to Superscale D/Grade 7 and above in the rest of the Civil Service.

In 2021, the PSC considered 31 candidates and found 20 suitable for appointment to the Administrative Service.

The PSC considered 36 officers for promotion to Superscale D/Grade 7 and above, including those in the Administrative Service. Of these, 32 officers were promoted.

The PSC considered and appointed an officer at Superscale Grade 9 and above in the Auditing Service. The PSC considered two officers and found them suitable for promotion to Superscale Grade 9 and above in the Auditing Service.

## APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF STATUTORY BOARDS

The PSC considers the suitability of candidates for appointment as Chief Executive Officers of Statutory Boards and subsequent renewals. The PSC also considers the suitability of the Chief Executive Officers for promotion to Superscale D/Grade 7 and above.

In 2021, the PSC considered and concurred with the agencies' recommendation to

- a) appoint 7 officers as new Chief Executive Officers;
- b) renew the terms of 15 existing Chief Executive Officers;
- c) appoint 42 officers as Acting Chief Executive Officers.

## APPEALS

There were no appeals for promotion/against termination under the Public Service (Personnel Boards and Appeals Board) Regulations in 2021.

## DISCIPLINE

The PSC is vested with the disciplinary control of civil servants under Article 110(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Singapore. Civil servants who misconduct themselves are dealt with under one of the three disciplinary procedures<sup>1</sup> listed below:

- a) The Public Service (Disciplinary Proceedings) Regulations ("the Regulations").
- b) The Public Service Commission (Delegation of Disciplinary Functions) Directions ("the Directions").

The PSC has delegated to the Permanent Secretaries, part of its functions pertaining to the discipline of officers for minor misconduct, and

- c) The Public Service Commission (Prison Officers) (Disciplinary Proceedings – Delegation of Functions) Directions ("the Prisons Directions").

The PSC has delegated to the Commissioner of Prisons, part of its functions pertaining to the discipline of junior Prisons Officers for minor misconduct.

<sup>1</sup>Officers may be disciplined under the Regulations when it involves serious misconducts; where the possible penalties include a dismissal or a reduction in rank. For less serious misconducts, officers may be disciplined under the Directions or Prison Directions, as appropriate.

Cases under the latter two categories are collectively known as being under “the Directions”.

In 2021, 172 new disciplinary cases were reported to the PSC. Together with 128 cases that were brought forward from 2020, the PSC processed a total of 300 cases in the year. Of these cases, 141 were completed, including 49 cases which were completed under the Regulations and 70 cases which were completed under the Directions. Formal disciplinary action was not instituted against the officers in the remaining 22 cases.

The most common types of misconduct for cases completed in 2021 under the Regulations were Non-Compliance of Orders, Dishonesty and Sexual Offences. Slightly more than half of all officers disciplined under the Regulations were dismissed or retired in the public interest at the conclusion of the disciplinary proceedings against them. Details of the 49 cases completed under the Regulations in 2021 are in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: BREAKDOWN BY OUTCOME OF CASES COMPLETED UNDER THE REGULATIONS IN 2021**

<b>Misconduct</b>	<b>Dismissal</b>	<b>Retirement in the Public Interest</b>	<b>Reduction in Rank</b>	<b>Financial Penalties</b>	<b>Reprimand</b>	<b>Allowed to Resign</b>	<b>Total</b>
Corruption	1	-	-	-	-	-	<b>1</b>
Dishonesty	6	2	-	-	-	-	<b>8</b>
Drug Offence	4	-	-	-	-	1	<b>5</b>
Indebtedness	1	1	-	4	-	-	<b>6</b>
Non-Compliance of Orders	4	2	2	4	3	-	<b>15</b>
Negligence	-	-	-	1	-	-	<b>1</b>
Sexual Offences	5	-	-	2	-	-	<b>7</b>
Others	3	-	-	-	3	-	<b>6</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>49</b>



# RECRUITING TALENT, DEVELOPING LEADERS





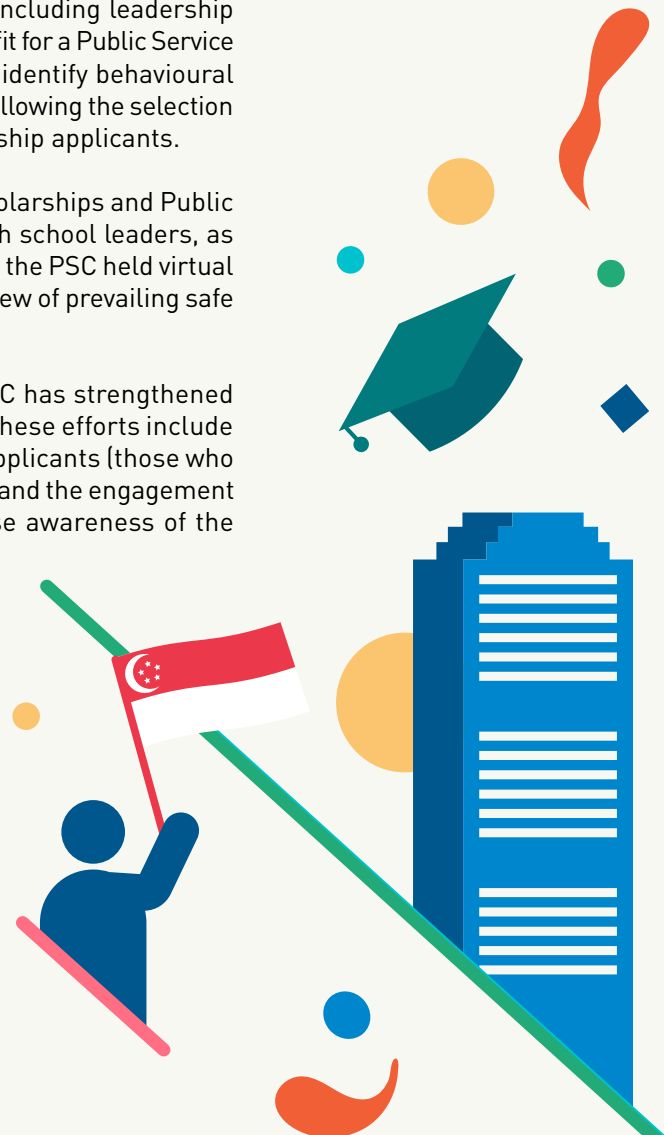
The PSC awards full scholarships to outstanding young men and women who are committed to serving Singapore through a career in the Public Service. Applicants may apply for and be awarded the scholarship depending on their preferred career pathway. This can take place prior to their undergraduate studies, during their undergraduate studies (as a mid-term scholarship candidate) or after their undergraduate studies with no more than three years of working experience in the private or people sector (as a PSC Master's Scholarship candidate). The multiple entry points have enabled the PSC to have scholarship holders that possess diverse perspectives and mindsets. PSC scholarship holders study various disciplines at established local and overseas universities and take on different opportunities during their periods of study, adding to the diversity of the Public Service when they commence their careers.

## IDENTIFYING TALENT

The PSC adopts a rigorous process to select scholarship holders. The Commission considers a range of information from multiple sources. These include the candidate's personal statement, school report, Co-Curricular Activity (CCA) achievements, community involvement records, academic results and other notable achievements. The holistic assessment brings out key factors the PSC seeks in candidates, including leadership potential, resilience, diversity of experience, aptitude and passion and fit for a Public Service career. The PSC has adopted a range of assessment tools, which identify behavioural traits in applicants such as risk propensity and learning orientation, allowing the selection panel an insight into some of the non-intellectual traits of scholarship applicants.

The PSC has continued to provide updated information on PSC Scholarships and Public Service careers to our stakeholders through regular meetings with school leaders, as well as information sessions for students and their parents. In 2021, the PSC held virtual information sessions for pre-university and university students in view of prevailing safe management measures.

To build a diverse leadership corps for the Public Service, the PSC has strengthened efforts in attracting diverse applicants for the PSC Scholarships. These efforts include partnerships with universities to increase the number of mature applicants (those who apply as a mid-term candidate or for the PSC Master's Scholarship) and the engagement of self-help community groups like SINDA and MENDAKI to raise awareness of the PSC Scholarships.



## PSC SCHOLARSHIPS — A GATEWAY TO PUBLIC SERVICE CAREERS

The PSC Scholarships offer three main career paths – Public Administration, Professional Service and Uniformed Service.

### PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Recipients of the PSC Scholarship or PSC Master's Scholarship will take up a role in Public Administration. These recipients are not tied to a specific Ministry at the start of their scholarship journey and their deployment is decided upon their graduation. The Public Administration pathway provides scholarship holders the opportunity to develop as a leader and gain experience in multiple sectors of the Public Service.

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Some candidates have a clear focus and interest in the career path they wish to pursue. For them, the PSC offers career tracks such as Engineering, Foreign Service, Legal Service, Medicine, Public Finance, or Teaching Service under the Professional Service career pathway. Recipients of these scholarships will return to serve in the respective agencies linked to their scholarships and are guided and developed in line with their professional tracks.

### UNIFORMED SERVICE

Recipients who respond to the call of security and defence of the nation will set off on the pathway of the Uniformed Services. The PSC awards The Singapore Armed Forces Scholarship (SAFS) and The Singapore Police Force Scholarship (SPFS) to outstanding young men and women who make the commitment to maintain peace and stability, and law and order in our country.

SAFS holders will be systematically trained and developed to assume key command and staff appointments in the SAF while SPFS holders will be groomed to be leaders in upholding law, maintaining order and keeping peace in Singapore.



# 2021 PSC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

PSC held its PSC Scholarships Award ceremony virtually in 2021.



75 scholarship recipients proceeded for studies in 2021; 31 for Public Administration, 35 for Professional Service and 9 for Uniformed Service (Table 2). Details of the course of studies and country of studies are in Table 3 and Table 4 respectively.

**TABLE 2: BREAKDOWN OF 2021 PSC SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS**

Career Paths and Award Schemes	Number who proceeded for studies in 2021
<b>Public Administration</b>	<b>31</b>
PSC Scholarship	30
PSC Master's Scholarship	1
<b>Professional Service</b>	<b>35</b>
PSC Scholarship (Engineering)	17
PSC Scholarship (Foreign Service)	4
PSC Scholarship (Legal Service)	4
PSC Scholarship (Medicine)*	3
PSC Scholarship (Public Finance)	2
PSC Scholarship (Teaching Service)	5
<b>Uniformed Service</b>	<b>9</b>
The Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) Scholarship	7
The Singapore Police Force (SPF) Scholarship	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

\*Mid-Term Awards

Information correct as at 31 December 2021

**TABLE 3: BREAKDOWN OF 2021 PSC SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS BY COURSE OF STUDY**

Course of Study	Number who proceeded for studies in 2021
Economics/Philosophy, Politics and Economics	13
Engineering & Information and Communications Technology	22
Finance/Business/Accountancy	3
Humanities & Social Sciences	17
Law	6
Liberal Arts	4
Medicine	3
Science/Mathematics	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

Information correct as at 31 December 2021

**TABLE 4: BREAKDOWN OF 2021 PSC SCHOLARSHIPS RECIPIENTS BY COUNTRY OF STUDY**

Country of Study	Number who proceeded for studies in 2021
China	4
France	2
Singapore	24
United Kingdom	21
United States of America	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

Information correct as at 31 December 2021



# PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP

The PSC also awards the President's Scholarship – widely regarded as Singapore's most prestigious undergraduate scholarship. The President's Scholarship is awarded on top of a public sector scholarship. It recognises individuals who have stood out among their cohort, demonstrating excellence in various pursuits. Recipients of the President's Scholarship are dedicated to improving the lives of Singaporeans and exemplify the ethos of the Public Service.

In 2021, there were two recipients of the President's Scholarship (Table 5).

**TABLE 5: PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS**

No	Name	Pre-university Institution	Course of Study	University
1	Ang Zyn Yee	Hwa Chong Institution	Economics and Statistics	Brown University
2	Wong Chia Ying	Raffles Institution	English	University of California, Los Angeles

Information correct as at 31 December 2021





# MOULDING TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Scholarship holders are involved in a series of milestone programmes and other developmental opportunities during their studies, to develop a diverse set of experiences and contribute better to Singapore.

## 2021 PREPARATORY COURSE

The Preparatory Course aims to prepare newly awarded PSC scholarship holders for their studies and set the expectations on their roles as ambassadors of the Singapore Public Service. In 2021, the programme was held virtually from 21 June to 2 July. An important component of the Preparatory Course is participating in the Youth Corp Leaders Programme (YCLP), which allows scholarship holders to identify, plan and execute projects that address issues in the community and support a meaningful cause. The YCLP projects that were completed by PSC scholarship holders in 2021 include "Project Free Bard", "Project Life Journaller" and "Team Kinderjoy" and a brief description of these projects are in the following paragraphs.



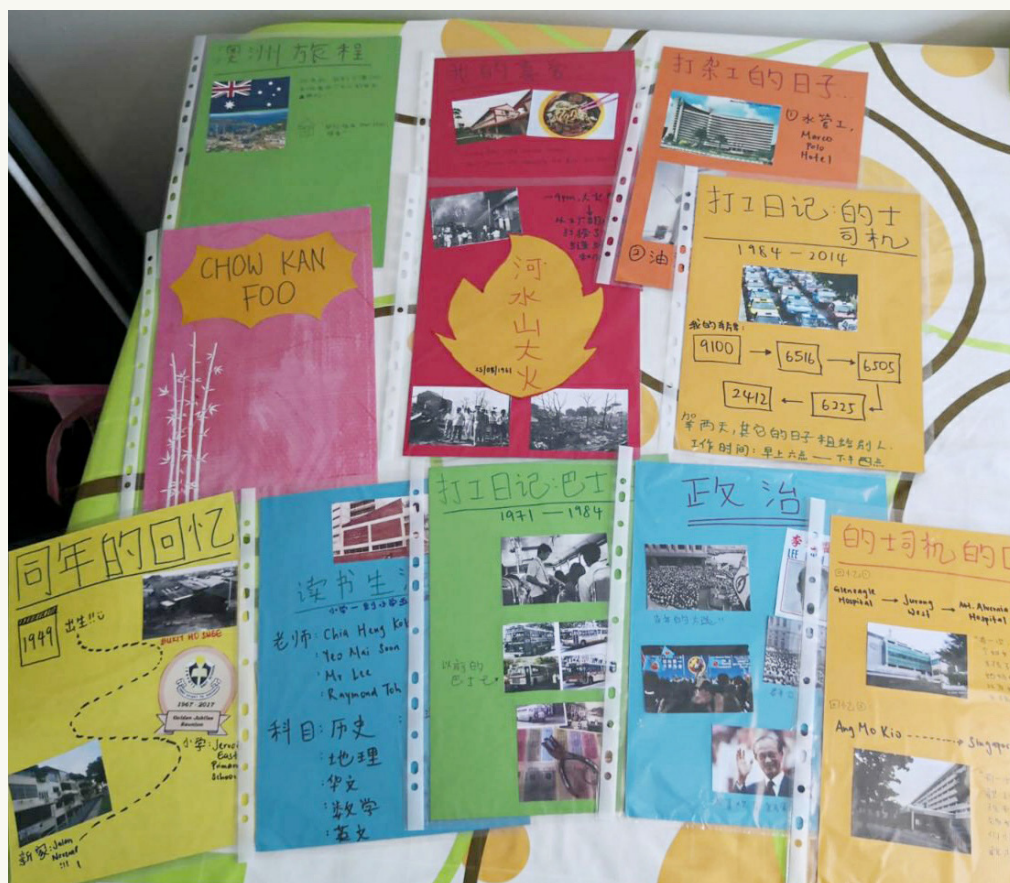


### Project Free Bard

Project Free Bard aims to empower youth to express their emotions in a healthy manner through the literary arts and to inculcate an appreciation of and engagement with the arts. This was achieved through weekly activities ranging from team building games, to poetry-related games and exercises, to riddles, to art and craft. The team also worked with SHINE Children and Youth Services, CampusImpact and FaithActs, where 30 to 40 students in total have benefited from Project Free Bard.

### Project Life Journaller

Project Life Journaller was a pilot project with All Saints Home (ASH) to engage elderly residents through reminiscence therapy. Through meaningful, in-depth conversations with the elderly about their life experiences, the team co-created scrapbooks that covered these experiences and allowed the elderly to feel hopeful about the future.



### Team Kinderjoy

Team Kinderjoy was founded with Life Community Services Singapore (LCSS). This idea stemmed from wanting to provide meaningful exposure for children of incarcerated parents - to inculcate values such as independence, confidence, curiosity etc. and instil important habits like recycling and financial management through a series of interesting activities. Activities include Art and Craft, Financial Literacy and Care Languages among other interesting games to engage the children. Most of the activities were carried through day camps.



### 2021 PSC SCHOLARSHIP HOLDERS' MID-COURSE PROGRAMME (PSMP)

The PSMP, held midway through a scholarship holder's undergraduate studies, builds on the foundations laid in the Preparatory Course and the scholarship holders' undergraduate experiences. The programme provides greater context on the realities of governance and highlights developments that have taken place since the scholarship holders commenced their studies. The PSMP also consists of a six-to-eight-week internship component with a government agency where scholarship holders gain first-hand experience in the Public Service. 71 scholarship holders attended the 2021 PSMP.

Singapore Seminar was held on 21 July 2021, with the theme, "Sustainable Singapore – Building Our Future Today". Bringing together scholarship holders from various public agencies, the seminar saw rich insights, perspectives, and discussion on sustainability issues and how they map out to Singapore's future.

### DIVERSE EXPERIENCES THROUGH ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES, INTERNSHIPS AND THE GAP YEAR PROGRAMME

Scholarship holders are encouraged to actively seek out diverse experiences that can complement their formal education and provide them with a wider worldview. Particularly, these experiences should be in areas of strategic interest to the Public Service.

Despite the pandemic, scholarship holders still found ways to partake in various summer and exchange programmes in 2021, both online and onsite. Some examples include an exchange programme in Austria, designed to provide students with the unique opportunity to study Central European History and the Sciences Po Summer School in Human Security, France.

Beyond academic programmes, scholarship holders also take part in internships outside of the Public Service. In 2021, scholarship holders had stints with Amazon Web Services and Lazada Group. Scholarship holders also have the option of taking up a year-long attachment locally or overseas via the Gap Year programme. In 2021, scholarship holders proceeded for their Gap Year programmes with the following organisations: ChipBrain LLC (United States of America); Corpy&Co., Inc. (Japan); Interpol, Singapore; Kouo. Ltd (United Kingdom); Singtel; UNESCO (France, Vietnam); and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (United States of America). The experiences from these stints help to introduce diversity into the talent pipeline and bring with them networks useful for the Public Service.

# 2021 OFFICIAL MEETINGS





The PSC values ongoing engagement with our partners and stakeholders. Through such meaningful engagement, the PSC keeps abreast of governance matters both locally and overseas. Besides hosting visits by representatives of foreign universities, local school leaders, thought leaders in different fields and other distinguished guests, the PSC also ventures out to engage stakeholders in other countries.

In 2021, the PSC resumed official on-site visits to several ministries and agencies to better understand their work amidst the pandemic as well as their strategies for the future. Through these visits, the PSC was also able to interact with public officers who were at the forefront of the relentless fight against the pandemic. The organisations that PSC visited in 2021 cut across the different sectors of government and included Eunoia Junior College (Ministry of Education), Changi Naval Base (Ministry of Defence), Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (Ministry of Transport), Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and the Ministry of Communications and Information.



Such visits strengthen the PSC’s understanding of the Public Service, and the vision that it strives towards for Singapore’s future. This understanding helps to provide insight into the PSC’s own work as it continues building on the strengths and addressing the gaps of the Public Service.



PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  

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SINGAPORE