

AN
AUGMENTED
REALITY
MAGAZINE

VOL. 61 ~~~ MAR - APR '25

HEY!

HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS PAGE
to get inspired

IT STARTS WITH ME

In caring, students grow more than they give

INSIDE

Impress the
CEO on day
one of your
internship

SG60 special:
10 innovations
NTU did first

Triplets on
campus:
Amusing or
confusing?

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1

PLACE 3D
OBJECTS
FROM THE
STORIES IN YOUR
ENVIRONMENT



Drag your finger
on objects to move
them, or near them
to swivel them

Go to selfie/wefie
mode

Reset

Take a photo or hold
to take a video

2

WATCH
PICTURES
COME
TO LIFE

See a visual morph
into a video

Turn
up the
volume



HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS PAGE
to maximise
your augmented
reality (AR)
experience



3

GET FREEBIES OR
TAKE PART IN
COMPETITIONS



Get stickers

Tap here to
download
a Telegram
sticker pack



IT STARTS WITH ME

What moves NTU students to help others? From sharing meals with seniors to teaching hearing-impaired children, our students are finding simple yet powerful ways to uplift others – and discovering how small acts of kindness can spark deep connections and personal growth



“I TAKE THE ELDERLY OUT FOR A GOOD MEAL”

Mdm Lai Ah Loy was just 27 when a gas explosion robbed her of her eyesight. In one tragic moment, everything went dark.

Now 68, she lives alone in a one-bedroom flat in Bukit Panjang.

She lost her husband eight years ago. Now, she rarely leaves her small flat. She knows every corner of her home by touch. But outside? She finds it unfamiliar and frightening without the guiding hands of her husband.

Every few months, though, her world brightens, all thanks to NTU medical student Chua Tze Hean.

Their paths first crossed when Tze Hean started *A Good Meal*, an initiative to bring joy to lonely seniors by taking them out for good food and fresh air.

These comforts may seem ordinary to us, but for Mdm Lai, they are powerful reminders that someone still cares about her.

“When they brought me out for lunch, I was very happy. Though I

can't see their faces, I can feel their warmth and affection. So I don't feel so alone in this big world," she shares in Mandarin.

"We can talk about anything under the sun. They treat me like a friend, not like a blind person."

Getting to know seniors like "Mdm Ah Loy", as she is affectionately called, in turn, inspires Tze Hean and his team of volunteers.

"She can cook, do laundry and dress herself. That's so incredible. I really admire her independent spirit and her perseverance despite all of her struggles. We learn so much just by being around her," says Tze Hean.

"My own troubles or problems feel so small in comparison."

A Good Meal that warms the heart

Simple as it sounds, a lot of heart and effort goes into making *A Good Meal* happen.

First, Tze Hean reaches out to active ageing centres and asks them to identify and invite socially isolated elderly who live alone in flats.

He specifically requests the centres to send their older and less mobile seniors, especially those who've been stuck at home or rarely join centre activities like exercise or craft sessions.

Next, the *A Good Meal* volunteers scout for a suitable lunch spot – one with a proper drop-off area,

wheelchair access, and a short walking distance from where the seniors alight.

On the morning of the outing, the team coordinates with a centre volunteer to transport five seniors and the volunteer in a large six-seater car to lunch.

While more costly than regular private-hire rides, these spacious vehicles can fit wheelchairs if needed and come with low steps, making it easier for seniors with weak legs to get in and out safely.

Four volunteers meet the group at the drop-off point and guide them to the restaurant. Ten people in total – just nice for gathering around a cosy table to share hearty chats over chilli crab or herbal duck.

Tze Hean pays for most of the meals out of his own pocket. Over time, word has spread through social media and among his friends' networks, so kind donors and volunteers sometimes chip in for meals and transport.

His small but committed core team includes NTU students, alumni, working adults and even a National Serviceman. Today, around 40 volunteers actively support *A Good Meal*.

"I REALLY ADMIRE HER INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AND HER PERSEVERANCE DESPITE ALL OF HER STRUGGLES. WE LEARN SO MUCH JUST BY BEING AROUND HER."

– Tze Hean



HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS VISUAL

to join Tze Hean and
his peers for
A Good Meal with
seniors



Source: @agoodmeal.sg on Instagram

Restaurants like Jumbo Seafood and Dian Xiao Er have also come on board to sponsor meals for the seniors.

Since starting in early 2024, the team has organised 24 outings and served more than 120 seniors.

Lessons from love and loss

The idea for *A Good Meal* came during Tze Hean's second year at NTU. He was an elderly befriender with a schoolmate's outreach programme supported by NTU's Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine).

On one outing, he saw how a senior's face lit up over lunch and realised just how powerful a shared meal could be. "I realised I can make a senior really happy," he says.

Tze Hean's heart for the elderly was shaped by his late grandma. She cared for her husband through dementia and later battled pancreatic

cancer. His other grandfather also suffered from dementia.

"I observed people dismissing other seniors' personal feelings and decisions, saying things like: 'Oh, you're old, you don't know what you're talking about,'" he shares.

This planted a deep desire in him to help the elderly and that set him on a new life path.

He changed his mind about studying law and decided to pursue medicine, hoping to make a real impact on seniors' lives as a doctor.

Now an LKCMedicine scholar, he plans to specialise in geriatrics or palliative care.

"While visiting patients as part of my hospital and polyclinic attachments, I meet people in hard situations," he shares.

"It's made me even more grateful for the experiences and

opportunities I've had."

"And I feel that if I'm in a position to give and contribute, then I should, because seeing the difference it makes has always been worth far more than the effort."

Dreams of a bigger table

Now that he's graduating in July and has just started his medical housemanship – working 12 to 30-hour shifts six days a week in a hospital – he intends to pass the torch to his core volunteer team to keep *A Good Meal* going.

But the mission isn't ending any time soon. To reach more seniors, Tze Hean plans to partner nursing homes. He has many more ideas brewing, from *A Good Day Out* to *A Good Teatime* and beyond.

He reflects: "Everyone will grow old. But I believe that no matter your age, your voice and your feelings still matter."

“WE TALK WITH OUR HANDS”

Back in junior college, Deandra Limandibhrata didn't know how to talk to her hearing-impaired classmate. Every conversation felt like a dead end. Eventually, she just stopped trying.

“I didn't always understand what she was saying. After a while, I avoided speaking to her,” says Deandra.

“But when I saw others chatting with her, smiling and laughing, I realised I wasn't trying hard enough.”

That moment stayed with her.

So when she entered NTU, she made a promise to herself: *Next time, I'll do better.*

She joined NTU's Welfare Services Club – specifically, the subgroup that runs programmes for the Deaf community. She started learning Singapore Sign Language. Week after week, she practised the signs, studied its grammar, and slowly built the courage to reach out.

Today, Deandra doesn't just talk with her hands. The final-year bioengineering student also leads a team of 65 NTU undergraduates that teach, play with, and grow alongside Deaf youth in Singapore.

“I was really naïve. I used to think Deaf people were so different from me. But I was wrong. They're just like you and me – nice, open people.”

Hands speak, hearts listen

Every Saturday, student volunteers fan out to activity centres islandwide, from Clementi to Kallang, to teach English, science, geography and other subjects to children who are Deaf or have Deaf parents.

It's not just about textbooks. They host science workshops and even make slime together.

“My child couldn't stop talking about how fun it was. He got to make slime and also learnt some science concepts!” shares one grateful parent.

Other team members organise outings – bowling, bouldering, you name it. At one climbing session, student interpreters stood below, cheering the climbers on in sign.

“VOLUNTEERING TAUGHT ME THERE'S ALWAYS A WAY TO CONNECT – EVEN WITHOUT WORDS. YOU CAN TEXT, GESTURE, OR SIMPLY SMILE. AND SOMETIMES, THOSE SPEAK THE LOUDEST.”

– Deandra



“Without someone to interpret, many of these activities are just out of reach for Deaf youth,” says Deandra.

Their biggest event? The Christmas Song Sign – an annual crowd-puller where NTU students mix music, sign language and theatre.

Last year, the team lit up CHIJMES and Our Tampines Hub with classic carols.

With every raised hand and expressive face, they shared something far deeper than lyrics or lingo.

A language full of feeling

At the heart of it all is Singapore Sign Language – a language as local and lively as the people who use it. There are signs for *kaypoh*, *don't bluff*, *kueh lapis*, and neighbourhoods like *Tiong Bahru* and *Boon Lay*.

“Singapore Sign Language reflects the language, culture and identity of Singaporean Deaf signers,” says Phoebe Tay, a Deaf NTU PhD student and key contributor to Singapore's first online sign bank and e-book, which NTU launched last year. The bank has more than 900 signs – and counting.

All new NTU volunteers go through basic sign language classes conducted at NTU. It's not just about memorising hand movements – your whole body joins in. Even your eyebrows matter.

“When you sign ‘surprise’, you need a surprised face too!” laughs Deandra.

“I now catch myself signing while talking to friends, without even realising it,” she says.

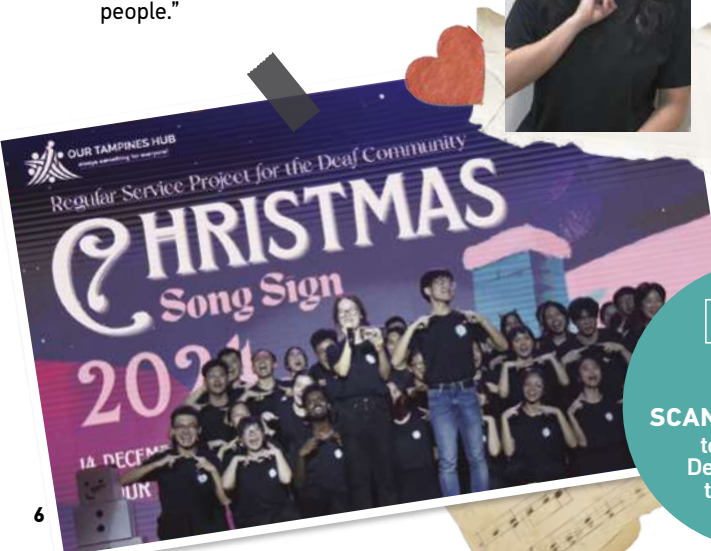
For many volunteers, what starts as community service turns into a lifelong passion. Some go on to take advanced sign language classes, train as interpreters, or become tutors at mainstream schools supporting hearing-impaired students.

Deandra says she's grown in ways she never imagined.

And if you're not a signer? That's perfectly okay, she says.

“Volunteering taught me there's always a way to connect – even without words. You can text, gesture, or simply smile. And sometimes, those speak the loudest.”

HEY!
AR
SCAN THIS VISUAL
to learn from Deandra how to tell someone “I care”



“WE BUILT A COOKING SCHOOL IN VIETNAM”

The night before leaving a rural village in Vietnam, one NTU student quietly broke down.

He'd spent two weeks in the small town of Phong Thanh with over 20 Civil Engineering students – building brick walls under the sun, running science workshops for kids, and sharing meals with villagers.

“He told me he felt invisible back in Singapore,” recalls fellow student Mark Tham. “Like if he disappeared, no one would notice.”

“But here, getting to laugh, work and live with our team and the friendly Vietnamese youth, he finally felt like he belonged. That's what made saying goodbye so hard.”

More than a school trip

Mark and his teammates were part of NTU's overseas community service programme – a life-changing initiative that sends students to less developed areas to build, teach, and live alongside local villagers.

They run fun workshops to teach the local kids, aged eight to 14, science through gliders, elastic cars and mini experiments.

In Phong Thanh, one in five residents live in poverty. Many kids leave school early to help their families.

“So we hoped to do more than teach,” says Mark. “We wanted to spark something – a love for learning, a belief that their future could be big.”

And that spark lit something in the volunteers too.

“The trip felt unreal,” Mark adds.



“There were more than 20 of us from NTU Civil Engineering. Most of us didn't know each other before. But we bonded like family. It was as if we were puzzle pieces that had always belonged together.”

Wake-up calls and full hearts

Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering (MAE) student Reina Lee still remembers one home visit in the village.

She met a mother whose husband had been injured and whose older children had to quit school to support the family.

“She said she didn't even dare to dream of a better future for her kids,” Reina shares.

**“IT'S MORE THAN
A PROJECT. IT'S
PEOPLE. IT'S
CONNECTION.”**

– Josiah

“That really shook me. I realised I'd been living life asleep, not even aware of how lucky I am.”

Since then, she's tried to live more consciously – being grateful for the little things, like her parents' support or simply having the chance to go to university.

Reina and her teammate Josiah Lau returned the following year with another 20 MAE students – and found the same kids running up to greet them, excitedly talking about the planes they'd made together in the previous year's aerodynamics workshop.

Many friendships forged in Vietnam are still going strong. NTU students and the Vietnamese youth continue to swap messages on Instagram and TikTok, sending each other birthday wishes and life updates.

“It's more than a project. It's people. It's connection,” Josiah says.

From bricks to breakthroughs

The trip isn't just about bonding. It's also about building – in every sense of the word.

Last year, Reina's teammate Husain Maimoon helped lay the foundations of a two-storey training kitchen in the village. Downstairs: a kitchen. Upstairs: a mock restaurant. The idea? To equip locals with hospitality skills and boost their chances of landing better jobs.

When Husain returned a few months later, he saw Singaporean volunteers teaching locals to cook on the very stoves his team had installed.



A village child wearing "glasses" made with a 3D printing pen from NTU's Mecatron, a student-led robotics club.

"It was a full-circle moment," he says. "The work we did is helping lives in real time."

There's now a wall in the centre etched with the names of every volunteer who helped build it – both local and Singaporean. Husain said he felt touched when he spotted familiar names among the hundreds.

Not just engineering – empowerment

Mark also worked on that same building, just weeks after Husain's team had left.

Today, Mark is interning at an MRT construction site in Singapore – a high-tech world of machines and precision. But in Phong Thanh, construction was all sweat and heart.

"There were no cement trucks. We mixed everything with shovels," he says. "It was hot, heavy work, but it brought us closer."

The NTU team prepared a safety plan before arriving – but on the ground, they quickly saw that local builders had their own ways, often more relaxed.



Instead of trying to change things, they chose to learn.

"We were taught not to go in thinking we should 'fix' how they do things," Mark shares. "We were there to observe, understand and work together."

His biggest takeaway?

"Engineering isn't just about following blueprints. It's about building lives. Even if you start small, with what little you have, you can still create something that helps people live better."

He adds: "That's the real foundation for lasting change."

Get involved, be inspired

NTU students have always had a heart for the community. In the new academic year, service learning will be introduced as a course for all undergraduates.

"We've heard many inspiring stories of NTU students and alumni going out of their way to lend a hand to others in less privileged situations. And they have all said how these interactions have changed their perspectives and helped them grow," says Prof Gan Chee Lip, Associate Provost (Undergraduate Education).

To deepen this spirit of service, NTU is launching a new credit-bearing

undergraduate course series titled Care, Serve and Learn. Students can select from several courses within the series, depending on their interests.

One of these courses is **Uplift@NTU**, where students will support children and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds through tutoring and mentoring.

"We want students to contribute meaningfully to society, starting with families in need," Prof Gan explains.

NTU DID IT FIRST: 10 WAYS WE MADE TECH HISTORY

As Singapore celebrates its 60th birthday, HEY! spotlights NTU's strides in innovation that exemplify the spirit of SG60

1st
FULL-SIZE
AUTONOMOUS
ELECTRIC BUS
IN THE WORLD

No driver, no problem

Volvo and NTU ferried Singapore into the future of public transportation in 2019 with the world's first full-size driverless electric bus. The 12m-long vehicle, which can carry about 80 people, has sensors and a sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) navigation system. It was tested on our campus and at NTU's autonomous vehicle testing circuit nearby – in both rain and shine. Launched to huge international media interest, the bus showcased how NTU collaborates with industry and government to create solutions that drive real change.



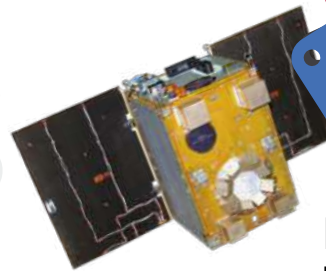
HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS VISUAL
to hop aboard
the future of
transportation

1st

SATELLITE
DESIGNED
AND BUILT IN
SINGAPORE



From campus to cosmos

NTU isn't just your passport to the world, but to the universe. Since 2009, the university has been running Singapore's first satellite programme for undergraduates and postgraduates. In 2011, X-SAT, the first made-in-Singapore satellite, was launched into orbit to capture images of Earth and track environmental changes. NTU has since launched 13 satellites, with the next one slated for lift-off later this year.

Deep tissue tech

Will robots take over the world one day? Maybe. But until then, one of them is lending a helping hand in our hour of knead. Robot masseuse EMMA made its debut in 2017 and has been used in Traditional Chinese Medicine clinics and hospitals to relieve lower back discomfort in patients. Developed by NTU startup AiTreat, the robot gives personalised massages with the help of AI algorithms. EMMA has gone global, working in clinics around the world, even the famous Mayo Clinic in the US.



1st

ROBOT
MASSEUSE IN
SINGAPORE

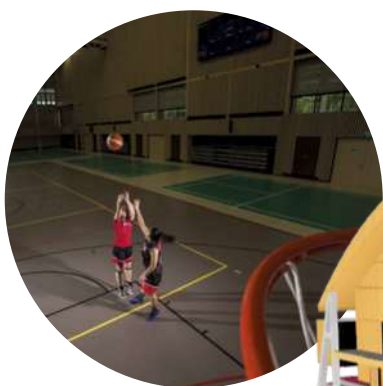


1st

3D-PRINTED
CAR IN
SINGAPORE

Print, race, win

Quite the feat for a student-built project, Nanyang Venture 8 turned heads in an NTU garage in 2015 as Singapore's first – and likely Asia's first – 3D-printed car. The solar-powered electric vehicle was designed and built by students from the College of Engineering, using techniques they had learnt in class. They 3D-printed 150 components and mounted them on a carbon fibre chassis to form the car's cabin. More than a head-turner, the car (and its creators) competed in races from Manila to London, picking up six awards along the way.



Wooden wonder

Why was NTU's sports hall named The Wave? Perhaps because it made waves as the first large building made from sustainable mass-engineered timber. Or maybe it was for its 70m-long curved roof, which took just weeks to install. Whatever the reason, it's easy to see why it's a game-changer. It looks cool from the outside, and is even cooler inside, thanks to the high-tech air-conditioning that chills from the ground up. The sprawling, pillarless arena can also be reconfigured quickly to host 13 badminton games or three basketball games, or anything in between.

From uni to unicorn

NTU spin-off Nanofilm became Singapore's first deep-tech unicorn when it achieved a valuation of \$1.9 billion following its initial public offering in 2020. Founded in 1999 by NTU professor Dr Shi Xu, the company made its mark with ultra-thin protective coatings used in everything from consumer gadgets to optical devices and automotive parts. In 2023, Nanofilm came full circle, partnering with NTU to launch a corporate lab focused on pushing the frontiers of advanced coatings and nanofabrication.

1st

DEEP-TECH
UNICORN
FROM
SINGAPORE



1st

ARTWORK IN
SPACE AND
THE DEEP
SEA



To the stars, moon and sea

While NTU innovations often shoot for the moon, two will actually land there later this year – after orbiting Earth. In 2022, two 3D-printed cubes, designed by a Singaporean artist and created at NTU, were part of the first-ever art collection displayed aboard the International Space Station. The artist teamed up with NTU again this year to send another 3D-printed cube to the ocean floor near the Mariana Trench off Japan, making it part of the world's deepest art installation.

1st

LARGE-SCALE
WOODEN BUILDING IN
SOUTHEAST ASIA



HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS VISUAL
to catch
The Wave

1st**LEGO-STYLE
HIGH-RISE RESIDENCES
IN SINGAPORE**

Snapped into place

If you live in an HDB flat or a condominium built in the last five years, there's a good chance it was constructed using a method where finished rooms are built in a factory and then stacked on-site like building blocks. As a testbed for new urban ideas, NTU is home to the first of these "Lego-style" buildings. Entire rooms in Binjai, Tanjong and Banyan Halls – complete with lighting, windows and fans – were assembled off-site and then stacked into place on campus.

1st**OUTDOOR
DELIVERY
ROBOT IN
SINGAPORE**

The hunger bot games

The pandemic was a time of uncertainty, but one silver lining was the FoodBot. Over two years, a fleet of these adorable food delivery "boxes on wheels" completed more than 12,000 deliveries to hungry students on campus and people at the nearby CleanTech Park. What makes the self-driving bots even more special is that they were made from scratch by Renaissance Engineering Programme students, who started building them in a lab right below their hall rooms.

HEY!*AR*

SCAN THIS VISUAL
to summon a
FoodBot. Food
not included

**1st****HUMAN-SIZED
ROBOT IN
SINGAPORE**

One giant leap for robotkind

In 2011, a 1.8m-tall "fella" made headlines in almost every local newspaper. His claim to fame? Being the world's tallest intelligent humanoid robot at the time. Apart from having a 500-word vocabulary, Nash could find his own way around. At his unveiling, he stood shoulder to shoulder with his human counterparts, earning him the nickname "Singapore's C-3PO" from the media.



"IT MADE ME SMILE"

Feel stressed sometimes? HEY! student writer Zaneta Ng asks fellow students what little things lift their moods

The kind bus driver

"I came across a nice NTU bus driver, and the encounter made me smile even though I was feeling quite down. I was at the pedestrian crossing between Pioneer Hall and Hall 1 and signalled for him to go first, since the bus was packed and I was the only one crossing the road. But he paused and waved me across instead. A few hours later, as I was returning to hall from my Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Social Good class, the same thing happened... with the same bus driver!"

"



Jex Lin
AI & Society, Year 1



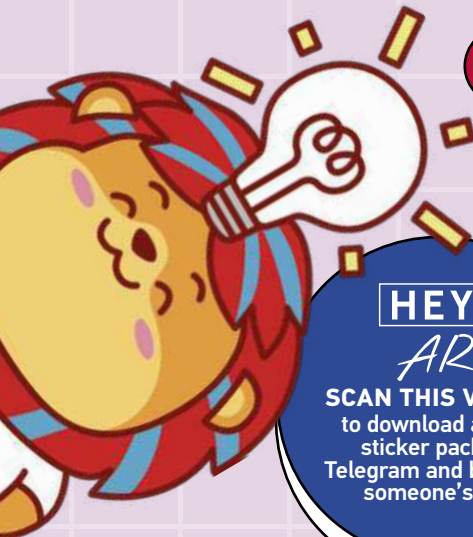
Mervell Tan
Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Year 2

Flower power

"One morning, I was on the campus shuttle from my hall to school when I noticed bright orange flowers blooming on a tree in the forested area near NIE. I'd never seen them before. I snapped a photo, and the sight of those flowers made my morning."

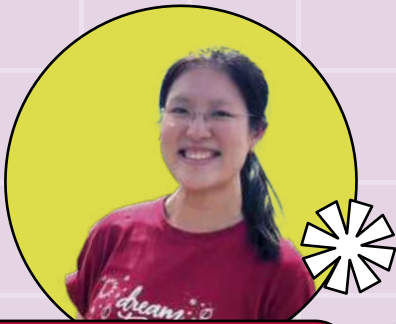
Practising mindfulness, by slowing down and spending less time on my phone, helps me stay present and feel better overall. That's probably why I noticed the flowers in the first place. Being in nature always calms me, especially when I'm worried about test scores or internships. It's like receiving a little love and care from Mother Nature."

"



HEY!
AR
SCAN THIS VISUAL
to download a Lyon
sticker pack for
Telegram and brighten
someone's day





Liu Jiahui

Accountancy & Business, Year 4

One year later, kopi uncle still remembers my order

"I've heard stories about food stall vendors remembering customers' orders, but I never thought it would happen to me because my orders are usually quite basic.

Last year, just before an exam, I went to the CresPion Hall canteen for breakfast. As I was about to order, the drinks stall uncle said: 'You haven't come by in a long time, right? Still want teh and kaya toast?' I was stunned – it had been nearly a year since I moved out of Pioneer Hall, yet he still remembered me as 'the girl who wakes up early for breakfast' and my preference for *teh* over *kopi*.

That morning, he wished me luck for my paper. I'm convinced I did well because of his well wishes – and that awesome *teh*."

Seeking solace at Hygge

"Whenever I head to the Lee Wee Nam Library, I go in ready to conquer my to-do list. One day, I stumbled upon Hygge – a cosy, dimly lit space on the fifth floor with soft music and bean bags. The first time, I sat down 'just for a bit' and ended up napping. Now, it's a habit: I study hard, then unwind at Hygge. It's become my reset button amidst all the stress – 15 minutes to breathe, recharge and feel human again."



Shrrinivaasaa A Thiagarajah

Electrical & Electronic Engineering, Year 1



Sweet dreams, roomie

"I feel a sense of warmth every time my roommate and I say 'good night' before going to bed; it's become our little daily ritual. We didn't know each other before moving into our double room, and I'm glad to have met such a great friend at NTU.

Although it may seem ordinary, our nightly exchange of 'good night, all the best tomorrow' feels special, because it shows we care about each other. Hearing those words melts away the day's fatigue."



Lim Li Wen (in orange)

Chemistry & Biological Chemistry, Year 1,
with her roomie, Lin Xiaoya, Electrical &
Electronic Engineering, Year 2

HEY!
STUDENT
WRITER



Recently, it's been Zaneta and her electric pot against the world, so if you catch her being distracted in class, she's probably just thinking about what to cook for lunch.

ON COURSE FOR GREATER THINGS

These NTU subjects are placed among the world's top 10 in the latest Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) subject rankings. Students tell HEY! what drew them to specialise in these fields at NTU, and why they've made the right choice

2ND
IN THE
WORLD

MATERIALS SCIENCES

"NTU's standing in materials science is among the best in the world, and I like the university's focus on hands-on learning. Lab sessions help me better understand and appreciate abstract, theoretical concepts. In one class, I used a microscope to see how adding certain microstructures to a material changed its physical properties, like its toughness – and we tested these properties in the lab too.

I became very interested in semiconductors because of Assoc Prof Tan Kwan Wee. I initially found semiconductors hard to understand, but he made the concepts much easier. He sparked my interest with his lively teaching – like using a crowded bus analogy to explain how semiconductors work, or demonstrating their features with magnets and other equipment.

I'm now keen to join the semiconductor industry. I've applied for a Work-Study Degree Programme, which lets me intern at a company in the field and later take on a final-year project with a relevant business."



Kimberly Suriya
ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC
ENGINEERING, YEAR 4

4TH
IN THE
WORLD

ELECTRICAL & ELECTRONIC ENGINEERING

"After studying mechatronics in polytechnic, I wanted to pursue a related field. I visited NTU's Open House and was drawn to the School of Electrical & Electronic Engineering's (EEE) welcoming culture. I was also wowed by NTU's high international standing in the field, on top of it offering the best EEE programme in Singapore.

I prefer hands-on learning so I really like the approach of combining theoretical and practical learning, such as studying circuitry theory in lectures before doing lab work in pairs.

During my internship at the Land Transport Authority's power supply and electrical services division, I worked with some colleagues who are NTU EEE graduates. Their achievements inspired me to specialise in power engineering, which NTU is known for. So I took up modules such as power systems and conversion, and power design.

Dr Eddy Foo, who teaches our power distribution module, makes learning enjoyable. He helps us see the bigger picture beyond the theory, such as by breaking down the costs of power generation to show the association between power engineering and economics."



Conan Lim
MATERIALS ENGINEERING, YEAR 2



MECHANICAL, AERONAUTICAL & MANUFACTURING ENGINEERING

"After polytechnic, I wanted to do a mechanical engineering degree and chose NTU because my family and teachers said it's the top university in Singapore for engineering education. NTU's high global ranking in the field was the cherry on top.

One of the most valuable experiences so far has been an engineering innovation and design module where we had to design a product that benefits society. My team came up with a mechanically retractable cover to shelter parked motorcycles when it rains, as existing covers tend to be bulky and tedious to fold after use. We had to consider many factors, from product construction methods to project management timelines.

NTU professors help us see the real-world relevance of what we're learning. For example, Asst Prof Ho Jin Yao connects concepts from heat transfer and thermodynamics to applications in heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. This helped me understand how refrigerants and cooling systems work – and inspired me to specialise in energy and the environment in my final year, with the aim of working in this field.

Asst Prof Ho also gave helpful advice on the modules that would best prepare me to become a licensed professional engineer. Coincidentally, they are on topics I am already interested in, so things have worked out well for me at NTU."



COMMUNICATION & MEDIA STUDIES

"I chose NTU's communication programme for its breadth and flexibility, which gave me the freedom to explore different media through practicum classes, school activities, internships and more. Since then, I've produced an animated documentary that was screened at local and international festivals, written across different beats, and interned in radio and video production – experiences that shaped me as a creative generalist still finding my niche.

NTU's overseas opportunities have been life-changing, allowing me to connect deeply with the world. During my exchange semester at the University of Texas at Austin, I studied music journalism and fell in love with it. Last July in Iceland, as part of NTU's Going Overseas for Advanced Reporting module, I produced a photo story on Icelandic rescue volunteers that was published in *The Straits Times* and a documentary that won an award overseas.

At NTU, my photojournalism lecturer and final-year project supervisor, Mr Samuel He, has challenged me since day one – from assigning us to cover Singapore's presidential elections to pushing us with realistic, thoughtful feedback. His support motivates me to try harder and do better. One day, I hope to pass on my passion by teaching future storytellers too."

Wayne Lim
COMMUNICATION
STUDIES, YEAR 4



Haider Irfan
MECHANICAL
ENGINEERING, YEAR 3



Dominic Lai
DATA SCIENCE & ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE, YEAR 3



DATA SCIENCE & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

"I've always enjoyed mathematics and programming, so NTU's Data Science & Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme suits me perfectly. When I applied in 2020 – before completing my National Service – it was a new course and the first batch hadn't graduated. I'm glad that it's now one of the most reputable AI courses in the world, according to a Forbes ranking, and that NTU's global standing in AI has grown even stronger since then.

Right now, I'm interning as an AI engineer with a public agency, testing large language and deep learning models to support home team operations. It's exciting to see agencies, like the police force, actively using the tools even as we improve them in real time. Modules I took at NTU in database systems and software engineering gave me a solid foundation to pick things up quickly on the job.

In my second year, I joined an interdisciplinary research project done with Imperial College London. We explored how students felt about the collection and use of their learning data, sharing insights across both our campuses. While finalising our findings, I mostly used Python for data analysis, but my teammates from NTU Psychology brought in perspectives I hadn't considered – like how a student's background could shape their responses. It reminded me that data isn't just black and white, but layered with human complexity."



Joey Lim
COMPUTER SCIENCE,
YEAR 2



COMPUTER SCIENCE & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

"I discovered my passion for software development while studying IT in polytechnic. Wanting to become a well-rounded developer and problem solver, I applied to NTU because of its strong reputation in computer science. I hoped to gain a solid foundation in core computing principles like algorithms, data structures and systems thinking.

Polytechnic students may worry that university will be too theoretical or a repeat of what they've already learnt. I found that NTU pushed me to the next level by helping me understand the 'why' behind the code, so I can build software that's robust, efficient and scalable.

It's not just textbooks here. There are many hands-on projects. For a software engineering module, my team built a smart bus booking app that detects congestion and reroutes buses in real time, using live traffic footage and computer vision to 'see' and count cars on the road.

Outside of class, I co-founded *DevHub@iLab* – a student coding community that helps my peers code better and prepare for technical interviews. We're part of the College of Computing & Data Science's Innovation Lab. With support from our mentor, Prof Chng Eng Siong, we'll be running a five-week software development programme in June for NTU students from all disciplines."



CHEMISTRY

"I chose to study chemistry at NTU because of its strong and well-structured curriculum, which prepares students to become professional chemists.

One thing that stood out was the summer research programme for undergrads. It's a great way to get real lab experience early on. After my first year, I joined Prof Chiba Shunsuke's NTU lab that works on methods to synthesise organic compounds such as pharmaceutical ingredients. I didn't have much lab experience then, but a PhD student patiently walked me through the whole experiment and supervised my work. That hands-on learning boosted my confidence.

I'm thinking about doing a PhD in chemistry. My academic mentor, Dr Zhang Zhengyang, has been generous with his advice, sharing what the PhD journey entails and how I can make the most of my undergraduate years."



Lim Wei Siong
CHEMISTRY, YEAR 3



Michael Pinto
CHEMISTRY &
EDUCATION, YEAR 2



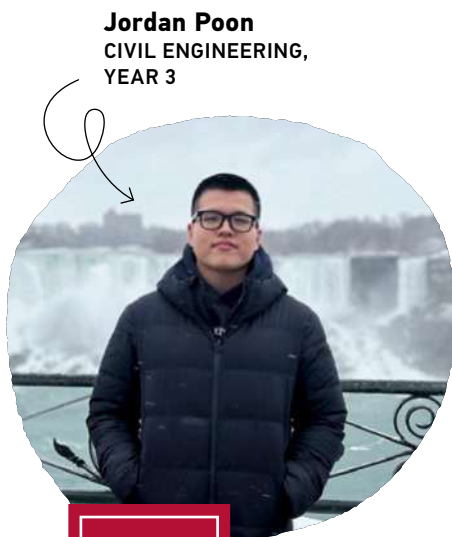
EDUCATION & TRAINING

"I had planned to study chemistry and take a postgrad teaching diploma to become a chemistry and biology teacher. But I found a great alternative at NTU's National Institute of Education (NIE) – a double major in Chemistry and Education that even gives me a 1.5-year head start in my career. Two years in, it's the best decision I've made.

What makes NIE special is its culture of care. With just 65 of us in the cohort, it feels like family – even profs who've never taught me say hello in the hallways. Our profs model the kind of teachers they want us to become – rigorous, compassionate and grounded in the real world. In class, it's easy to ask questions and join the dots across topics.

One biodiversity module changed how I see learning. On a field trip to the Singapore Botanic Gardens, our lecturer, Mr Bian Tan, made us observe a flower for 45 minutes. I left with pages of observations on plant reproduction and a deeper connection to nature. It made me realise how powerful field-based learning can be. I'm now researching how it can create more meaningful experiences for future students.

Organising a volunteer project in India helped me grow as a leader. In May, I'm heading to Australia for a co-teaching stint, followed by a semester exchange in the UK to study medicinal and environmental chemistry."



Jordan Poon
CIVIL ENGINEERING,
YEAR 3



CIVIL & STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING

"As a kid, building LEGO models such as Star Wars ships sparked my interest in civil engineering. NTU was the perfect fit with its unique second major in society and urban systems that matched my passion for urban planning. The Nanyang Scholarship, which covers tuition and more, sealed the deal.

NTU's urban planning modules and the guidance of my mentor, transportation expert Assoc Prof Wong Yiik Diew, taught me to take a human-centric approach to civil engineering. We go beyond complex infrastructure calculations, learning how people interact with design in their everyday lives.

In my second year, I studied what influences the behaviour of elderly pedestrians, and how we can use these insights to design safer traffic solutions. My research paper, co-authored with Assoc Prof Wong, was published last October. Working on it showed me the meaningful impact civil engineers make. There's so much more I want to explore in this field."



CHEMICAL ENGINEERING

"NTU's chemical engineering curriculum opens doors to many industries, from pharmaceuticals to energy.

Our school has a strong support system – from profs to seniors. Year 2 was a steep learning curve as the modules got more engineering-heavy. I struggled with fluids systems at first, but Assoc Prof Raymond Lau would slow things down during tutorials to get everyone on the same page. He never got frustrated, even when we asked the same questions, and made sure we understood the concepts.

I've joined a hackathon on climate change. My team's working on sustainable cooling and heating solutions – applying fluids concepts we've learnt, while thinking about how our ideas could work across different climates."



Lee Xin Tian
CHEMICAL & BIOMOLECULAR
ENGINEERING, YEAR 2

DON'T HAND YOUR BRAIN OVER TO GEN AI

Generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) can boost your learning – or make you lazy. An NTU academic shares how to use it to sharpen your edge and stay indispensable in an AI-powered world



Visual: ChatGPT

It's true, Gen AI can impact your smarts.

Just ask one of AI's biggest investors, Microsoft, whose researchers found that high confidence in Gen AI was associated with less critical thinking. According to them, Gen AI can encourage users to accept responses without deeper reflection.

But I'm sure you know that already.

As an NTU academic who also helps organisations upskill in Gen AI, let me tell you how I nag at young people not to hand over their brains to the machine.

The AI didn't eat my homework!

Many students ask me which jobs will survive the future.

I tell them: "The jobs where the boss gets to strangle you if something goes wrong. While many jobs may disappear, we still need humans who can get blamed for the wrong decisions, and perhaps praised for the right ones."

When a worker submits a poorly written report, he cannot possibly tell the boss: "It's all Microsoft Word's fault!"

The same logic applies to using Gen AI. To many, an AI-generated piece of content looks good enough to submit to the boss. But what happens if it contains hallucinations that tank the company's sales?

Now, to be that important person who gets hired in the future, you need

to have the skills and experience to evaluate what AI produces. Your ability to evaluate AI-generated work will be all that stands between a soulless answering machine and your company's fate.

What does that mean? You've got to get really good in your chosen area(s) of expertise.

Otherwise, how will you have an edge over the 10-year-old kid who's going for prompt engineering classes?

I know Kung Fu

One of my favourite movie scenes is from *The Matrix* (1999), where Keanu Reeves has an entire library of Asian martial arts techniques uploaded to his brain and he awakens, exclaiming: "I know Kung Fu!"

While many people will be tempted to zig and let Gen AI do all the thinking, you can zag and learn faster than ever before by partnering with the machine.

First, you must reflect on why some topics feel so frustrating to learn.

The answer may be just that the reading or textbook is written in a convoluted way. Well, give the impenetrable content to ChatGPT or DeepSeek and type the prompt “eli5” (explain like I’m five).

Now that the topic has been broken down into its simplest elements, you do it! Try explaining what you have learnt to a friend or to your lecturer to impress them.

If anything, I hope Gen AI destroys the ability of humans to terrorise others with unnecessary jargon.

Compete with the machine for perfection

Let me tell you a secret. Even professional writers like me still have typos in every piece that we write. Forgive me, I am only human.

In the newsroom, I would have copyeditors using their fingers to point out the offending grammar mistakes in my writing. Thankfully, these days, as I type away in my NTU office, it’s much less painful. Before I publish anything (like this article), I will ask ChatGPT to “check grammar”.

Obviously, ChatGPT will fix my errors in a jiffy, but ah, the fun is in reducing the number of errors it catches each time. That’s me improving my writing accuracy with every new piece, and it doesn’t cost a cent.

On the other hand, it means the bar has been raised and now everyone in the office will know who DOESN’T use Gen AI for work. Interns, please take note.

It may seem daunting to compete against a machine, but what have you got to lose? A calculator already beat you in math years ago, yet you’re still here.

Even if AI does become our overlord, don’t go down without a fight.

Ian Yong Hoe Tan is a lecturer in strategic communication at NTU’s Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information.

★ STEAL MY PROMPTS

I dislike the term “prompt engineering”. As a true-blue arts guy, I find the term too elitist and not inclusive. Anyone can come up with a good prompt, as long as they think clearly and know what results they want to achieve. I also believe in writing very concise prompts. Here are some that I use regularly – do try them out.

“CREATE STUDY NOTES FROM THIS TEXT”

I find this crunches content better than the usual “summarise this” prompt. And you thought students were the only ones using AI to skim through boring textbooks or papers?

“CHECK THE STORY FLOW”, “ANY GAPS IN LOGIC?”

I use this to check the articles that I write for the media. It’s great to have another pair of eyes to make sure my story is written in a logical flow and to ensure I have covered the different perspectives sufficiently.

“BRIDGE THESE TWO PARAGRAPHS WITH A GOOD TRANSITION”

Sometimes, I get writer’s block, and I will struggle to fit two ideas or paragraphs together in a smooth way. Gen AI is really good at plugging the gap, after which I will rewrite the provided text in my own words.

“MAKE THIS MESSAGE KINDER”

We all have bad days. But we should never take out our frustrations on someone else. When you are feeling crummy, stop, breathe and ask ChatGPT to tone down your message or email before hitting “send”. You will prevent many bridges from being burnt.

“WHO IS IAN YONG HOE TAN” (ENSURE “WEB SEARCH” BUTTON IS ACTIVATED)

This isn’t just an ego trip. I do this to check that large language models like ChatGPT pull accurate details about me from my website, LinkedIn and NTU directory pages. People are increasingly using Gen AI to do web searches, and we need to make sure our online data is updated and accurate.

After you are done reading about my boring life, use this prompt to find out more about other people, things or companies. But remember: You still must verify the accuracy of the facts as Gen AI can hallucinate anytime.

GEN AI SHOWDOWN: WHICH AI RULES THEM ALL?

HEY! writer Lester Kok tests six popular Gen AI tools to see which ones are best for research, writing, image creation, resume help and more

Many free Gen AI tools today let you access their best models, though most have usage limits – like how many times you can use them each day. But not all AI tools are good at the same things.

So, which ones are actually useful for student life? We tested several options and rated them based on what they do best (as of April 2025). All are free to use, making them ideal for students on a budget.

The contenders:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. ChatGPT by OpenAI | 4. Copilot by Microsoft |
| 2. Grok by X | 5. Perplexity |
| 3. Gemini by Google | 6. DeepSeek by High Flyer |

Coding: ChatGPT

If you're new to coding or building a web app, ChatGPT – particularly when paired with GitHub Copilot, another AI tool powered by OpenAI – is a top choice. It helps you write clean code and understand how everything works.

Grok and DeepSeek are also handy, especially for breaking down how things work behind the scenes, like game mechanics or programming logic. That's super helpful if you're still getting the hang of programming.

Research and studying: Gemini

Need help breaking down a tough topic or writing a paper? Gemini takes the lead. It connects to the Google ecosystem and scans hundreds of sources to give you solid, well-rounded answers.

ChatGPT comes in second. It's clear and reliable, and it gives citations. Perplexity ranks third, with live web searches and clickable links.

All three offer “deep search” options – meaning they can go beyond surface-level summaries to provide detailed, context-rich answers to academic or scientific questions. DeepSeek is also helpful for pointing out gaps in your knowledge. Grok, on the other hand, tends to struggle to go deep and may base its responses on incomplete information.

Travel planning: Grok

Planning a semester-long exchange or a short trip? Grok is your go-to. It searches the web and gives you practical details – like travel time, estimated costs, what apps to download, and even what to wear based on the weather.

Perplexity comes next. It curates travel ideas, suggests destinations and delivers a sample itinerary. The others? They mostly list top attractions and offer a basic itinerary without much depth.

Creative writing:



ChatGPT is the most versatile tool for creative writing. Whether you want it to mimic your favourite author, act like a news editor, or roleplay as a character, it does it all. However, it has a habit of using em dashes (—), which may be a dead giveaway that something is written by AI.

Grok and DeepSeek tie for second. Both can easily take on fun personas, from a sassy sidekick to a wise old monk, adding flair and flavour to your writing. But beware the over-the-top vibe when your prompt asks for a fun take – as you'll see in the examples below.

Excerpts showing the writing style of the top three tools:

Prompt used:

Help me rewrite the following in your usual tone of voice but with a fun take.

Pause and unwind at Yunnan Garden, where serenity flows with sustainability. Home to a 5.6m man-made waterfall that nourishes the garden's lush greenery and wildlife, it's the perfect retreat after a long day of classes. If you're lucky, you might catch nature at its finest – a sea of cotton ripples across the sky, or a brown-throated sunbird flitting through the trees.

ChatGPT

Tucked right on campus, this peaceful green gem comes with its own 5.6-metre waterfall — yes, a legit man-made one — that keeps the place fresh and full of life. Think chill vibes, cool shade, and loads of Insta-worthy moments.

Perfect for when your brain's fried after back-to-back lectures. Sit by the water, soak in the calm, and if the universe is feeling generous, you might just spot a fluffy cloud parade overhead or a sunbird showing off its moves in the trees.

Study break sorted.

Grok

Yo, kick back and chill at Yunnan Garden, where zen vibes and eco-coolness collide! Picture this: a 5.6m man-made waterfall splashing life into a jungle of green and happy critters. It's your go-to

spot to decompress after slogging through classes. Keep your eyes peeled—you might spot a cotton-candy sky or a brown-throated sunbird zipping around like it owns the place. Pure nature, pure vibes!

DeepSeek

Need a break from cramming and chaos? Slip into Yunnan Garden—where zen vibes meet eco-friendly swag. The MVP here? A 5.6m waterfall that's basically nature's hydration station, keeping everything lush and Insta-worthy.



Stroll around and you might hit the jackpot: skies doing their best cotton candy impression, or a flashy sunbird pulling off aerial acrobatics between the trees.

Pro tip: This is the spot to reset your brain before your next lecture marathon. #NatureTherapy

Building your CV or resume: Grok

AI is a great tool to level up your resume. Just enter your background, education, awards and experience, and Grok will generate a personalised CV tailored to job requirements.

It also tells you where your strengths lie, what skills you're missing, and even suggests how to prepare for interviews. It can create mock interview questions and offer you strategies to prepare your answers.

ChatGPT takes a solid second place, with helpful advice on next steps. The rest of the AI tools are decent, but they tend to be less detailed.

Images generated by Gemini (left) and ChatGPT (right).



Image generation:

Gemini

Gemini produces the most photorealistic images, with lifelike faces and subtle details like hand gestures and facial expressions. It even nails elements like eye contact and lighting. It works faster than ChatGPT, if server traffic isn't too heavy.

ChatGPT is also strong – it handles settings like The Hive well, but can slip up on finer details, such as laptops with missing screens or students who look older than expected. Grok often struggles with generating realistic faces and hands, while Copilot's images look quite obviously AI-generated.

For illustrations, ChatGPT is the most consistent. It can mimic styles like Ghibli or anime with ease, making it a reliable choice for stylised visuals. Gemini's visuals look beautiful, but it often mangles text in images, so posters and banners may end up with unreadable or misspelt words.



Gemini



Grok



ChatGPT



Copilot

Perplexity and DeepSeek cannot generate images.

Prompt used:

Generate a realistic image of a group of happy 20-year-old Asian students on the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) campus in Singapore. They are sitting outdoors in a modern, green campus environment, using their laptops, chatting and drinking bubble tea. The background features NTU's iconic architecture, such as Gaia with its timber façade or The Hive with its unique, rounded towers. The students are casually dressed, smiling and enjoying a sunny day, surrounded by lush greenery and contemporary university buildings.

OVERALL WINNER:

ChatGPT

ChatGPT takes the top spot for being the most versatile of them all. It handles everything I throw at it without much fuss. Whether I need help turning my words into poetry, diving deep into a research topic, or generating an image

from scratch, ChatGPT consistently delivers at the standard I expect. However, the use of the em dash can be annoying and I often have to tell it not to use it.

Gemini's the runner-up in this AI battle, thanks to its in-depth analysis, wide web reach, and handy Canvas – an interactive workspace that lets you write, edit and code while chatting with the AI side by side. It also generates visuals with impressive detail.

Grok lands in third place with its colourful tone and strong support for CVs and cover letters – especially useful for students preparing to enter the job market.

DeepSeek and Perplexity can't generate graphics at all, though Perplexity is very good for web searches and research. Copilot performs decently across most tasks, but nothing really stands out – and its image generation is quite weak.

CAN'T FOCUS? TRY THESE TIPS USED BY GOOGLERS

These mindfulness tips can help you regain clarity and calm

What's the Search Inside Yourself course?

Developed at Google to boost mental wellbeing while building emotional intelligence and leadership skills, this mindfulness course has been used by firms like American Express and Procter & Gamble, with over 100,000 participants across more than 150 cities.

At NTU, two free workshops were run by the University Wellbeing Office and supported by NTU alumnus Tan Chade Meng, a computer engineering graduate who created the course as a Google employee. More sessions are in the works.

You're at your desk trying to study, but your mind inexplicably starts to wander. Soon, you're bored. Restless, you reach for your phone, scroll through TikTok – and lose track of time.

If this sounds familiar and you're not sure how to deal with it, fret not. Here are some quick and easy tips to help you focus from a Search Inside Yourself mindfulness course – made popular by tech giant Google – that was conducted at NTU in March.

1. Regain your focus in three breaths

- **1st breath** Focus on your breathing. Feel the air move in and out through your nose.
- **2nd breath** Relax your body.
- **3rd breath** Ask yourself: "What's important to me right now?" Then gently return to your task.

2. Train your attention through a daily routine

- Pick a routine activity to focus on. You can practise this every day.
- For example, while waiting for your MRT ride, notice how you're standing and what you're feeling.
- When the train arrives, be aware of your pace and your feet stepping into the cabin.
- Inside, note how it feels to sit or hold the handrail.

3. Calm yourself with a "body scan"

- Sit, stand or lie down. Notice your physical sensations, such as your feet on the floor.
- Breathe naturally, feeling your chest and abdomen move.
- Imagine a scanner slowly moving from your head all the way down to your toes. Repeat a few times.

How mindfulness makes a difference

“I realised how often my mind wanders while studying or doing tutorials. Using techniques from the workshop, I can bring my focus back to my work within minutes.”

– Computer science student Li Haoran on how the workshop helped him stop scrolling TikTok mid-task for a dopamine rush

“There is a lot of waiting during my lab experiments. So instead of using that time to scroll Instagram, I now try to practise mindfulness to focus on what I need to do next.”

– Anand Raksha, a PhD student in medicine who uses her idle time to be more attentive to her work

“The breathing exercises help me think more clearly and not let my feelings cloud my judgement.”

– Physics major Saurav Kafle, who turns to mindfulness to keep calm whenever he meets challenges, such as during chess competitions or exams



HEAR THE BASS, FIND YOUR PLACE

Throwback to the star acts and bright lights of the NTU Open House night festival

Sun's down, beats up. NTU's Open House traded info booths for bass drops as its first-ever night fest lit up the campus. Prospective students and visitors soaked up electrifying sets by NTU alumna Annette Lee, singer-songwriter lullaboy and DJ Jade Rasif. Organised by the NTU Students' Union with support from the Student Affairs Office, the festival was a certified banger. Catch the highlights here.



DJ Jade Rasif spinning unforgettable memories.



Multi-hyphenate Annette Lee takes the stage at NTU, where her creative journey began.

“ I have this song called *Gold*. It's about how sometimes we don't see the gold in ourselves until someone else sees it in us. That might represent a lot of the friends that I made here, who encouraged me to continue to pursue my dreams even on days when I felt lousy about myself.

- Annette Lee, School of Art, Design & Media alumna

”





~ Rising musician lullaboy belts out soulful tunes that strike a chord.



“ I had so much fun at the night fest. My favourite part was lullaboy's segment. He's a wonderful artiste, and his music got me through my A-levels. Earlier in the day, I had some great conversations with energetic NTU student reps. They came across as really welcoming and helpful, which gave me a sense of how supportive and lively the NTU community is. I've applied for two programmes here: Business with a second major in Sustainability, and Environmental Earth Systems Science.

- Shernace Seet, Dunman High School graduate

”



~ Caught in the feels: One lucky fan enjoying lullaboy's sweet serenade.

HEY!

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Missed the magic?
SCAN THIS PHOTO
to catch the vibe

FIVE “WAIT, WHAT?” MOMENTS FROM MY INTERNSHIPS

Final-year HEY! student writer Eliz Wang ponders the brilliant, and sometimes baffling, things she learnt from her attachments

You go into internships expecting a few things: work experience, LinkedIn updates and maybe a new caffeine addiction. What you don't always anticipate is how each stint can shake up your worldview or throw you into situations you never saw coming.

Over the past four years, while studying history in NTU, I've done everything from academic research to public policy marketing, to something that involved far more Excel spreadsheet agony than I had ever anticipated.

Across these internships – at places like Shopee, Temasek, Simple Group and bolttech, I've encountered unexpected lessons that have made me rethink how I approach work, and even what I want from my 20s. Here are five of them.

1 Titles mean less than you think

Going in, I assumed the prestige of a job title would determine the impact I could make. Spoiler: not really. Some of my most meaningful work happened in roles that seemed small on paper, but gave me very real opportunities.

Like developing marketing strategies in a foreign market with startup consultancy Simple Group. Or leading a creative project as a newbie, where I conceptualised and executed a full branding campaign from scratch.

Meanwhile, I've seen my friends at big-name firms spend weeks formatting slides. The title is just an accessory; what you do with the role is what counts.

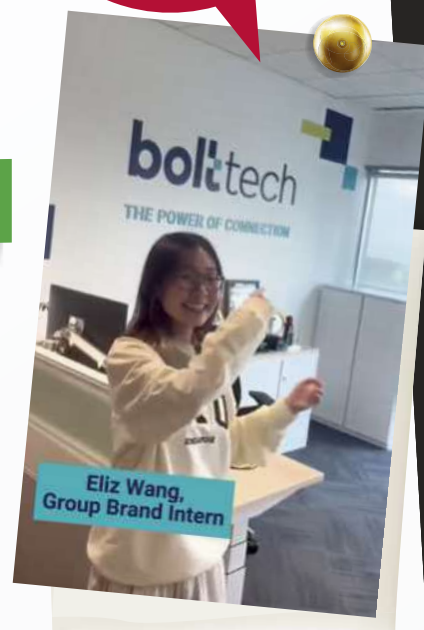
2 No one, literally no one, has it all figured out

I used to think people in their 30s had life sorted out. I was so wrong. Most of them are just winging it, too. At bolttech, I worked alongside professionals who had switched careers three times before landing in insurance tech. Meanwhile, at investment firm Temasek, I saw firsthand how people from different backgrounds – from environmental science to consulting – could all find their way into business strategy. Your early career is less about having a master plan, and more about collecting experiences and figuring out what feels right.

HEY!

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SCAN THIS VISUAL
to watch the reel Eliz
created as part of a global
talent attraction project
she kickstarted as
an intern





3 The best lessons come from the worst days

I've had internships where I felt completely out of my depth. I've made mistakes that haunted me on the train ride home. But these moments, the ones where you feel utterly incompetent, are the ones that teach you the most. I learnt how to handle constructive criticism without taking it personally, how to ask for help without feeling like a burden, and how to bounce back after a rough day. If an internship never challenges you, you're probably not growing.

4 Network, network, network

Before my first internship, I pictured networking as painfully forced small talk at awkward office events. As an extrovert, I thought I'd be the one breezing through these moments, but I quickly learnt that it's not all about being outgoing. While I enjoyed meeting people and sparking conversations, the real connections often happened when I stopped focusing on "networking" and simply had genuine chats. Some of the best advice I've received came from spontaneous post-meeting talks or casual coffee sessions.

I've stayed in touch with colleagues who later helped me land other opportunities, not because I was working a room, but because we built mutual respect from honest sharing.

Break the ice with the big boss: Get tips on how to start conversations on page 28.



NTU interns in Ho Chi Minh City: As part of NTU's Overseas Entrepreneurship Programme, Eliz delved into cross-border marketing at a consultancy that helps Singaporean firms expand across the Asia-Pacific.



Eliz grew her graphic design and storytelling skills at investment company Temasek by creating visuals that explain public policies.

5 Internships change your plans – sometimes drastically

I walked into one internship convinced I wanted to pursue finance full time. I left knowing I'd rather work in public affairs. Another internship made me reconsider my aversion to the corporate world. Each experience reshaped my expectations of what I wanted in a job – more flexibility in how and when I worked, more creativity in the tasks I took on, and, most importantly, work that felt meaningful. Internships aren't just resume boosters; they're trial runs for different versions of your future.

The biggest surprise for me? Internships don't shape your career. They shape you.

Whether it's discovering an unexpected passion, surviving a tough boss, or realising what kind of workplace actually excites you, the lessons stick.

And sometimes, the most valuable thing you take away isn't a line on your resume, but the person you become in the process.

HEY!
STUDENT
WRITER



When she's not obsessing over the footnotes of her history thesis, Eliz is either biking at East Coast, watching *Akira* or contemplating a second plate of duck rice.

BREAKING THE ICE WITH THE BIG BOSS

Got a minute with the CEO during your internship? Make it count with these tips from NTU insiders – and leave a lasting impression

1 MENTION YOUR UNIQUE SELLING POINTS DURING YOUR INTRO

Know what makes you stand out from your peers, in terms of who you are and what you do. Convey this to make a memorable impression, says Zu Han. If a project that aligns with your strengths comes along, the CEO might recall your conversation and assign you to it, which will add to your portfolio. If you're shy around strangers, rehearse your lines beforehand.

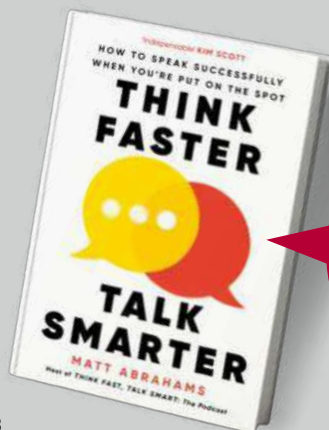
Example:

"Hello, I am Zu Han. I am an NTU undergrad and intern. I've lived in Malaysia, China and Singapore, and love storytelling and deriving insights from data. Nice to meet you!"

HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS VISUAL for your chance to win a book that will help you say it right, even on the fly



2 FIND COMMON GROUND TO BUILD A CONNECTION

See the CEO and other senior management as fellow human beings, rather than unapproachable figures, advises Leena. Show genuine interest in them from the start, perhaps by learning about their interests through conversations with colleagues. These insights can help you connect on a personal level.

For instance, if you find yourself in the elevator with the CEO, you could start a conversation about shared hobbies or interests while keeping it professional. Casual conversations like these can make the workplace friendlier and reduce stress.



Leena Gan

is a final-year communication undergrad with several marketing internships in local and overseas startups under her belt.

Tip:

"If the CEO collects travel souvenirs, share an interesting anecdote from your own adventures overseas at an appropriate moment, such as during an office party or after a meeting has wrapped up."

3

SHOW CURIOSITY AND INTEREST IN THE ORGANISATION AND INDUSTRY

If you can see yourself working in the organisation in the future, here's another way to make the best use of a brief interaction, say, while washing hands or waiting in line. Zheng Xun's advice is to casually ask about the industry and company's plans for the future. You'll get a better understanding of the company's mission and industry trends, and also demonstrate that you are proactive about your career.

Ng Zheng Xun

is an audio machine learning researcher at a public agency. The recent computer science grad interned with Ernst & Young and did his final-year project in South Korea.

Example:

"I'm deeply interested in the company's work, such as using artificial intelligence (AI) to transcribe music into notes. I'm particularly passionate about using AI in music, having done several similar projects myself. Could you share your thoughts on where the field is headed and the key challenges you foresee for the company?"

4

CONGRATULATE THE CEO ON A RECENT ACHIEVEMENT

Everyone likes to be appreciated for their successes and the CEO is no exception. Starting the conversation with a sincere compliment can enhance rapport with the person, says Theresa. Stay up to date with the latest company news by reading the CEO's internal messages, social media posts and industry news sites to sieve out nuggets of information for conversation starters.

Career coach Theresa Ong

helps students from the School of Chemistry, Chemical Engineering & Biotechnology with their job search.

Example:

"I just learnt that your organisation has been ranked among TIME's World's Best Companies. Congratulations! This is a testament to your leadership. What's your secret to success?"

5

SLIP IN YOUR SPECIAL TALENT AND LEND A HAND

Use that 60-second window with the CEO to highlight your abilities and propose concrete ways you can contribute, says Angeline. By articulating how your skills match the organisation's needs, you position yourself as a valuable resource, opening the door to potential opportunities.

Angeline Sim

is a career coach at the School of Art, Design & Media and the Wee Kim Wee School of Communication & Information.

Example:

"I am a third-year filmmaking undergrad, and I absolutely love video production. I've even entered my work in global competitions and won. If you ever need help editing corporate videos, I'd be happy to pitch in and support your company's branding efforts."

THREE PEAS IN A POD

These triplets are on different academic paths at NTU. So what makes them similar?

Two's company, and three's a crowd?

Not for the Sampath brothers, who have shared an unbreakable bond since they were born – just minutes apart.

Lokeshh, Sivanesh and Sailesh, 23, have navigated life's milestones together, from acing school exams to serving National Service, and are now thriving as NTU students.

"It's great – you always have two built-in buddies with shared interests. If I'm bored at home, I can just pop into their room and disturb them," says Sivanesh, a third-year economics & data science student.

Sailesh, a business & computer science student, agrees: "We were never really lonely, and I've always appreciated that."

Triplets are rare in Singapore – only eight sets were born last year. It's even rarer for triplets to be conceived through in-vitro fertilisation, like these Singaporean brothers.

This fun fact often doubles as an icebreaker that gets them the "oohs" and "aahs". "The best part about being triplets? We never have to think of a fun fact about ourselves during orientation camps," Sailesh quips.

It's no surprise, then, that they attract stares when they're out together, such as at their favourite hawker centre.

"It's not that we expect people to come up to us like we are celebrities," says Lokeshh, a Renaissance Engineering Programme (REP) student specialising in computer science. "But the staring and pointing can get awkward when we're just trying to eat."

DOUBLE TAKES

The Sampath brothers are mixed triplets – Lokeshh is fraternal while Sivanesh and Sailesh are identical. This means that while the three of them share similar traits, Sivanesh and Sailesh look more like each other.

This has led to plenty of amusing cases of mistaken identity around NTU – their first shared campus since primary school.

Sailesh recalls buying food from the *caifan* (mixed vegetable rice) stall at Canteen 11, unaware that Sivanesh had ordered from the same stall just minutes earlier.

"The *caifan* uncle was so confused and kept giving me a weird look. He said: 'Boy, just now you never order, ah?'," he says with a laugh.

Friends have often mistaken Sailesh

for Sivanesh, and vice versa. "People have waved at Sailesh, thinking he was me, and I've had the same experience," Sivanesh explains. "Sometimes, when someone says hi to me, I am genuinely unsure whether the person is Sailesh's friend, or just greeting someone behind me."

"When I'm having a bad day and these incidents happen, they cheer me up because they are quite funny," he adds. "If I'm tired, though, I just play along."

Even their mother isn't immune, says Sailesh. "When she's cooking with her back turned, she sometimes calls me Sivanesh because we sound the same," says Sailesh. "It still happens now."

CARVING THEIR OWN PATHS

Growing up together, the three brothers naturally share similar values, such as cherishing family ties and friendship.

While childhood fights were inevitable, they've grown calmer and now tackle problems logically. They're grateful their parents never pitted them against each other but instead gave them space to discover themselves.



SAILESH

Double degree in Business & Computer Science

SIVANESH

Economics & Data Science

LOKESH

Renaissance Engineering Programme

Lokeshh is the dependable one and the go-to for help. Sivanesh, the optimist, always sees the silver lining. Sailesh is open-minded and "the embodiment of chill," as Sivanesh puts it.

As a child, Sailesh felt a strong need to stand out. "I wanted to do my own thing – whether through my choice of clothes or music. But that need faded as I grew older," he shares.

Their interests diverged over time. Sailesh taught himself drumming, while Sivanesh and Lokeshh took to football, with Lokeshh also joining

Tanjong Hall's dance crew.

Even as life pulls them in different directions – Lokeshh is at the University of California, Berkeley, for his year-long overseas immersion as Sivanesh and Sailesh wrap up their third year at NTU – their bond remains unshakable.

"Life will bring unexpected challenges, but I know my brothers will always be there," says Lokeshh. "Whatever comes our way, we'll face it together."

For the Sampath brothers, three isn't a crowd – it's a team.



TOMORROWLAND

How NTU's homegrown technologies are reshaping our future



HEY!
AR
SCAN THIS
ILLUSTRATION
to see how tiny
waves can make a
big impact

Real-life waterbending

The big idea: Where there's water, there are waves. But what if we could bend those waves to our will and use them to move things? That's exactly what a team of scientists has done. With a mix of physics and wave wizardry, they figured out how to control floating objects just by shaping water waves.

What's unique: The team used sound to generate waves in a water tank and combined them to form complex patterns – from twisting loops to swirling vortices, like mini whirlpools. These patterns can

precisely control and steer objects such as ping pong balls, hold them in place like invisible tweezers, or make them move in circular or spiral paths.

Benefits: Just like the Waterbenders in *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, scientists can now manipulate water. This tech could be used to move tiny particles or sort cells in a lab, and even scaled up to steer boats without engines, helping to prevent collisions with sea walls. There's even potential to harness the same wave patterns to contain and clean up oil spills and other pollutants, quite literally opening up a whole new wave of possibilities.



Brewing up second chances

The big idea: When we think of beer, we probably picture a cold mug in hand, not piles of soggy grain. But behind every brew is a massive amount of food waste called brewers' spent grain. Now, NTU scientists are giving it a second life by upcycling the waste grain into useful materials to make things like vegan milk and even vegan leather.

What's unique: Brewers' spent grain is packed with proteins, antioxidants and nutrients. A team of food scientists from NTU Singapore, funded by Heineken Asia, found a new way to use precision fermentation and microwave heating to extract over 80 per cent of the grain's available protein – the highest yield ever recorded. This extracted protein is rich in nutrients and fatty acids, making it perfect for use in plant-based food products, such as alternative meats.

Benefits: Beer brewing waste could be a goldmine of sustainable solutions. Beyond being a food source, it can also be used to make cosmetics, bioplastics and even vegan leather grown from fungi. These efforts could help reduce the amount of waste sent to our landfills, lower carbon emissions and support the circular economy.

The lung and short of it

The big idea: What if we could study lung diseases without real human lungs? A team of NTU researchers is making that possible by growing mini, human-like lungs in the lab – opening the door to testing treatments for some of the toughest respiratory conditions.

What's unique: Led by NTU and the Agency for Science, Technology & Research, the team is using cutting-edge stem cell techniques to develop "lung organoids" grown from real lung tissue samples. These organoids are tiny 3D structures that mimic how real human lungs grow and function, from the airways to the air sacs. Unlike cell cultures grown in petri dishes, these organoids develop in layers and respond to disease much like actual lungs.

Benefits: These mini lungs could become a powerful tool in the fight against asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer and more. Doctors can use them to test how lungs respond to treatments, paving the way for personalised medicine. This approach also reduces the need for animal testing and could make drug development faster, safer and more accurate. In short, it's a breakthrough that will transform how we study, treat and understand lung diseases.



FYI

SCENE + HEARD

"I'm deeply grateful to have received NTU bursaries as an undergraduate. Giving to the Class Gift is my way of paying it forward – so our juniors can experience things like hall life, CCAs or university expeditions abroad, without having to worry about working part-time just to afford their tuition fees."

– Class of 2025 graduate Dextian Chua (second from left), a bursary recipient and Class Gift donor



Cool paint

We're big fans of beating the heat. Thankfully, so are the hotshot scientists on our campus. They've developed a cool, heat-reflective paint that will be applied to all existing HDB estates by 2030. This follows a successful pilot in Tampines, where the special coating reduced ambient temperatures by up to 2°C. Even better, homes in the coated blocks used less electricity, as air-conditioners didn't have to work as hard to keep things cool.



Photo: Screengrab/YouTube/Coldplay

HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS PHOTO
to hear shazza's
NTU jingle, and take
part in a quiz to win
an exclusive NTU
collectible pin



Her star keeps rising

Have you spotted NTU communication student shazza in Coldplay's *Man In The Moon* music video? It's the latest feather in the cap for the rising singer-songwriter, who has already graced a giant billboard in New York City's Times Square, sung with Canadian pop duo Crash Adams, and performed for the country on National Day – all in her young career.



HEY!

AR

SCAN THIS PHOTO
to uncover Angel's
touching link to
the gift

A gift for the next generation

Hey, students, here's some heartwarming news: A \$110 million gift from UOB and the Wee Foundation to NTU will open doors to new opportunities. For a start, the donation will support undergrads who need financial aid and fund a venture creation programme that empowers students to solve real problems in areas like artificial intelligence and sustainability. In a serendipitous twist, the ceremony announcing this was hosted by Year 2 student Angel Lau, who is a beneficiary of a similar life-changing gift as a Wee Cho Yaw Future Leaders Award recipient.

Thank you for the feedback

A heartfelt thanks to all readers who joined our 2025 HEY! survey. Your honest thoughts mean a lot – and they'll help us create even better stories for you.

Yong Jun Jie, a business and financial technology student from Nanyang Polytechnic, says reading HEY! helps him picture what life at NTU could be like as a humanities or business student – paths he's considering. Another reader, NTU Electrical & Electronic Engineering undergrad Chua Jen Ching, enjoys checking out the innovative projects her peers are working on, and hopes to see other inspiring stories of students overcoming challenges.



Yong Jun Jie (left) and Chua Jen Ching (right) picked up Sony ULT Wear headphones for sharing their thoughts in the HEY! readership survey. They're just two of over 100 HEY! readers who won in the survey lucky draw, which included sponsored prizes like a Contiki island-hopping trip to Thailand.



Get the scoop at ntu.edu.sg/hey

HEY! has moved to a new web home. Get the latest campus news, inspiring stories and big ideas at ntu.edu.sg/hey. Plus, subscribe to get HEY! stories delivered straight to your inbox – and for a chance to win an exclusive NTU tee. Keep an eye out for the giveaway in our next HEY! mailer.



Piloting pays off

Soaring above international contenders, two NTU teams from the School of Mechanical & Aerospace Engineering pulled off sky-high wins at an aerial robotics contest. Competing in the technically demanding Autonomous Swarm category, they designed, built and deployed swarms of 10 to 25 autonomous drones in a simulated search-and-rescue mission. Their efforts paid off big time. By clinching the top two spots, the teams walked away with \$35,000.

Singapore's top MBA graduates

Does an MBA help your career? On average, the salaries of NTU's MBA graduates increased nearly 1.5 times within three years of completing the programme, alongside improved career progression. This contributed to NTU's MBA programme being ranked No. 1 in Singapore and 22nd in the world in the Financial Times Global MBA Ranking. Still need another reason to apply? NTU alumni get a 10 per cent discount on tuition fees.



HEY!

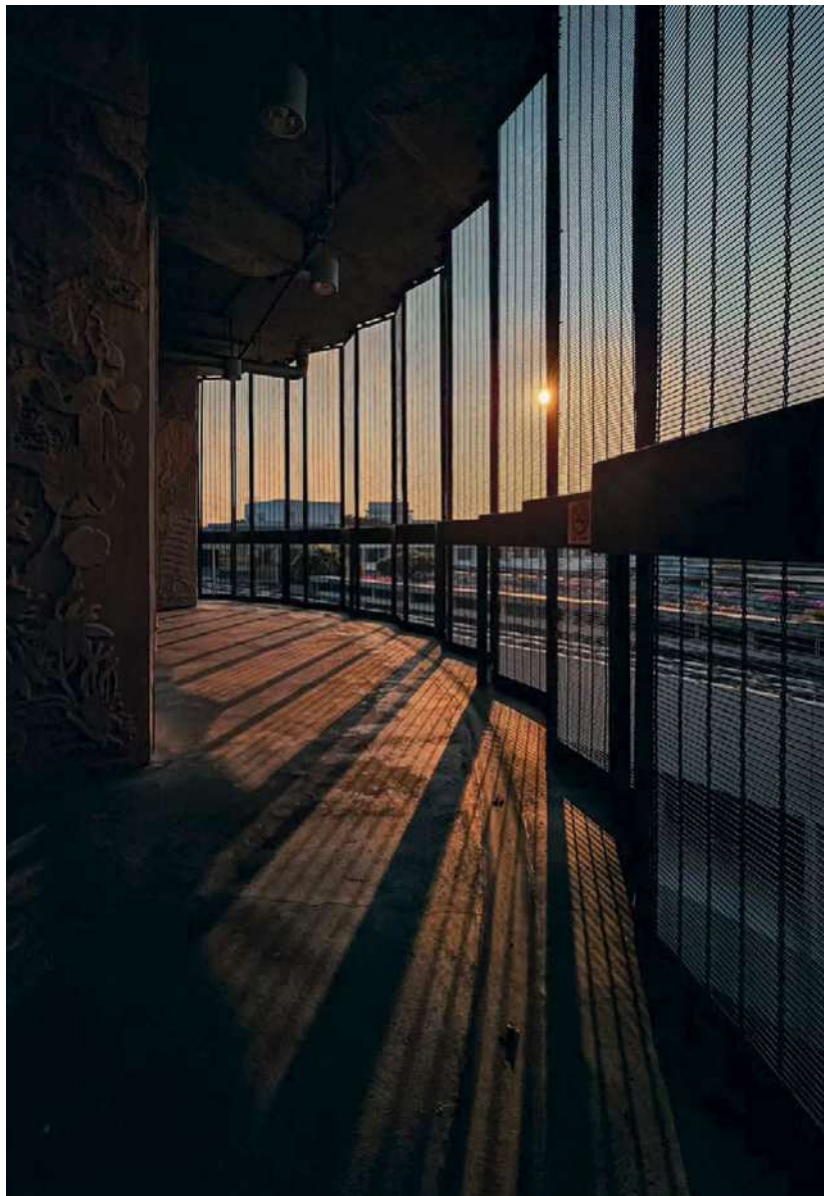
PIX

⇌ Kwok Pei Fang

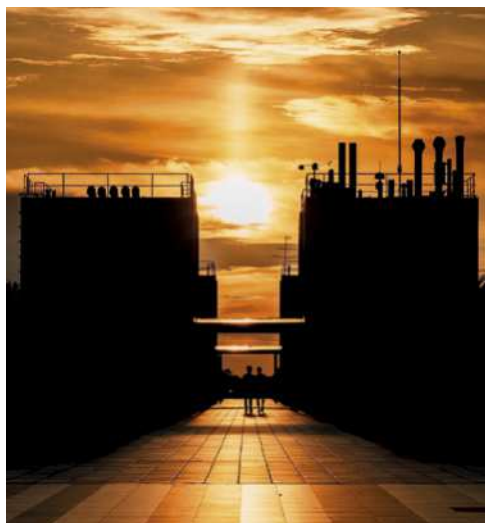
Sunny side
up from The
Hive.
@victor_zhuo

GOLDEN HOUR: CAMPUS EDITION

Not everyone gets a front-row seat to the sky's grand finale – but at NTU, you just might. Here are sunset moments worth slowing down for



Came for a run, stayed for the palette.
@_i_am_dariaa



Some sunsets are better shared.
@ytridentx

All aboard the sunset express.
@lovinnn_sgtransportt_



H-all in awe.
@picsxemily



A sight that chases the blues away.
@ttotaler34



Leaf your worries behind and soak in this view.
@chu_kann



NANYANG
TECHNOLOGICAL
UNIVERSITY
SINGAPORE



WORLD'S BEST YOUNG UNIVERSITY 2024

Times Higher Education

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- Renaissance Engineering
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"Each time you walk into NTU, you feel like you are entering a true university, the real corridors of learning. And I like the profs. They may not be your assigned mentors but will still look after you and sponsor you for projects and competitions."

Chong Su Ying
TAISP

SCHOLARSHIP BENEFITS

★★★★★

CAMPUS FACILITIES

★★★★★

CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION

★★★★★

GLOBAL EXPOSURE

★★★★★

PROGRAMME REPUTATION

★★★★★

MENTORSHIP

★★★★★

"The professors are approachable and easy to relate to. They are experts in their areas, and they communicate clearly."

Leom Sheng Rui
REP

UNIVERSITY RANKING

★★★★★

CAMPUS FACILITIES

★★★★★

VIBRANT CAMPUS LIFE

★★★★★

Muhammad Izzuddin Bin Husein
CNYSP

"NTU is forward-looking and outward-looking, being very well connected globally. I chose the CN Yang Scholars Programme because of the opportunities to build an international network through overseas conferences, learning trips, attachments, and research projects."



SMART CAMPUS, SMARTER THINKING
ntu.edu.sg/admissions/ug