

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
SINGAPORE

# ANNUAL REPORT 2023

INTEGRITY • IMPARTIALITY • MERITOCRACY



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# CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

Singapore fully transitioned to living with COVID-19 as an endemic disease in 2023. Our society held together and emerged united from the pandemic. As shared by Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong in Parliament during the Debate on the Motion on Singapore's Response to COVID-19, the most important lesson learnt from the crisis is that **we are stronger when we stand and work together**. This key takeaway will continue to guide our future approaches. Across the Public Service, agencies need to continue working together with the private and people sector, in the interest of the common good, to enable Singapore to overcome our challenges.

Today, Singapore faces an international environment fraught with tensions and uncertainties. Being small and open, as a country trading with the rest of the world, Singapore is susceptible to the fraying of the global economic order and disruption of supply chains when countries turn to protectionist measures. These challenges have reinforced the need for Singapore to cultivate a diverse leadership pipeline, to lead the next generation in adapting to the shifting global dynamics, building bridges across different communities, and identifying new approaches to issues that confront us from trade diversification, social mobility to sustainability and matters of national security. To achieve this, we must continue to attract, develop, and retain good people for the Public Service.

## Building a Diverse Leadership Pipeline for an Evolving Future

The Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholarship reflects our commitment to nurturing exceptional and dedicated individuals to contribute to nation-building. We seek to enhance diversity in our leadership pipeline and refine our selection strategies in tandem with the evolving challenges and talent requirements. We are pleased to report progress in our efforts in 2023.

The 65 scholarship holders who proceeded for their studies in 2023 came from a wide range of 19 different pre-university institutions, comprising the Integrated Programme schools, junior colleges, polytechnics and an international institution supporting home-based education.

The PSC (Sustainability) scholarship was awarded to the inaugural batch of three individuals in 2023. They are currently pursuing their undergraduate and postgraduate studies and will embark on a career in sustainability and economic circularity in the Public Service upon graduation. We look forward to seeing more students take up this scholarship in the coming years.

We awarded seven mid-term PSC scholarships in public administration, public finance, sustainability and engineering in 2023. The Public Service will benefit from the maturity, perspectives and experience of these individuals. As the PSC expands its range of scholarship offerings to attract talent beyond the pre-university levels, a mid-term option will be introduced for the Singapore Armed Forces Scholarship and the Singapore Police Force Scholarship in 2024. These mid-term scholarships are open to undergraduate students who have a passion to serve in the uniformed services and safeguard our national security.



The scholarship experience is becoming more diverse and enriching. We are committed to strengthening our partnerships to provide opportunities for our scholarship holders to participate in overseas internship programmes with international organisations and the private sector through the Gap Year programme. This exposure to different cultures and environments enables scholarship holders to gain an understanding of issues beyond the Public Service, and an international network that will contribute to Singapore's future collaborative endeavours with other countries.

Digital and technological literacy will become as essential as language proficiency in shaping thoughts and ideas. I am heartened to see that many PSC undergraduate scholarship holders have diversified into different fields at the postgraduate level e.g. humanities majors at the undergraduate level taking up data science and technology for their Masters, or engineers broadening into economics and management for their Masters. Such well-rounded educational training is helpful to prepare them to be more versatile and adaptive public officers, who can tackle evolving and multi-disciplinary challenges.

### **Building Partnerships to Strengthen Collaboration**

The PSC strengthened collaboration with a wide range of agencies to attract talent to the Public Service. In 2023, we held a Whole-of-Government Scholarship Fair to synergise the outreach efforts of different public sector scholarship-awarding agencies. The recent establishment of a strong Alumni Network has brought together over 160 PSC scholarship holders and public officers from the Administrative Service and the Public Service Leadership Programme, to serve as ambassadors for the Public Service scholarship and career. This proactive outreach not only serves to inspire the next generation of youths but also embodies the spirit of giving back.



**...the most important lesson learnt from the crisis is that we are stronger when we stand and work together. This key takeaway will continue to guide our future approaches.**

The Public Service must also forge close partnerships with the private and people sectors to co-create a roadmap for the next bound of nation-building and refresh our social compact. As future leaders, it is therefore critical that our scholarship holders take an active interest in the community. All PSC Scholarship recipients go through the Youth Corps Leaders Programme (YCLP) to identify, plan and execute projects that address issues in the community and support a meaningful cause. I am pleased to report that they completed eight YCLP projects in 2023 supporting a wide range of issues and stakeholders from mental wellness, vulnerable youths to the elderly.

### **The Road Ahead**

The PSC will continue to work hard to build a robust and resilient leadership pipeline for the Public Service. Our search for talent leads us to individuals dedicated to serving Singapore and our community and who possess the right values. Integrity is at the heart of the Public Service's values and is essential for building strong institutions and for maintaining public confidence and trust. The PSC remains steadfast in ensuring the integrity of the Public Service by exercising disciplinary control over civil servants impartially, regardless of their rank or seniority, and without fear or favour.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to my fellow PSC members for their invaluable counsel and to the secretariat team for their strong support. We have overcome challenging times in the past year, and I am confident that our core values and adaptability will position us well to navigate the road 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\*.

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.

**Since 1995, the following personnel functions have been 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.

The PSC is the final appellate body to consider appeals against decisions of the Special Personnel Board.

The PSC performs a non-constitutional role of recruiting and developing talent for the Singapore Public Service through PSC Scholarships, as well as coordinating the efforts of scholarship-awarding agencies.

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

# MEMBERS OF THE PSC

The Constitution provides for the PSC to have a Chairman and at least five but not more than 14 other Members. As at 31 December 2023, the PSC comprised the Chairman, Deputy Chairmen and ten other Members.



**Mr Lee Tzu Yang**  
Chairman



**Mr Kwa Chong Seng**  
Deputy Chairman  
(retired on 16 April 2023)



**Ms Chua Sock Koong**  
Deputy Chairman



**Mr Po'ad Mattar**  
(retired on 2 February 2024)



**Mr Edward D'Silva**  
(retired on 2 January 2024)



**Professor Lily Kong**



**Mr Alan Chan**



**Dr Sudha Nair**



**Professor Benjamin Ong**



**Ms Euleen Goh**



**Mr Ramlee Bin Buang**



**Mr Warren Fernandez**  
(appointed on 1 June 2023)



**Ms Geraldine Chin**  
(appointed on 10 July 2023)

# APPOINTMENTS, PROMOTIONS, APPEALS AND DISCIPLINARY CASES





# 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 and 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 2023, the PSC considered 23 candidates and found 21 suitable for appointment to the Administrative Service.

The PSC approved 38 officers for promotion to Superscale D/Grade 7 and above, including those in the Administrative Service.

There were no appointments nor promotions into and within Superscale grades in the Auditing Service.

## Appointments and Promotions 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 2023, the PSC considered and concurred with the agencies' recommendation to:



**A.** Appoint 17 officers as new Chief Executive Officers;



**B.** Renew the terms of 18 existing Chief Executive Officers;



**C.** Appoint or extend 62 officers as Acting Chief Executive Officers; and



**D.** Promote three Chief Executive Officers to Superscale D/Grade 7 and above.

## Appeals

In 2023, the PSC considered one further appeal against termination under the Public Service (Personnel Boards and Appeals Board) Regulations.

## 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 2023 ("the Regulations");



**B.** The Public Service Commission (Delegation of Disciplinary Functions) Directions ("the Directions");



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

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

The revised disciplinary legislation was implemented in 2023. A total of 136 new disciplinary cases were reported to the PSC in 2023. Together with 95 cases that were brought forward from previous years, the PSC processed a total of 231 cases in the year. 149 cases (65%) were completed. Of these completed cases, 60 cases were completed under the Regulations, 71 cases were completed under the Directions, and no formal disciplinary action was instituted against the officers in the remaining 18 cases.

<sup>1</sup> Officers may be disciplined under the Regulations when it involves serious misconduct, where the possible penalties include a dismissal or a demotion. For less serious misconduct, officers may be disciplined under the Directions or Prison Directions, as appropriate. The PSC has delegated to the Permanent Secretaries / Commissioner of Prisons part of its functions pertaining to the discipline of officers for minor misconduct.

The most common types of misconduct cases completed under the Regulations were Drug Offences and Non-Compliance of Orders. [Table 1](#) shows the breakdown of the 60 cases completed under the Regulations.

**Table 1: Breakdown by Outcome of Cases Completed under the Regulations in 2023**

MISCONDUCT	OUTCOME						
	DISMISSAL	RETIREMENT IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST	DEMOTION	FINANCIAL PENALTIES	REPRIMAND	ALLOWED TO RESIGN	TOTAL
Dishonesty	4	2	2	-	-	1	9
Drug Offences	11	1	-	-	-	-	12
Indebtedness	1	-	2	5	-	-	8
Non-Compliance of Orders	3	3	-	3	3	-	12
Negligence	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Sexual Offences	7	2	-	-	-	1	10
Theft	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Corruption	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	5	1	1	-	-	-	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>60</b>



# RECRUITING TALENT, DEVELOPING LEADERS



# PSC SCHOLARSHIPS — A GATEWAY TO PUBLIC SERVICE CAREERS



The PSC awards full scholarships to outstanding young men and women who are committed to serving Singapore through a career in the Public Service. The PSC Scholarships are open to applicants at various points in their education journey and offer three main career paths – Public Administration, Professional Service and Uniformed Service. Successful applicants may be awarded the scholarship prior to their undergraduate studies, during their undergraduate studies (as a mid-term scholarship recipient) or after completing their undergraduate studies with no more than three years of working experience in the private or people sectors (as a Master's scholarship recipient). The multiple entry points have enabled the PSC to recruit scholarship holders with diverse perspectives and backgrounds.



## Public Administration

Recipients of the PSC Scholarship or PSC Master's Scholarship will assume a role in Public Administration. They are not tied to a specific Ministry at the start of their scholarship journey and can be deployed across different agencies after 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.

PSC introduced the PSC Scholarship (Sustainability) under the Public Administration career pathway in 2023. Recipients of the PSC Scholarship (Sustainability) or PSC Master's Scholarship (Sustainability) will develop domain capabilities in sustainability and circularity and contribute to realising Singapore's vision of a sustainable and future-ready nation. They will be deployed across different agencies to work on initiatives relating to the circular and green economy, coastal protection, biodiversity, urban heat issues and sustainable land use, to name a few.



## Uniformed Service

The PSC also awards the Singapore Armed Forces Scholarship (SAFS) and the Singapore Police Force Scholarship (SPFS) to outstanding young men and women who respond to the call of defending the nation and are committed to maintaining peace and stability, and law and order in our country.

SAFS holders are systematically trained and developed to assume key command and staff appointments in the SAF, while SPFS holders are groomed to lead the Home Team in upholding law, maintaining order and keeping peace in Singapore.

In 2023, the PSC announced the extension of the SAFS and SPFS to mid-term applicants to further diversify the range of scholarship offerings beyond the pre-university levels. This provides promising candidates, who may decide on an SAF or SPF career during university, the opportunity to apply for the mid-term scholarship from 2024 onwards.



## Professional Service

Some candidates have a clear focus and interest in the career path they wish to pursue. The Professional Service pathway develops scholarship holders for a specific career in Engineering, Foreign Service, Judicial Service/Legal Service, Medicine, Public Finance or Teaching Service. Recipients of these scholarships return to serve in the respective agencies linked to their scholarships and are guided and developed in line with their professional tracks.



# IDENTIFYING TALENT

The PSC adopts a rigorous process to select scholarship holders and considers a range of information from multiple sources. These include the candidate's personal statement, school report, achievements in Co-Curricular Activities, community involvement, 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, passion and fit for a Public Service career. The PSC has adopted a range of tools, allowing the selection panel an insight into some of the non-intellectual and whole person traits of our applicants. The PSC continually reviews its battery of tools for scholarship selection and enhances it to ensure that the right talent is selected.

The PSC provides updated information on the PSC Scholarships and Public Service careers to our stakeholders through regular meetings with school leaders, as well as sessions for students and their parents.

In 2023, the PSC expanded its annual Scholarship Information Session to a Whole-Of-Government Scholarship Fair involving over 40 agencies. The scholarship fair provided a 'one-stop' platform for prospective scholarship applicants and their parents to learn more about the careers and scholarships offered by the various agencies. Key overseas education partners were also invited to share on the tertiary education opportunities in France, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.



The PSC works in close partnership with agencies, schools, universities and self-help community groups to reach out to a diverse profile of candidates and raise awareness of the scholarship and career options available in the Public Service. In 2023, the PSC established the Alumni Network which brought together over 160 volunteers from the Public Service talent programmes to complement and support engagement and partnership efforts. Over the past year, the Network has supported close to 20 initiatives and engaged a diverse range of student profiles through school engagement sessions and leadership programmes.





# 2023 PSC SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS



In 2023, 65 scholarship recipients proceeded for studies – 32 on the Public Administration track, 26 on the Professional Service track and 7 on the Uniformed Service track ([Table 2](#)). Details of their courses and countries of study are in [Table 3](#) and [Table 4](#) respectively.

**Table 2: 2023 PSC Scholarship Recipients**

CATEGORIES	NUMBER WHO PROCEEDED FOR STUDIES IN 2023
<b>Public Administration</b>	<b>32</b>
PSC Scholarship*	29
PSC Scholarship (Sustainability)*	2
PSC Master's Scholarship (Sustainability)	1
<b>Professional Service</b>	<b>26</b>
PSC Scholarship (Engineering)*	12
PSC Scholarship (Foreign Service)	1
PSC Scholarship (Judicial Service / Legal Service)	4
PSC Scholarship (Medicine)*	2
PSC Scholarship (Public Finance)*	2
PSC Scholarship (Teaching Service)	5
<b>Uniformed Service</b>	<b>7</b>
The Singapore Armed Forces Scholarship	5
The Singapore Police Force Scholarship	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>

\* Including mid-term scholarships

**Table 3: 2023 PSC Scholarship Recipients by Course of Study**

COURSE OF STUDY	NUMBER WHO PROCEEDED FOR STUDIES IN 2023
Economics / Philosophy, Politics and Economics	21
Engineering / Information and Communications Technology	14
Finance / Business / Accountancy	3
Humanities and Social Sciences	16
Law	6
Medicine	2
Science / Mathematics	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>

**Table 4: 2023 PSC Scholarship Recipients by Country of Study**

COUNTRY OF STUDY	NUMBER WHO PROCEEDED FOR STUDIES IN 2023
France	1
Japan	1
Singapore	19
United Kingdom	26
United States of America	18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>65</b>





# PRESIDENT'S SCHOLARSHIP



The PSC awards the President's Scholarship – 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 their pursuits. Recipients of the President's Scholarship have shown dedication to improving the lives of Singaporeans and exemplifying the ethos of the Public Service.

In 2023, there were three recipients of the President's Scholarship (Table 5).



**Table 5: 2023 President's Scholarship Recipients**

NAME	PRE-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTION	COURSE OF STUDY	UNIVERSITY
Chua Jia Zhi, Edison	Hwa Chong Institution	Economics	University of California, Los Angeles
Foo Yong Yee Renee	Hwa Chong Institution	Business and Global Affairs	Georgetown University
Mei Feifei	Raffles Institution	Economics	University of Chicago



# MOULDING TOMORROW'S LEADERS



PSC scholarship holders participate in a series of milestone programmes and developmental opportunities during their studies. These programmes help them to develop a diverse set of experiences and prepare them to make impactful contributions.

## 2023 Preparatory Course

The annual Preparatory Course aims to prepare new PSC scholarship recipients for their studies and equip them for their roles as ambassadors of the Singapore Public Service. The programme also provides them with a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges ahead for the Public Service. The 2023 Preparatory Course was conducted from 15 to 28 June 2023, and included a three-day Outward Bound Singapore component, incorporating key elements on building self-awareness, leadership skills and team cohesion.



As part of the Preparatory Course, all scholarship recipients also took part in the Youth Corps Leaders Programme (YCLP), which enables them to identify, plan and execute projects that address issues in the community and support a meaningful cause. There were eight YCLP projects completed in 2023. Of which, three are featured in the following paragraphs.

## KITA

KITA worked with Thye Hua Kwan Moral Charities to empower seniors residing in rental flats to better manage their health through befriending, health education and literacy efforts. The project focused on engaging and reinforcing health-seeking behaviours, while helping to prevent and reduce the prevalence of social isolation in these seniors.

## Lighthouse

Lighthouse sought to provide long-term, one-on-one social support for youths aged 13 to 25 years who are emotionally vulnerable or have mental health concerns. Working with Social Services institutions such as the Institute of Mental Health's CHAT (Centre of Excellence for Youth Mental Health) and Samaritans of Singapore (SOS), the team provided volunteers with sponsored training in peer befriending and matched these volunteers to the socially vulnerable youth for a three-month befriending period under the guidance of a core team mentor.



### TechBridge

TechBridge focused on bridging the digital literacy divides between underprivileged students and their peers, through the building up of essential digital skills. Working with the Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC), the team held digital clinics to address digital difficulties faced by both parents and students from upper primary and lower secondary, promoting a family-centric approach and empowering underprivileged children to succeed in an increasingly digitalised society.

### 2023 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 holder's undergraduate experiences. The programme provides greater context to the realities of governance and highlights recent developments in Singapore. The PSMP includes a six-to-eight-week internship component with a government agency, where scholarship holders gain first-hand experience in the Public Service. 77 scholarship holders attended the PSMP held from 3 to 7 July 2023.

Organised together with the PSMP, the Singapore Seminar on 26 July 2023 brought together scholarship holders from various agencies under the theme "Strengthening Our Social Compact: Education in Transition". The forum featured insights and perspectives, as well as discussion on how the key shifts in Singapore's education landscape contribute to strengthening our social compact.







### **Diverse Experiences through Academic Programmes, Internships and the Gap Year**

Scholarship holders are encouraged to actively seek out diverse experiences, particularly in areas of strategic interest to the Public Service, to complement their formal education and provide them with a broader worldview.

In 2023, PSC scholarship holders took part in academic programmes across a wide range of countries including Antarctica, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland, to widen their horizons. Some of these programmes offered unique experiences, for example, studying the sustainable use of natural resources through field trips into the marine and terrestrial biology of the Antarctic Peninsula, and understanding the intricate issues surrounding migration and refugees in European nations through a summer term in the Freie University of Berlin.

Beyond academic programmes, scholarship holders took part in internships outside of the Public Service. In 2023, these included stints with the Berggruen Institute of China Centre, LinkedIn and GIC Singapore.

Scholarship holders also have the option of a Gap Year programme either locally or overseas with international organisations, reputable non-governmental organisations and private companies. The experiences from these stints inject diversity into the talent pipeline and build global networks. In 2023, scholarship holders did Gap Year programmes with the following organisations: FICCI.AI (United States), ClientEarth (United States), Allozymes (Singapore), Interpol (United States) and the UNESCO offices in France, Thailand and Kenya.



# 2023 PSC VISITS



# 2023 PSC VISITS

The PSC makes visits to Ministries and agencies to better understand the work and challenges of the Public Service. In 2023, the PSC did visits to a total of 14 Ministries and agencies, where the PSC was able to interact with public officers and learn more about the work across different sectors, ranging from growth and transformation at MHA, future capabilities of the Army at MINDEF, health crisis management at MOH to sustainability infrastructure at MND.





These regular visits strengthen the PSC's understanding and insights into the Public Service and help the PSC perform its roles and functions. The PSC would like to thank all public officers for their commitment and hard work in building a better Singapore.



