



Realising Your Career Aspirations

Is this really for me?

Hear from seniors on how they decided whether a career in the Public Service was for them and on their considerations when applying for the different PSC Scholarships.

What are your plans for the future?

Do you remember when you were asked, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" Well, these reflective questions are quite similar. Here, you will have the chance to ponder about the future and learn a little about what PSC has to offer.

Where do you want to study, work and settle down in the future?



Local



Overseas

Well, PSC offers you both choices! PSC Scholarships are bonded government scholarships that support undergraduate & postgraduate courses in almost every country in the world. PSC is willing to learn about and discuss with aspiring candidates any good programmes and universities that they wish to take up. You're not even limited to choosing one country! The PSC values the diversity of experiences and encourages holders to explore, be it via exchange programmes or the Gap Year programme – which allows you to work overseas for 6-12 months before returning to serve your bond. Although scholarship holders are required to return to Singapore to serve their bond after their studies, there are also postings within the Public Service that may allow you to work outside of Singapore or engage in work trips to foreign countries. The only limitation is your choice.

How do you plan to fund your university education?



Scholarship



Bank Loans



Work while Studying



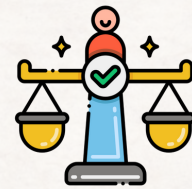
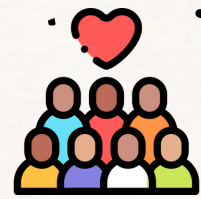
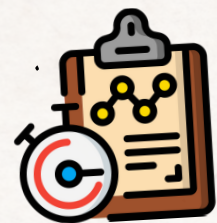
Parents Funding

With a PSC scholarship, you wouldn't have to worry much about funding! The scholarships fully fund your entire university education! This includes an allowance for your living expenses, travel for approved reasons, and tuition fee. It is important to note that such perks are given as scholarships holders have to serve out a bond (duration is dependent on the country of study) to fulfil their commitment to work as an officer in the Public Service.

What type of job can you see yourself working in?

- ☒ People-facing job
- ☐ Office desk job
- ☒ Routine job
- ☐ Problem-solving job
- ☒ Hands-on job
- ☐ Fast-changing job

You will be spoilt for choice in the Public Service. There are a multitude of roles, which include people-facing and desk-bound ones. Under the PSC scholarship, you have the opportunity to work at different ministries on exciting projects and be involved in policymaking. For those with more specialized interests that are not necessarily in policymaking, the scholarships also offer tracks to build you as a specialized leader.



What brings you joy in life?

- ☐ Making a difference in someone's life
- ☒ Spending quality time with your loved ones
- ☐ Successful career
- ☐ Money
- ☒ Finding meaning and enjoying your work
- ☐ Travelling the world
- ☐ Being surrounded by nature
- ☒ Maintaining work-life balance

If you didn't know, a job in the Public Service is very meaningful as your work will be able to make an impact on the entire Singapore. This includes the lives of your family and friends! Furthermore, you wouldn't get bored with the work as it is very challenging. Public servants have to manage a diverse range of complex issues that are both dynamic and rapidly changing. Just take a look at how every ministry had to help during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a scholarship holder, you could be one of them next time.

What are some personal characteristics that you are proud of?

- ☐ Creative
- ☒ Intelligent
- ☒ Courageous
- ☒ Funny
- ☒ Outgoing
- ☐ Resilient
- ☒ Adaptable
- ☐ Honest

Lucky you! The Public Service looks for talents with a wide diversity of traits. There isn't a specific character that PSC is looking out for. Each candidate brings their own unique perspective, and as long as you are able to meet the demands, the scholarship is an option for you.



What should you consider when choosing a career?

Hear stories from fellow Singaporeans to broaden your perspective and different-coloured tips to consider when making your career choice.

Sarah

*Sarah's experience working at the Auditor-General's Office (AGO)
Lazada and Nutanix*

The internship at AGO was **very purposeful** and I felt a sense of satisfaction after seeing the findings from the audit project I worked on published in the Auditor-General's Report. The findings ensure transparency and accountability of the Public Service towards the citizens. A major takeaway from this internship is also the importance of having **data analytical skill sets** in the audit industry so that one can conduct audits more efficiently in today's data-centric world. Such skills are also **highly sought-after in many other industries**.

Having done an audit internship in the public sector, I wanted to explore other industries in private firms. The two internship experiences at Lazada and Nutanix gave me insights about the working culture of private tech firms. I enjoyed the **fast-paced and casual working environment**. For both firms, the teams that I worked with comprised of employees from different countries, contributing to the unique and **diverse team dynamic**.

The **welfare** of both firms were amazing. Nutanix has a **wellness day** every quarter where all international offices will be shut to allow employees to focus on their mental health and well-being. I greatly enjoyed the **sales kick-off event** at Nutanix with inspirational talks and great DJ music to motivate them in the new financial quarter. For Lazada, I love the **vibrancy** of their office, which has an open concept and operates on a hot desking concept, facilitating open **discussions among colleagues**. Besides, I enjoyed their smart casual working dress code as it livened up the working environment."

Impact & Fulfillment

- What kind of impact does your work bring?
- How long-term are the effects of your work?

Career Stability & Flexibility

- How easy is it to move to other companies or industries? (or even countries?)
- How much are you compensated for the job?
- What is a typical turnover rate?

Bryan

Bryan's experience working at a start-up, DSTA and a Big Tech Company in Silicon Valley

"At DSTA, I made literature reviews and a proof of concept app. DSTA is a **large** organization with work that has the potential for a **big impact**. Projects are **longer-term**, which meant my team seemed to follow **more regular working hours**. There was more **welfare** in terms of activities and merchandise, something a smaller company might not have the resources for.

Finally, I did my most recent internship at a Big Tech company in Silicon Valley. It was an amazing experience as I was given an open-ended problem to solve, with a lot of space for **creativity and innovation**. It was **less hierarchical** — my work as an intern was used by my team. I was **excited** to go to work, and I was not alone. My co-workers were super **passionate** and very eager to help others outside the scope of their responsibilities. It was a big motivator, knowing that our products would be **used by millions across the globe**.

In all the 3 internships I did, the people I met seemed rather **satisfied**, and I found that **work culture varies** a lot between teams, between companies and between countries. The **scope of work** and the **team** you're working with are crucial."

Alexis

Alexis' experience working in a local media company, a local start-up, Tiktok, Shopee and Amazon

"I think that **working culture** differs a lot from company to company and is very much influenced by the **industry**. In new and emerging industries such as e-commerce, the **working pace** is very fast and can sometimes feel hectic or intense. This is also common in new start-ups, where **processes** might not be well-established yet and are being developed on the fly, especially in rapidly-expanding companies. This can be a bit frustrating if you prefer more structure. **Working hours** were also often quite irregular.

At the same time, all the companies where I worked had a very **flat culture** and I was able to easily approach my managers for questions and help. Things had to **move fast** and could move fast because **there wasn't much red tape involved**. This is in contrast to other industries such as banking or large MNCs, where some of my friends experienced a stricter **hierarchy** and more **bureaucracy**. The flip side is that well-established global companies will also have **more structured processes in place**.

Personally, the exposure to different industries and different types of companies really helped me to figure out where I might want to work. I settled in the tech industry as the working hours were not too bad, **the pay was relatively high** and I really enjoyed the company culture. Through my working experiences, I learned that I **enjoy an open environment free of unnecessary red tape and administrative work**, and that a healthy **work-life-balance** is very important to me."

Employee Profile & Work Culture

- What is the working culture of the industry / company / team?
- Do you prefer more international environments?
- How inclusive is the company?
- What are typical working hours?
- What kind of benefits are provided?
- How fast-paced is the working environment?
- How much support can you expect on the job? (i.e. skill upgrading, advice from superiors, etc.)
- Do you prefer more project-based work or routine tasks?

Hierarchy & Structure

- Is your company hierarchical or flatter?
- Do you prefer structured processes (with potentially more checks and balances / red tape) or more autonomy with faster approval processes (but greater uncertainty)?



Which scholarship is best for you?

There are many types of scholarships available. But which one suits you the best? Here are some differences you might want to consider.

1 General Considerations

Bond vs Unbonded

- Bonded scholarships provide certainty to your future career and offer job security for 4-6 years immediately after graduation, which allows you to use your time in university wisely and develop yourself with relevant skills that fit the role. There are also planned career pathways and development opportunities that come with it.
- Unbonded scholarships (e.g. from universities, organizations etc.) offer you flexibility and freedom in career/future options. You can discover your career plans while in university, before firming up your career plans.
- Mid-term and Master's scholarships from organizations such as PSC are also an alternative option for those who would prefer to make a decision later in their studies/life.

Local vs Overseas

- Some scholarships are only applicable for local universities, whereas others will fund overseas studies.
- Some scholarships apply for the specific country of study (e.g. DAAD for Germany)
- For bonded scholarships, local scholarships usually have shorter bonds than overseas scholarships
 - PSC Local Bond: 4 Years
 - PSC Overseas Bond: 5 Years for non-English-speaking countries & 6 years for English-speaking countries

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PSC Open vs Ministry-specific scholarship (incl. PSC Professional Service)

Studies

- What do you want to study? (Suggestion: List your hobbies or interest or anything you enjoy. Afterwards, group them together to see commonalities which might point you towards a certain sector)
- Is it important to you to be able to apply what you're studying?
- What other jobs does this degree offer outside the public sector? (Do you have a back-up plan?)

Open Scholarships

Greater flexibility in choice of degree (relevance to Public Service work in general)

Tied scholarships

Degree must have relevance to specific ministry

Nature of work (note: variable!)

- Which sector of the government interests you? Link back to what you study or your list of interests
- Which sector will your degree be able to add value to your work?
- Potentially interested in both? Indicate interest in both!

Open Scholarships

Tends towards policymaking (but might also involve more "hands-on" work, depending on posting); Posting after graduation is not fixed (i.e. more flexibility/choice)

Tied scholarships

Path after graduation usually planned out; some postings might be more "hands-on" (again, this is very variable) e.g. MOE scholarship holders (incl. PSC Teaching) are required to work initially as teachers

The career tracks under the Professional Service pathway include the Engineering, Foreign Service, Legal Service and Medical Officer tracks or the Teaching Service.
Some ministries that are NOT included in the PSC Professional Service pathway also offer scholarships (e.g. MSF, MCI, etc.)

Have you looked at what other scholarships this ministry offers? How do the benefits differ? What are the differences in potential work scope?

- e.g. MOE: PSC (Teaching) vs. MOE Teaching Scholarships (e.g. EMS, TS) and MOE Teaching Award
- e.g. MINDEF: SAF (awarded by PSC) and PSC (Engineering) vs. SAF Merit

Generally, PSC tied scholars will be seconded to a position in the wider Public Service i.e. outside your parent ministry. However, this does not apply to all the Professional Service scholarships (e.g. Legal Service). The individual is developed on a path to lend their skills beyond the specific domain and bring their specialist knowledge that has value, to complex multi-faceted issues to a wider scope of influence.

A ministry-specific scholarship (in comparison to PSC tied) means you stay where your keen passion and interests are, and choose the path that may suit you better, since not everyone may want to move into a wider scope and lead. So it really depends on what your calling is!

3 PSC (Professional Service) vs. Ministry Scholarships

- You can consult the individual ministries for more information on the specific scholarships provided.
- Other platforms such as BrightSparks also include comparisons between ministry scholarships.
- The application process differs for the specific scholarship; some are processed on the PSC portal and others on the specific ministry's portal. You can also apply to both! Moreover, application tasks/requirements are usually similar, so you can re-use your application.
- Pay attention to the different deadlines and apply early!

4 Final Words

- Still thinking about it? There's no harm trying! (Don't shut doors for yourself)
- There are many scholarship/funding options out there, and your choice depends on your personal priorities.