

## **SURVEY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE**

### **COUNTRY PROFILE**

*The smallest and most prosperous of nations in Southeast Asia. It became an independent nation on August 9, 1965 after its unexpected separation from the Federation of Malaysia. Located off the southern tip of the Malay Peninsular. Together with its 40 tiny adjacent islets, Singapore has 226 square miles (585 square kilometres) of territory. At its greatest extent, Singapore Island measures 23 miles from east to west and 14 miles from north to south. About 80 miles north of the equator, it lies at the mouth of the funnel-shaped Strait of Malacca, the water way between the Sumatra Island and Malaysia's west coast. Once a British colony, Singapore's political system is based on the British model of parliamentary democracy with a President as Head of State and Prime Minister as Head of Government. It is presently ruled by a disciplined socialist party.*

### *Economy, Population, and Demography:*

A market economy. Singapore is a highly successfully developed country in the world. With a superb natural harbour, Singapore's traditional economy is based on commerce. Trade and services such as transport, banking, storage, repair, insurance, and communications have given Singapore the reputation of being the most highly skilled middleman of Asia. The GNP was S\$76,172.2 mil billion in 1992.

Singapore's population is more than 2.8 million 75% of which live in the City of Singapore on the island's southern shore. Of the total population, Chinese, with five different spoken dialects, make up 76%; Malays make up 15% united by the use of the Malay language and Muslim faith; while "Indians", originating mainly in South Asian countries such as India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, account for 7% a major proportion use Tamil as their mother tongue. Singapore's literacy rate is one of the highest (91.1% in 1992) in the region.

*Official Languages :* Chinese, English, Malay, and Tamil.

### *Educational System:*

Singapore has a good educational system of formal and non-formal education. The formal education system consists of primary (age 6-11) and secondary (age 12-17). There are vocational and teacher training colleges and higher education institutions. The country

devotes more than one fifth of the total government recurrent expenditure on education.

*Communication  
Infra-structure:*

Singapore has a good system of communication including printing, radio and television broadcasts, postal services, telephone, and telecommunication facilities.

**OVERVIEW OF  
DISTANCE  
EDUCATION:**

Distance education in the Republic of Singapore is provided mainly by small, commercial, and overseas providers at university level. In the public sector, the National Productivity Board has been offering courses in career and technical area. A larger initiative in distance education is to be offered by the Singapore Institute of Management in collaboration with the British Open University.

*Factors Leading  
to Establishment  
of DE Programmes:*

The need to provide the opportunities for those who are not able to get higher education via traditional means due to family, social and economic considerations and limited opportunities in conventional education institutions.

*Year of  
Establishment:*

To be launched in January 1994.

*Media  
for Distance  
Education:*

Printed media supplemented by audio-visual media, tutorial (face-to-face, mailing, and telephone), computer assisted instruction, practical work, and schooling (day, evening, and weekend) at regional and study centres.

*Sources of  
Financial  
Supports:*

Government to give a one-time grant of \$38mil to help the institution to cover cost of developing programme.

*Trends of  
Development in  
Distance Education:*

Growing as the Open University Degree Programme is being planned and established as the newest open university in Southeast Asia.

*Legal Status:*

Government will assist SIM.

*Aims:*

To expand life-long educational opportunity and quality for adults to bring about individual, social, and national development.

*Control and  
Management:*

Representatives from the Ministry of Education, SIM & NUS will set up a steering committee.

*Instructional  
System:*

The students study mainly at home from distance education packages consisting of print media, audio-cassettes, video-cassettes, and computerized instruction as well as attending face-to-face tutorials, and schooling at designated study centres.

*Geographical coverage:* Nation-wide.

*Enrollment and Graduates in DE Programmes:* The first enrollment of 1,000 students is projected.

**LIST OF  
DISTANCE  
EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS:**

1. Singapore Institute of Management Open University Degree Programme
2. The National productivity Board.

**SINGAPORE OPEN UNIVERSITY\***  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

---

**INSTITUTIONAL  
DATA**

*Year of  
Establishment:* 1992.

*Name of Head:* **Dr. Tay Eng Soon**  
*Position:* *Vice-Chancellor (Designated)*  
*Address:* Ministry of Education  
Kay Siang Road,  
Singapore 1024, REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE.  
*Telephone:* 470-9203  
*Telex:* EDUN RS 34366  
*Fax:* 475-6128.

**Nature of institution:** Distance teaching only.

**Educational levels  
provided for DE  
programmes:** First degree.

<b>Titles and levels of DE programmes:</b>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Level</i>
	1. Bachelor of Art	Undergraduate
	2. Bachelor of Science	Undergraduate.

**Governance:** A national establishment.

**Objectives:** (1) National and economic development, (2) Individual personal development, (3) Life-long recurrent education, (4). Expansion of educational opportunity, and (5) Equality of educational opportunity.

**Sources of financial  
support of DE  
programmes:** *Tuition Fees:*  
The student pays all tuition expenses or required to pay a certain amount of tuition fees yet to be decided.  
*Budget:* From the Government.

---

\* Since the gathering of this data, press statements indicate that the Government of Singapore will not be proceeding with the establishment of the Singapore Open University. Alternative models are being studied and the launch date postponed to 1994.

<b>Trends of development of DE resources and activities:</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Trends of enrollment in DE Programmes:</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Number of current DE students:</b>	Current students: Not applicable. Annual intake: Not applicable.
<b>Number of annual DE graduates:</b>	Not applicable.
<b>Components of personnel in DE:</b>	Not decided yet.
<b>Number of Courses and programmes:</b>	Number of courses offered: 3 (in the first year) Foundation: Arts, Mathematics, and Science. Number of programmes offered: 2 (Planned).
<b>Production of teaching materials/media:</b>	1. Teaching materials and media are bought in from UK 2. Additional teaching materials are produced by Course teams. 3. The stages are (1) Acquire, (2) Local adaptation if necessary, (3) Deliver, (4) Assess, (5) Evaluate, and (6) Revise.
<b>Regional/Study Centres:</b>	To be available. Number of the centres: (To be decided); The centres are run by (To be decided); The sources of financial supports are from government and fees; Major functions of the centres are to provide tutorial, laboratory works, study space, and examination.
<b>Overall student Profile:</b>	Data not yet available.
<b>Major obstacles for implementing distance education:</b>	Not applicable.
<b>PROGRAMMES OF INSTRUCTION, MEDIA, METHODS, &amp; EVALUATION:</b>	List of Programmes: 1. Bachelor's degree.

## **PROGRAMME I: BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

---

**Level:** Undergraduate.

**Titles of programmes offered in this level:**

1. Bachelor of Arts
2. Bachelor of Science.

**Courses of instruction:**

*Humanities:*

History: World history  
Philosophy  
Psychology.

*Languages and Literature:*

Languages: English  
Literature: English.

*Engineering and technology:*

Computer technology, programming  
Electrical, electronic and microelectronic  
Engineering design  
Mechanical Engineering  
Materials science and metallurgy.

*Physical Science:*

Chemistry  
Electronics, microelectronics  
Physics.

*Biological Science and Technology:*

General biology and life sciences  
Applied biology  
Environmental studies  
Genetics.

*Mathematics:*

Computing  
Computer science  
Information technology  
Mathematical sciences  
Statistics.

*Social Sciences:*

Geography.

**Length of course:** *Minimum number of study hours/week/course: 10-12.*  
*Total number of weeks/course: 40.*  
*Total number of courses making up programmes: 6-8.*

**Media and methods:** *Most dominant:*  
 Printed correspondence texts.  
*Dominant:*  
 Audio-cassettes  
 Face-to-face tutoring  
 Tutorial via mailing  
 Face-to-face counselling  
 Counselling by telephone  
 Telephone tutoring  
 Kits  
 Practical work  
 Study centres  
 Day schools  
 Evening schools  
 Weekend schools  
*Least dominant:* None.

**Language of instruction:** English.

**Admission requirements:** (1) Completed "A" Level (Grade 12), (2) Meet the required minimum age of 21 years, and (3) Be a citizen of the country.

**Number of students:** Number of current students: Students not yet admitted.  
 Annual intake of DE students: 1,000 (projected).

**Evaluation:**  
*Continuous:* Written assignments for submission

*Final:* 1. Written final examinations  
 2. Oral final examinations.

<b>Profile of students in this level:</b>	<i>By Educational Background:</i>	(%)
	Secondary/High school:	100.0
	First degree:	-
	Higher degree:	-
	<u>Total:</u>	<u>100.0</u>

*By Employment:* Data not yet available.  
*By types of career:* Data not yet available.  
*By gender:* Data not yet available.

**Acceptance of certificates, diplomas, and degree:** Accepted as comparable to those given by non-distance education institutions.