

Career Advancement **Singapore City Guide:**

How to Prepare for a Successful Summer in Singapore

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Singapore Housing Overview

If you enjoy cities with plenty of recreation areas, then Singapore is for you! Despite being a densely populated metropolis, nearly 50% of the city is dedicated to green spaces. It even has a Botanic Garden that has been designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO.

Many University of Chicago students choose internships based in Singapore every year. The summer break provides students with the opportunity to explore the city and take advantage of the fun activities it has to offer. Whether you opt to live in the city or in surrounding areas, there are plenty of housing options for every preference.

The type of housing you're looking for, your budget, and your connections in Singapore are all factors that should help determine where you begin your housing search. The earlier you begin looking, the more options you will have and the easier it will be to choose exactly where you want to live for the summer. In the end, it is best to find housing that is near your job location with easy access to public transportation. This should be a priority when looking for housing, as it will make your commute to and from work easier and save you a lot of time and money.

Finding Summer Housing

Steps you should take when looking for housing:

1. *Consider finding a roommate.* You may end up spending a good amount of your summer income paying for rent. If you can find classmates, friends,

or relatives willing to room with you, this could be your best option for saving some money.

2. *Location is everything.* One strategy is to search for housing that is close to your workplace or near transportation that will get you to work quickly. Singapore has a variety of public transportation options for navigating the expanse of the city.
3. *Decide what is important to you.* Once you've decided on what neighborhoods would be convenient for you, it's always helpful to explore what attractions they have to offer. Whether you love trying new restaurants, shopping, or visiting cultural institutions, find a place that will give you the most time to explore your favorite things.
4. *Politely ask your employer about housing resources.* Your employer may have suggestions for where to live or be able to give you the contact information of other interns who are searching for housing so that you can room together or get advice.

Online Housing Resources

There are a variety of online housing resources that provide short-term housing vacancies, including:

<https://cove.sg/>

<https://www.dorms.com/Singapore/Singapore/>

<https://www.student.com/sg/singapore>

<https://www.sublet.com/>

In addition to the links above, Facebook groups are good places to look for short-term housing or roommates.

Student Housing Organizations

Student-specific housing is highly recommended when looking for internship housing in Singapore!

Student Housing Organizations are corporations that own large residential buildings and rent out rooms to students. Sometimes the buildings are set up like dormitories with single rooms and collective bathrooms, and other times the rooms are more like studio or one-bedroom apartments. It is important to look and apply for housing as soon as possible. There are pros and cons to living in student housing, just as there are for living in a dormitory.

Pros

- Amenities such as security, maintenance, etc.
- Opportunity to easily meet other students.
- Several options ranging from economical setups to ones with more amenities: prices can range between \$2,655 and \$4,083 for the entire summer.

Cons

- Possibility you'll be matched with a roommate.
- There are rules and regulations in most of these places that you will have to abide by.

These institutions offer summer housing: Prinsep Street Residences:

<https://corecurriculum.smu.edu.sg/prinsep>

Communal living accommodations for young adults enrolled in school. Rooms include a bed, desk, chair, and storage space. Students also have access to a communal dining hall, lounging areas, and a basketball court. This organization can be reached at psr@smu.edu.sg.

Residences at Stirling:

<https://hostel.mdis.edu.sg/>

This building is an on-campus hostel that hosts a vibrant student community. Residents can choose between a single, double, or quadruple occupancy room. Students also have access to a gym, a convenience store, and a shuttle bus service. Email: hostel_reservations@mdis.edu.sg.

Xacco Student Housing:

<https://xacco.co/>

Company that focuses on students that need short-term rentals. Rather than owning one building, Xacco helps people book a stay in any part of the city. Contact (+33) 650 65 77 99 or mail@xacco.co for more information.

Singapore Neighborhoods

The majority of students with summer internships in Singapore choose to live in different neighborhoods based on their internship location. Below is a list of neighborhoods that could be suitable housing options:

Bugis is located in the southern portion of the island. Bugis is one of the most well-known neighborhoods for street-shopping, with close to 400 shops and plenty of young adults!

Clementi is a popular neighborhood for universities and students. As a result of the student presence, Clementi offers shopping, cafes, and public transportation.

Duxton Hill is in the southern portion of the island, bordering Chinatown. This neighborhood is equally popular for its architecture and its nightlife!

Chinatown is home to some of the top tourist attractions in Singapore! The neighborhood offers great food and is famous for its colorful heritage centre buildings.

Tiong Bahru is the oldest housing estate in Singapore. This neighborhood is a mix of old and new, with plenty of young adults opening new cafes, restaurants, and shops to enjoy.

Rental Tips and Expectations

Applying for a Rental Unit

Most landlords will ask you to complete a rental application form. The application will typically ask for:

- Name, address, and telephone number
- Current and past landlords
- Financial information regarding your ability to pay the rent, like monthly or annual income
- Names of people who will be living in the unit

Cost of Living

A few notes to remember while considering housing costs:

- Please note, short term apartment leases are rare and expensive. The average monthly rent for a studio or 1-bedroom apartment ranges from \$2,000 per month or \$3,000+ per month for a 2-bedroom or 3-bedroom apartment.
- Hostels are available for a lower cost per month, but rooms or communal spaces (kitchen, living room) may be shared.
- While researching housing to rent, be aware of scammers on rental websites. A common tactic used by the seller is stating that they will be out of the city for months, limiting their accessibility. According to two students trying to find housing over the summer, “[they] also noticed that a lot of the scam responses were the same, someone leaving the city for 3 to 9 months for a job.”
- Be sure to get in contact (via phone, Zoom, etc.) with your landlord or leaser before agreeing to rent the vacancy. When possible, visit the space or do a video tour before signing the lease.

Singapore Transportation

SBS Transit Rail System

Singapore’s Transit Rail System covers the entirety of the city and is easy to navigate. Fares are based on distance traveled and can range from about \$0.75 to \$2.00.

Public Bus Routes

Rather than being operated by one entity, bus routes in Singapore are managed through several companies such as [Go-Ahead Singapore](#), [SBSTransit](#), [SMRT Buses](#), and [Tower Transit Singapore](#). Fare prices vary across routes.

Taxis and Shared Ride Options

Fares are paid in cash and are based on distance and time using the meter inside the car. You can also e-hail a cab through various mobile apps such as Grab or Gojek.

<https://www.grab.com/>

<https://www.gojek.com/>

Monthly Transportation Cost

EZ-Link Reloadable Card

This card can be used on both the Mass Rapid Transit and the Light Rail Transit systems—and even certain bus routes. In addition, the EZ-Link mobile app makes adding card balance and checking transactions much easier.

Singapore Safety

After living in Chicago for school, you should be well-versed in safety precautions for a big city. However, here are some basic tips you should be reminded of before your internship. Using common sense is good advice and you should read the following tips for a quick refresher.

General Safety Tips:

- Remember that there is safety in numbers. Walk with friends, or take populated routes when going places. Be especially careful at night.

- Plan your route in advance, walk with a purpose, and be alert at all times, especially when talking on a cell phone or using headphones in public.
- Avoid deserted areas such as parks and alleys.
- If you think you are being followed, cross the street, change direction, or go to a public place.
- Never display large amounts of cash or other valuables in public. If you need to organize your wallet, duck into a store or wait until you're home.
- Don't keep your wallet in the back pocket of your pants or backpack, and be aware of your wallet or purse in commotions. Pickpockets often employ helpers to create disturbances nearby.
- Use caution when using ATMs and don't carry too much cash around with you. Most places accept credit cards and ATMs are everywhere. Just make sure you choose one that is in a busy area.

Connect with Alumni

While you're in Singapore this summer, take advantage of the opportunity to connect with another great resource: University of Chicago alumni! Whether you're interested in working in Singapore after graduation, or you wish to find out more about certain career paths, networking with alumni may be one of the most beneficial things you do during your summer. Research alumni who are currently working in Singapore through the UChicago Wisr Network, an alumni mentoring platform: <https://uchicago.wisr.io/signup> and the online alumni directory: <http://www.uchicagoalumni.org>.