

# Students from diverse backgrounds join Duke-NUS' Class of 2028 to embark on their medical journeys

*A violinist, an athlete, engineers and architecture graduates highlight the diversity and drive of Duke-NUS Medical School's 18th cohort of medical students.*

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Medical School officially welcomed its 18th cohort of Doctor of Medicine (MD) students during a white coat ceremony, where the students' diverse academic experiences and vibrant backgrounds were celebrated. Among the 78 new students, a violinist, sportsman and an architecture graduate will learn their craft alongside science and engineering majors—all united by their passion to improve the lives of patients.



Duke-NUS' Class of 2028 celebrate the start of their medical journeys.

Held at The Ngee Ann Kongsi Auditorium on 2 August, the ceremony saw these future doctors don their white coats and recite the Hippocratic Oath in front of their families, Duke-NUS faculty and healthcare professionals, pledging to uphold the highest standards of medical practice and patient care.

In a first this year, the Class of 2028 includes seven Nanyang Technological University (NTU) graduates who were admitted into the School via a conditional admissions pathway. These pathways are a route for outstanding students from partner undergraduate programmes to pursue graduate-entry medicine. A total of 22 students were admitted via similar pathways from institutions such as the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD), the Singapore Management University (SMU) and the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Professor Thomas Coffman, Dean of Duke-NUS, said:

“This ceremony not only marks the start of our students' medical careers but also reinforces the strong collaborative ties Duke-NUS has with leading academic institutions including NUS, NTU and SUTD, providing outstanding students enrolled in complementary programmes at these institutions a direct route to fulfil their dreams of studying medicine, and setting them on a path



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to excellence in healthcare."

Among the first batch of NTU conditional admissions pathway students is Ms Dan Yuet Ruh, a violinist and Dean's Scholarship recipient whose experience in music has informed her approach towards practising medicine: "Learning the violin is a matter of the head and the heart—it requires strict discipline, and an almost empathetic understanding of the composer and the music I'm playing. Playing the violin has taught me not only that perfection, or even ability, only comes after years and years and years of actual blood, sweat and tears, but also how to channel my feelings and experiences into genuine connection,

without which communication and empathy would be impossible to achieve. Both are qualities I believe a good doctor would benefit from."

Ms Lim Yu Wen, who joined Duke-NUS via another conditional admissions pathway from SUTD, shared her vision of bringing architecture and medicine together:

"Being able to apply my background in architecture to innovation for the healthcare field would be a privilege. Already, we see various housing models emerging to enable our seniors to thrive. It makes me think about what our future healthcare facilities and living environments will look like. I think there's still space for more investigation and growth in this area."

They are among the 69 undergraduate degree holders, who together with two students who previously embarked on PhDs and seven master's degree holders make up the Class of 2028. Collectively, they represent a wide diversity of academic disciplines, having excelled in fields such as science, engineering, psychology, pharmacy, computer science, nursing, architecture, law, business and dentistry.

Embarking on the four-year research-intensive MD programme to become tomorrow's healthcare leaders are 57 Singaporeans, three Singapore Permanent Residents and 18 international students, further highlighting the cohort's diversity.

While pursuing a PhD in public health at The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Ms Wang Huwen's research on COVID-19 was published in the world-leading infectious diseases journal *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*. Now that she is on the cusp of starting her medical studies at Duke-NUS, Ms Wang, a Lee Foundation Scholarship recipient, shared how she hopes to make a difference as a doctor:

"I believe my research experience will be very valuable for my time at Duke-NUS and in my future work as a doctor. Doctors are often the first to encounter and have the opportunity to identify newly emerging infectious diseases, as we saw with the COVID-19 pandemic. Conducting research on COVID-19 has helped me understand the process of viral infection, which I hope will

enhance my ability to recognise and respond to new infectious diseases in the future.”

Having also excelled in their non-academic pursuits, the Class of 2028’s multifaceted students bring skills and experiences in sports, music and more with them as they enter the medical field.

As an undergraduate student, Mr Abhay Menon captained his university’s basketball team to a league title while pursuing an education in bioengineering. Mr Menon, a recipient of the Shaw Foundation Scholarship, shared his dream of leveraging his experiences to engineer medical solutions:

“My aspiration to improve the quality of life for amputees through innovative prosthetic technologies stems from my research in 3D bioprinting and regenerative medicine. I have always been fascinated by the intersection of engineering and medicine in solving pressing problems in healthcare.”

With its newest intake, Duke-NUS will continue to develop future healthcare leaders, innovators, scientists and educators with both technical excellence and empathy when caring for patients through its world-class MD curriculum. Students will complement that with clinical training at institutions under SingHealth, as part of Duke-NUS’ strategic partnership with Singapore’s largest healthcare group.

Upon completion of the MD programme, students receive an MD degree jointly awarded by Duke University and the National University of Singapore.

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