

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMME 2026



NUS Law

The National University of Singapore Faculty of Law (NUS Law) is widely regarded as the leading law school in Asia. Staffed by an outstanding permanent faculty diverse in origin and qualifications, NUS Law is dedicated to building a vibrant community and creating an environment that facilitates critical thinking and reflection on the fundamental legal issues confronting our interconnected world. Located in Singapore, which for more than a century has been a commercial hub at the crossroads of Asia, NUS Law is very much Asia's Global Law School.

The PhD programme at the school offers outstanding candidates the opportunity to pursue advanced research under the mentorship of world-class legal scholars. Designed for those aspiring to contribute original and significant work to the field of law, the programme combines rigorous coursework with the development of a substantial doctoral thesis. Students benefit from NUS Law's vibrant intellectual community, broad research strengths—including international law, comparative law and commercial law—and extensive global academic networks. Throughout their studies, candidates receive close supervision and are encouraged to engage critically with complex legal issues across jurisdictions. Graduates of the programme are well-equipped for careers in academia, international organisations or advanced legal practice, and are part of a dynamic network of scholars who shape legal thought regionally and globally.



Featured on cover:
(from left) Supawich Sirikanchana (Thailand), Kanika Jamwal (India),
Yeo Bee Lian Jeanette (Singapore), Alfian Yasrif Bin Kuchit (Singapore)

NUS Law is the

#1 Law School in Asia

#12 Law School in the World (THE)

Source: Times Higher Education (THE)
World University Rankings by Subject 2025: Law

#10 Law School in the World (QS)

Source: Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)
World University Rankings by Subject 2025: Law



MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN



NUS Law's graduate programmes—our PhD, LLM and JD degrees—are an integral part of our vision as Asia's Global Law School. Every year, we welcome lawyers from dozens of countries around the world to Singapore, one of the most dynamic, open and multicultural nations on the planet. When you come to do your PhD at NUS, you will be part of a global research conversation, engaging with experts in the field and studying beside future leaders in the law.

At the same time, our PhD programme is highly selective. We admit only a few students each year. So each of you is special. When you complete an elective course, you will be working alongside a wide variety of fellow students. As researchers, however, you will receive individual attention from your advisor—or, where appropriate, advisors. And you will join a small community that has its own dedicated training programme and events.

Naturally, many of those events are academic. But many are also social—and sometimes, both. Some of your fellow students will become lifelong friends. And rightly so. Graduate studies should be about more than just study. We are fortunate that NUS Law sits on a vibrant campus that is only a bus or subway ride from all sorts of interesting locations, whether cultural, botanical or culinary. And, of course, just a short flight to the rest of Southeast Asia. A PhD here has life-changing possibilities. I hope that, with NUS Law, you will embrace that journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Simester".

Professor Andrew Simester

Dean

Faculty of Law

National University of Singapore



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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE DEAN (RESEARCH)



NUS Law's PhD programme stands out for its academic excellence, supportive environment and diverse community. As Vice Dean of Research, I am proud to invite you to become part of our exclusive, close-knit group of scholars united by a shared passion for advancing legal knowledge and addressing the pressing issues of our time.

Each year, we admit only a small number of PhD students, ensuring personalised attention from our dedicated academic and administrative staff and meaningful connections with peers. In addition to guidance by faculty members renowned for their expertise, our students benefit from immersion in NUS Law's research community, where they will have opportunities to participate in seminars, conferences and workshops that enrich their academic journey.

At NUS Law, we are also committed to accessibility. A wide range of scholarships and financial support is available, reflecting our dedication to attracting talented scholars from around the world and ensuring that financial constraints do not hinder academic success.

Whether your interests lie in theoretical, doctrinal, comparative, historical, critical or interdisciplinary approaches to the study of law, NUS Law offers the mentorship, resources and global network you need to thrive. Join our vibrant and inclusive community, where close relationships and academic rigour come together to shape the future of legal scholarship.

Professor Lynette J. Chua

Vice Dean (Research)

Faculty of Law

National University of Singapore

ASIA'S GLOBAL LAW SCHOOL



A Brief History

NUS Law is part of the National University of Singapore (NUS), the oldest tertiary institution in Singapore. The roots of NUS Law lie in the establishment of the Department of Law in the then University of Malaya in 1956. The first law students were admitted to the Bukit Timah Campus of the University in 1957. In 1959, the Department attained Faculty status with Professor Lionel Astor ("Lee") Sheridan serving as the founding Dean.

The pioneer class of law students graduated in 1961, counting among its most illustrious members Professor Tommy Koh (Ambassador-at-Large and former Dean), former Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong, former Dean Thio Su Mien,

Emeritus Professor Koh Kheng Lian, former Solicitor-General Koh Eng Tian and former Police Commissioner Goh Yong Hong.

With the decision of the Government of Singapore and the Federation of Malaya that the Singapore Division and the Kuala Lumpur Division of the University of Malaya should become autonomous national universities in their respective countries, the University of Singapore, with its campus in Bukit Timah, was established on 1 January 1962.

In 1980, the University of Singapore and Nanyang University (Nantah) merged to form NUS. With that, the Faculty of Law became part of the modern NUS.

"Our ambition is to continue to be the best law school in Asia and one of the best in the world. This is where civilisations of the world meet and co-mingle. We offer faculty and students a unique multicultural milieu for study, research and mutual learning."

Professor Tommy Koh
Class of 1961
Ambassador-at-Large
Former Dean of NUS Law



DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The PhD programme is a small, highly selective programme of 20 to 25 research students across four years. The Faculty aims to give the most extensive support to help all students achieve their doctorate. A majority of our students are given scholarships to cover tuition fees, as well as a monthly stipend.

Each student will have one or two supervisors with whom they will discuss their work regularly. They will be given research training across the whole of the first year and will participate in fortnightly doctoral workshops with all of their fellow doctoral students across the whole of their time here. There is also a common working and social space, regular social events and research funding for field trips and conferences. Our aim is for our research students to be challenged and for them to realise their research dreams.

Degree Requirements

Students will participate in Doctoral Workshops and Graduate Research Seminars as part of their Research Training, which aims to enhance legal research skills and methodologies, broaden perspectives on legal scholarship, build confidence in presenting ideas, and refine research questions and agendas.

Required courses include LC6378 Doctoral Workshop and LC6009GRSII Graduate Research Seminar II. Additionally, students have the opportunity to take up to four elective courses, which must be selected in consultation with their thesis advisors, with the option to waive a maximum of three of these electives.

Those who complete the coursework requirements will be permitted to take the Doctoral Candidate Qualifying Examination (DCQE), where they must defend a preliminary outline of their proposed thesis in a 30- to 40-page research proposal before a Thesis Committee. This examination occurs within 12 to 18 months of enrolment.

Where the Thesis Committee is satisfied that a thesis proposal is a viable one and the student is competent to produce a thesis by the end of the candidature period, their PhD candidature will be confirmed.

Programme Duration

Most PhD candidates complete their thesis within three to four years. The minimum period of candidature is two years, and the maximum is five years.

RESEARCH INTERESTS

Global, regional and uniquely Singaporean perspectives on legal issues are all evident in the research produced by our faculty. The professors at NUS Law are not only engaged in a constant search for better legal solutions to the issues that confront all societies, but are also continually challenging accepted wisdom and conventional norms by raising new questions and problems to be addressed. Their work stretches across all aspects of law and appears in the most prestigious journals as well as books published by leading university presses around the world. They write on Singapore's domestic law as well as comparator jurisdictions, both within the common law world and further afield. In addition, NUS Law professors' research genres span doctrinal, theoretical, comparative, critical, historical, international, socio-legal and other approaches and methodologies. To find out more about NUS Law faculty's research specialisations, visit law.nus.edu.sg/research.

VISITING PROFESSORS

Every year, NUS Law hosts over two dozen visiting professors. They come from some of the top universities in the world including Harvard, Yale, Oxford, Cambridge, the LSE, Melbourne, Seoul National University and University of Hong Kong, among many others. Our international visiting faculty conduct classes on their areas of expertise during their time with us and they add to the cosmopolitan nature of our law school by bringing their own unique perspectives to the legal education offered by NUS Law.



Professor Shazia Choudhry (Wadham College, Oxford), as the Kwa Geok Choo Distinguished Visitor in 2024, delivered a lecture on human rights, the family justice system and domestic abuse

CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

At NUS Law, our faculty members and researchers organise a vibrant array of international conferences and workshops. In any given year, the conferences and workshops hosted by NUS Law and its research centres cover topics in public law, private law, international law, comparative law, legal history, law and society, jurisprudence, and more. These events foster rich intellectual exchanges, connecting scholars, practitioners and policymakers from around the globe to tackle pressing legal challenges. PhD students will be able to immerse themselves in this stimulating environment, engaging with thought leaders and contributing to groundbreaking discussions that shape the future of law.

Our students will have ample opportunities to broaden their academic networks, gain exposure to interdisciplinary approaches and develop deeper expertise in their chosen fields. The close integration between doctoral research and the activities of these centres ensures that NUS Law PhD students are well-positioned to produce impactful, globally relevant scholarship.



The inaugural International Forum on Asian Laws was held in August 2024, co-organised by the Centre for Asian Legal Studies at NUS Law and the Oxford Programme in Asian Laws at the University of Oxford's Law Faculty

A portrait of a woman with short dark hair, smiling, wearing a black blazer over a black top. She is standing in a library or study area with bookshelves and tables in the background. The lighting is warm and indoor.

**Yeo Bee Lian Jeanette (Singapore),
NUS Law Doctoral Candidate**

"The NUS Law PhD programme has profoundly changed how I engage with the world around me. My classmates and the professors have challenged and inspired me in ways for which I am ever grateful."



**Alfian Yasrif Bin Kuchit (Singapore),
NUS Law Doctoral Candidate**

"I pursued my PhD at NUS Law to explore the intricate intersections of Islamic jurisprudence, customary law, colonial history, bureaucracy and politics in Southeast Asia. NUS provided the ideal environment, with access to renowned experts from various Faculties, exceptional resources including world-class libraries and administrative support, and a vibrant and collaborative research culture fostered by strong camaraderie among the PhD cohort."

ADMISSIONS

The application period commences on 1 September and ends on 15 October, for the academic year starting in August the following year. There is only one intake per academic year.

For detailed information on how to apply, visit nusgs.nus.edu.sg/programmes/phd-law.

Admission Requirements

Prospective applicants should possess the following academic qualifications to be considered for admission:

- A good Bachelor's or first degree in Law (LLB/BA/JD); OR a good Master's degree in Law (LLM/BCL/MJur/MPhil) with a relevant Bachelor's degree; OR relevant equivalent qualifications
- Minimum TOEFL iBT Total score of 100—Candidates who have obtained a minimum IELTS (Academic) overall band score 7.0 may also apply.

TUITION FEES

The table below shows the applicable fees per annum for Academic Year 2024/2025. Please note that tuition fees may be subject to change from time to time. Please refer to updates at nus.edu.sg/registrar/administrative-policies-procedures/graduate/graduate-fees.

Government-subsidised Graduate Coursework Programmes

Research Programme	Fees payable by students in receipt of MOE Subsidy		International Students
	Singapore Citizens	Singapore Permanent Residents	
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	S\$9,600	S\$14,100	S\$40,300

THESIS REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

The PhD is awarded upon the submission of a thesis of not more than 100,000 words that is a substantial piece of original research in a particular field of law, or a critical interpretation worthy of publication, written under supervision by a Faculty academic member.

PhD students have to submit their theses for examination (after being approved by their respective supervisor(s) and the Vice Dean, Research) by the maximum period of candidature or such date as stipulated by the supervisors or the University, whichever date is earlier.

The oral examination will only be convened if the candidate has passed the thesis examination.

Your doctoral degree will be conferred by the Board of Graduate Studies at NUS about one to two months after the examiners have recommended that it be awarded.

PHD GRADUATES



"Pursuing a PhD at NUS Law was a most transformative journey, which contributed significantly to my professional and personal development. I benefitted immensely from outstanding supervision and great support provided by the Faculty and the University. The University's rich intellectual environment was highly conducive to undertaking advanced research, and I was very fortunate to engage in the scholarly activities of the Faculty's vibrant research centres. I thoroughly enjoyed my doctoral experience and I am deeply grateful for all the wonderful opportunities."

Dr Irina Sakharova PhD '22

Lecturer in Contract Law

Durham Law School, Durham University



"NUS Law provided me with an extremely conducive environment for engaging in doctoral research. The excellent resource base in the libraries of the University, both physical and online, seemed to cater comfortably to my relentless pursuit of primary and secondary sources from multiple jurisdictions. The coursework on research methodologies taught me the intricacies of legal research and writing. Most importantly, I was fortunate to enjoy the support and camaraderie of the wider NUS Law community comprising faculty members and other doctoral candidates that made an otherwise lonely scholarly journey so lively."

Professor Umakanth Varottil PhD '10

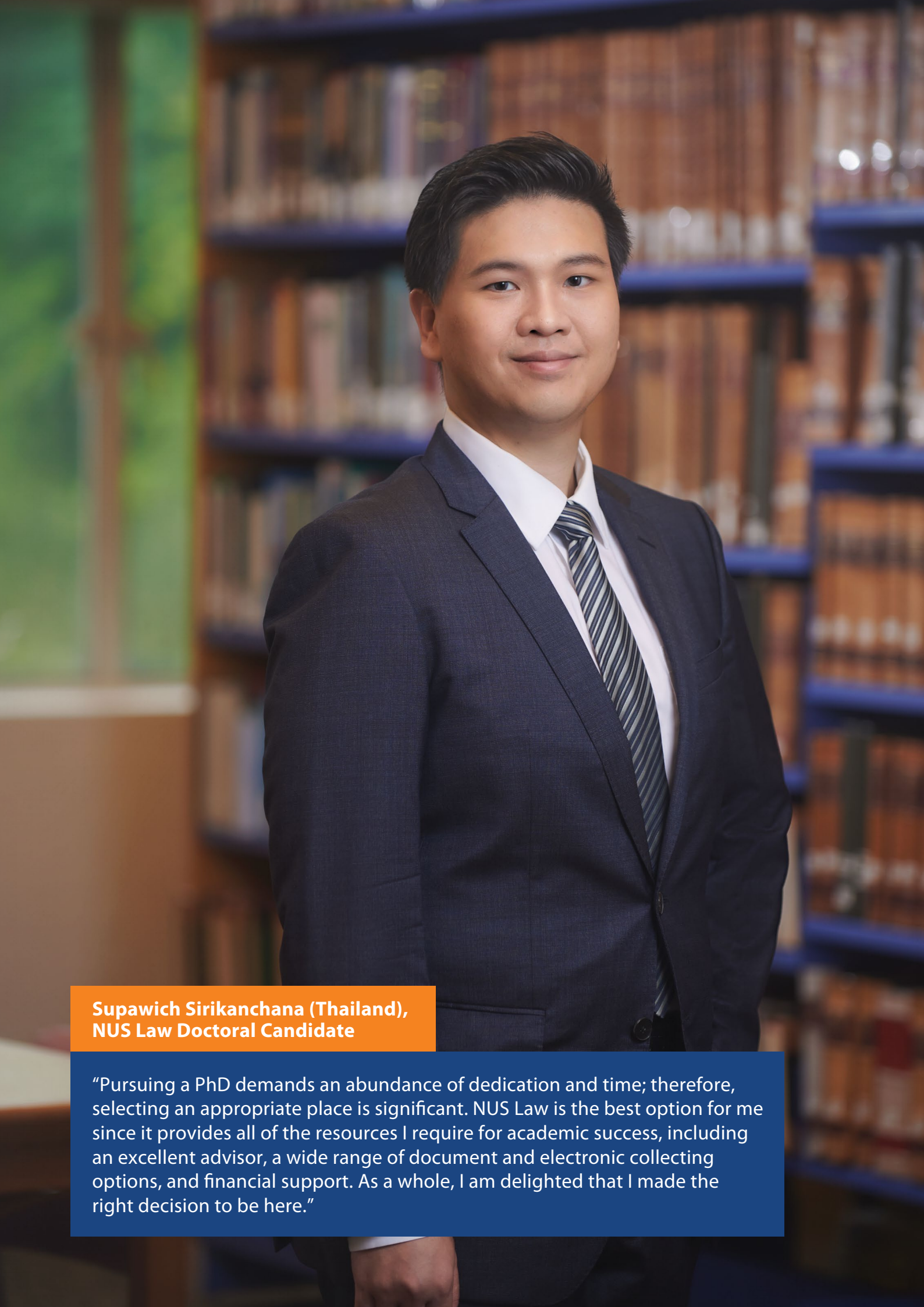
Vice-Dean of Graduate Studies

NUS Law



**Kanika Jamwal (India),
NUS Law Doctoral Candidate**

"The PhD programme at NUS Law provides an exceptional environment for pushing the boundaries of conventional legal research. It encourages innovative and experimental approaches, offering support for cutting-edge research projects. Further, opportunities to participate in research workshops, both within the PhD community and across the broader academic network, create an intellectually stimulating environment."



**Supawich Sirikanchana (Thailand),
NUS Law Doctoral Candidate**

"Pursuing a PhD demands an abundance of dedication and time; therefore, selecting an appropriate place is significant. NUS Law is the best option for me since it provides all of the resources I require for academic success, including an excellent advisor, a wide range of document and electronic collecting options, and financial support. As a whole, I am delighted that I made the right decision to be here."

SCHOLARSHIPS

We offer several fully funded places for our Doctoral Programme at every intake. Successful applicants will receive:

- (i) a monthly stipend of between S\$2,500 and S\$3,200 per month (as per AY 2024/2025 scholarship rates), and
- (ii) a full tuition fee subsidy for a maximum of four years

The scholarships available to Law Doctoral candidates are as follows (in alphabetical order):

- ASEAN Scholarship
- Commonwealth Scholarship
- NUS Research Scholarship
- President's Graduate Fellowship

PhD students who are on applicable scholarships and who successfully pass the Doctoral Candidate Qualifying Exam will receive an additional monthly stipend of up to S\$500 per month. We will also provide funding for research expenses and conferences up to a maximum of S\$8,000 during the period of the programme.

The ASEAN Scholarship programme was launched in AY 2025/2026 by the NUS Graduate School. This programme aims to grow the next generation of ASEAN educators and technology leaders. Awardees will be assessed on their suitability for graduate school as well as their potential to contribute back to their home country in terms of education or industry/technology development. The Faculty of Law will nominate deserving candidates for this scholarship from our ASEAN applicants.

For a full list of scholarships available, please visit nusgs.nus.edu.sg/scholarships.

ACCOMMODATION

On-campus housing for graduate students is located at the main Kent Ridge Campus. Full-time international research graduate students with accompanying spouses will be given priority to apply for the married graduate accommodation. Married graduate students with accompanying children usually have to live off-campus where it may be more suitable for families.

Please note that university housing is not guaranteed as demand usually exceeds supply. Graduate students may apply for on-campus accommodation, subject to availability. More details on housing are available at the Office of Student Affairs website at nus.edu.sg/osa/.

The NUS Office of Student Affairs also maintains a list of private accommodation (please visit osa.nus.edu.sg/accommodation/other-accommodation) such as single or double rooms in private apartment blocks around the Kent Ridge campus.

Do note that in Singapore, when one rents an apartment in the private market, the landlord usually expects one month's advance rent and one month's security deposit. The real estate agent may also expect the equivalent of one month's rent as commission.



RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES

NUS Law is home to various centres and institutes that cater to specialised areas within the international legal infrastructure. Our centres and institutes attract a wide range of experts to join the conversation on important areas of law. The ideas and solutions advanced in these incubators of legal innovation have a broad impact in Singapore and around the region. The centres and institutes also provide students with valuable research opportunities and the chance to work directly with faculty members on projects at the core of their scholarly agendas.

Active participation in centre-led activities gives our PhD students valuable hands-on experience beyond their individual research projects. By engaging in workshops, seminars and collaborative initiatives, students sharpen essential skills such as research design, academic writing, public speaking and project management. These experiences contribute directly to their academic development, while also building practical capabilities that are highly valued in professional settings. Students not only deepen their expertise in their fields but also strengthen their visibility, positioning themselves competitively for careers in academia, research institutions, international organisations and industry.

Asia-Pacific Centre for Environmental Law (APCEL)

APCEL was established in cooperation with the World Conservation Union-Commission on Environmental Law and the United Nations Environment Programme, in response to the call in Agenda 21 to build capacity in environmental law and promote environmental consciousness.

APCEL has pioneered a wide-ranging programme of teaching, research and outreach to galvanise the use of legal mechanisms to address climate change, biodiversity loss and plastics pollution. Recent projects include research on the Paris Rulebook, sustainability standards, and environmental courts and tribunals.

✉ lawapcel@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/apcel

Asian Law Institute (ASLI)

ASLI facilitates collaboration and encourages excellence in research and teaching in Asian law. It is based on a co-operative enterprise and has at its heart the ethos of being true to its roots. It prides itself as an indigenous institute of Asian law, created in Asia by Asian law schools and open to the world.

✉ asli@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law1a.nus.edu.sg/asli/index.aspx

Asian Society for International Law (AsianSIL)

AsianSIL is an international non-partisan, non-profit and non-governmental organisation that promotes research, education and practice of international law by serving as a centre of activities among international law scholars and practitioners in Asia and elsewhere, in a spirit of partnership with other relevant international, regional and national societies and organisations.

✉ asiansil-admin@nus.edu.sg

🌐 asiansil.org

Centre for Asian Legal Studies (CALS)

CALS serves as a dynamic intellectual hub for Asian legal studies in Singapore, for the region, and the global academic community. Our research focus includes comparative legal research in civil law, commercial law, public law, and law and religion in Asia.

✉ cals@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/cals

Centre for Banking & Finance Law (CBFL)

CBFL generates scholarship and debate about the many facets of the banking sector, the capital markets and other financial services in Singapore, the region and internationally.

✉ cbfl@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/cbfl

Centre for International Law (CIL)

CIL was established as a university-level research institute at NUS in response to the growing need for international law thought leadership and capacity building in the Asia Pacific region. CIL's focus areas of research and training are Ocean Law and Policy, ASEAN Law and Policy, Investment Law and Policy, International Dispute Resolution, Nuclear Law and Policy, Teaching and Researching International Law in Asia (TRILA), Global Health and Policy, Climate Change and Public International Law. In addition to the numerous specialised courses, CIL holds the annual CIL eAcademy on International Law, ASEAN Law Academy, Singapore International Arbitration Academy and the International Trade Academy.

✉ cil.info@nus.edu.sg

🌐 cil.nus.edu.sg

Centre for Legal Theory (CLT)

CLT brings together a variety of colleagues whose theoretical interests connect with the law in diverse ways, ranging across a number of legal specialisms as well as related disciplines. The Centre exists to promote formal and informal exchanges on theoretical work undertaken by members of the Faculty and by colleagues from other institutions.

✉ clt@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/clt

Centre for Maritime Law (CML)

CML is sponsored by the Singapore Maritime Institute (SMI) and focuses on commercial maritime law research and enhancing knowledge and expertise among the shipping community in Singapore. CML also leads in the teaching of maritime law in the Faculty.

✉ cml@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/cml

Centre for Pro Bono & Clinical Legal Education (CPBCLE)

CPBCLE is the central body that oversees and runs pro bono programmes and the clinical legal education programme at NUS. The programmes offer law students the opportunity to be of service to the community while honing the craft of lawyering.

✉ probono@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/cpbcle

EW Barker Centre for Law & Business (EWBCLB)

EWBCLB seeks to enhance and promote research and educational opportunities for faculty, students, legal practitioners and business executives who share a common interest in the fields of law, business and economics.

It is a broad church that, at the same time, has deep specialisation in corporate and insolvency law, private law, intellectual property, taxation and arbitration.

✉ ewbclb@nus.edu.sg


🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/ewbclb

Private Law Discussion Group (PLDG)

The PLDG is a group of scholars at NUS Law pursuing scholarship in private law. Its mission is to enhance the culture of discussion and scholarship in any area of private law. Members meet regularly and engage with the regional and international private law research community.

✉ pldg@nus.edu.sg

🌐 law.nus.edu.sg/pldg



"As one of the chosen few, our PhD students work at the heart of a new global legal order, located in a vibrant, multiethnic community. Coming to NUS Law will change your life, both academically and personally."

**Professor
Andrew Simester**

*Dean
Faculty of Law
National University of Singapore*



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