



# Forbes flops over NUS

## It fails to take into account uni's heavy subsidies

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THE National University of Singapore (NUS) has been named by Forbes.com as one of the world's most expensive universities.

It ranks alongside US institutions like George Washington University in Washington DC, Kenyon College in Ohio, Canada's Quest University, and Imperial College in the UK.

Forbes reported that full annual fees at NUS comes to about US\$24,000 (\$36,000) on

average. A spokesman for NUS said, however, that the university does not consider itself one of the most expensive universities in the world.

"The tuition fee actually payable by students for the majority of courses at NUS is much lower because they receive tuition grants from the Government," the spokesman said.

The spokesman is right – the Forbes rankings do not take into account any financial aid, such as subsidies and grants, that students may receive.

According to the NUS spokesman, all Singaporean students pay subsidised fees of between \$6,000 and \$8,000 per annum for undergraduate courses other than medicine.

The fees for international students range from \$9,000 to \$12,000 per year. Only those who do not receive the Ministry of Education's tuition grant pay the full fees.

The spokesman said: "These fees are much less than what is charged by other top universities overseas."

"Imperial College London, which is also cited by Forbes as one of top universities outside the US, charges annual tuition fees that are in the \$33,000 to \$43,000 range. Top US universities charge even more."

The spokesman explained that international students who take up the tuition grant

sign a deed with the Singapore Government requiring them to work in Singapore for three years upon graduation from NUS.

In addition, NUS also offers financial assistance to students in the form of tuition fee loans, bursaries and scholarships.

These are available to both Singaporean and international students.

Most Singaporean students pay heavily subsidised fees. (See table, below.)

### Netizens bash article

The Forbes article, which reports Singaporean students pay just "a few thousand" less than full tuition, has caused an uproar in cyberspace.

Many netizens criticised the article for not presenting an accurate picture of the fees most students pay to attend NUS.

One netizen wrote on blog aggregator Tomorrow.sg: "If you ever apply to a local university in Singapore, you will immediately find that something is wrong with the figures."

"Given that almost all citizens qualify for a tuition grant, you end up paying about a quarter of the full fees."

Another netizen added: "I couldn't care less if the 'actual cost' was a million dollars a month – the fact is, I'm paying \$6,110 a year after the subsidy. And \$6,110 is dirt cheap, compared to Australia, the UK and the US."

However, several netizens commented that tuition fees for non-Singapore residents were expensive compared to other universities.

One netizen wrote: "The article is correct. This is the actual cost without grants... It is one of the most expensive colleges..."

But NUS students The New Paper spoke to – both local and foreign – mostly echoed netizens' sentiments that the article had somewhat misrepresented student fees.

Miss Rachel Tan, 21, a European Studies and Political Science student at NUS, said: "As a Singaporean, I get subsidised school fees. I think the main thing people are unhappy about may be that foreign students on scholarships get the same subsidies."

Foreign students, such as Miss Amitha Pagolu, 20, an NUS literature student from India, also benefit from lower fees.

"The fees are not an issue – I'm not Singaporean, and I pay about \$4,500 every semester. The Ministry of Education has already subsidised (my education) quite a lot."

However, students like Jaryl Kok, 22, a Medicine undergraduate at NUS, said he was concerned that tuition fees would get expensive.

He said: "It is an issue. We pay about three times more (than non-medicine undergraduates) over five years, which is about six to seven times more in total."

"We still pay about \$18,000 per year and \$90,000 over five years – even after subsidies."

### How the fees compare

#### NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

##### Subsidised fees for:

- Singapore citizens: \$6,360 - \$18,230
- Singapore PRs: \$7,000 - \$20,060
- Non-Singapore citizens: \$9,540 - \$27,350

#### NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

##### Subsidised fees for:

- Singapore citizens: \$6,360
- Singapore PRs: \$7,000
- Non-Singapore citizens: \$9,540

#### SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

##### Subsidised fees for:

- S'pore citizens: \$9,130
  - Singapore PRs: \$10,040
  - Non-S'pore citizens: \$13,700
- For non-bachelor of law degrees*
- Singapore citizens: \$10,050
  - Singapore PRs: \$11,060
  - Non-S'pore citizens: \$15,080
- For bachelor of law*