

For the

# Next Generation

of Students

After an eventful year of new projects and initiatives, the time came for the 26th Singapore Medical Society of the United Kingdom (SMSUK) committee to pass the torch to the 27th SMSUK committee. We are grateful to *SMA News* for their continued support of SMSUK, and it is our aim to continue building upon this treasured relationship, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our world.

Our society's vision for this year is centred on two themes: "Career Development" and "Community". Through our events and initiatives, we hope to inspire confidence in our members as they make decisions pertaining to their future careers. It is also our aim to cultivate a stronger sense of community between SMSUK members that transcends geographical boundaries.

As SMSUK's newest editor, I hope our readers enjoyed the first column I had

written back in June (<https://bit.ly/5306-Letter>) and I look forward to bringing everyone more exciting and relatable content about SMSUK and our members.

This time of the year, many fresh-faced Singaporean students will be preparing for their first year of medical school in the UK. It is without doubt that pursuing a university education far away from home and friends can be very daunting. Based alone in a foreign country, navigating unfamiliar accents and food, gaining independence and learning to take care of your own needs are just some of the rites of passage every Singaporean student studying in the UK has to undergo. Hence, this month, we asked our members to share some words of advice for Singaporean students embarking on this leap into a UK university education.

– Chin Sue-Kay, Editor, SMSUK

Text by Zhu Hongguang

Congratulations on being given the opportunity to pursue medicine in the UK. I can guarantee that the next five to six years will be one of the most fulfilling, adventurous and stressful periods in your life.

For most of you who have been through a rather mollycoddled life growing up in Singapore, there will be many firsts when you move to the UK. Some of you may be taking a long-haul flight alone, living alone or with friends, and even cooking your own meals or washing your own laundry, all for the first time. You may also feel terribly homesick during the early days of your studies.

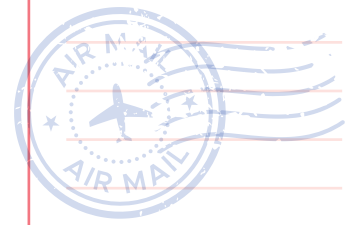
Soon, you will realise how huge and diverse the world is after leaving the "little red dot". In your studies, you will have the opportunity to interact with classmates, teachers and patients from

all backgrounds. Should you decide to continue your medical career in the UK after your studies, you will also gain valuable insights into a different healthcare system and working environment. Perhaps you can even bring home the positive aspects should you decide to return to Singapore after gaining a greater world view.

Try not to spend your whole university life buried in your textbooks. Take a cheap flight out to explore the nearby European countries on a weekend trip. Enjoy a night out with your friends. University life only comes once. It is great if you managed to snag that one additional mark on your examination. However, if it came at the expense of missing out on meaningful experiences, your university life in the UK is as good as wasted.



**Zhu Hongguang** is a medical alumni of Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry.



**Toong Ping Jing** is a Year 2 medical student at University of Cambridge.

Text by Toong Ping Jing

To Singaporean students wanting to study in the UK, I would highly encourage you to do so. For those that will be starting university this year, congratulations on making it. It will be a significant milestone in your life and the beginning of your medical career. Just a year ago, I was in the same position as you. Preparing to begin university at a foreign place far away from my home and family was very daunting, and being exposed to a different culture really is both exciting and scary.

After a year at the University of Cambridge, I have grown and developed in many ways that would not have been possible if I had attended a local university. One of the main skills I picked up, of course, was cooking. I learnt to buy groceries, estimate the amount I would eat for each meal and even got to

experiment with many different recipes. Initially, most of my food stuck to the pan and many were either overcooked and burnt, or undercooked. I also became more independent, having to keep track of my bills and finances on my credit card. I learnt to problem-solve, to ask for help when needed and to stand up for myself.

If you encounter challenges, do not hesitate to seek help. Do not feel shy or embarrassed to ask "stupid" questions as everyone has had to start somewhere. In university, there are many tutors that you can go to for help. Your peers and fellow students will also be more than happy to assist you. Additionally, there are many clubs and societies that become a family that you can turn to.

Finally, best of luck to all of you! ◆

