

Developing Young Futurists

The Centre for Strategic Futures
Internship Programme 2019





Futures Thinking in the DNA of Singapore's Nation-Building

There are practical men who maintain that such speculations are a waste of time and they have no bearing at all on solutions to immediate day-to-day problems. This may have been so in earlier periods of history when changes were few and minute and were spread over decades and centuries.

But we are not only living in a world of accelerating changes but also of changes which are global in scope and which permeate almost all aspects of human activity...[and since] change is about the future then only a future-oriented society can cope with the problems of the 21st century.

S Rajaratnam, 1979



The world that we live in does not unfold in a predictable and linear fashion. While we cannot predict how the future may play out, foresight allows us to exchange points of view across backgrounds and disciplines, challenge one another's assumptions and generate insights that can help us all make better decisions.

– Peter Ho, former Head of Civil Service and Senior Advisor to CSF

What is Futures Work and Why is it important?

Our world is becoming increasingly complex and flux-driven. Good policy-making requires, more than ever, anticipation of future trends and developments. Broadening minds to the changing operating environment is the mandate of futures work.

Who are futurists?

Futurists are scouts on the forefront of developments in technology, society, economy, and more. We identify and contextualise new strategic issues and developments relevant to support high-quality decision-making.

What is CSF?

The Centre for Strategic Futures is a think tank and foresight agency located within in Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office. Our role is to find forward-thinking insights that will create a better future for Singapore. We specialise in surprises, the counter-intuitive, the in-between-the-cracks, and the long-term.



Internship Programme (Full-time)

CSF is constantly on the look-out for high-calibre and skilled interns to join our research efforts.

Apply If You Are

A year 2 to 4 Singaporean university undergraduate with critical and rigorous thinking and relational ability. Futures work requires both the head and heart. Interns will need to analyse complex issues, as well as relate and communicate with thought leaders, experts, and policy-makers.

In particular, we value interns with deep expertise in emerging technology spaces (e.g. Artificial Intelligence, Biotech etc.) or experience in social sciences (e.g. History, Sociology etc.) Interns with previous work experience in public agencies are also encouraged to apply.

Beyond these qualities, clear and cogent writing, presentation, and administrative skills are essential basics.

Internship Period	Application Opens	Closing Date
Jan – Apr	Sep 2018	14 Oct 2018
May – Aug	Jan 2019	15 Feb 2019
Sep – Dec	May 2019	15 Jun 2019

How to Apply

Please submit CV and latest transcript to: Inthira_MAILVAGANAM@pmo.gov.sg and Kenneth_POON@pmo.gov.sg with the subject header “CSF Internship 2019 (Name)(School)(Degree Course)”, indicating preference of internship period.

As part of the selection process, there is a 48h written test and then a face-to-face interview. Successful applicants will be contacted by the Public Service Division Human Resources Department.

Why Apply?

Cutting-edge Foresight and Policy Research

You Will be Part of the Team

You will join CSF as Research Assistants and take part as full members of project teams, with a great deal of autonomy and ownership over research and direction.

You will have opportunities to work with other teams in Strategy Group such as the Economy, Social, Technology, Land & Liveability, and Security & Resilience teams, as well as the National Population Talent Division (NPTD) and National Climate Change Secretariat (NCCS).

At the end of their projects, you will have the opportunity to present your work at senior management platforms such as Strategic Futures Network (SFN).

You will be given experience and exposure to strategic decision-making in the Centre-of-Government.

You will work with CSF strategists and experienced policy officers from the wider Strategy Group to scope and develop your research. Beyond the team, you will have opportunities to interview senior public service officers, private sector leaders, civil society, academics and more.

Projects that previous interns have worked on:

- AI and Public Health Surveillance
- AI Ethics and Governance
- Token Economies
- Climate Change – New Winners and Losers
- Social Credit System
- Portable Biologics
- The Rise of Post-fact Politics



Meet some of our Staff



Lim Pei Shan
Head, CSF

Chongqing
Connectivity initiative
Office, Ministry of
Trade and Industry

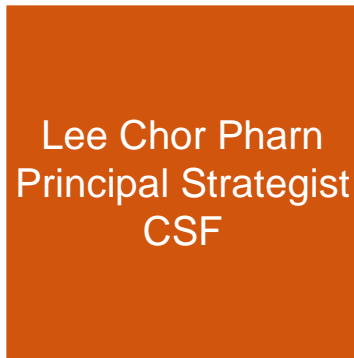
MINDEF



China Office,
Infocomm
Development
Agency



Futures and Strategy
Division, Ministry of
Trade and Industry



Lee Chor Pharn
Principal Strategist
CSF



Liana Tang
Deputy Head,
CSF

Policy (Libraries &
Archives) and
Strategic Planning,
MCI

Innovation & Service
Development, NLB

Meet our Interns



Chiu Chai Hao
Natural Sciences (Biological),
Cambridge University

MOE Teaching Scholarship

Why did you apply for the internship programme at CSF?

Having worked a little in the Ministry of Trade and Industry's Futures Group, I really enjoyed and was really interested in futures and foresight work, and decided to have a glimpse of how the similar process works at a higher, whole-of-government level where perspectives beyond the economic lenses are considered. This also came at a time where significant biotech breakthroughs and developments are happening - which can impact not just the economy, but also other areas of policy too.

What were your first few days at work like?

I think what stood out the most for me in the first few days was how flat the structure is in PMO Strategy Group, and how everyone is friendly and approachable. This is probably the only place in the civil service where Directors and Deputy Secretaries actually sit in cubicles even though they have a room allocated to themselves! 😊

What was your greatest challenge?

Possibly working and writing about food/farming transformation, because the pressure to disprove the case against agriculture in Singapore and making a case for its importance got quite overwhelming. It has always been difficult to argue a case for it. Similarly, as the only scientist among the interns, it was challenging and interesting to bring a more scientifically-informed view of genetic engineering and genetic modification issues.

It sounds like you took on the responsibility to bring the scientific perspective to the table! Would you like to share what you personally took away from the experience?

Mmm... Well I was pushed to think at a whole-of-government level in terms of effecting change and bringing perspectives to people. While the analysis of an issue is pretty much a science - it is rigorous, fact-based, and methodical, the packaging to convince policy makers to regard the most important insights is an art. I think it is something I have learnt to be more comfortable with.

What advice do you have for future interns?

Have an open mind, and revel in uncertainty! But also have tools to critique news and signals, so you can sieve out the real signals from the noise. It is not unusual when something is overly hyped, but don't be afraid of using your technical knowledge, or asking people with the technical knowledge - to ascertain how impactful a particular development is.

Why did you apply for the internship programme at CSF?

I applied for this to experience something that was more centre-of government. I've only ever done government internships, and previously I was in a ministry that specialised in a very deep silo, so I wanted something different. My interests are also very broad and I wanted the exposure to different fields.

You study Global Studies at NUS, which spans a pretty broad curriculum. Could you share some applications from this discipline to your work at CSF?

Oddly, the application doesn't come directly from the discipline but rather as a product of how the course is structured. It's a very flexible course and we are allowed to curate our own curriculum. And although it is extremely broad and all-encompassing, I've actually managed to religiously avoid a few fields, such as economics, psychology, and history. When I got to CSF, I got tasked on a climate change project, and I was made to delve into these domains. So actually, my already-broad education is being further broadened at CSF!

What projects have you done so far?

I've been here for a little over a month, and so far I've done a science piece on fertility issues, and of course I'm currently working on my climate change piece. The whole point of these research pieces is to find good and rare angles, so often we have to consider the second or third order impacts.

The work of "finding rare angles" must have been quite new to you; how do you personally interpret it now that you've been doing this for a month?

Well, the point of the research is to influence policymakers to think differently about the future. Policymakers often have many day-to-day concerns and the future does not occur to them often, if at all. So each research piece needs to convey why this particular concern should be more pressing than other concerns. We need to think out of the box as to how to frame it, and how to communicate it.

What are the must-haves on this internship?

Be extremely open minded and have a good learning attitude 😊



Jasmine Tan
Global Studies,
National University of Singapore

University Scholars Programme



Apply for our Internship Programme today!

“The future is a realm of freedom, of power and of will. It is at once a land to be explored and a land to be built on.”

- Bertrand de Jouvenel

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