

# ESSENTIAL SOFT SKILLS EMPLOYERS WANT TO SEE

Having the necessary technical or hard skills may get you shortlisted, but showcasing that you have the right soft skills will set you apart from other candidates.

**G**raduate employers place a lot of emphasis on finding candidates with the right skills and competencies for their organisation. These could be very specific skills, abilities and knowledge needed to do the job. However, complementing these technical competencies are skills and behaviours that are essential for your career.

These basic soft skills are often overlooked by candidates, but they are the things recruitment professionals want to see evidence of.

## Time management

Someone with good time management skills are able to prioritise tasks and organise their schedule in order to complete their work on time without compromising their work quality.

### How to showcase during an interview

Explain your ability to meet deadlines, and describe how you prioritise your tasks and handle interruptions while you are working.

### Example

"I was managing several different projects while juggling my responsibilities as a committee member of the Music Society on campus. I was working to meet different project deadlines so I had to divide my time and resources appropriately. I was able to get all of the projects submitted on time by breaking them into smaller tasks and set mini deadlines for each one. I also set rules for myself to block out distractions and help me handle interruptions when the task at hand is urgent."

### Tip:

Commitments to part-time work or extracurricular activities call for good time management, and it's a skill you're likely to develop further through work experience or internships.

## Team management

Team management involves the ability to collaborate with and lead a group of different individuals to achieve a common goal, and to do so in a positive working atmosphere. A well-managed team uses individual strengths to improve team performance.

### How to showcase during an interview

Talk about a time when your personal involvement has directly affected the way a group of people have worked, and positively influenced the outcome. Always remain positive when answering questions about teamwork as you want your employers to recognise your ability to get along with your colleagues.

### Example

"I was responsible for a team that was given a specific target to achieve. By giving certain team members particular roles that played well with their strengths and enabling them to reach their full potential, we were able to achieve that target successfully."

### Tip:

Taking up roles with some level of authority in extracurricular activities, such as student council positions or a team captain role of a sports team, is a good way to gain leadership skills.



## Problem solving skills

Problem solving is all about using logic, as well as imagination, to make sense of your situation and come up with intelligent solutions. It also involves analytical skills and thinking out of the box when solving an issue.

### How to showcase during an interview

Prepare an example of a problem solving experience you've encountered. You will need to explain how you identified the problem, came up with a solution and implemented it. Quantifiable results are good, and the more complex the situation, the more impressive a successful result is.

### Example

"During one of our major society events, we realised that we had run out of drinks for our guests. As the head of the committee, my team and I quickly drew up three options to resolve the problem. After careful consideration, we decided to go with Option C. Although Option C was slightly pricier than the other options, it proved to be the most effective solution as it helped us improve the overall guests' experience at the event."

#### Tip:

Consider using the STAR model when explaining the situation during an interview. Think about the **Situation** you faced and the **Task** you had to complete, the **Actions** you took, and the **Results** you achieved.

## Interpersonal and communication skills

Having these skills means that you are able to interact with other people, whether as an individual or in a group.

### How to showcase during an interview

You need to be able to express yourself concisely to impress graduate recruiters, but you also need to be a good listener and skilled at asking questions. Besides that, you can talk about an instance where you were able to use interpersonal skills confidently to resolve a problem or to improve a situation. It may also be a good idea to select examples where you used diplomacy when communicating with other people.

### Example

"We encountered a problem when we were organising one of our society events, as one of my team member had a difficult time coming to an agreement with one of our suppliers. I acted as a mediator and was able to help them resolve their problems by speaking to them individually and understanding their reasons. By doing so, I was able to help them come to an agreeable term." ♦

#### Tip:

At interviews you should be confident, smile and make eye contact. Shake hands and remember names. Remember that non-verbal communication is important too!



# CRAFTING EFFECTIVE RÉSUMÉS

A good résumé is key to getting the graduate job you want. Here are tips on how to get your résumé ready for job applications.

**T**he overall aim of a résumé is to market yourself and your skills to an employer and convince them to invite you to an interview or assessment centre. Moreover, your résumé is quite likely your first point of contact with a recruiter, so it is important for you to tailor your résumé to match the industry and the employer's requirements for the role on offer.

Although there are no hard and fast rules for writing résumés, or for the structure you should use, there are some guidelines that you can follow to use as a starting point. That said, here are two recommended formats for your résumé:



## Reverse chronological résumé

- Involves listing your experiences from your most recent to the oldest one.
- Allows the employers to grasp your skills and experience in a single glance.

## Skills-based résumé

- Emphasises your skills and achievements.
- Useful for graduates who have limited work history or a work history that isn't directly related to the job that you're applying for.



## Keep your purpose in mind

Regardless of the format, your résumé should always be adapted to highlight your strengths and how they align with the employer's needs.

For instance, if you are applying for a software engineering job, you may want to use a skills-based résumé to showcase your skills and the projects you've worked on. In a case like this, a skills-based résumé would be more fitting than a reverse chronological résumé.

## Top tips for effective résumés



- Be selective with the information on your résumé. Make sure to only highlight the most relevant skills for the role or industry you're applying for.
- Make it short and concise. Recruiters expect graduate résumés to be no longer than two pages.
- Use easy-to-read typefaces such as Times New Roman, Tahoma, Calibri or Arial.
- Keep your font size between 10 to 12, with a different size for headers.
- Keep tweaking your résumé. With enough practice, you'll soon be able to grasp what works and what doesn't.



## Résumé format

### Wong Kok Wah

Mobile: 8765 8903

E-mail: kwong@gmail.com

#### EDUCATION

##### University of London

Singapore Institute of Management

Aug 2015 – May 2018

- Bachelor of Science (Banking & Finance)
- GPA: 3.7

#### RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

##### Research Assistant, Fiber Optics Lab

Aug – Dec 2017

- Assisted on research into power fiber laser systems and their practical industrial applications.
- Set up, maintained, and catalogued equipment used in research experiments.
- Coded programme to filter and analyse gathered data, in order to assist with interpretation of research findings.

##### Future Electronics Singapore, Intern

May – July 2017

- Actively sourced for potential Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) suppliers of key components in Malaysia.
- Identified more cost-effective alternatives to key components used in company products. Theoretically reduced production costs by 5% as a result.
- Communicated directly with senior management during the sourcing process, and submitted report of findings to them.

#### OTHER EXPERIENCE

##### Two Geeks, Raffles Square store, Sales Representative

May – July 2016

- Successfully promoted digital products, and was awarded "Best Sales Person" within first month on the job for exceeding sales target by 15%.
- Assisted customers with relevant queries on hardware and software products.
- Reconciled cash at daily close of business.

#### CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

##### Chairman, Public Relations, Investment & Networking Club

Aug 2016 – Aug 2017

Singapore Institute of Management

- Led a group of eight committee members to publicise club events, which successfully increased club membership by 20%.
- Encouraged club members to actively participate and help out in club events.

##### Soccer Team Captain, Singapore Institute of Management

Jan 2016 – Present

- Currently playing on university team's first division. Led team to win the inter-university Lion Cup in 2015.
- Responsible for selecting and motivating team members, and organising and conducting bi-weekly training sessions.
- Liaised with team captains at other universities to coordinate practice matches.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Proficient in Microsoft Office.
- Languages: fluent in English and Mandarin (both spoken and written).
- Enjoys outdoor sports, particularly soccer and ultimate frisbee.
- Regularly participates in volunteer work.

#### REFERENCES

- Dr. Edwin Wong, senior lecturer, School of Business Studies, Singapore Institute of Management  
Tel: 9085 6721 E-Mail: edwin.wong@sim.edu.sg
- Mr. Thomas Kumar, operations manager, Future Electronics  
Tel: 9983 7832 E-Mail: kumar.thomas@future-e.com ♦



# WHAT'S IN A GOOD COVER LETTER

Impress recruiters with a well-written cover letter to go along with your résumé.

**H**ere we have two cover letters – but only one is considered a good cover letter. Look at what an effective cover letter includes to discover how to impress a recruiter right away, and learn from the other cover letter's mistakes so you don't make the same ones.

## COVER LETTER A

Dear Ms Chung,

I am writing to apply to be a management trainee in your management graduate programme. I am on course to graduate this coming July with a Bachelor of Business Management with Communications (Hons) from SIM-University of Birmingham, with a projected GPA of 3.5. I was encouraged to apply after speaking to one of your representatives at a talk given at my university. **(1)**

Through my degree programme, I have learned about most conventional information systems. I have also studied important business topics such as product life cycles, organisational behaviour, quality control metrics, consumer behaviour and supply-chain management – all of which can be useful to the job on offer. **(2)**

One of the group assignments during my degree was a project aimed to simulate the launch of a new organic snack brand. I particularly enjoyed leading a team that oversaw the purchasing and logistics of the project. I initiated a brainstorming session, and then delegated responsibility to come up with a framework to collate essential client data. **(3)**

During my second year, I did a four-month formal internship with FeynM, a European FMCG company, and was placed in their F&B division. I helped the company evaluate their partnerships with packaging vendors, and identified more cost-effective alternatives to their current arrangements. My supervisors took my findings into consideration, and realised they could reduce packaging costs by 5% as a result. I also managed to pitch an idea to the marketing team, suggesting a more sustainable campaign for our organic food products to be based around the natural elements of sun and water. The idea was accepted and implemented. **(4)**

I would love to work for Deb & Co. and contribute to its success. Looking at your website, I believe strongly in your company's policies of creating products that are cruelty-free, and I think I would benefit from your rotational set-up and the mentor scheme you run for new joiners. **(5)**

I have attached my CV for your consideration, and I hope to hear from you in due course.

Yours Sincerely,  
Veronica Lee

### Why it's a good cover letter

**1.** The first paragraph states what job Veronica is applying for, as well as her academic background.

**2.** This section shows that she has the theoretical knowledge for the role.

**3.** The applicant strategically selected information that showcases her ability to be a team player and a leader.

**4.** The internship experience shows that she is capable of translating what she learned to real-world practice. Remember always to include examples and let your achievements speak for themselves.

**5.** The applicant demonstrated that she has done her research on the company's culture. Going the extra mile will impress recruiters and will show them your genuine interest in the organisation.



Dear N  
I woul  
opport  
I belie  
and N  
Throu  
I part  
a new  
allow  
I als  
Euro  
and  
I cor  
resu  
win  
I we  
as p  
if th  
I ha  
You  
I ar  
chi  
Yo  
Ja



## COVER LETTER B

Dear Ms Chung,

I would like to apply for your graduate management scheme, as it is a great opportunity for me to learn in an internationally-renowned company like yours. I believe I share your aims of championing vitality and the well-being of people and Mother Earth. **(1)**

Through my studies, I've learned a lot about Singapore's FMCG industry. I participated in a school project where I was involved in managing start-up costs for a new line of retail stores for a scenario that was assigned to us. The team project allowed me to gain teamworking skills which I can bring to your company. **(2)**

I also learned management skills through my internship with FeynM, a European FMCG company. I juggled many tasks with overlapping deadlines and had to deal with suppliers which helped develop my people skills. I contributed by helping to maximise productivity and slash overheads, which resulted in greater profitability for the company and the cultivation of more win-win relationships with its customers and suppliers. **(3)**

I would love to meet you and show you everything I've learned in university (such as product life cycles, consumer behaviour and supply-chain management) to see if they will transfer to your business. **(4)**

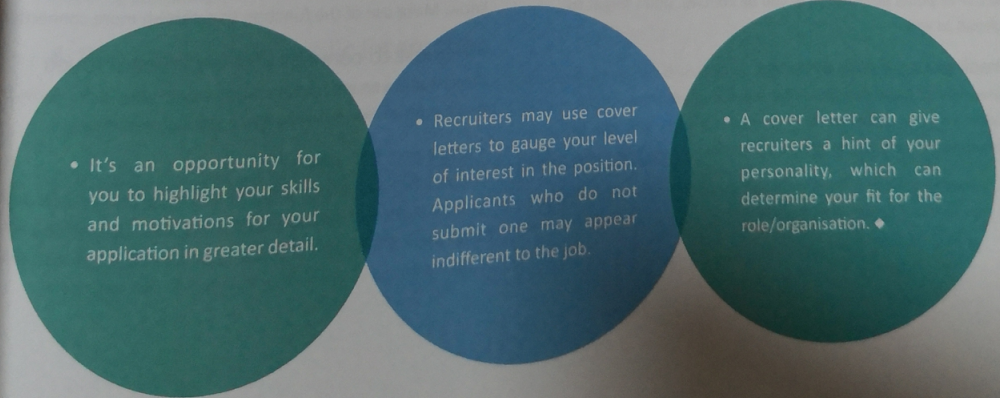
I have always been a big fan of Deb & Co. and your ethos as an organisation. You will find me to be committed, driven, and ready to go the extra mile. I am confident I will be a great addition to your company. I would love to have the chance to speak with you in an interview to show you what I can do. **(5)**

Yours sincerely,  
Jason Chan

### Why this cover letter falls short

- 1.** The opening paragraph is little more than an exercise in flattery, which can have an adverse effect of sounding insincere. Jason is also not clear about which graduate management scheme he is applying for.
- 2.** The applicant does not mention any of his achievements and fail to provide any examples that showcase his skills.
- 3.** Using jargons (e.g. slash overheads) is a big no-no. There are no mentions of specific, measurable examples of the applicant's achievements during his internship.
- 4.** This sounds like Jason have not done enough research on whether his knowledge would relate to the job he is applying for.
- 5.** Signing off by saying you are a big fan can be cheesy to many recruiters. Also, he still has not shown how he can be of added value to the company.

## WHY SHOULD YOU WRITE A COVER LETTER?





# HOW TO WRITE A PROFESSIONAL EMAIL

Your first contact with a graduate recruiter is likely to be an email, so make an effort to create a good first impression with a professionally written email.

**W**ritten communication skills are essential for graduate jobs and are greatly valued by employers. Your job may not involve crafting long reports or strategy documents, but emails are a fact of working life in most careers and even for the shortest note, clear communication is essential – so make sure you put some thought and care to your email before hitting the send button.

Here are some tips on how to write a professional and clear email that will leave recruiters with a positive impression of you.



## Check the subject line

The subject line should contain keywords that will allow recruiters to quickly recognise the purpose of the email. "Application for management associate position," for example, is short but informative. It is also easy to search for, especially in a full inbox, and looks suitably professional.



## "Hi", "Hello", or "Dear"?

"Hi" may be too casual for your first contact with an employer. "Dear Ms/Mr ABC" is probably your safest bet.

If the recruiter replies with a "Hi" and your first name, then take their lead and do likewise in all your subsequent correspondence. Nonetheless, always be sure to maintain a professional tone.



## Use everyday English and be concise

Whilst studying at university, one tends to adopt an overly wordy, passive academic style to convey what one is thinking, asserting and concluding. Long words and flowery phrasing can make you feel impressive, but it's better to get straight to the point.

Be active and not passive. The passive voice is where the subject is acted upon instead of acting itself. The typical giveaway is the use of 'to be' and its various forms: is, was, were, am, are. An example of a phrase with a passive voice is "I was responsible for the launch of a new process". You should instead word it in a more straightforward manner by saying, "I launched a new process".

Use everyday English and active verbs to convey information and actions without a blur of unnecessary words. You'll have room to include more about yourself and make your key achievements stand out.

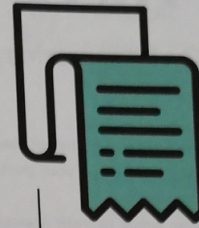




### Don't spice things up with txt spk

If you're looking for an original way to make a job application or email stand out, don't write it in text language.

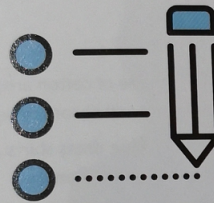
If you want to be taken seriously, carefully proofread all your emails to make sure you sound respectful and professional. Reserve smiley emoticons for message boards and Facebook. Slangs and jargons are best avoided too. It totes make things confusing for 'em recruiters!



### Read up on basic grammar and check your spelling carefully

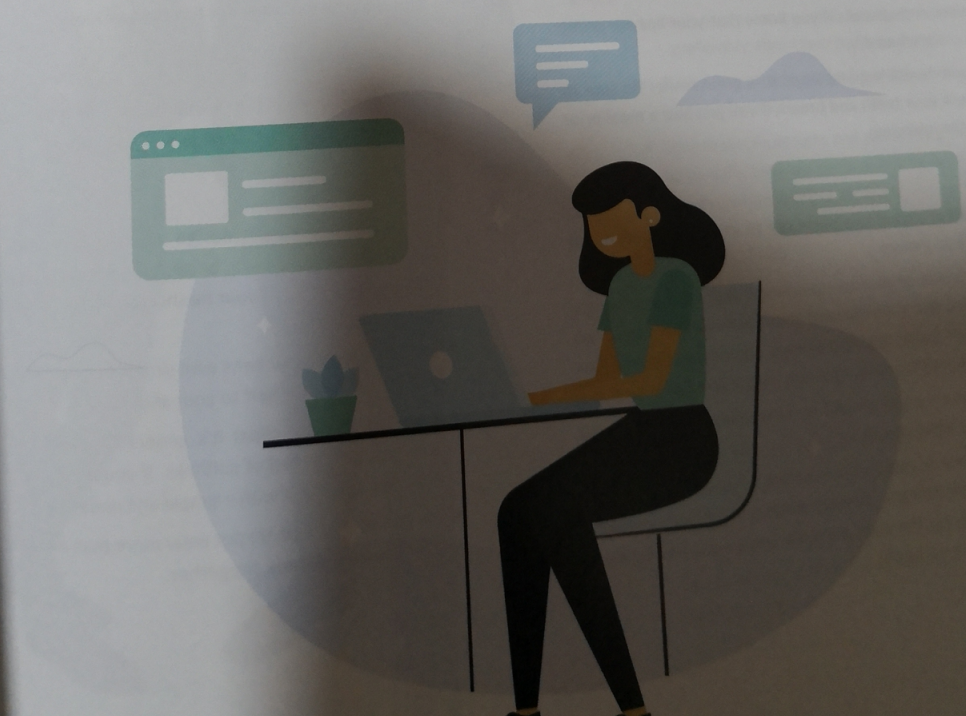
Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are tools that give sense to what you say. Make sure to proofread and double (or even triple!) check your email draft before clicking send.

You want your email to be clear and error-free, as recruiters have very little time to try to interpret what you really mean, and spelling slip-ups will show your lack of attention to detail.



### Signing off

Close your email as you would in a cover letter. You should make the effort to get a contact name for your application to address that person directly – so sign off with "Yours sincerely" and use your full name. ♦





# INTERVIEWS TIPS

Clueless as to how you can approach interviews? Don't worry, we've got you covered!

**C**ongratulations! You are one step closer to getting the job now that you have secured an interview with an employer. Now comes the tricky part – you need to convince them that you have what it takes for the role you applied for.

This is easier said than done, but preparing ahead can go a long way in boosting your chances of getting the job. Here's a short list of common interview questions to help you prep.



## 5 COMMON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### "Tell me about yourself."

This is a tricky one. Many candidates make the mistake of reciting biographical information about themselves. Your interviewers have those already! What interests the interviewer is your compatibility for the job on offer, so talk about your skills, past experiences, and achievements that are related to the job instead.

### "What is your biggest weakness?"

Interviewers ask this question to evaluate your degree of self-awareness and your ability to improve. This does not mean you should resort to self-deprecation, though! Instead, you can talk about a problem you encountered in the past, and the steps you took to mitigate the problem. Aim to describe a weakness that could also be a strength, but don't be corny ("I'm a perfectionist" is too cliché!).

### "What do you know about the company, and why do you want to work for us?"

This is your chance to impress the interviewer with the research you've done. However, make sure you're not just regurgitating everything that is on their website. Relate qualities about you to the company's history and culture or its products and services to explain why the company interests you. Questions like this are exactly why you need to do your homework beforehand.

### "What are your strengths?"

Employers look for candidates who are realistic about their abilities, so resist the temptation to exaggerate or talk about skills you do not have. Reflect on the qualities that the particular job requires and then use specific experiences from your past as examples to prove that you do possess the skills you claim to have.

### "Where do you see yourself in five years?"

When interviewers ask this question, what they want to know is how committed you are to the job. Do your research on the profession you are applying for and find out the kind of career progression you can realistically expect within the company. Alternatively, you could talk about the skills you wish to build on should you end up working in that company.



## PREPPING FOR THE BIG DAY

Knowing what questions to expect is important, but the preparation process is often what determines your rate of success.

### Pre-interview



#### Research widely

Research not only enables you to give in-depth answers and the ability to ask better questions during interviews, you'll also be able to assess whether the organisation is right for you. Also, take time to research the requirements of the role and how your skills and interests align with it.

Additionally, you can also read up on the company culture. To widen the scope of your research, read up on the industry in general – have an understanding of the latest market trends and current issues. By doing so, you'll be adding breadth and depth to your answers, and increasing your chances of impressing your interviewers.



#### Practice

Practice makes perfect, so come up with a list of commonly-asked interview questions to avoid getting caught off guard in the actual interview. Our list of common interview questions in the previous page can help you get a good head start. You can practice individually, or enlist the help of your career advisor by setting up mock interview sessions.

### During the interview



#### Communicate clearly

Most companies will settle on the middle ground between standard English and the local variation, so occasionally dropping a "la" or "ma" is acceptable as you'll want to sound natural. If your work is contingent on good language and communication, you may need to practice speaking in proper, perfect English to keep up a good image.



#### Ask and clarify

If you encounter a question you're unable to answer, stay calm and think it through step-by-step. Walk the interviewer through what you know, and show them how you'll arrive at a hypothetical answer to their question. If all else fails, "I'm sorry, I don't know the answer" is a perfectly reasonable response.

Also, when in doubt, ask. However, avoid asking questions with answers that can be easily found on the firm's website. Instead, ask questions pertaining to career progression, professional certifications, employer expectations and even firm culture – questions that require insider knowledge and experience.



#### Speak with tact

While remuneration is important, extra care should be taken during salary negotiation. Avoid making a salary pitch too early on and wait till you're the final candidate in the hiring process before asking about the salary, bonus and company benefits. Focus less on what you want or need, and base your remuneration package on how much value you can contribute to the firm instead.

### Post-interview



#### Follow-up

Following up after the interview could significantly affect whether an offer is extended to you as it shows your level of interest in the position. Write a simple and concise email to thank your interviewer for their time, and to reiterate your interest in the role. ♦



# INSIDE THIS GUIDE

## Career Connect Prepares You

- 3 A Message for Our Students
- 4 What is Project 1095?
- 5 Your 1095 Journey
- 6 How Career Connect Can Help You
- 10 SIM GE Career & Internship Fair
- 12 Meet Our Career Development Team
- 14 Talent Development Programme (TDP)
- 18 360 Degree Development Programme
- 20 SIM GE Edge Award
- 22 SIM GE Alumni

## Discover Your Career Options

- 24 Industry Insights
- 30 Career Chapters
- 33 Choosing an Employer: MNCs vs. SMEs vs. Start-ups
- 35 Exploring Internships
- 48 Project Protégé
- 50 Shanghai Career Drive
- 52 Cross Cultural Internship Programme
- 54 Global Learning
- 57 Explore the World With AIESEC
- 59 The Global Experience

## How to Market Yourself to Employers

- 62 Student Care: Managing Your Wellness
- 66 Job-Searching: The Ultimate Guide
- 68 Top 3 Things to Look for in a First Job
- 70 Rules of Getting Hired
- 72 5 Essential Soft Skills
- 74 Develop Your Technical Skills
- 76 Crafting Effective Résumés
- 78 What's in a Good Cover Letter
- 80 LinkedIn for Career Success & Digital Networking
- 82 How to Write a Professional Email
- 84 Dress to Win
- 86 Networking for Success
- 88 Interview Tips
- 90 Acing Assessment Centres
- 92 Accepting a Job Offer
- 94 Preparing for Your First Day
- 96 How to Upgrade Yourself

## Jobs and Internships

### Produced by



(Company number: 200301978M)

1 Lorong 2 Toa Payoh  
#05-04 Braddell House  
Singapore 319637

Tel: +(65) 6294 6505

Fax: +(65) 6294 1043

www.gtimedia.asia

### Editor

Candice Leow

### Editorial

Loh Supei, Candice Leow

### Design & production

Nurul Huda Abd Razak, Charlene Wong

### Advertising

Ron Ong, Terence Teo, The GTI Media sales team

### Marketing & distribution

Shirlyn Ting, Tang Weishan, Cheryl Tan

### Managing Director

Isaac Hee

### International managing director & co-founder

Adrian Wood

### Printer

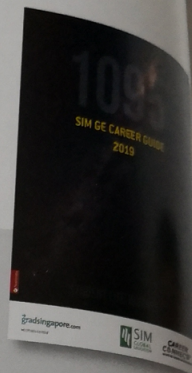
Times Printer Pte. Ltd.

16 Tuas Ave. 5,

Singapore 639340

© GTI Asia Pte. Ltd, Jan 2019

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced by any means including, but not limited to, photocopying or storage in a retrieval system in any form without prior written consent of GTI. The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and their publication does not necessarily imply that such views are shared by GTI. Whilst every care has been taken in the compilation of this publication, the publishers cannot accept responsibility for any inaccuracies, or for consequential loss arising from such inaccuracies, or for any loss, direct or consequential, arising in connection with information in this publication.





# 1095

## SIM GE CAREER GUIDE 2019

### STUDENT LIFE JOURNEY