

# The changing landscape of English-taught programmes

**Singapore  
Malaysia  
Indonesia**



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# Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia

Southeast Asia has traditionally been a key source area for international students heading to major study destinations such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia or Canada. More recently, however, the region has also become an international education hub in its own attracting students from neighbouring countries. Three countries stand out in this development, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.

Singapore emerged early<sup>1</sup> as a country with a high academic standard, a high number of study programmes taught in English and well-ranked universities, making it a known destination for international students. Singapore was one of the first countries developing a Global Schoolhouse initiative<sup>2</sup> in 2002, aimed at quality education services delivered by world-class universities, together with local and private universities. More than 50,000 international students are estimated to study in Singapore in 2020<sup>3</sup>, although the reported figure is sometimes higher<sup>4</sup>.

Neighbouring Malaysia, also has ambitions of becoming a world-class regional hub for education.

Since 2015 the country introduced the Malaysia Education Blueprint Strategy<sup>5</sup> focusing on education quality as and international standing. Since then, Malaysia already hosts a large foreign student population<sup>6</sup>, largely from lower-middle income countries, and welcomed several campuses especially from British and Australian universities. It has set an ambitious goal to increase the number of foreign enrolments from 81,953 in 2019<sup>7</sup> to 250,000 international students by 2025<sup>8</sup>.

In contrast, Indonesia currently has one of the lowest foreign student populations (less than 8,000 international students in 2019). While a traditional source country, with a large population, and a rich cultural heritage, Indonesia has struggled to reach its internationalisation goals<sup>9</sup>. It is likely that the higher institution landscape will undergo significant transformations<sup>10</sup> to keep pace with what is poised to become one of the top economies in 2030<sup>11</sup>.

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# Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia

In Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, there are 25 Higher Education Institutions offering English-taught programmes. 15 of them are located in Malaysia, 7 in Singapore, and 3 in Indonesia. The highest ranked universities in 2021 were National University of Singapore (ranked 25th) and Nanyang Technological University (ranked 47th)<sup>12</sup>, both located in Singapore. Malaysia has 10 ranked universities, which focus on the recruitment of international students, of which University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur has the highest ranking (301+). In Indonesia, there are 2 Higher Education Institutions, which are ranked 1001+.

## Institutions in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore



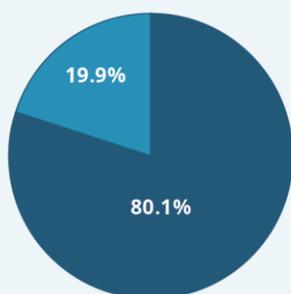
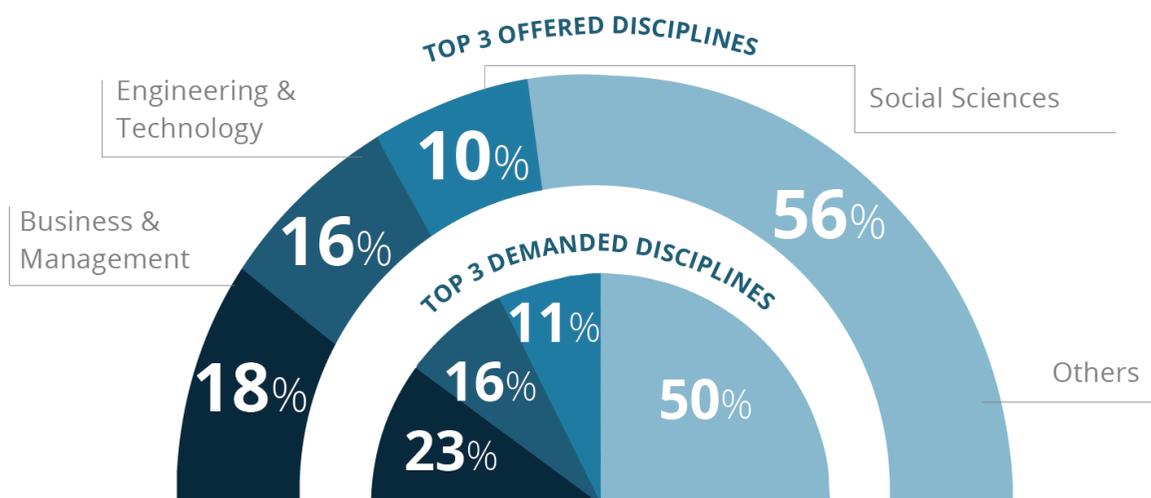
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# Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia

In total, there are 1,188 English-taught programmes offered in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. The vast majority of them are full-time programmes (80.1%). disciplines include Social Sciences, Natural Sciences & Mathematics, Computer Science & IT, and Medicine & Health.

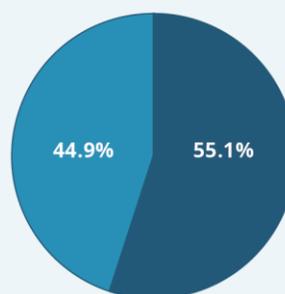
There are slightly more Master's degrees (55.1%) than Bachelor's degrees (44.9%). However, compared to the global ratio (excluding the English-speaking countries) of 68.9% : 31.1%, these three countries have a relatively high ratio of Bachelor's programmes.

Business & Management (18%) and Engineering & Technology (16%) are two leading disciplines in terms of number of offered programmes. Other common



**Flexibility of the programmes**

- Part-time
- Full-time



**Level of Study**

- Bachelor's
- Master's

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# About British Council

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. The roots of the British Council lie in Europe. Our first offices opened in Europe in 1938 and we have supported educational and cultural relations with countries of Europe ever since.

Our higher education work supports internationalisation, mobility of academics and students, and partnerships between UK and European higher education institutions. We provide insights and knowledge to inform current debates and conduct research to understand the impact of our work and foster innovation within the sectors and communities in which we work.

## About IELTS

IELTS - the International English Language Testing System - is the world's most popular English language test for work, study and migration. More than 11,000 organisations trust IELTS as a reliable indicator of true-to-life ability to communicate in English.

Delivered on either computer or paper, IELTS assesses a test taker's English language proficiency across four skills: listening, reading, writing and speaking. It is the only high-stakes language test recognised for migration across Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

With a focus on human conversations, IELTS was a pioneer of four-skills English language testing more than 30 years ago and continues to set the standard for English language testing today.

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# About Studyportals

Studyportals is the global study choice platform. We help students find and compare all their education options globally, and make an informed choice. We help institutions to optimise their classroom from a quantity, quality and diversity perspective, on the basis of results. Over 50 million students annually from 220 countries and territories worldwide choose between 207,000+ programmes from over 3,700 universities in 117 countries, which allows us to help our clients with best practice from all over the world. Our mission is to empower the world to choose education.

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