



# SPOTLIGHT

## Globalization of Management Education

### Featured Schools:

Fudan University School of Management / Korea University Business  
School / National University of Singapore (NUS) Business School

Shanghai, China / Seoul, South Korea / Singapore

<http://www.s3-asiamba.com/main.do>

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**AACSB International**

## S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA Program

With the growing importance of Asia to the global economy, Asian business schools are increasingly realizing how necessary it is to prepare their students for a multi-focal, globalized business environment. For the past five years, a consortium of three of the foremost business schools in Eastern and South-Eastern Asia has put together a unique, collaborative MBA program that accomplishes this very goal, while maintaining the educational focus on the rising stars of Asia.

According to Ernest Chng, Senior Manager of International Relations at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Business School, the idea for this program first originated in 2005 at a centennial celebration for Fudan University, Korea University, and NUS, when officials from the three schools initially met and conversed. Sun Long, Executive Director of International MBA Programs at the Fudan University School of Management (FDSM), says that though their meeting was largely by chance, it proved extremely serendipitous, not only for the three schools but for the students that have benefitted from their collaboration.

The universities founded the S<sup>3</sup> University Alliance (S<sup>3</sup>UA) and sealed it with the Seoul Declaration for Collaboration at the Tri-University Colloquium in Seoul on May 19, 2006. The name of the program, S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA, is derived from the first letter of the three cities where the business schools are located: Shanghai, Seoul, and Singapore. The program admitted its initial cohort in 2008.



### How the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA Partnership Works

According to Director Sun, the three partners share common values and opinions on education and development. He stresses the importance of these shared outlooks to the functioning of the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA, since the three schools each contribute equally to instruction, curriculum development, and the annual student cohorts. Keeping harmony among the partners was and is very important to the success of the program, he says, so the vision for the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA was solidified well before the program began. Additionally, the three partners agree that since they are all AACSB-accredited, none have to worry about differentials in quality.

Director Sun also indicates that the program managers from each partner school meet regularly three to four times per year, when each class starts (its inauguration at FDSM prior to the beginning of the first semester) and then at each of the partners' orientation sessions for the students. At these times, he says, they discuss things such as any needed curricular adjustments for the coming year, career services collaborations and how resources from each schools' career development office can be pooled to better support S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA students, etc.

Senior Manager Chng says that each school is responsible for administering all aspects of the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA for the segment of the program that it has agreed to host. The main office for the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA program is established in Korea University Business School (KUBS), and this office is responsible for coordinating the operations and maintaining all the records for the program, he says. Although the operating costs are borne by KUBS through revenue earned from candidates recruited by KUBS, the common advertising and promotions cost of the program is shared equally amongst the three partner schools. Director Sun stresses that "the major move of this practice is not from the profit side. It's mostly about the idea and the vision that we should collaborate and cultivate the Asian leaders, as something only we can do."

Students are admitted to a "home university" based on the geographical region from which the applicant is a citizen, according to Director Sun. He says that students from outside Asia can choose which one to apply to, and students pay tuition fees only to their home university throughout the program. Any imbalance is settled at the end of each intake through cross-institutional charging, based on a pre-agreed per-student rate amongst the three institutions, according to Senior Manager Chng. The two of them and Yong Keun Yoo, Academic Director of the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA Program at KUBS, all indicate that each partner admits its own portion of the student cohort to the program using their own admission requirements, though their requirements are similar:

School	Entrance Exam Requirements	Work Experience Requirement
FDSM	Chinese national entrance examination ( <b>GRK</b> ) required for any Chinese passport holders living in or outside China <b>GMAT</b> required for non-Chinese students who want to apply for an FDSM degree	3 years
KUBS	<b>GMAT</b> recommended for Korean, Japanese and international students (for Chinese students, <b>GRK</b> can substitute) Official English Proficiency test score required if applicant is not a graduate from English-speaking countries	2 years
NUS	<b>GMAT</b> required for all NUS degree applicants, including those seeking their second degree from NUS	2 years

\*Qualified applicants are interviewed in English at their respective business schools, and the interview outcomes are accepted for all three schools.

Director Sun says that the partners look for candidates that can survive in a very diversified setting, and are open-minded enough to share with and to challenge other students in the class.

### How the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA Program Works

Each of the three partners contributes about 10 students to each cohort, totaling approximately 30 students in the program, per cohort. Director Yoo states that going forward, all three schools plan to

recruit one more student for each year, slowly increasing the size of the S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA cohort by three persons per year. Upon the successful completion of the program, students are awarded two MBA degrees: one from each student's home university and one from their choice of a second university from among the three partners. Graduates also receive an S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA program certificate signed by all three deans from FDSM, KUBS, and NUS Business School.

Each cohort progresses through three semesters, one taught at each of the three partner schools.<sup>1</sup> Students undergo orientation at the start of each semester, to familiarize themselves with each campus and its facilities. Students have until the start of their final semester to make up their minds about which partner they want their second degree from, according to Senior Manager Chng. Director Sun notes that the curriculum at each partner is carefully coordinated by the program managers from the three schools, to build on that which the student cohort has learned in previous semesters, and that each semester includes at least one context-specific field trip and/or internship opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

The S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA program is taught entirely in English; however, students who do not already speak the local language at a given partner school have the opportunity to take basic language courses in Chinese and Korean as well, in a non-credit capacity. FDSM students are also required to take a degree-compulsory course in Advanced Business English during their semester at NUS, which is optional for KUBS and NUS students.<sup>3</sup>

The first semester takes place in Shanghai, and runs from September to December. It is at FDSM that the students undertake their foundational core courses, as well as a course on doing business in the Chinese context. During the months of January and February, the class breaks to allow students to pursue internship opportunities, and/or take the aforementioned non-credit language courses.<sup>4</sup>

After the break, they spend the months of March through June in Seoul, where they continue taking core courses at KUBS, as well as a course on doing business in the context of Korea and Japan. The third semester at NUS in Singapore runs from August through the end of November. This semester allows the students to pursue their final core courses, including a course on doing business in the broader context of Asia and the Pacific, as well as a few elective courses. Finally, those students whose home university is Fudan, as well as any KUBS and NUS students who elect to earn their second MBA degree from FDSM, must subsequently return to Shanghai for a fourth and final semester in order to write and defend their master's thesis.<sup>5</sup>

Director Sun says that S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA students are afforded opportunities to fully participate in each university's student life, activities, and clubs, etc., and they also have full access to each partner school's resources while they are on campus. Senior Manager Chng indicates that those who graduate become alumni of both the universities from which they earn a degree, retaining access to those schools' career

services and alumni networks. Additionally, says Director Sun, "The students can benefit from this kind of collaboration. It's almost the only one like it in the market. It is very deep. It is a great experience."

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## End Notes

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<sup>1</sup>S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA. (2013) Tri-Semester Curriculum web page. Electronic document, <http://www.s3-asiamba.com/listener.do?layout=experience.03>, accessed August 14, 2013.

<sup>2</sup>Fudan School of Management, Fudan University. (2013) Empowering Asia, Empowering MBA web page. Electronic document, <http://www.fdsf.fudan.edu.cn/S3/en.html>, accessed August 15, 2013.

<sup>3</sup>NUS Business School, National University of Singapore. (2013) S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA Curriculum web page. Electronic document, <http://bschool.nus.edu.sg/TheNUSMBA/ProspectiveStudents/DoubleDegreeProgrammes/S3AsiaMBA/ProgrammeInfo/Curriculum/tabid/2316/default.aspx>, accessed August 15, 2013.

<sup>4</sup>NUS Business School, National University of Singapore. (2013) S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA Programme Schedule web page. Electronic document, <http://bschool.nus.edu.sg/TheNUSMBA/ProspectiveStudents/DoubleDegreeProgrammes/S3AsiaMBA/ProgrammeInfo/ProgrammeSchedule/tabid/2317/default.aspx>, accessed August 15, 2013.

<sup>5</sup>S<sup>3</sup> Asia MBA. (2013) Dual Degree and One Certificate web page. Electronic document, <http://www.s3-asiamba.com/listener.do?layout=experience.02>, accessed August 14, 2013.