

KELVIN KC SEAH

CONTACT INFORMATION

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CURRENT APPOINTMENTS

Jan 2025 – Present Associate Professor (Education), Department of Economics, National University of Singapore

July 2021 – Present Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Economics, National University of Singapore

Nov 2021 – Present Research Fellow, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)

Dec 2021 – Present Research Advisor, Housing & Development Board, Singapore

July 2017 – Present Affiliated Faculty, Institute for Application of Learning Science and Educational Technology (ALSET), National University of Singapore

PREVIOUS APPOINTMENTS

Jan 2020 – Dec 2024 Senior Lecturer, Department of Economics, National University of Singapore

Jan 2024 – Jun 2024 Deputy Head (Teaching), Department of Economics, National University of Singapore

Jul 2015 – Dec 2019 Lecturer, Department of Economics, National University of Singapore

Jun 2016 – Nov 2021 Research Affiliate, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA)

Jan 2015 – Jun 2015 Research Fellow, Centre for Research on the Economics of Ageing (School of Economics), Singapore Management University

Jul 2014 – Oct 2014 Adjunct Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Otago

Jul 2009 – Jun 2010 Instructor, NUS Business School, National University of Singapore

Jan 2009 – May 2011 Adjunct Lecturer, SIM University

Aug 2007 – Dec 2007 Teaching Assistant, National University of Singapore

EDUCATION

Jan – Jun 2014	Visiting PhD Student (VSRC), Princeton University Sponsor: Professor Marta Tienda
2011 – 2014	PhD in Economics (Exceptional PhD Thesis award), University of Otago Thesis: <i>Three Essays on The Non-Labour Market Impacts of Immigration</i> Advisors: Professor Steven Stillman, Dr Tarja Viitanen, Dr Murat Genç
2007 – 2009	Master of Social Sciences (Economics) with Highest Distinction, National University of Singapore
2003 – 2007	Bachelor of Social Sciences (2 nd Upper Honours), National University of Singapore

RESEARCH AREAS

Applied Microeconomics, Labour Economics, Economics of Immigration, Economics of Education

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles

“Depth or Diversity? Examining the Longer Run Impacts of College Curriculum Breadth” (joint with Jessica Pan and Poh Lin Tan), *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 2025, 238: Article 107212.

“Do College Admissions Criteria Matter? Evidence from Discretionary vs. Grade-Based Admission Policies” (joint with Rais Kamis and Jessica Pan), *Economics of Education Review*, 2023, 92: Article 102347.

“Do Ethnically-Congruent Teachers Really Matter Little for Hispanic Students? A Re-Examination of the Data”, *Economics Letters*, 2021, 206: Article 109976.

“Do You Speak My Language? The Effect of Sharing a Teacher’s Native Language on Student Achievement”, *Southern Economic Journal*, 2021, 88(1): 245-273.

“Impact of Immigrant Peers on Native Students’ Achievement: Evidence from Australia, Canada and the United States”, *Australian Economic Review*, 2021, 54(1): 94-116.

“Breadth of University Curriculum and Labor Market Outcomes” (joint with Jessica Pan and Poh Lin Tan), *Labour Economics*, 2020, 65: Article 101873.

“The Effect of Immigration Shocks on Native Fertility Outcomes: Evidence from a Natural Experiment”, *IZA Journal of Development and Migration*, 2018, 8(18): 1-34.

“Immigrant Educators and Students’ Academic Achievement”, *Labour Economics*, 2018, 51(C): 152-169.

Book Chapters

“From Meritocracy to Parentocracy, and Back” (joint with Vincent Chua). In Lee, Yew-Jin (Ed.) *Education in Singapore: People-Making and Nation-Building*, 2022. Singapore: Springer (refereed).

WORKING PAPERS

“Should We Border? The Impact of Immigrant Students and the Role of Institutional Arrangements” (joint with Raphael Leong).

OP-EDS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

“After O-Levels, the Choice of Subjects isn’t Always Straightforward” (joint with Ivan Png), *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, January 9, 2024.

“Singapore has Long Resisted Unemployment Benefits, so Why the Change of Heart?”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, October 19, 2023.

“Does Immigration Affect Natives’ Fertility?”, *Population Association of Singapore (PAS) Commentary*, July 27, 2023.

“Parenthood Incentives – Singapore Cannot Keep Doing More of The Same Without Knowing Whether These Really Work”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, February 24, 2023.

“A Lot of Swot – Good or Not?”, *The Straits Times*, August 10, 2022.

“Raise Salaries to Attract More Locals to Hospitality and F&B? It’s Not So Simple”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, July 23, 2022.

“Workplace Discrimination: Greater Clarity Needed”, *The Straits Times*, September 4, 2021.

“More Non-Citizen Workers = Fewer Local Babies?”, *The Straits Times*, July 29, 2021.

“Foreign Labour Shortages in Construction Sector is a Wake-Up Call for Change”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, June 13, 2021.

“University Admissions Not Solely About Grades: Some Surprise Results” (joint with Jessica Pan and Rais Kamis), *The Straits Times*, March 11, 2021.

“Looking to 2021: Prospects for the Singapore Economy and Jobs Market”, *NUS News*, February 11, 2021. (Invited commentary; link: <https://news.nus.edu.sg/looking-to-2021-prospects-for-the-singapore-economy-and-jobs-market/>)

“Will Fewer Foreign Workers Help Low-Wage Singaporeans?” (joint with Yeow Hwee Chua and Ivan Png), *The Straits Times*, February 5, 2021.

“PSLE Scores Could Impact Life Outcomes. So Don’t Let Them”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, December 14, 2020.

“How Can Tertiary Students Boost Their Career Prospects in a Prolonged Crisis?”, *TODAY*, August 31, 2020.

“Immigration – A Fraught Issue That Deserves Closer Study”, *The Straits Times*, July 23, 2020.

“Will Reducing Foreign Worker Numbers Really Hurt Singapore?”, *TODAY*, June 11, 2020.

“For Your Neighbours’ Sake, Turn the Volume Down This Stay-Home Period”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, April 17, 2020.

“How Can We Tell If Women Are Discriminated Against in the Labour Market?”, *The Straits Times*, March 21, 2020.

“What Economics Predicts About Pre-School Fees After Subsidies”, *The Straits Times*, October 3, 2019.

“Tuition Has Ballooned to a S\$1.4b Industry in Singapore. Should We Be Concerned?”, *TODAY*, September 12, 2019.

“PSLE Changes: New PSLE Scoring System for Foundation Level May Dampen Motivation”, *The Straits Times*, July 29, 2019.

“Fixation on Academic Qualifications will be Hard to Break”, *The Straits Times*, June 5, 2019.

“The Start of Subject-Based Banding – Is Grouping Classes by CCAs the Best Option?”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, May 20, 2019.

“Single-Sex Schools Linked to Better Student Performance”, *The Straits Times*, March 16, 2019.

“Streaming May End, But Will Parents’ Behaviour Change?”, *The Straits Times*, March 7, 2019.

“Ensuring Poorer Kids Don’t Feel Marginalised in Top Schools”, *The Straits Times*, November 29, 2018.

“Reducing Class Size is Good, But Mind the Costs”, *The Straits Times*, October 24, 2018.

“Government Matchmaking Programmes Need a Rethink to Get Singles to Mingle”, *Channel NewsAsia Commentary*, October 20, 2018.

“Does Socioeconomic Background Matter? The Case of Singapore”, *Economics & Society*, 2018, 1, 10-14.

“When Poor Children in School Don’t Dream Big” (joint with Euston Quah), *The Straits Times*, June 9, 2018.

“Why Banning Tuition Will Only Make Things Worse”, *The Straits Times*, May 10, 2018.

“Time for Singapore Universities to Admit More International Students” (joint with Ivan Png), *TODAY*, January 29, 2018.

“Don’t be Hasty in Dismissing Private University Degrees”, *The Straits Times*, November 28, 2017.

“Understanding Gender Effects of Teacher-Student Interactions”, *The Straits Times*, November 24, 2017.

“Immigrants Outdo Native Students in Studies”, *The Straits Times*, June 14, 2017.

“Direct School Admissions Revisions Laudable, But Challenge Lies in Transparency”, *TODAY*, March 17, 2017.

“How to Decide Whether to Get a Degree or Start Work”, *The Straits Times*, March 8, 2017.

“Kids with Tuition Fare Worse”, *The Straits Times*, December 8, 2016.

“PSLE Changes: Mixed Effects on Pupils of Different Abilities”, *The Straits Times*, July 27, 2016.

“Looking Good Pays Off – In Dollars and Cents”, *The Straits Times*, May 10, 2016.

“Gauging Impact of Immigrant Students”, *The Straits Times*, February 10, 2016.

“Discussant Comments on Human Trafficking: The Economic Factors in Connection with Modern Day Slavery”, *Proceedings of the Pennsylvania Economic Association 2014 Conference*, 2014, pp. 113.

AWARDS

2025	National University of Singapore Department of Economics Teaching Excellence Award (for Teaching in AY2023/2024)
2024	NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Outreach and Engagement Award (AY2023/24)
2022	National University of Singapore Faculty Teaching Excellence Award (for Teaching in AY2021/2022)
2020	National University of Singapore Faculty Teaching Excellence Award (for Teaching in AY2019/2020)
2020	National University of Singapore Provost Educator Award (PEA), Educator Development Fund

2017	National University of Singapore Faculty Teaching Excellence Award (for Teaching in AY2016/2017)
2014	University of Otago Exceptional PhD Thesis Award
2011 – 2014	University of Otago Doctoral Scholarship
2012	University of Otago Travel Grant
2010	National University of Singapore Graduate Students' Teaching Award
2009	Singapore National Committee for Pacific Economic Co-operation (SINCPEC) Prize (Best student in the Master of Social Sciences programme at the National University of Singapore)
1998	Singapore Ministry of Education Edusave Scholarship

RESEARCH GRANTS

2024 – 2026	Co-Investigator, Singapore Ministry of Education Tertiary Education Research Fund, SGD 176,528 (USD 131,944). “Internship Participation and Student Outcomes in Singapore” (joint with Jessica Pan and Haoming Liu)
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STUDENT SUPERVISION

2023	Dhanvinkrishnan Gokulan, Ong Rui Zhi Caleb
2022	Muhammad Excel Muslim, Tabitha Tan Si Yi
2021	Gary Phng Wei Guang, Goh Eng Han, Koh Tze Hou, Quek Yew Hong Ryan, Raphael Leong Soong Ern
2020	Choo Jun Heng Alvin, Jeffrey Lau Yong Heng, Mohamad Rafi Bin Kamsani Chia, Quek Yong Kuang, Wan Xuan Ting Meredith
2019	Amanlia Toh Chu Ying, Angie Heng An Qi, Hee En Wei Leon, Tan Zi Jing
2018	Ang Xing Yi Amos, Darren Aw Tsin Liang, Heng Sze Min Phoebe
2017	Joseph Ng Zhi Wei, Khoo Zi-Yu, Teh Jong Tyng, Yan Saifan

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Speaker, Population Association of Singapore 2024 Annual Meeting, Singapore, May 2024

Speaker, Population Association of America 2024 Annual Meeting, Columbus O.H., United States, Apr 2024

Speaker, Royal Economic Society 2024 Annual Conference, Belfast, United Kingdom, Mar 2024

Speaker, Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics 2023 Conference, Taipei, Taiwan, Dec 2023

Speaker, 2023 Asian Meeting of the Econometric Society (AMES), Singapore, Jul 2023

Speaker, European Society for Population Economics 2023 Conference, Belgrade, Serbia, Jun 2023

Speaker, Population Association of Singapore 2023 Annual Meeting, Singapore, May 2023

Speaker, American Economic Association (AEA) Meetings, New Orleans, United States, Jan 2023

Speaker, Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics 2022 Conference, Tokyo, Japan, Dec 2022

Speaker, 56th Canadian Economics Association Annual Meeting, Ottawa, Canada, May 2022

Speaker, Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics 2021 Conference, Beijing, China (virtual), Dec 2021

Speaker, EALE SOLE AASLE 2020 Conference, Berlin, Germany (virtual), Jun 2020

Speaker, Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics 2019 Conference, Singapore, Dec 2019

Speaker, Singapore Economic Review Conference 2019, Singapore, Aug 2019

Speaker, European Society for Population Economics 2019 Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, Jun 2019

Speaker, Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics 2018 Conference, Seoul, South Korea, Dec 2018

Speaker, Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics 2017 Conference, Canberra, Australia, Dec 2017

Speaker, Singapore Economic Review Conference 2017, Singapore, Aug 2017

Speaker, Korean Economic Association – Asia-Pacific Economic Association Annual Conference, Seoul, South Korea, Jul 2017

Speaker, Singapore Economic Review Conference 2015, Singapore, Aug 2015

Speaker, Population Association of America 2015 Annual Meeting, San Diego C.A., United States, April 2015

Speaker, The Rimini Conference in Economics and Finance, Rimini, Italy, Jun 2014

Speaker, Pennsylvania Economic Association Annual Conference, Edinboro P.A., United States, May 2014

Discussant, Pennsylvania Economic Association Annual Conference, Edinboro P.A., United States, May 2014

Speaker, University of Melbourne – Princeton University International Perspectives on Immigration Workshop, Melbourne, Australia, Jul 2013

Speaker, 1st IZA@DC Young Scholar Program, Washington D.C., United States, Oct 2012

SEMINAR PRESENTATIONS

2015 University of Melbourne, University of Queensland

2014 Princeton University, University of Otago, Singapore University of Social Sciences

2013 University of Otago (twice)

2012 University of Otago (twice)

SERVICE (PROFESSION)

Chair of Curriculum Committee, NUS Department of Economics, 2021 – Present

Outreach Lead, NUS Department of Economics, 2021 – Present

Member of Executive Committee, NUS Department of Economics, 2020 – Present

Inclusive Policy Lab Expert, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2019 – Present

Member, Institute of Policy Studies Social Inclusion Policy Network, 2018 – Present

Committee Member, Singapore Centre for Applied and Policy Economics, 2017 – Present

Peer Reviewer (Teaching) - Internal, NUS Department of Economics, 2020, 2022, 2023, 2025

Department Speaker, NUS and CHS Open Houses, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025

Board of Examiners, NUS Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, 2023, 2024, 2025

Conference Reviewer, Higher Education Conference in Singapore (HECS), 2025

Organizer and Speaker, Sharing on NUS Economics (outreach session to students from junior colleges and polytechnics to introduce them to how life as an economics undergraduate at NUS is like), NUS Economics Department, April 2025

Faculty Search Committee (Educator Track), NUS Department of Economics, 2018 – 2024

Member of Scientific Committee, 2024 Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference, 2024

Organizer and Panellist, Economics PhD Information Session (workshop providing guidance to students interested to pursue a PhD after graduation), NUS Department of Economics, October 2024

Panellist, Sharing on NUS Economics (outreach session to students from junior colleges and polytechnics to introduce them to how life as an economics undergraduate at NUS is like), NUS Economics Society, March 2024

Panellist, Developmental Issues in the Malay World and Woman's Emancipation: Ideals and Impediments (NUS Open House 2024 Talk), NUS College of Humanities and Sciences, March 2024

Organizer and Panellist, Economics PhD Information Session (workshop providing guidance to students interested to pursue a PhD after graduation), NUS Department of Economics, November 2023

Invited Speaker, Economics Specialisations Sharing Session (workshop providing guidance to economics undergraduates on declaring a specialisation), NUS Economics Society, October 2023

Member of Scientific Committee, 2023 Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference, 2023

Session Chair, 2023 Asian Meeting of the Econometric Society (AMES), July 2023

Selection Committee, NUS Aptitude Based Admissions Interviews, 2023

Peer Reviewer (Teaching) - External, NUS Department of Sociology, 2022

Reader, 2022 NUS Commencement Ceremony, 2022

Masters Thesis Examiner, NUS Department of Economics, 2020, 2023

Column Administrator, *Straits Times* – Ask NUS Economists Column, 2020, 2021

Chair of Econometrics Curriculum Review Committee, NUS Department of Economics, 2020, 2021

Honours Thesis Examiner, NUS Department of Economics, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021

Selection Committee, NUS Economics Teaching Assistant Applications, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2021

Member of Scientific Committee, 2021 Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference, 2021

Advisor, National University of Singapore Economics Society, 2016 – 2020

Member of Organising and Scientific Committee, 3rd Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference, 2019

Invited Speaker, Roosevelt Institute @ Yale-NUS Singapore Policy Deep Dive, March 2019

Member of Scientific Committee, 2nd Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference, 2018

Member of Scientific Committee, 1st Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics (AASLE) Conference, 2017

Panellist, FASS Forward to Exams (workshop providing guidance to undergraduates on preparing for exams), November 2017

Competition Judge, National Economics and Financial Management Challenge (Singapore national economics competition for pre-university students), July 2017

Panellist, Workshop on Graduate Studies (workshop providing guidance to students who wish to pursue graduate studies in Economics), October 2016

Organising Committee, Singapore Health Economics Association Conference, May 2015

Session Chair, Pennsylvania Economic Association Annual Conference, May 2014

SERVICE (COMMUNITY)

Military Expert, Singapore Armed Forces
OC, NUS National Police Cadet Corps

REFeree FOR

Applied Economics, Asian Case Research Journal, Asia Pacific Education Review, Australian Journal of Labour Economics, Bulletin of Latin American Research, Economics of Education Review, German Economic Review, Higher Education, International Journal of Manpower, Journal of Labor Economics, Journal of Population Economics, Journal of Public Economics, LABOUR: Review of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations, Migration Studies, Singapore Economic Review, Social Science Quarterly

INTERNSHIPS / TRAINING

May 2008 – Jul 2008 Summer Intern, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)

Oct 2007 – Jun 2008 Research Assistant to Professor Ivan Png and Professor Albert Hu,
National University of Singapore

May 2006 – Jun 2008 Research Assistant to Professor Euston Quah, Nanyang Technological
University

May 2006 – Jul 2006 Intern, Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore

May 2005 – Jul 2005 Intern, Economic Development Board, Singapore

Jul 2005 Research Assistant to Professor Wong Wei Kang, National University
of Singapore

MEMBERSHIPS

American Economic Association, Asian and Australasian Society of Labour Economics,
Canadian Economics Association, European Association of Labour Economists, Population
Association of Singapore, Royal Economic Society, Southern Economic Association, The
Econometric Society

SKILLS

Programming STATA

Languages English (native) and Mandarin (fluent)

REFERENCE

Professor Steven Stillman
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