

NUS Commencement 2025
Main Ceremony Speech by NUS President, Professor Tan Eng Chye
Thursday, 10 July 2025, 10am, NUS University Cultural Centre

Mr Po'ad Mattar, NUS Pro-Chancellor;

Distinguished Guests, Graduates, Parents and Friends;

Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to all! It's my great pleasure to welcome everyone gathered here for our first Commencement ceremony of 2025. As we come together to celebrate the remarkable achievements of our graduates, we also commemorate the momentous occasion of NUS' 120th anniversary – a testament to 120 years of excellence, innovation, and community-building.

First and foremost, let me extend my heartiest congratulations to our graduates. Your years of hard work, dedication and perseverance have finally come to fruition, leading up to this pivotal moment.

Each of you had your fair share of challenges to navigate during your time at NUS – whether these be academic, financial, social or even psychological in nature – but you have also experienced triumphs, opportunities and most importantly, growth. Take immense pride that having overcome these trials; you have emerged as a stronger, more resilient, and indomitable individual.

Through the interdisciplinary and transformative educational experience at NUS, you acquired a solid academic foundation, along with the capacity for critical thinking, the ability to solve complex problems, and the skills to collaborate effectively with persons from diverse backgrounds.

Global and experiential programmes allowed you to explore new perspectives, push boundaries, and develop lifelong skills, while out-of-the classroom activities paved the way for you to pursue your passions in the arts, sports, or community engagement. I believe that such holistic development has prepared you well to take on the world, whatever it may bring.

Indeed, the current global landscape is marked by uncertainty and a grim economic climate, and there are many unknowns.

But, life is the messy bits – a journey of discovery and adventure – you don't need to have a perfect plan in place! However, having a strong sense of purpose will give you the clarity of mind and fortitude to steer through unexpected turns and also difficult times.

As the late Chadwick Boseman put it, "Purpose is an essential element of you. It is the reason you are on the planet at this particular time in history. Your very existence is wrapped up in the things you are here to fulfill. Whatever you choose for a career path, remember, the struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose."

It is important to believe that even in the face of adversity, there is always room for hope and optimism. Finally, embracing a growth mindset and committing to continuous learning are key to thriving in the dynamic, complex and fast-paced environment of today.

In 1905, the National University of Singapore was founded for the community, by the community. A hundred and twenty years on, while we have grown and evolved, we remain steadfast in our mission to serve the needs of our country and society. As you move forward with purpose, passion, and confidence, you join a legacy of dreamers, changemakers, and trailblazers to shape a better future for all of us.

On behalf of the NUS community, we look forward to your contributions and accomplishments in the next chapter of your life.

Congratulations to the Class of 2025!