

NUS law faculty to return to Kent Ridge in 2025

It will move into Yale-NUS premises after spending 19 years at Bukit Timah campus

Gabrielle Chan

The National University of Singapore's (NUS) law faculty will be moving back to Kent Ridge come August 2025, after spending 19 years at its Bukit Timah campus.

It will move into the Yale-NUS College premises located in University Town after the final batch of Yale-NUS students graduates, said NUS in a statement on May 27.

The move will give law students easier access to non-law electives and non-law minors offered by other colleges, said NUS Law dean Andrew Simester, noting that law is "increasingly interwoven" across domains such as healthcare, artificial intelligence and sustainability. "This marks a significant step by the university to further integrate its distinctive law degree programmes into its comprehensive and interdisciplinary undergraduate education," NUS added in its statement.

With the move, students will also get more opportunities to interact with the main campus community of 50,000 students.

The NUS Law community comprises about 1,000 undergraduate and 250 postgraduate students, and 160 full-time faculty and staff. NUS Law will neighbour NUS College, the honours college of the university, with both faculties located in the same premises.

The NUS Centre for International Law, a university-level research institute established in 2006, will also

move to the Kent Ridge campus.

In response to queries from The Straits Times about plans for the current law school building, NUS said: "We are exploring plans to repurpose and reallocate the space at the Bukit Timah campus according to our needs, and will study the different options carefully."

The Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, located in the Bukit Timah campus, will remain.

Plans are in place to ensure NUS Law will have a smooth transition to the new premises in time for the new academic year in August 2025, said NUS.

Second-year law student Nasha Marican said it is a bittersweet feeling to be moving to Kent Ridge after having been at the Bukit Timah campus.

Although she will miss the serenity of the Bukit Timah campus and the occasional sightings of others from the Singapore Botanic Gardens, the 21-year-old said she feels the move will make it more convenient for those taking non-law modules, as the shuttling from the Bukit Timah campus to Kent Ridge was "gruelling".

"I am excited to access the wide range of facilities that Kent Ridge offers," she said. "I am also grateful for the opportunity to make friends and network with students from other faculties – an opportunity that is rare on the Bukit Timah campus, where we are the only faculty."

She said she will miss the Wee Chong Jin Moot Court most of all,



The National University of Singapore's Bukit Timah campus, where the law faculty has been located since 2006. The faculty's move back to the main Kent Ridge campus will give law students easier access to non-law electives and non-law minors offered by other colleges, said dean Andrew Simester. ST PHOTO: BRIAN TEO

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE MOVE

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SECOND-YEAR LAW STUDENT NASHA MARICAN

as it is the only court where law students in Singapore can participate in mock trials in a court-like setting. "I will miss the moot court deeply, and I do hope students will still have access to the court despite the move to Kent Ridge."

NUS president Tan Eng Chye said: "This homecoming is a meaningful milestone that is more than just a physical relocation."

"It is a reaffirmation of our commitment to be more closely integrated, collaborative and innovative in our aspirations in research and teaching."

He said NUS Law, before its move to Bukit Timah, had spent 25 years at the main campus – from 1981 to 2006.

This followed NUS' establishment in 1980, after the first cohort of law students were admitted in 1957 at the Bukit Timah campus as part of the University of Malaya, NUS' predecessor institution.

The faculty in 2006 returned to the Bukit Timah campus under NUS.

The Straits Times reported that in 2005, when the faculty's relocation was announced, students had

expressed concerns about being separated from the main Kent Ridge campus and the potential impact on interacting with other students. The university then proposed measures like providing shuttle services and organising events, such as the annual Rag and Flag day, to promote student engagement.

NUS then had planned to relocate its law and business faculties to the Bukit Timah campus to accommodate more postgraduate students and offer additional short courses for professionals.

However, it was subsequently decided that only the law faculty would move to Bukit Timah in 2006, while the business school would be expanded and take over some of the law faculty buildings on the Kent Ridge campus.

Associate Professor Jaclyn Neo, an alumna of NUS Law from the class of 2003 who joined as a faculty member in 2007, said she feels positive about this change.

"I studied law at the Kent Ridge campus and so, this feels almost like a homecoming," Prof Neo said, adding that moving to the main campus will help to expand NUS

Law's programmes as well as build closer ties with the rest of the university.

When asked if she had any concerns about the move, she said: "The timeline is quite short, which means that we will need to be very efficient in identifying faculty needs and ensuring that the space at the new campus can be repurposed in time for our teaching and research, including ensuring that our research centres will have the space to house our researchers."

Furthermore, with our increased focus on interdisciplinary curriculum and research, it is a welcome move to be closer to the rest of the university to build closer research links and collaborations with colleagues on the main campus."

But Prof Neo said she would still miss being in the middle of the Singapore Botanic Gardens and being able to show off the Unesco World Heritage site to those who visit.

She added: "Hopefully, we will continue to have access to the Bukit Timah campus for alumni events and other major events."

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