

SAS QUEST PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

You have questions. We have answers.

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WHAT IS QUEST?

Q: What exactly is Quest?

A: A full-day, year-long program for juniors and seniors that inspires a community of learners through personalized learning, an interdisciplinary approach, and experiential learning while leveraging a flexible schedule.

Additional Resources to learn more about the Quest Program:

- [SAS Quest Program Website](#) this site contains the most up-to-date information on the program.
- [Official SAS Quest Website](#)
- [Quest Stories](#) - Hear and read about Quest experiences from Quest students and alumni
- [Quest Application for SY 2025-2026](#)
- [Quest Program Website](#)
- [Quest 1-Pager](#) (PDF)
- [Quest Supplemental](#) - List of Partnerships and Universities of Quest Alumni (PDF)
- [Quest Information Sessions Flyer](#) (PDF)

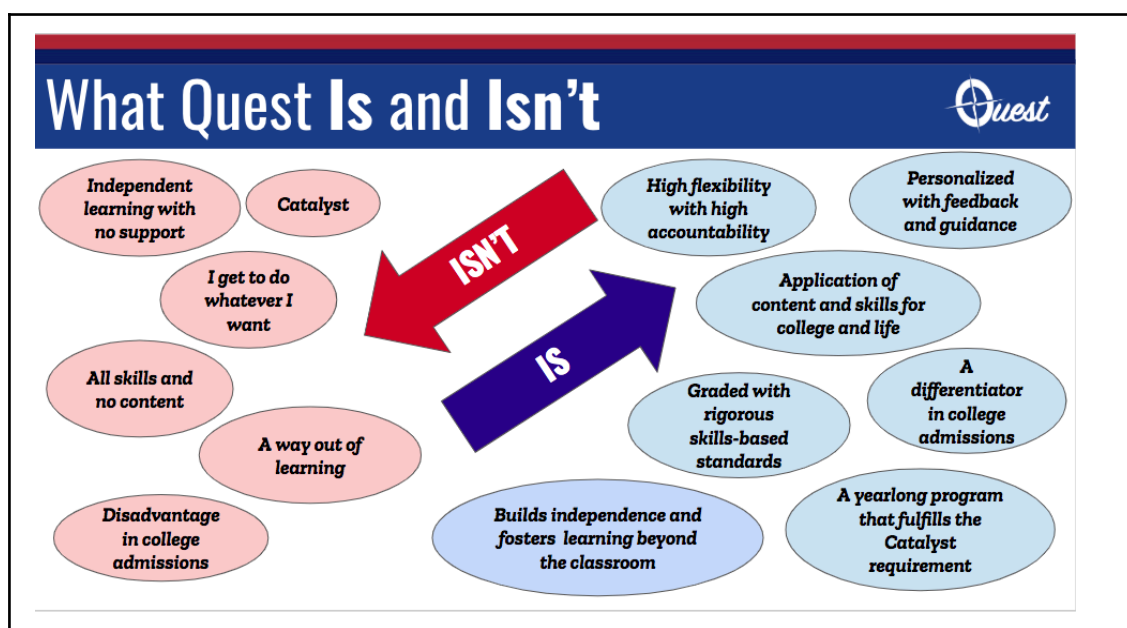
Q: How long has this program been offered at SAS?

A: The program began in SY2016-17 as a “senior only” 2-Day program offering six (6) courses. It has changed since then to a junior-senior program one-day program with four (4) courses. SY2024-25 marks its 9th year of programming. It has been open to both juniors and seniors for the past seven (7) years. It moved to its current model of a one-day, every-other-day program in SY2021-22; this is the model that will continue into the foreseeable future as it works best to give students the best advantage for Quest opportunities while still fully accessing all other SAS courses and participating in campus programs and events.

Q: How Does Quest Differ from the General High School Program?

A: Quest is a competency-based learning system designed to ensure all students develop skills they in school and beyond. To achieve this goal Quest aims to mirror how people learn, work, and succeed in the world. It prioritizes agency, encourages adaptability, and reflects the cultures and expectations our students will encounter in their future.

- ☐ Students advance upon demonstrated success rather than seat time.
- ☐ The essential skills students develop include explicit, measurable, transferable, learning outcomes that empower those students.
- ☐ Assessment is a meaningful, positive learning experience for students.
- ☐ Students receive timely, differentiated learning support based on their individual needs.
- ☐ Learning experiences emphasize application and creation of knowledge, in addition to the development of essential skills and dispositions.



Q: How is it different from Catalyst?

A: “Catalyst” refers to the Catalyst Project graduation requirement. The Catalyst Project is a student-directed project where students work with a mentor in a relevant field of interest to create an original product. Catalyst is a minimum of one semester long. Quest, is a year-long program that gives students voice and choice in their learning on specific interdisciplinary topics embedded into the curriculum. The independent research and project-based learning done through Quest’s Student Driven Study (SDS) fulfills the Catalyst Project graduation requirement. The difference between the two is that Catalyst is typically research done for one semester, whereas in Quest all students have an opportunity to conduct a scholarly research study over an entire year and may submit their thesis to the College Board for AP Research credit. As such, Quest allows students (with the guidance of an outside mentor and three Quest advisors) following the AP Research curriculum to delve deeper into their passions and interests over the course of an entire year rather than one semester.

Q: If you do Quest, do you also have to do Catalyst? Would be great to get clarification on Quest, Catalyst, Capstone etc.

A: No, students would not need to do Catalyst as a semester course. Quest satisfies the Catalyst graduation requirement. Please see the FAQs document for more details on how

the Quest program is different from the 1-semester Catalyst course and the Catalyst graduation requirement.

Details about the Capstone program can be found in the Program Planning Guide. While students can elect to take AT Research in Quest and can submit their research for AP Research credit, AP Capstone has a requirement that students also complete AP Seminar; this means a Quest student working towards earning AP Capstone would need to have taken AP Seminar prior to Quest. For Juniors in Quest, they could elect to take AP Seminar as their outside (non-Quest day) course and take the non-AT research in Quest, which would prepare them well for AT Research/AP Research for their senior year.

Q: How does a student (or parent) determine if they are a good “fit” for the Quest program?

A: This question comes up frequently. The Quest program is appropriate for many students if they have:

- a strong desire to learn
- have a good work-ethic
- enjoys teamwork, collaborative projects and ability to work well with others
- Ability to engage in self-directed learning (works independently and autonomously)
- responds appropriately to teacher and peer constructive feedback
- Can work in a variety of dynamic classroom and professional settings
- Willingness to navigate nuances of learning in problem-based interdisciplinary projects
- either have good time-management or a desire to work on improving their time-management skills.

Quest students are expected to work with others, demonstrate intrinsic motivation, and have a positive attitude. The Quest advisors will facilitate learning, but students should be prepared to work hard.

Many students come into the Quest program with a strong passion or interest, but this is not a prerequisite. Each year we find that some Quest students do not know what they want to do but they are curious and have a desire to discover more about who they are and push themselves to learn more about what they are capable of achieving with the right support and encouragement.

Students do not need to come into the program already knowing what they want to do for an internship, for research, or major for university. The Quest Advisors will help students work on identifying these things based on each student’s skills and interests.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Q: What are the requirements to join?

A: APPLICANTS MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

The following criteria must be met prior to submitting the application:

- **Grade level:** be a rising junior or senior at the time of application;
- **On Track to Graduate:** be on track to graduate within the expected timeframe; must plan to complete 1-year of the program (note: Quest is not an appropriate placement for a rising senior that intended to graduate early in December graduation.)
- **Application requirements and Quest student profile:** ensure appropriate fit for the program. Applicants must be in good standing academically, behaviorally, and in attendance.
- **Counselor(s) meeting:** has met with PAC and College Counselor (for rising seniors) prior to submitting application.
- **Parent Support:** ensure parent(s) or legal guardian will support enrolling in the Quest program
- **Commitment to Launch Week:** applicant and parent acknowledges and agrees to commit to participating in the Quest program's Launch Week trip which typically occurs approximately 1 week prior to the start of the school year.
- **Commitment to Partnerships Program:** accepting a 6- 8 week partnership placement in a professional workplace setting during the school year.
- **Application Completion:** Successfully completes the application, including the required written statements.
- **Counselor Support:** receives positive support for their placement in Quest from both their PAC Counselor and College Counselor; for rising juniors not yet assigned a College Counselor, additional positive support will be required from the applicant's advisor and/or teachers. See application process information below.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS:

ALL APPLICANTS:

Applications are screened by a process of a holistic review of the applicant's profile, which includes reviewing the application and supporting materials provided; consulting with PAC and College counselors for input on the "fit" to which the applicant meets the requirements and possesses the desired attributes and dispositions that will lead to a positive learning experience for the applicant and the Quest learning community. At a minimum, the applicant will need to receive positive support from both the PAC and College Counselors; the applicant's advisor will also be consulted to help determine how the student engages in a small community. To ensure that selected students are strong representatives of the program and school community, the Dean of Students will confirm that each applicant is in good standing academically, behaviorally, and in attendance. This process ensures that all participants are well-prepared to serve as positive role models and trusted representatives when collaborating with professional organizations, stakeholders, school leaders, and peers.

If necessary, Quest advisors may seek additional input from current teachers, and previous Interim sponsors

Personal and Academic Integrity

To be admitted into Quest, applicants must uphold the SAS core values, personal integrity, and cultural expectations, as defined in the [student handbook](#); be in good academic standing; have no significant academic or behavioral infractions within the past

12 months that resulted in: a behavioral contract, a school suspension, suspension from participation in co-curricular, removal from and/or disciplinary action from misconduct during an off-island school-sponsored trip.

GRADE 10 APPLICANTS:

For current Grade 10 students applying to participate in their junior year, current teachers will be contacted for input on the student's readiness for the level of maturity and academic independence required to be successful in Quest.

The following attributes and dispositions listed below serve as both guidance for potential student applicants (and their parents) and criteria for Quest advisors and an applicant's counselors for screening applicants to ensure alignment with the expectations and goals of the Quest program.

ATTRIBUTES AND DISPOSITIONS FOR QUEST PROGRAM STUDENT PROFILES:

Desired Traits and Dispositions of a Quest student:

- Desire to Learn: Demonstrates a desire for acquiring knowledge and skills through Quest's experiential learning and interdisciplinary learning approach.
- Work Ethic: Exhibits a disciplined approach of working towards goals and desired learning outcomes; willingness to seek support when needed.
- Interpersonal Skills: capable of working in team-based learning environments; engages appropriately with peers and adults in various learning and professional situations and environments.
- Self-regulation: ability to regulate emotions and behaviors in a highly dynamic learning environments in a variety of settings, both on and off campus.
- Readiness for Self-Directed Learning: Capable of working independently and autonomously.
- Constructive Feedback Response: Responds positively to feedback from both teachers and peers.
- Adaptability: Can thrive in various highly dynamic classroom and professional settings.
- Willingness to navigate the complexities and nuances of interdisciplinary project-based learning.
- Time Management: Exhibits good time-management skills or a strong willingness to improve in this area.

Desired Demonstrated Interest and Motivation:

- Project-Based Learning: Displays a keen interest in learning through problem-based and project-based learning approaches.
- Interdisciplinary Connections: Values connections between different fields of study.
- Experiential Learning: Seeks to gain practical knowledge through hands-on experiences.
- Passion Pursuit: Desires to discover and pursue passions and interests in real-world contexts.

- Time Management Focus: Motivated to learn effective time-management strategies.

Desired Positive Community Engagement:

- Small Learning Community: Enjoys being part of a close-knit community of learners.
- Collaborative Learning: Enjoys collaborating with peers, excelling in team-based projects.
- Positive Attitude: Maintains a positive attitude towards collaborative learning and teamwork.

Q: What are the application deadlines?

A: Round 1: Monday, December 16, 2024, 11:59 pm *Early Decision deadline; Seniors are prioritized in Round 1.**

** Round one applications will prioritize rising seniors. All early decision applicants will receive notification by December 20th; this allows students and families to begin making plans for next summer/school year. We encourage students to apply early before the program reaches capacity.*

Round 2: Saturday, March 1, 2025, 11:59 pm. *Regular deadline: rolling acceptance until we reach capacity.***

***Round two applications open on January 20 and will close on March 1, 2025. Round two applications are accepted on a rolling basis until we reach capacity. The program's capacity is 30 students. There is no priority given to rising seniors in this round; rising juniors and seniors have equal opportunity based on the date of their application to join. Once we reach capacity, students will be placed on a waitlist based on their graduation year and date/time stamp on the application.*

Q: Why are there 2 rounds? What does it indicate?

A: There are many reasons for having 2 separate rounds. The primary reason is to provide opportunities for families at different stages of decision-making. Round 1 typically has applicants that are certain that Quest is the right program for them and they desire to secure a spot early. Applying early and knowing whether they have secured a spot for next year also helps families begin to plan ahead for travel/summer plans for next summer.

Round 2 provides an opportunity for students and families who would like to take more time to determine whether Quest is right for them or need more time as they may be contemplating an international move away from Singapore and are not yet certain if they will still be enrolled at SAS next year. While we begin providing informational meetings for parents in November, we will begin hosting informational meetings for students in November and January. Anecdotally, we do find some students who apply in Round 2 had not known much about the Quest program until Semester 2; this is often true for students new to SAS.

The disadvantage to applying later in the process is that available spaces might be limited as we reach program capacity.

Q: Is the acceptance by first come first serve?

A: To some extent, yes. There are 2 rounds spread out between November - February. Refer to the information on the application deadlines (above) to understand more about which round rising seniors are prioritized.

Q: How many students will Quest be enrolling for SY25-26?

A: We have a capacity to accept 30 students into next year's Quest program. This capacity allows us to maintain a ratio of 10 students for each advisor (there are 3 Quest advisors) and maintain a small learning community.

Q: What is the acceptance rate?

A: The acceptance rate varies from year to year as we do review applications to ensure it that it is a "best fit" for both the student and for our program.

Below is our acceptance rate for the past three years of programming:

- SY24-25:
- SY23-24: 68% acceptance rate
- SY22-23: 87% acceptance rate
- SY21-22: 93% acceptance rate

Q: What happens when the number of applicants exceeds the capacity the program can accommodate?

A: At either of the rounds of applications (there are two rounds of intake), if we have more applicants than spots available students will go onto a waitlist based on the date of their application. Please note that in each round seniors within that pool of applicants are prioritized. If spots fill up at the closing date of Round 1, Round 2 will still open for applicants who want to be added to a waitlist.

Q: Has there been a waitlist?

A: Yes. Each year we have unfortunately had to waitlist some students.

Q: Are applications binding?

A: Submitting an application is not binding. If a student is accepted into Quest, it is not binding until course sign-ups, which will happen in March. Once a student has signed up for courses and selects the Quest courses, they will not be able to make schedule changes until the school year begins in August, should they decide not to participate in Quest after such time. Students and parents will sign a document in March as well, which acknowledges that they plan to participate in Quest, including the Launch trip, in August. Once a student and parent signs this document, it will be financially binding as we will book flights, and accommodations and will have paid in advance for all of your travel expenses. For that reason, any student that decides not to participate in Quest after signing the document in March would still be financially responsible for paying for the travel expenses of the Launch trip (this is estimated to be approximately \$2500, similar to the cost of upcoming Interim '25 trips to Bali). Course selections and the financial cost of the Launch trip are the only aspects that become binding for the student. If a family anticipates there may be a likely chance they may end up moving next summer, but would still want to apply to Quest in case they are able to stay in Singapore, we recommend the family purchase their own trip/travel insurance. Our school's travel insurance may not cover this as a travel claim for refund if the family knows they may be relocating.

COURSES, ACADEMICS & PERSONALIZED LEARNING IN QUEST

Q: What does Quest every other day look like?

A: The number of Quest courses for students in the One-Day option will mean students will take four courses in Quest (either A-Day or B-Day, depending on students' desired general high school course selections). In 2025-2026, there will be two cohorts of 15-20 students; one on A-Day, and approximately the same number of students on B-Day. Having Quest every other day will allow students greater flexibility in course selection outside of Quest with three non-Quest courses from which to choose. During the nine-week Quest Partnership (similar to an unpaid internship) students will have one-to-two work days every week. The four core courses offered in Quest 2025-2026 will be at either the college preparatory or Advanced Topic (AT) Level.

Quest Courses (open to Juniors & Seniors)

Math: Data Analysis & Visualization/ or AT DAV

Science: Conservation & Resource Studies/ or AT CRS

Social Studies: Society, Governance & Civic Action/ or AT SGC

English: Research & Composition (non-AT SDS English)/ or AT Research

Q: How much freedom does a student have over pursuing a project they are interested in for Quest?

A: Quest is designed to give students the opportunity to pursue their passions and interests. Research topics and projects are interdisciplinary in nature with rigorous standards attached; however, students are given free rein to select a variety of modalities, or topics, artifacts or products based on personal or collaborative group interest. Quest Advisors will work with students to ensure that their project ideas meet course requirements in order to earn credit.

Q: How much time is required for the student's participation in the projects they are involved in?

A: This will vary from student to student and project to project, so it is impossible to give an exact answer. Workloads in Quest are rigorous yet manageable.

Q: May a Quest student work on a project they have already started on before enrolling in Quest?

A: This is a possibility! Students can work with the Quest Advisors to make their pre-existing projects work to meet the requirements of the course to earn credit.

Q: For the non-Quest courses (i.e. regular high school classes), would you have the same requirements as non-Quest students?

A: Yes.

Q: Are Quest students allowed to continue with their foreign Language studies?

A: Students are able to continue with a foreign language if they choose to take a foreign language as one of their three (3) SAS courses they sign up for on their non-Quest day. This is something you can speak with your PAC counselor about if you are unsure of which courses would be best to take during your junior year to keep you on track for all graduation requirements and to align with your goals and plans after graduation.

Q: What are tests or exams like in Quest?

A: Quest is an interdisciplinary, project-based program. Quest students do not take traditional tests or exams for their Quest coursework. Quest students are assessed on a variety of performance tasks throughout the year. These tasks are skills-based. For example, a student may be assessed on public speaking skills when giving a presentation; they may also be assessed for other English skills when communicating on social media, producing blog posts to publish on Medium, and/or for their email correspondence with professionals for their partnership or for event-planning. In other courses, students will be assessed on the data visualizations they create from data they have collected. In this example, there are numerous skills that could be assessed from this process, such as the science skill of data collection and the methods they used to collect the data, math skills in data analysis (how the student has interpreted the data), coding skills for creating the visualizations, and data communication for how they use visualizations and written/verbal communication to explain or discuss the data represented in the visualization. These are just a few examples in how Quest assessments are skills-based; students have to demonstrate the skill by the work they produce for individual and group projects or research they conduct in Quest.

Q: How many APs are students able to take if they opt into the Quest program?

A: Quest does not limit how many APs a student is able to take other than the 1-Day Quest option allows for students to take up to three non-Quest courses. The maximum cap of seven AP courses still holds true for all high school students.

Please note that all four of the Quest core courses can be taken at the regular college prep level or at the Advanced Topic (AT) level. The Quest English course, AT Research, course also prepares students who wish to submit their research to College Board for AP Research credit. The prerequisite for electing to submit research to College Board for AP Research credit is completing the AT Seminar course in the previous school year.

Q: I'm curious as to whether data analysis is the main methodology for most projects, or have other research methodologies been used, e.g. qualitative analysis

A: Students take a variety of approaches (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed) in their student-designed studies. As part of the Data Analysis and Visualization course credit, all students also learn quantitative analysis skills regardless of their student-designed study approach. Some research approaches this year of students doing qualitative studies include discourse analysis, grounded theory, autoethnographical studies, and more. Quest students take on many research approaches!

Q: What topics are covered in the different Quest courses? What would a Quest student actually learn and study?

A: Quest courses are not so much topic-centric as they are more skill-based and due to the interdisciplinary nature of the coursework they are thematic. By design, the themes are broad enough to allow for student choice.

In Semester 1, the unit themes are:

QUEST LAUNCH WEEK (1 week prior to the start of the regular school year)

Unit 1: Explore: Self and Community (*this includes the Quest Launch Week*);

Unit 2: World of Work (*this is when students participate in the 8-week off-campus partnership program*)

In Semester 2, the unit themes are:

Unit 3: The Future We Choose: The World as it Could and Should be.

Unit 4: Quest SDS Thesis and Defense *(this unit is dedicated time for students to work on their SDS research projects);*

In both semesters these themes are applied across all Quest courses for interdisciplinary projects and application of knowledge and skills. The content knowledge and skills needed for the interdisciplinary projects completed in Quest are often taught in what is referred to as "[Just-in-Time teaching \(JiTT\)](#)" and learning approach so that students are actively learning the information and skills necessary to be successful for the projects they are about to engage in. This is taught through a variety of strategies including: focused reading and video modules to review prior to the class the content and skills will be taught in; direct teach instructions, [experiential learning](#) (learning through doing) experiences, small shared group inquiry, peer instruction (students help teach each other something they have become student experts in) and many more learning strategies with the goal that students are applying what they are learning almost immediately after learning it or simultaneously as they are learning it.

To give you some more specifics for each core course, please visit the following webpages:

- [Courses in Quest](#)
- [The Student-Driven Study \(SDS\)](#)
- [Quest Units of Study](#)

QUEST DAILY, WEEKLY, AND YEAR-LONG SCHEDULE

Q: Do Quest students have a free block?

A: Quest students have a lot of control over their schedules. While there are many commitments Quest students must attend to - attending Quest classes, project work, partnerships, non-Quest courses - it is possible for a Quest student to have a free block. However, this will only be possible if they are able to manage their time wisely. Many former Quest students tell us that time management is one of the most important skills that they learn in the program.

Q: How are non-Quest courses scheduled?

A: We work hard to make sure that Quest students' non-Quest courses are scheduled on the same day (i.e., Day 1 or Day 2). This enables us to have one day dedicated just to Quest.

Q: Is Quest basically a day-long free block?

A: No! Although Quest students have a flexible schedule, there is still a lot of accountability and support built in. We call the Quest schedule flexible because we are able to tailor our time during the day to exactly what students need, rather than being bound by the block schedule that the rest of the high school follows. With this flexibility, Quest students are able to participate in a variety of learning experiences throughout the day, including going to partnerships, working on group projects, hearing from speakers, and attending "traditional" lessons with the Quest community. The Quest teachers provide support to each student to ensure their success.

PARTNERSHIPS (UNPAID INTERNSHIPS)

Q: What are Quest ‘partnerships’?

A: Partnerships are an opportunity for Quest students to engage in real-life work with an organization or business - think of them as an unpaid internship. We don’t call them “internships” because in these partnerships, Quest students work towards meeting learning targets that they identify with the Quest Advisors and become part of their semester grades.

- Visit the [Quest Partnership webpage](#)
- Watch the [Quest Partnerships video](#) to get an inside glimpse (Youtube, 6:17 min.)

Q: How do we find our partnerships?

A: Quest teachers work hard to find partnerships for each Quest student based on the student’s strengths, interests, goals and student choice. Each year students are placed in a wide range of professional fields from both the corporate and nonprofit sectors. We have amassed a large database of potential partnerships which helps ensure that every Quest student has a partnership. Some Quest students already have a partnership lined up coming into the program (i.e. through their own connections) - this is another way that some Quest students have secured their partnerships in the past. Incoming Quest students are welcome to set up their own partnerships over the summer and at the start of their school year in August if they prefer this option; otherwise, Quest advisors will arrange for a list at the start of each school year for partnering organizations offering placement opportunities for Semester 1.

Q: How long does the partnership last? What do you do once it’s over?

A: Students will complete 8 weeks of a partnership (similar to an unpaid internship) in the first semester and will work two- or three days per week for the duration of the 8-week partnership. In the second semester, more time is dedicated to completing the Student Driven Study (SDS). In the past, some Quest students have made arrangements on their own to continue their partnerships, however, this is not organized through Quest and has to take place outside of normal school hours.

Q: Do all students get partnership placement in their first choice of interest area?

A: Generally, yes, the Quest advisors identify potential partnership work placements for students and help students prepare to apply with a resume, cover letter, and formal interview. The internship placement ultimately decides whether to hire or not hire a Quest student. Most years we have 100% of students get hired at an off-campus partnership placement (similar to an unpaid internship) in their desired field. Most students work in-person in a professional setting for the entire duration of their partnership; some may experience a blend of in-person/in-office and some days WFH.

Q: The Quest program will match the students with an internship?

A: Every student will be matched with a partnership. The Quest Advisors reach out through their extensive network to assist with the placement. This placement is based on a student’s skillset and areas of interest. Students will complete an “Interest” survey during April 2025 prior to the start of their Quest school year so that Quest Advisors can go ahead and begin this process of searching for potential matching placements. In May 2025, Quest will host a workshop for incoming Quest students to create their resume and a draft cover letter. Students are welcome to reach out to organizations they may be

interested in or have a connection with already and work to make their own arrangements for securing a partnership for Semester 1, 2025; otherwise the Quest advisors will reach out to our network of professionals to begin lining up potential partnerships based on incoming student interests. Students will go through the interview process in August; sometimes interview with only one organization they have identified as a desired placement; others may interview with more than one organization. The student gets the final choice and also gets to direct which field it is in, but the Quest Advisors teach the skills of communication and networking and help guide and support the process.

Q: What are some examples of places where Quest students have done their partnerships?

A: Students may work off-campus with an organization of their choice in a wide range of professional fields and from larger corporations, small start-up businesses, educational institutions, and nongovernmental organizations and in settings from offices in the CBD to outdoor work, laboratories, studios and sometimes a mixture of in-office and work-from-home.

See also:

[2024 Participating Partnerships Placements](#)

[2023 Participating Partnerships Placements](#)

[2022 Participating Partnerships Placements](#)

Past student work partnerships have included:

marketing, finance, environmental and naturalist education, biological lab work, fieldwork, coding and software development, video game design, music and film production, engineering, robotics and automation, curriculum development, urban agriculture, online publishing, culinary, fashion design, hotel tourism, and the performing arts.

Past partnership organizations have included:

Abacus Wealth, Airbus Singapore, Brahm Centre, ANERDstore Batik Design, Aomori Spring Ski Resorts, Aspire Capital, Athena Media, Battle Brew Productions, Centre Stage, City Music, Pte, Cleverly (formerly Athena Media), Cloop Fashion, CognLearn, Crevantage, Difference Engine Comics, DZH International, EarthSchool, Eunoia, Expat Living Publications, Felicitas Global, Global Mortgage Group, Green Nudge, Ground Up Initiative, HCAC, IMCB, Infinite Studios, Intercontinental Hotel, Iris Worldwide Marketing, Jane Goodall Institute- SG, Konbini, Seastainable, Kroll Associates, LongHash Ventures, Mainstream Fund Services, MelonCrates, Michael Fiebrich Design, MindFi, Miss Muffet Cake Boutique, Mothership, My Foot Dr., National Youth Sports Institute, Nine Tales, Nomnomby, NUS Business School, NUS Neurobiology Lab, NUS Reef Ecology Lab, NUS Research Assistant, The Nutrition Clinic, Ourglass Robotics, Pomeroy Studio, The Potato Head, SAS Communications Office, Singapore Law Society, Souschef, Sport Singapore, The Star PAC, Teamie Pte, UFIT, Urban Journey, U.S. Embassy, Vena Energy, Wah! Banana, Whizz, Wildlings, Yale-NUS, YoungLife, Young Nautilus, Zendyll Music, Zerrin Sustainable Fashion.

Q: Do you get paid for the partnership?

A: You get paid in the form of invaluable life experience! Cash compensation (if provided by the partner organization) is allowed only for Singaporean citizens and permanent residents, and only if the student decides to continue working for their partnering organization AFTER completing the Quest partnership experience. Students are not allowed to be paid during their partnership placement as the emphasis is on learning new skills, and students are earning course grades at this time. Quest does provide EZLink cards to help students commute from home to their partnerships using the bus or MRT.

Q: How does doing Quest compare against a student doing an internship during the whole of Summer followed by the normal academic load in Junior year? What extra would Quest be providing a student?

A: Completing an unpaid partnership experience through Quest has many advantages. The Quest advisors have cultivated relationships with dozens of organizations across Singapore. This enables us to match students with organizations in their field of interest.

Furthermore, we are able to identify organizations that would have a job scope appropriate for a high school student, and that the organization is aware of the unique constraints and responsibilities of taking on a high school student. We ensure students are safe (child safeguarding is our highest priority), given appropriate work while optimizing opportunities for professional and personal growth as our goal is for every placement to be a positive work experience as for most students it is their first introduction to the world of professional work.

Second, students receive support throughout the partnership from the Quest advisors. The advisors collect systematic feedback from partnership supervisors and share this with students. We do weekly check-ins with students to ensure it is a positive, meaningful experience for both the students and their workplace.

Third, Quest students receive academic credit during the partnership. They complete a variety of assignments that complement and enrich their partnership. For example, students study organizational governance, as well as workplace ethics and leadership, to gain a deeper understanding of the organization and about effective workplace policies and practices for success. Students learn how to write resumes, cover letters, and how to interview effectively. In addition, many Quest students complete partnerships that are aligned with their student-designed studies.

Fourth, completing an internship over the summer would limit students and families from potentially traveling, going on college visits, or other enrichment activities that would be impossible to do during the academic year.

SUMMER 2025 ONE-WEEK QUEST ‘LAUNCH’ TRIP:

TENTATIVE LOCATION: BALI -OR- HA LONG BAY

Q: What are the dates for next year’s Quest Launch trip?

A: Tentatively, the dates for our next Launch Week will be August 3-9, 2025, with travel to either Bali or Ha Long Bay beginning on August 3; and students returning to Singapore on August 10. We will confirm the location and dates by December 20, 2024 so that families can plan summer travel accordingly.

Q: Where will the students travel to for the Launch Week?

A: Quest will either be returning to Bali, or charting a new Quest Launch Week in Ha Long Bay, Vietnam for the 2025 Launch Week–Stay Tuned for Details...

Q: What vendor(s) is SAS working with to organize this trip?

A: Next school year’s trip will be run by vetted vendors that SAS has an established relationship with and have run SAS student programs off island.

Q: What is the purpose of this Launch trip?

A: The aims of our summer Quest trip are to:

- Build the Quest Community of Learners and Bond as a Team
- Conduct Environmental and Social Fieldwork in the Southeast Asian Region
- Explore Resource Conservation Issues through Experiential Learning
- Build Data Analysis Skills

- Engage in Service-Learning
- Engage in Cultural Exchange

Q: Is the Quest Launch trip at the start of the year a requirement to participate in the Quest program?

A: Yes. The Quest program believes that education can and should exist beyond the classroom. “Learning beyond the classroom walls not only enriches what students learn in class, but it also enhances students’ role as global diplomats, both on and off campus” (Myra M. Goldschmidt, Debbie Lamb Ousey and Christine Brown in *Research and Teaching in Developmental Education*, Vol. 28, No. 1 (Fall 2011), pp. 34-40).

In the first week of the Quest program, students will discover themselves through technology-free interaction with nature. The unit is designed so that students may (1) learn about collaboration, initiative, and endurance in a non-urban setting, (2) build relationships with self and others in absence of technology, (3) develop community and a positive connection with their Questmates, and (4) cultivate awareness, knowledge, appreciation, and concern for the natural environment and the effect of people’s actions upon it (5) get an introduction to the skills expected in the program.

The first academic unit for the Quest program begins while on this trip; therefore there are academic expectations, in-field lessons for content knowledge and skill attainment, and course assignments and grades earned during the week. For example, Quest teachers will integrate curriculum including data analysis and visualization math skills, social studies (cultural curiosity of local communities, and investigation into the economics and cultural practices of the region), English (written and oral reflections on learnings) and environmental science (conservation of natural resources) while on the one-week trip.

Q: What is the itinerary? What will students be doing for the Launch week?

A: Refer to the [Quest Launch webpage](#) for details.

Q: Where have previous years of Quest students gone for their Launch trips?

A: Previous years’ Quest cohorts Launch trips included backpacking in the Canadian wilderness, paddling and trekking in Mongolia, and Scuba diving in Malaysia and snorkeling and conducting data on manta rays and sea turtles in Bali.

Q: Will this count as ‘Interim’ or will students still be expected to participate in the February 2026 Interim?

A: Quest students have the same privileges and responsibilities for Interim participation as any other SAS student. Students will have the opportunity to completely participate in Interim; they may choose to go on an international Interim or may choose to participate in a Singapore-based interim for Interim 2026.

Q: How much does this trip cost?

A: Based on previous planning for Launch trips, the total approximate cost would be capped at no more than \$2500 will include (based on our previously planned Trips):

- Food
- Accommodation
- Travel Insurance
- Snorkelling, marine-based activities, cultural activities
- Participation in field research programs and working with marine biologists
- Travel to and from site (flights to/from Bali, buses, boats)
- Travel cost for accompanying teachers

(NB: final custom costing will depend on the location of travel, and the number of Quest students enrolled, we will know by Spring Break).

Q: Are there scholarships or any financial aid available for families?

A: Yes! There is a Quest trip scholarship application that will be shared with families requesting financial assistance based on family need. Depending on need, scholarship awards may cover 25%, 50%, or up to 100% of the total cost of the trip. Scholarship applications will be available February-March 2026.

COLLEGE-RELATED QUESTIONS: AFTER QUEST AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Q: Will Quest affect whether I get into the college I want to go to?

A: Quest can be seen as a differentiator in the college admissions process. Many universities look for students that are able to demonstrate a passion and uniqueness. Take, for example, this quote from the Stanford Alumni Magazine:

Stanford's Dean of Admissions Richard Shaw states: "It's a holistic evaluation. Of course academic credentials are important, but we're also looking for evidence that this young person has a passion, that he or she will bring something to our community that is unique. We want to hear a 'voice'—that's a critical component."

Q: How does Quest prepare me for college?

A: Aside from providing a rigorous college-level or college-preparatory curriculum, Quest students learn many skills that they need to apply in college. These skills include time management, project management, networking, writing a thesis paper, and self-advocacy. Many Quest students who have graduated frequently refer back to these skills as being some of the most valuable aspects of being in Quest.

- Hear what our alumni have to say about how Quest prepared them for university on our [Quest Alumni Stories webpage](#)

Q: When considering applying for and preparing for college, is it better to do Quest during a student's Junior year --or-- during their Senior year?

A: This is a very personal decision and there are advantages to taking Quest in either year. Here are some aspects to consider for either year:

Advantages of Quest During Junior Year:

- Participation in Quest during the Junior year allows students to develop time-management and organizational skills that will serve them well during their Senior year as many Quest students return to full time in SAS courses. They will be equipped with the soft skills that will help them with further advanced coursework and in student leadership positions in their co-curricular clubs and activities.
- Participation in Quest during the Junior year may offer up many other opportunities to a student through their networking, coursework, partnership, etc. that they were exposed to in the Quest program and will be able to further capitalize on during their Senior year.
- They will have an entire year of robust learning experiences they can use in their college applications.
- Our juniors, after having completed their year in Quest, have reported feeling more confident in themselves and feeling more certain of what they want to pursue for a university major.
- Some students who have really planned out their four years of high school described junior year as the better year because it gave them something meaningful to do to deeply pursue their passion and gain more skills in their junior year while waiting to take specific courses not accessible to them until senior year.

- *Students that are new to SAS in their sophomore year may prefer to take Quest in their junior year to find a deeper sense of community and belonging that can be hard to establish for students that transferred in from another high school.*

Advantages of Quest During Senior Year:

- *Participating in Quest during the senior year keeps students fully engaged through the entire year (no opportunity for 'senioritis'). This is a great way for students to finish up their time in high school.*
- *During the second semester of senior year there are fewer competing demands from the Quest program during the second semester of Senior year because they do not need to which means students can fully immerse themselves into projects.*
- *Participating in Quest during the senior year will allow many SAS students an opportunity to have taken all of the other AP coursework they may have wanted to take. By Senior year, some SAS students have already reached the AP cap limit of 7 AP courses; for those students, this allows them to continue to maximize their academic growth with further advanced courses.*
- *For students applying to the U.K. for university, it might be best to wait until senior year as it allows more opportunity to complete more AP courses in junior year and have the AP scores that U.K. universities will be looking for.*

Q: Could we get a list of universities that students who did Quest got accepted into?

Which programs?

A: We do not collect data on the names of universities/programs that students have applied to and been accepted into; we only collect data on the universities our alumni have chosen to attend.

Here is the list of universities that we are aware of that SAS Quest alumni are attending, or have graduated from:

[List of Universities Attended by Quest Alumni - Handout](#) (PDF)

Q: How will the Quest program and Quest courses appear on a student's SAS transcript?

A: A traditional transcript will be sent to universities and college programs. Quest courses will appear on the transcript just like any other course a student takes at SAS.

- Students earn grades in Quest through the assessment of interdisciplinary projects and experiences and are scored with the applicable standards from the Quest courses. So for one task a student may receive grades in science, math, English, and social studies. However, the transcript will still reflect the official course titles. Overall, Quest offers a lot of options for students, including: Advance Topics (AT) or mainstream level courses, an opportunity for AP Research credit if a student has met the prerequisite, and access to all courses offered at SAS outside of Quest for up to three (3) courses on their non-Quest day.
- **The image below shows a SAMPLE* transcript of how Quest courses will appear on a student's official transcript.**

**Nb: this is not a real student's transcript. The College Counseling Office provided us with a mock transcript of what a Quest student's transcript will look like for the purpose of this FAQ.*

High School Transcript

Name: (last, first) Chan, Nicholas

Birthdate: June 5, 2002 | ID: 861227 | Class of 2022

Singapore American School

High School Counseling Department

40 Woodlands Street 41

Singapore, 738547

www.sas.edu.sg

	Semester I		Semester II		Continued from Left	Semester I	Semester II
18-19 High School					SAMPLE		
English 9/World History	B	1.00	B+	1.00			
Geometry	B+	0.50	B	0.50			
Biology			B+	0.50			
Molecular Biology**	B+	0.50					
Computer Science I	B	0.50					
Spanish Novice	B+	0.50	B+	0.50			
Art I: Foundations			B	0.50			
Personal Defense - PE			A	0.50			
Adventure/Climbing-PE	A	0.50					
I Service: Philippines			A	0.25			
19-20 High School					THIS IS A FICTITIOUS STUDENT TRANSCRIPT; NOT A REAL STUDENT'S TRANSCRIPT		
English 10/American History	B+	1.00	B	1.00			
Algebra II/Trigonometry	B+	0.50	A	0.50			
Chemistry	A	0.50	B+	0.50			
AP Computer Science	B	0.50	B+	0.50			
Spanish: Intermediate	B	0.50	B	0.50			
AT Entrepreneurship	A	0.50					
Safety/First Aid - Health			A	0.50			
IS: Singapore			A	0.25			
20-21 High School						Grades and Grade Points	
AP English Language	B	0.50	B+	0.50	A+ 4.5	D+ 1.5	
AT Psychology	B	0.50	B+	0.50	A 4.0	D 1.0	
Precalculus with Parametrics**	B+	0.50	B	0.50	B+ 3.5	F 0.0	
AT Computational Physics	B+	0.50	A+	0.50	B 3.0	W/P	Withdrawn/Pass
AT Comp Sci: Data Structures	B	0.50	B	0.50	C+ 2.5	W/F	Withdrawn/Fail
Spanish: Intermediate II	B+	0.50	B+	0.50	C 2.0	Inc	Incomplete
Advanced Guitar			B	0.50			
21-22 High School					AP	Advanced Placement	
Ceramics I	A+	0.50			AT	Advanced Topic	
Indoor Sports			A	0.50	**	Honors	
AP Calculus AB	A	0.50	A	0.50	IS	Interim Semester	
AT English: Research & Comp	B+	0.50	B+	0.50			
AT Math: Data Analysis & Visualization	A	0.50	B	0.50			
AT Science: Conservation Studies AT	A	0.50	B+	0.50			
Society, Governance & Civic Action I	A	0.50	A	0.50			
Service: Singapore A			A+	0.25			
GOA, Ind. Study, Learning Support, Language Arts Lab, and Math Lab are only offered P/F.							
AP and AT classes are weighted.							
Minus grades (ex. B-) are not awarded.							
This student is enrolled in Quest, an every-other-day, year-long program that includes high-level interdisciplinary core courses with a focus on student-led research. Students engage in rigorous self-directed experiential learning, develop project management skills, conduct data analysis, and visualization, complete a three-month internship, and defend their own written thesis at the end of the course.							

9th Semester I GPA: 3.21

9th Semester II GPA: 3.47

10th Semester I GPA: 3.44

10th Semester II GPA: 3.53

11th Semester I GPA: 3.93

11th Semester II GPA: 3.88

12th Semester I GPA: 4.28

12th Semester II GPA: 4.17

SAS Cumulative GPA: 3.74

Class of 2022

Graduated Date: 5/25/2022