My Study Year Abroad

Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Ellie-May Rands

About NTU and my studies

About NTU

- Ranked **12th globally** in the QS World University Rankings 2027 and **8th for Chemistry.**[1]
- A highly international research community comprising **over 8,300 researchers and staff from over 70 countries.**

My studies

Semester 1 – Modules:

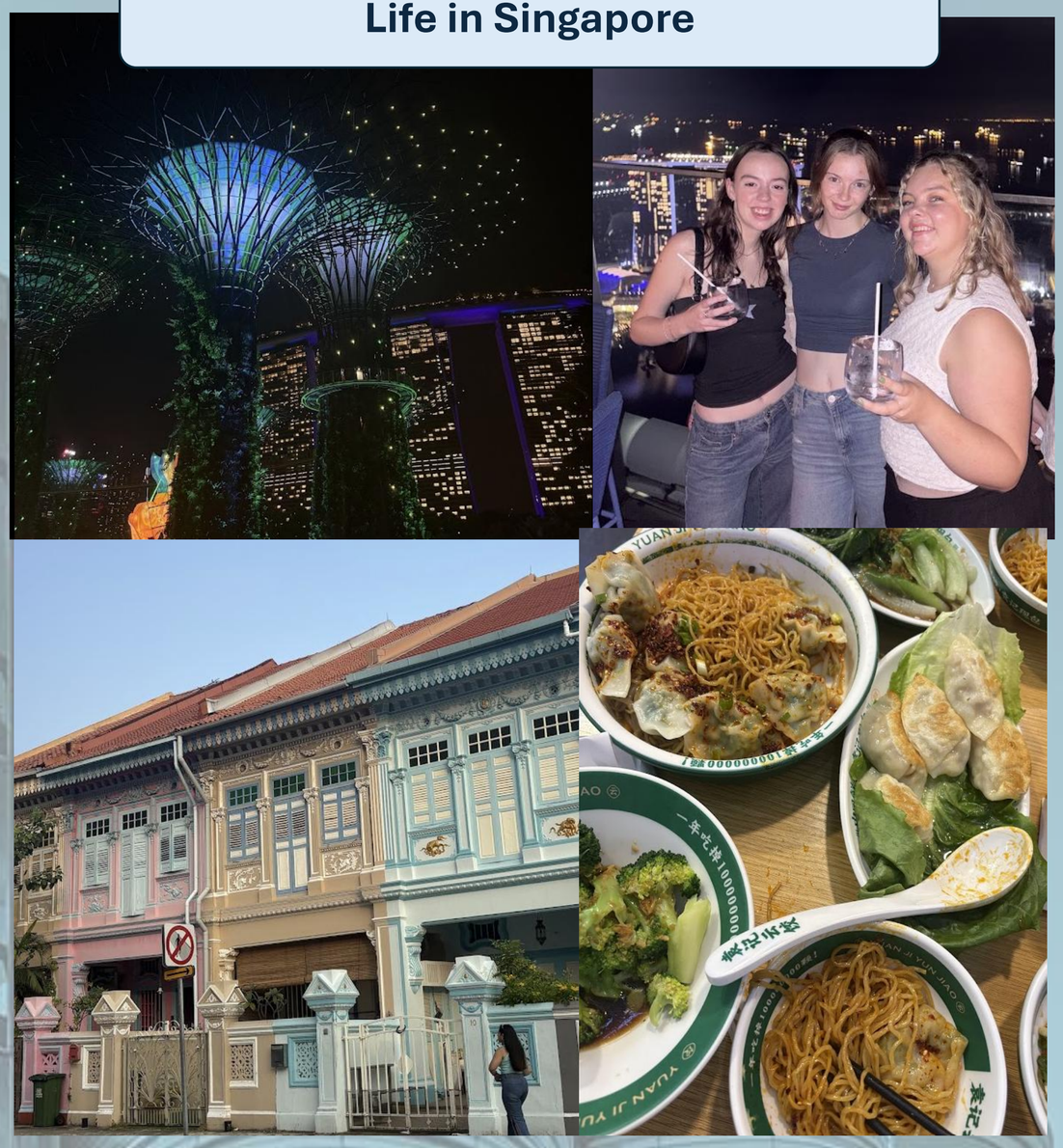
- Chemical Spectroscopy & Applications
- Organometallic Chemistry
- Organic Reaction Mechanisms & Synthesis
- Current topics in Analytical Chemistry

Fast-paces teaching, assessed mainly through mid-terms and final examinations, alongside participation and attendance in some modules

Semester 2 – Research:

Joined the Zhong Research Group for a semester-long research project.

Life in Singapore



Travel



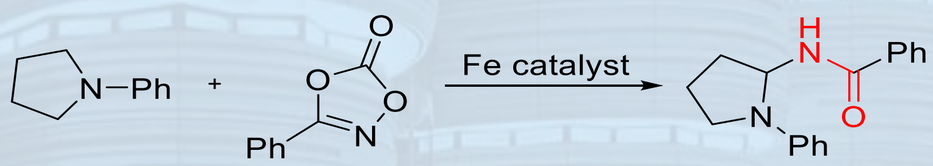
My Research

Ligand Design and Coordination Pocket Effects in Iron-Catalysed C(sp^3)-H Amidation

Aim: Investigate how ligand design influences the activity of iron catalysts for direct C(sp^3)-H amidation.

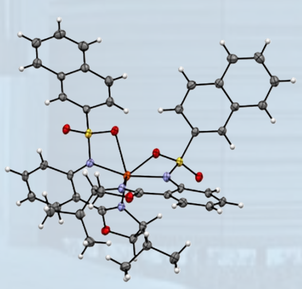
What I did:

- Synthesised a series of **anilido-oxazoline ligands** and **Fe complexes.**
- Characterised their **coordination structures and steric environments.**
- Tested the complexes in **C(sp^3)-H amidation.**

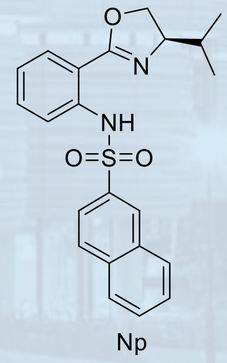


Key finding:

Changing the sulfonyl protecting group affected catalytic activity, with the **naphthyl catalyst giving the highest yield (57%).**







Things to know before you go

Accommodation
On campus shared-rooms are the most common and affordable option

Visa
A Student's Pass is required; process is straightforward but requires a medical exam.

Climate
Hot & humid year-round - bring breathable clothes and a jumper for strong air-con.

Getting around
MRT & buses are cheap and reliable. Grab taxis are also affordable.

Nightlife
Download Hazel's Guestlist – cheaper club entry and often includes free drinks.

Course registration
Register early for courses on STARS and be prepared for the add/drop period.

My year abroad was one of the best experiences I've had. Moving to the other side of the world on my own was daunting but ultimately the best decision I have ever made. I gained valuable experience as a researcher at a top university, while being able to immerse myself in a new culture, make friends from around the world and travel throughout Southeast Asia.

1. *QS World University Rankings 2027,* https://www.topuniversities.com/world-university-rankings *(accessed August 2026).*