

As secretaries and personal assistants in Singapore celebrate Secretaries Week this week, secretaries around the world share their experiences with RECRUIT.

Backbone of the office



MEGAN CROWDER, 27

City: Sydney
Lifestyle: "Sydney is a great place to work and live. From multinationals to small offices, there are lots of job opportunities for secretarial or administration staff. You can easily move into new fields or become an executive secretary. Overall, it is quite a safe city. There are areas in which you need to be careful, but that's true of every city."

Average salary: A\$3,125 (S\$3,373) per month.
Benefits: A bonus and a pension scheme.

Working hours: 45-hour week.
Travel time to work: Five to 10 minutes by train or car.

Lunch break: Up to an hour, but usually eats at her desk.

Job responsibilities: "My role is to run the administrative office of APM Training Institute, a private college. I handle course enquiries and process applications, organise interviews for students wishing to enrol at the college, prepare teaching materials, deal with the lecturers, collate students' marks, handle enquiries — basically, all the behind-the-scenes work."



ALLYSIA ROBINSON, 27

City: London
Lifestyle: "London's great — an absolute shopping mecca. The nightlife is fantastic, and there is an amazing variety. But like most international cities, the cost of living in London is very high."

Average salary: £1,600 (S\$4,464) per month.
Benefits: Being a temporary staff member, she's entitled to 13 weeks' paid holiday and access to quality training.

Working hours: 40-hour week.
Travel time to work: 45 minutes.

Lunch break: 45 minutes.
Job responsibilities: "Diary management, travel arrangements, typing, expenses and invoices, arranging seminars and video-conferencing with the Sydney office. I assist two full-time staff members and will also be assisting another senior staff member soon."



ODILE MOURET, 30

City: Geneva
Lifestyle: "Geneva is a very safe city with few homeless people and a great nightlife, with anything from clubs, discos, karaoke bars to theatres and cinemas."

Average salary: As a bilingual secretary, CHF5,900 (S\$7,629) per month.

Benefits: Most companies pay an extra month's salary as a bonus.

Working hours: 40-hour week.
Travel time to work: 25 minutes.

Lunch break: One-and-a-half hours, usually flexible.
Job responsibilities: "Answering correspondence, writing letters, organising and participating in meetings and taking minutes, and other general secretarial and administrative duties. Knowledge of Word, Excel and PowerPoint is essential."



MICHAEL SHINDER, 25

City: New York
Lifestyle: "New York's energy and pace keep you on your toes. New York City at night puts the whole world at your doorstep."

Average salary: US\$3,200 (S\$5,700) per month.

Benefits: Medical, dental and optical insurance. Tuition reimbursement. Vacation bonus pay.

Working hours: 45-hour week.
Travel time to work: 50 minutes by train.

Lunch break: One hour.
Job responsibilities: "Coordinating conference calls and on-site meetings, greeting clients, administration duties, making sure things happen as they should. Through networking with the right people, I have taken on more IT-based projects. Around here, no matter what you're doing, you've got to multi-task, or you'll never get anything done."



GINA TAN, 32

City: Singapore
Lifestyle: "Singapore is a very safe city and there is no danger even if you work late. My workplace is right in the middle of the Orchard/Scotts Road shopping belt. It's so convenient to pick up groceries and run errands during lunchtime...and the cinemas are just nine floors below my office!"

Benefits: Medical and dental coverage, annual leave, annual medical incentives, training, bonus.

Working hours: 40-hour week.
Travel time to work: One hour.

Lunch break: One hour.
Job responsibilities: "I work as the personal assistant to the company's regional director, who travels extensively. In handling travel arrangements and flight details, I need to ensure an efficient and cost-effective itinerary. Other duties include correspondence, arrangement of meetings, diary management and other secretarial tasks. I also assist the country manager in some coordination work with our branches and deal with insurance matters."

Article contributed by Adecco, which has 6,000 offices in 50 countries, including 13 here. Website: www.adecco-asia.com/singapore.htm