

# NUS to take in more poly grads with entrepreneurial abilities

Five polys here will each nominate up to 40 such students under special scheme

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Of the 7,800 undergraduates admitted to the National University of Singapore (NUS) last year, about 1,200 were polytechnic graduates.

The number is likely to rise further this year, with the university launching a special admission scheme for those demonstrating entrepreneurship abilities.

NUS, which runs a programme to nurture entrepreneurs in different business nodes of the world, has asked the five polytechnics to each nominate up to 40 students. These include those who have displayed a strong entrepreneurial inclination during their diploma studies as well as students who have participated in programmes that are related to entrepreneurship.

Those who do not meet NUS admission requirements will be considered under the Aptitude-Based (Discretionary) Admissions Scheme.

In announcing the new scheme yesterday, NUS senior deputy president and provost Ho Teck Hua said: "NUS is a forerunner and key player in Singapore's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and we hope to position Singapore strategically as a key node in our innovation and enterprise network."

"As part of this effort, we are constantly looking for students with entrepreneurial inclinations to provide them with a pathway to realise their entrepreneurial ambitions."

Those who are accepted stand to gain from NUS' active industry



partnerships and experiential entrepreneurial education, including the highly popular NUS Overseas Colleges (NOC) Programme, where students head to business and innovation nodes, such as Silicon Valley and Shenzhen, to intern in start-ups and take up courses in partner universities.

Since 2002, more than 2,800 NOC alumni have established over 370 companies globally, more than a dozen of which have been acquired.

The admission chances for polytechnic students will also be



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**NUS SENIOR DEPUTY PRESIDENT AND PROVOST HO TECK HUA**

boosted by yet another scheme – the bonus admission points scheme. Last year, to encourage and support students to pursue their passions, NUS awarded 1.25 bonus admission points to A-level students applying for their first-choice programmes. That resulted in 9 per cent more A-level applicants – about 700 students – being offered admission to their top-choice courses.

An analysis revealed that students who were admitted into their first-choice courses through the bonus admission points scheme are

doing as well as students who were admitted into the same courses without the bonus points.

Following these encouraging results, NUS will be extending the scheme to students with polytechnic and International Baccalaureate qualifications this year.

Professor Ho also announced that from the new academic year starting in August, NUS students will be able to design their own module, including how they learn and who they learn from, for one portion of their curriculum.

Under the optional Design-Your-Own-Module initiative, undergraduate students may take up to four modular credits from their Unrestricted Electives Modules to pursue subjects that contribute to their personal and professional growth.

Students have to organise themselves into a group of at least 10 and submit a proposal to an NUS faculty mentor for review and approval. They can either invite a guest speaker from the industry to tutor them on a subject – for instance, fintech, urban sustainability or the fine arts – or select modules from a suite of online courses offered by edX, a not-for-profit massive open online course provider.

Prof Ho said the new initiatives are designed to encourage students to take greater ownership of their learning and pursue their passions.

He said students who enjoy what they are learning tend to be more motivated and are more likely to do well and, at NUS, the faculty constantly looks at ways to encourage students to embrace lifelong learning and pursue their passions.

He said: "In the new academic year, we are doubling our efforts by offering students the flexibility to chart their own learning journeys and opening access to NUS' unique entrepreneurial education pathway to poly graduates. In the long run, we hope to nurture highly motivated, self-directed learners."

The polytechnics welcomed the move by NUS to attract their graduates who have an interest in entrepreneurship.

In a joint statement, they said it paves the way for polytechnic students with an aptitude for entrepreneurship to continue to develop their skills, work on their start-ups and build relevant internship experiences from the polytechnic years to the university years.

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