

New medical school picks 54 from over 800 applicants

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SINGAPORE'S newest medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, has picked its inaugural batch of 54 students out of more than 800 A-list applicants.

The school, being set up by Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Imperial College London, said that besides stellar academic qualifications, those chosen had shown the potential to be outstanding patient-centred doctors.

The school shortlisted 440 to

attend eight interviews with health-care professionals such as nurses as well as members of the public, who assessed the candidates from the patient's perspective.

Those who made the inaugural batch – all Singaporeans – had almost perfect scores in the interviews and also aced their British BioMedical Admissions Test. Two out of three students are A-level holders and 90 per cent of them are among the top in their cohort.

NTU provost Freddy Boey believes the school is set for a "resounding start".

"As a new school, we have designed and invested in a whole new different programme," said the professor. "Yet, we are not really new as we are backed by Imperial's established track record in training some of the world's best doctors."

Several of its incoming students had turned down places at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and overseas universities.

This, despite the fees of \$30,000 a year being \$7,000 more than at NUS' Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine.

Part of the draw was the Impe-

rial College brand name, which ranks highly among medical and engineering degrees.

Another reason, students said, is the new school's innovative teaching methods.

NTU recently highlighted it will use some of the latest medicine teaching tools such as plastinated bodies, which are long-lasting cadavers preserved using plastic, and the Anatomage Table, which lets students perform 3-D dissections virtually.

Also, the material developed by Imperial College for the new school includes over 200 e-lectures, which have been profes-

sionally recorded by professors, clinicians and scientists. Students will be able to access these any time on their iPads.

Pioneer student Huang Baoxian, 19, who scored eight As for her A levels at Hwa Chong Institution, said she was drawn to the programme because of its partnership with Imperial College.

Former Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) student Stewart Retnam, who chose NTU over two British universities, said: "I intend to practise medicine in Singapore so it makes sense for me to study here."

The 20-year-old, who had an

International Baccalaureate score of 43 out of 45 points, added that the use of online e-modules meant that students can set their own pace.

The school will eventually increase its annual intake to 150 – half the number of medicine students that NUS admits.

Besides boosting the number of doctors for Singapore, the school hopes to see more of their graduates becoming clinician scientists – doctors who do research and drive scientific discovery in medicine, on top of treating patients.

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New NTU medical students (from left) Huang Baoxian, Stewart Retnam, Ryan Chen and Ang Jia Wei viewing a life-size human body in 3-D using the Anatomage Table. PHOTO: NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY