Freshmen at NTU assured of 2-year stay in hostels

SINGAPORE - Freshmen who stay at halls of residence at the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) usually have to compete with each other and take part in as many extra-curricular activities as possible to stay on for a coveted second year.

But the coming batch of freshmen will have it much easier.

The freshmen in the 2017/18 academic year, which begins this July, will be guaranteed a room for two years, said NTU President Bertil Andersson at the annual State of the University address on Thursday (March 16).

"A residential experience is part of the holistic education we offer here at NTU," he said.

Since 2012, NTU has guaranteed every freshman the opportunity to live on campus, and has now expanded the programme to their second year.

Professor Andersson said: "Demand (for campus living) has always been high and we have been doing a lot of construction in the last few years to meet the demand."

In August, three new halls will open at Nanyang Crescent, providing accommodation to 1,820 more students.

Hall rooms are currently awarded to seniors based on a competitive entry points system, where students take part in hall and university activities to earn points. There is usually a cut-off to qualify for a room in the second year.

This system has deterred some seniors, such as third-year biological sciences student Koh Wei Yi, 22, from re-applying to stay on campus after their guaranteed stay during their freshman year.
"I had other commitments outside and was not interested in joining activities just for the sake of getting points," said Ms Koh, who stayed on campus only during her first year.

Last September, NTU opened three new halls which offered 2,100 more places to students. With the upcoming halls, about 14,200 undergraduates will be able to live in 24 halls across the campus, fulfilling over 90 per cent of the current demand. Typically, halls regularly organise their own sports, recreational, and social activities, such as Hall Day celebrations and inter-hall games.

Prof Andersson said: "Talk to any NTU graduate and they will tell you that living on campus is something not to be missed."

Miss Tan Li Yun, 19, a first-year business student, agreed.

"One of the best things about hall life is playing sports or just hanging out with friends after classes," she said.

One prospective student is already looking forward to hall life.

Miss Siti Aisyah Dantiyah Mahmood, 18, who visited the NTU campus during the open house two weeks ago, said: "The idea of staying at a university campus is really exciting."

Associate provost for student life Kwok Kian Woon felt the new halls allows more students to "experience community life and learning beyond the curriculum".

"They will enjoy a vibrant campus life, which is the hallmark of NTU's holistic education," he said.