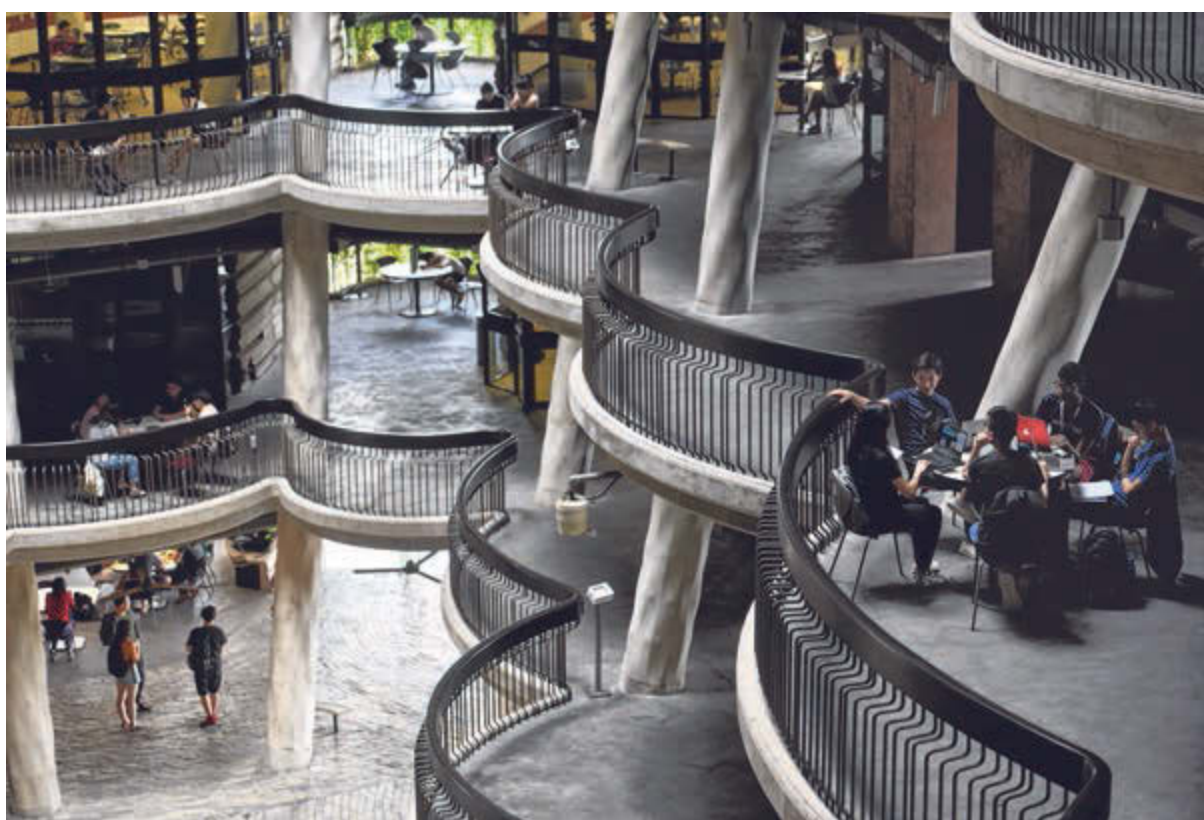


7 NTU looks beyond grades

Applicants to 40 Nanyang Technological University undergraduate courses can improve their chances of getting a place through interviews, aptitude tests and portfolios. The programmes include those in engineering, science, and the humanities and social sciences. **HOME B2**



Students at The Hive in Nanyang Technological University. NTU said the 40 programmes adopting the broader criteria this year include those in humanities and social sciences, engineering, and science. ST PHOTO: JASMINE CHOONG

NTU broadens admissions criteria

40 undergrad programmes will consider portfolios, conduct interviews, aptitude tests

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School leavers eyeing a place in a highly competitive course at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) can soon improve their chances through interviews, aptitude tests and portfolios.

NTU announced yesterday that for 40 of its 111 undergraduate programmes, shortlisted applicants will undergo a “qualitative assessment” that will include interviews, aptitude tests and portfolios.

For the remaining 71 programmes, interviews will also be conducted for high potential candidates who may fall slightly short of the entry score for a degree course, or for those considered based on their talent in fields such as the arts and sports, under the discretionary admissions scheme.

With the broader criteria, a prospective student who shows passion for a chosen programme and the potential to succeed may have an edge over a more academically qualified applicant vying for the same course.

NTU said the initiative follows its successful pilot last year involving 17 programmes, including highly competitive, premier programmes such as medicine and the Renaissance Engineering Programme.

The 40 programmes adopting this new approach this year include those in humanities and social sciences, engineering, and science.

NTU Provost Ling San said: “NTU’s new holistic approach means that our professors are in-

vesting more time, resources and manpower to interview and assess individual students. But we are willing to do so, to better match students’ aspirations and passion for the subject, as long as they can show us that they can cope with the rigours of their chosen degree course.

“But for the right applicant, the advantages can be tremendous. For example, we have admitted students who may have totally missed out on a place in a university if they had not been assessed holistically, and they are now excelling in their programmes.”

An example is first-year mechanical engineering student Samuel Fong. With a 2.4 cumulative grade point average (GPA), the 29-year-old poly diploma holder would not have been able to enrol at many universities.

Struggling to complete his polytechnic course over eight years, he used to play truant, miss exams or fail his modules, which caused him to be expelled from poly thrice.

Had NTU not looked at his other polytechnic grades – he scored a perfect 4.0 GPA for his second and third years – and the impression he made during his admissions interview, Mr Fong would not have made it to university. Now, he has performed exceptionally well in his first semester, with a GPA of more than 4.5 out of 5.

NTU, which is likely to take in about 6,200 students this year, expects to shortlist and interview up to 2,000 students this year for the 40 programmes using the broader admission criteria.

Besides admissions, Prof Ling

also announced the expansion of the Co-operative Education track where students will complete three mandatory internships – 50 weeks in total – within their four years of undergraduate studies. This year, this track will also be available for students taking up four other programmes – mathematical sciences, chemistry and biological chemistry, physics, and applied physics.

This track comes on the heels of the Applied Wealth Management track, launched last year jointly by NTU and DBS Bank.

Prof Ling said with the nature of jobs changing in tandem with the fourth industrial revolution, practical work experience in addition to good grades is paramount to help students stay ahead of the curve.

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BETTER MATCH

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NTU PROVOST LING SAN