New medical school selects 54 students out of more than 800 applicants

Two out of three students are A-levels holders and 90 per cent of them are among the top students in their cohort. -ST
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Shortlisted candidates queueing to start their interviews for the newest medical school at Nanyang Technological University (NTU), the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, set up by NTU and Imperial College London. Singapore 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 and Imperial College London said it shortlisted 440 of them to attend a series of eight short interviews.

The final 54 chosen medical students - all Singaporeans - had almost perfect scores in the interviews and also aced their BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT).

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Here's the press release in full:

Fifty-four top students will form the inaugural intake for Singapore’s newest medical school jointly set up by Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Imperial College London, when it starts classes this August.

Coming from top schools such as Raffles Institution, Hwa Chong Junior College and Anglo-Chinese School (Independent), the first batch of students who are all Singaporeans not only hold stellar academic qualifications and excellent communication skills but have also demonstrated the skills required to be outstanding patient-centred doctors, including excellence in problem solving, communications and applying scientific knowledge.

The Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKCMedicine) received 817 applicants from among those who sat for the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT), an admissions requirement of the school in addition to A-Level results or equivalent qualifications.

From there, 440 candidates were shortlisted to attend the school’s series of eight short interviews known as the Multiple Mini Interviews (MMI).

The final 54 chosen medical students had excellent scores in the Multiple Mini Interviews and also aced their BMAT, achieving better than the average global BMAT scores.

Two-thirds of the students entering LKCMedicine have completed A-Levels and 90 per cent of them are among the top students in their cohort. The remaining one-third hold equally outstanding results, with qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate and the NUS High School diploma.

Professor Freddy Boey, Provost of NTU, said: "It is fantastic that our new medical school at NTU is getting off to such a resounding start. As a new school, we have designed and invested in a whole new different programme, with technology-driven lessons, simulated patients, team-based learning and the latest educational tools such as virtual dissection and plastinated human specimens.

"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."

Senior Vice-Dean, Professor Jenny Higham, who has been involved in this joint medical school from the start of its development, said: "We're excited to be pioneering innovations in medical education at LKCMedicine. Students will be using the latest medical training tools, including a fantastic life-size virtual dissection table, and will be learning from outstanding academic staff and clinicians."

"The new teaching materials have been rigorously tested and have received excellent feedback from Imperial's medical students. We are confident that the new course will deliver the highest quality of training, giving students the knowledge, skills and experience to be top doctors to serve Singapore."

Teaching materials developed by Imperial College London for the new school include over 200 e-lectures professionally recorded by professors, clinicians and scientists, which students will be able
Miss Huang Baoxian, a graduate from Hwa Chong Institution who scored 8 As for her A levels, said she was drawn to NTU's medical programme because it is offered jointly with the prestigious Imperial College London.

"My friends who are studying in Imperial College said that the education there is very good and interactive, so I feel that was the plus point for me to join NTU, since I know I'll be in safe hands, after having met the NTU professors who were very open to new ideas and have shown concern for students' welfare," said the 19-year-old, whose elder sister is also a medical student.

"I'm very excited to be part of the pioneer batch, as I get to walk the path which has not yet been taken, as part of the trailblazers, leading the way for future students."

Miss Huang, who has volunteered and interned in various healthcare settings, is also the recipient of NTU's prestigious Nanyang Scholarship. The scholarship is given only to the best NTU students who excel academically, demonstrate strong leadership potential, and possess outstanding co-curricular records.

Mr Stewart Retnam, an LKCMedicine Scholarship recipient, said the patient-centric approach to teaching medicine and the link to Imperial College London were what drew him right from the start.

"The partnership with Imperial College London was to me, a strong guarantee that the school would deliver beyond expectations. I also look forward to opportunities which I can draw upon and learn from Imperial's robust curriculum, given its proven track record," the 20-year-old said.

Mr Retnam, the eldest of three siblings in his family, felt that having earlier patient contact and exposure to clinical environments, as well as opportunities to hone their interpersonal skills via interaction with simulated patients, would prepare medical students well for actual clinical work.

"I was also very attracted to the strong emphasis on the use of technology in the delivery of lessons. The inclusion of online e-modules and iPad-supported learning meant that students could set the pace of our own learning and in our own time," said the ASC(I) graduate, who had an almost perfect IB score of 43 points out of a maximum 45.

Students at NTU's new medical school can look forward to a robust medical curriculum that fuels innovation and independent thinking, aimed at producing competent, caring and professional medical practitioners.

Mobile learning and simulation will be among the education tools used, including teaching materials accessible from an iPad and the Anatomage Table which displays life-sized 3D images of full body anatomy. LKCMedicine students will also be the first in South-east Asia to use the Anatomage Table for learning.

The new medical school will also be pioneering the use of plastinated specimens - human bodies pledged towards science and preserved through plastination - for medical education.

To encourage active collaborative learning, team-based learning in clusters will be a key feature, and students will be working with patients in a range of healthcare settings as early as the second month of their first year of study.