Singapore, 6 April 2005

Pre-Graduate Award for direct Bachelor-to-PhD life sciences programme

Scholarships support undergraduates in BSc-PhD programme as early as in their second year of studies.

Come this new academic year in July 2005, outstanding students from School of Biological Sciences (SBS) at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) will be able to get a head-start in their PhD training from as early as second year of their undergraduate studies. This is the first time such a scheme is available.

This Pre-Graduate Award (PGA) for B.Sc., PhD. Life Sciences programme is a collaboration between the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and NTU. The PGA aims to provide NTU students with a strong and broad foundation in biological sciences leading to graduate studies and research in areas of life sciences. These areas include chemical biology, molecular and cell biology, computational and structural biology and genetics/genomics.

Selected students are able to begin their PhD training in their final year and may choose to complete their Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Biological Sciences course in just 3.5 years (instead of the usual four years). The B.Sc., Ph.D. programme, spanning a maximum of 6.5 years, will enable students to attain their Ph.Ds close to two years earlier. PGA recipients are able to pursue their PhD training with the A*STAR Graduate Scholarship or NTU Research Scholarship.
“The PGA provides an avenue for bright young undergraduates at our local universities to pursue their PhD studies and research immediately after their undergraduate studies. The programme also enables them to be exposed to research work at A*STAR research institutes and interact with scientists and researchers in similar fields. These students will form an important pool of local research talents in years to come,” said Professor Lam Khin Yong, Executive Director, A*STAR Graduate Academy.

In addition to being able to attain their PhDs in a shorter time, PGA recipients will also be given monthly stipends ranging from $460 - $760. The PGA also covers the payment of undergraduate tuition fees from second year onwards.

Up to 15 Pre-Graduate Awards (PGA) will be made available annually to second to final year students who have keen interest and strong desire to pursue postgraduate life sciences research. The selection of candidates for the awards would be carried out by a PGA Selection Committee of the NTU School of Biological Sciences.

Says Professor James Tam, Dean of NTU’s School of Biological Sciences, “By exposing young undergraduates from as early as in their second year, to the rigorous research needed to attain PhDs, we are playing a lead role in achieving research excellence in the exciting and multi-disciplinary field of life sciences.”

He adds, “NTU is a critical source of research talent for Singapore and beyond so the Pre-Graduate Awards for this B.Sc, PhD life sciences programme is an excellent opportunity to groom a new generation of research talent for Singapore. It will definitely help to strengthen Singapore’s position as a world-class research hub.”

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About Nanyang Technological University
Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is an established international institution in tertiary education.

Our university has a distinguished lineage with roots that go back to 1955. We began as Nanyang University, a private university set up with donations from people of all walks of life, from Singapore and the region. The university grounds, Yunnan Garden Campus, was donated by the Hokkien Clan Association as part of this campaign.

We were reborn as Nanyang Technological Institute, established on the same campus in 1981 with government funding to educate practice-oriented engineers for the burgeoning Singapore economy. In 1991 we became Nanyang Technological University with the absorption of the National Institute of Education.

Today, we are a research-intensive university ranked among the top 50 universities in the world. We have a strong engineering college ranked among the best globally, a business school with one of the top 100 MBA programmes in the world, an internationally acclaimed National Institute of Education, one of the best communication and information schools in Asia, and a biological sciences school at the forefront of Singapore’s life sciences initiative.

Undergraduate enrolment will swell from 17,500 to 23,500 with the establishment of three new schools – the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Art, Design and Media, and School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences.

A traditional strength of the university is the high employment rate and high remuneration received by its graduates. The university is now in the process of realising its New Undergraduate Experience initiative with a comprehensive curriculum, wide choices of options for students, vibrant campus life and international experience. Strong international relationships and collaboration programmes is a hallmark of the university. This includes the Singapore-MIT Alliance, Singapore-Stanford Partnership, Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management, Singapore – University of Washington Alliance in Bioengineering, Global Immersion Programme with Peking University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, University of Washington and Georgia Institute of Technology, among many other programmes in US, China, India, Japan and Europe.

For more information, visit www.ntu.edu.sg

About Agency for Science Technology and Research (A*STAR)
A*STAR's mission is to foster world-class scientific research and talent for a vibrant knowledge-based Singapore. The Agency comprises the Biomedical Research Council
(BMRC), the Science and Engineering Research Council (SERC), the A*STAR Graduate Academy (A*GA), the Corporate Planning and Administration Division (CPAD) and a commercialisation arm, Exploit Technologies Pte Ltd (ETPL).

The two research councils fund and oversee 12 public research institutes in areas such as bioinformatics, genomics, molecular biology, bioengineering, bioprocessing technology, chemical sciences, materials, high performance computing, information technology and communications, manufacturing technology, microelectronics and data storage.

For more information, visit: www.a-star.edu.sg

About A*STAR Pre-Graduate Award

The Pre-Graduate Award aims to nurture bring young undergraduates in their 2nd and 3rd and final year of studies at our local universities. The scheme is opened to Singaporean and Asean nationals undergraduates with excellent academic results and who are enrolled in full time studies in faculties of Science, Computing, Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Biological Sciences at NUS or NTU. Students will be given a tuition fee subsidy and monthly stipend. They will proceed to do their post-graduate studies under A*STAR Scholarships or the universities graduate programmes.