

**TOWARDS A  
FLEXIBLE & DIFFERENTIATED  
UNIVERSITY ADMISSION SYSTEM**

**Report of the University Admission Committee  
February 2004**

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **Background**

1. In April 2003, the Ministry of Education (MOE) set up the University Admission Committee chaired by Prof Chong Chi Tat, Provost & Deputy President, National University of Singapore (NUS) to look into the changes to the joint admission system of NUS and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in view of the upcoming changes to our Junior College (JC)/Upper Secondary and university landscapes. The Committee comprised representatives from NUS, NTU, Polytechnics, JCs and MOE.

## **Current Admission System**

2. Currently, NUS and NTU conduct a joint admission exercise under a common framework. Beyond meeting a minimum threshold for application, 'A'-level graduates are ranked based on a composite admission score comprising 'A'-level results (75%), SAT I (25%) and Co-Curricular Activities or CCA (up to 5 bonus points). For polytechnic graduates, the composite admission score is made up of polytechnic results (60%), 'O'-level results (15%), SAT I (25%) and CCA (up to 5 bonus points).

3. As a private university, the Singapore Management University (SMU) conducts its admission exercise independently, based on its own admission criteria.

## **Towards A Flexible & Differentiated University Admission System**

4. The Committee recommends that NUS and NTU should take steps towards greater ownership of their admission criteria, leading eventually to full autonomy in admissions. They should be allowed to change their admission criteria so as to be more responsive to their strategic objectives and changes to market demand, as well as to compete for the best students. The Committee recommends that NUS and NTU move towards a flexible and differentiated admission system for this purpose.

5. However, the Committee feels that three main principles should remain relevant for university admission. First, the university admission system should continue to be based on the principle of meritocracy so as to uphold the quality and standing of our universities. Second, it should retain its relevance to the broader objectives of our education system and motivate students to develop the qualities essential for the future. Third, the university admission system should enable our universities to cater to the increasing diversity in our education landscape, especially at the upper secondary and pre-university levels.

6. The Committee's recommendations, for implementation with effect from Academic Year (AY) 2004, can be summarised as follows:

- a. Change in the university admission process. Introduce separate admission exercises by NUS and NTU under a broad university admission framework which the two universities will continue to share. This will allow students to receive competitive offers for admission from both universities.
- b. Changes in the criteria for selection within the revised broad university admission framework. These are:
  - A 2-tier system consisting of a University Score and a Faculty Score (which can be up to one-third of the final Combined Score).
  - Omission of SAT I as a requirement for admission to NUS and NTU, in view of the impending changes to SAT I and the implementation of the new Singapore-Cambridge 'A'-level curriculum. In the transitional period (AY2004 and AY2005), applicants can submit their SAT I scores and be assessed by the universities based on the higher of the two scores – one with SAT I and the other without SAT I.
  - Mother Tongue Language (MTL) grades need not be counted in the University Score. However, the universities will continue with the current practice of requiring a minimum MTL grade as a condition for admission. Applicants who have done well in MTL can include their MTL grades in the University Score, which will be re-based.
  - As a first step towards greater autonomy in admission criteria, each university can admit up to 10% of its intake based on its own, independent criteria.

7. The Committee believes that NUS and NTU should eventually be given full autonomy in admissions as part of the move towards a competitive, diversified and vibrant university education landscape.

8. A diagrammatic representation of the revised framework is shown in Figure 1. The details of the Committee's recommendations are outlined in the ensuing paragraphs.

## **Separate Admission Exercises**

9. The Committee recommends that with effect from AY2004, NUS and NTU conduct their own admission exercises while retaining a broad university admission framework for the time being. With separate admission exercises, applicants will still have a single point-of-contact for application but will receive parallel offers from both NUS and NTU. This is unlike the current joint admission exercise in which the applicant will only receive a single offer from any one of the two universities. The new process will allow for greater flexibility and competition for the best students between the two universities.

## **Broad University Admission Framework**

10. The Committee proposes that from AY2004, the admission framework be revised to allow each university and its faculties more leeway to decide on their admission criteria. Beyond the minimum threshold for application, it recommends a 2-tier admission framework consisting of a University Score to first shortlist applicants for faculties' consideration and a Faculty Score that will allow each faculty to identify the best candidates for the course of study. Each faculty will select applicants for admission based on a Combined Score comprising the University Score and Faculty Score. The inclusion of the University Score ensures that the selection of applicants for admission is still predicated on a foundation of common criteria, while the use of the Faculty Score allows faculties greater flexibility to select applicants of a desired profile. The Faculty Score can comprise up to one third of the final Combined Score

### Minimum Threshold

11. The Committee recommends that NUS and NTU continue to set a minimum threshold for application, as per current practice. For 'A'-level graduates, the threshold remains unchanged, i.e. passes in at least two 'A'-level subjects and attempts at General Paper (GP) and MTL.

12. For polytechnic graduates, the Committee recommends that the current minimum threshold be changed from the need for a relevant polytechnic diploma to one where an applicant with a polytechnic diploma in any discipline is eligible to apply. Faculties will decide if the applicants meet the prerequisites to undertake the university course. Such a move will enable more polytechnic graduates who can benefit from university education to apply. This can be implemented when the universities are ready to do so.

## University Score

13. For 'A'-level graduates, the Committee recommends that the universities set a University Score comprising 95% 'A'-level examination results and 5% CCA. The universities could shortlist applicants for faculties' selection based on this score. For polytechnic graduates, the University Score will comprise 75% polytechnic examination results, 20% 'O'-level examination results and 5% CCA.

14. The Committee recommends that SAT I be omitted as a required component in the University Score for 'A'-level and polytechnic graduates (see paras 18 to 23). It also recommends that it not be mandatory for 'A'-level graduates to count their MTL grades in the University Score although they are still required to meet the minimum MTL requirement (see paras 24 to 25).

15. Currently, the CCA points are positioned as bonus points for university admission. The Committee proposes that under the revised admission framework, CCA points be incorporated into the 100% University Score for both 'A'-level and polytechnic graduates. This will provide greater clarity in the University Score and signal the importance of CCA for our students.

16. The Committee notes that the first batch of 'A'-level students who graduate under the new Singapore-Cambridge 'A'-level curriculum framework will apply for university admission in AY2008. It suggests that with the new 'A'-level curriculum, the universities consider counting GP (or Knowledge and Inquiry), Project Work, three H2 subjects and one H1 subject (out of which one must be a contrasting subject), together with CCA, towards the University Score. As NUS and NTU gain greater autonomy, they can then decide on the components of the new 'A'-level curriculum, including the number and type of subjects, to include as part of their respective admission criteria.

## Faculty Score

17. On top of the University Score, the Committee recommends that each faculty can assign a Faculty Score (which can comprise up to one-third of the Combined Score) via additional admission criteria to select applicants. These can include performance in one or more of the following components:

- a. Interviews
- b. Specialised areas of study (including H3 subjects<sup>1</sup> under the new 'A'-level curriculum and research projects)

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<sup>1</sup> Under the new 'A'-level curriculum that will be introduced in 2006, a H3 subject is offered at a higher level or in greater depth for those students with exceptional strength and passion for that particular subject.

- c. Portfolios of work
- d. Reasoning or aptitude tests
- e. Outstanding performance in non-academic areas

### SAT I

18. The Committee recommends that SAT I be omitted as a mandatory admission criterion from AY2004. This is principally because of the impending changes to SAT I in the United States from 2005, and the implementation of the new 'A'-level curriculum from 2006.

19. The Committee also notes that there was a high correlation between the SAT I and the current 'A'-levels for the AY2003 university intake. For the AY2003 university admission exercise, only 199 'A'-level and 71 polytechnic graduates gained admission to NUS and NTU on account of their SAT I results. With the new SAT I and new 'A'-level curriculum, the Committee notes that the overlap between the two is likely to be higher. The changes to SAT I in 2005 - from the current reasoning test to a more proficiency/content-based test - will make the test more like our 'O'-levels and 'A'-levels. As for the new 'A'-level curriculum to be implemented from 2006, it will focus more on thinking skills.

20. Furthermore, the Committee has received feedback from JC/CI students, teachers and principals that the SAT I has imposed an additional burden on our 'A'-level students. They are spending time and effort preparing for SAT I, on top of their existing 'A'-level curriculum.

21. As for polytechnic graduates, the Committee recommends that universities and faculties should have the flexibility to use the most appropriate admission test(s) to select polytechnic graduates best suited for university education. Such tests will provide the universities with an objective assessment of the candidates' abilities across the different polytechnics.

22. As some applicants could have taken their SAT I earlier, the Committee recommends that NUS and NTU can allow these applicants to submit their SAT I scores for the AY2004 and AY2005 admissions. The universities will then assess such applicants based on the higher of the two scores – one with SAT I and the other without SAT.

23. However, the Committee recommends that faculties can, at any time, choose to include SAT I or any other aptitude tests as part of the Faculty Score if they deem the tests relevant to the selection of candidates. Faculties that do so will make public any such requirements in advance.

## Mother Tongue Language

24. The Committee is of the view that an individual's course of study at university and his career options should not be decided by his performance in MTL. It recommends that while 'A'-level graduates should continue to meet the minimum MTL requirement<sup>2</sup> for university admission, there is no need to count the MTL grade in the University Score with effect from AY2004.

25. Notwithstanding this, the Committee recommends that applicants who have done well in MTL can include their MTL grades in their University Score, which will be re-based.<sup>3</sup> This will continue to motivate students and reward them for doing well in MTL. At the faculty level, those departments which consider MTL as relevant to any of their disciplines can also recognise MTL as part of the Faculty Score.

## **Independent Admission**

26. Beyond the proposed broad university admission framework, the Committee is of the view that NUS and NTU should be given more leeway to decide on student admission over time. For a start, the Committee recommends that each university can have full flexibility to determine the profile of up to 10% of its intake using its own, independent criteria, with effect from AY2004. Such criteria should continue to be merit-based but at the discretion of the universities. This flexibility will be the first step towards allowing the universities full autonomy to decide on their admission criteria over time.

## **Conclusion**

27. The Committee recognises that the university admission system plays a key role in shaping the education system and the profile of our undergraduates. It is of the view that as the university and school landscapes evolve, university admission must move in tandem.

28. The Committee's recommendations for a flexible and differentiated university admission system will enable NUS and NTU to be better placed to compete and select the best students. It believes that over time, both universities should be given full autonomy over all admissions. This will enhance our universities' capacity to attract a myriad of talents and develop peaks of excellence.

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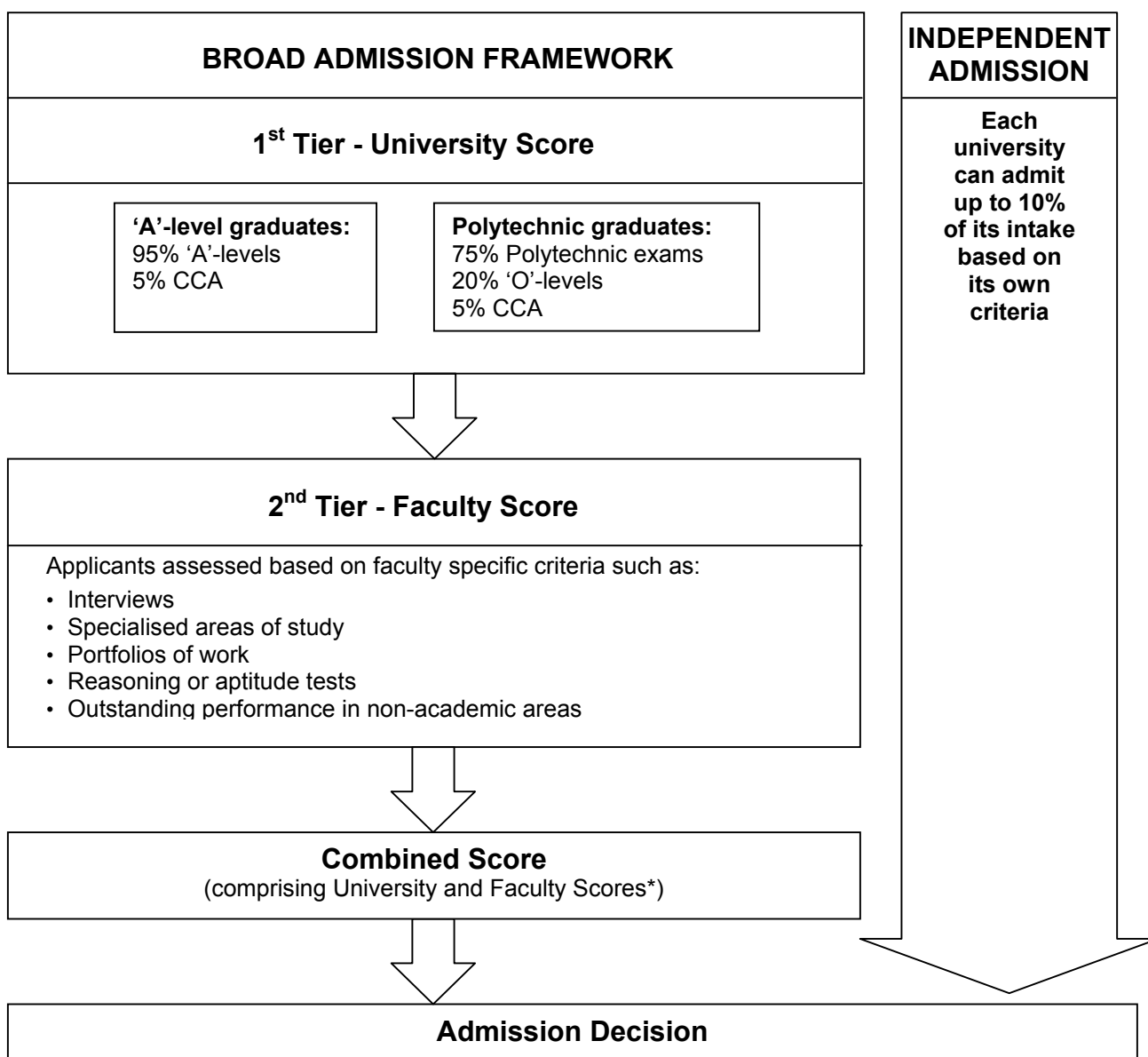
<sup>2</sup> The minimum MTL requirement for admission is a D7 for MTL or a pass in MTL B.

<sup>3</sup> Currently, under the 'A'-level component of the composite admission score, five subjects, i.e. three 'A'-level subjects, GP and MTL are counted. The maximum attainable 'A'-level points is 76. With the removal of MTL as a mandatory component, the maximum attainable points will be reduced to 68 points. For applicants whose MTL grade is included in the 'A'-level component, their 'A'-level points will be adjusted from a base of 76 to a base of 68.

**Figure 1:**

## **A FLEXIBLE AND DIFFERENTIATED UNIVERSITY ADMISSION FRAMEWORK**

- NUS and NTU will have their own admission exercises.
- The proposed broad university admission framework comprises a University Score and a Faculty Score, which together make up a Combined Score.
- Each university has the flexibility to determine the profile of its students up to 10% of its intake.



\*The University Score will make up a minimum of two-thirds of the Combined Score while the Faculty Score will make up a maximum of one-third of the Combined Score.



# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

- 1.1 In July 1999, the Committee on University Admission System chaired by Professor Shih Choon Fong, then Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Singapore (NUS) conducted a review of the joint admission system of NUS and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU). Its recommendations were implemented with effect from the admission exercise in Academic Year (AY) 2003.
- 1.2 Since then, two major reviews have taken place – the review of Junior College (JC)/Upper Secondary education and the review of the university sector and graduate manpower planning. There is a need to revise the university admission system so that it is aligned with the changes arising from both reviews.

## Changing Landscape

### JC/Upper Secondary Education Review

- 1.3 In April 2002, the Committee for the Review of JC/Upper Secondary Education chaired by Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, then Senior Minister of State (Trade and Industry & Education), was set up to develop a revised JC curriculum framework and articulate a vision for JC/Upper Secondary education.
- 1.4 Arising from the review, changes to the JC/Upper Secondary landscape and the JC curriculum are being implemented. Among other things, there will be greater diversity in the JC/Upper Secondary education system, including the introduction of Integrated Programmes in selected secondary schools and JCs; alternative curricula and qualifications to the 'O'- and 'A'-levels such as the International Baccalaureate; new specialised independent schools in sports, mathematics and science, and the arts to cater to students with talent in the respective fields; and a few privately-funded schools at the JC/Upper Secondary level.
- 1.5 The new JC curriculum to be implemented from 2006 will focus more on knowledge and thinking skills. It will broaden the range of disciplines students study as well as provide them more opportunities to develop special interests and strengths, especially in non-academic areas.

- 1.6 The JC/Upper Secondary Education Review Committee also recommended that the university admission criteria be aligned with the broader and more flexible JC curriculum.

### **University Sector Review**

- 1.7 In February 2002, the Committee to Review the University Sector and Graduate Manpower Planning (or USR Committee in short) chaired by Dr Ng Eng Hen, then Minister of State (Education & Manpower), was set up to recommend a long-term structure for our university sector to better serve Singapore's economic and manpower planning needs as we transit to a new economic structure. It recommended that NUS be transformed into a multi-campus university system, NTU become a full-fledged comprehensive university and Singapore Management University (SMU) continue to expand as planned. In addition, the Committee recommended that a few good private universities be allowed to set up campuses in Singapore.
- 1.8 For the increase in university cohort participation rate from 21% to 25% by 2010, the USR Committee observed that there is a potential pool of good quality polytechnic students who can benefit from university education. More polytechnic graduates are expected to be enrolled in our local universities as we expand the capacity of our university sector.
- 1.9 The USR Committee recommended that the existing university admission system be fine-tuned as the university sector becomes more diverse. In addition, the university admission system should enable our universities to be more responsive to the manpower needs of our economy as well as students' choice in terms of course offerings. There should also be greater latitude for universities and faculties to adopt different admission criteria. With greater flexibility at the faculty level, each university can better manage the broader spectrum of student abilities and recruit the target group of students who will best benefit from and contribute to the institution.

### **Impending Changes to the SAT I**

- 1.10 The SAT I is a test that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning skills. According to the College Board<sup>1</sup>, a new SAT I will be introduced in March 2005. The changes include, *inter alia*, the addition of a third section on Writing (in addition to the Verbal and Math sections) and the inclusion of higher level mathematics questions in the Math section. By

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<sup>1</sup> The College Board owns, and together with Educational Testing Services (ETS), develops and administers the SAT I.

including a third measure of skills -- Writing, the new SAT is expected to help US colleges make better admission and placement decisions.

## **Review Process**

- 1.11 In April 2003, the Ministry of Education (MOE) set up the University Admission Committee chaired by Prof Chong Chi Tat, Provost & Deputy President, NUS to look into the changes to the joint admission system of NUS and NTU in view of the upcoming changes to our JC/Upper Secondary and university landscapes.
- 1.12 The Committee comprised representatives from NUS, NTU, Polytechnics, JCs and MOE (see composition at [Annex A](#)).
- 1.13 The terms of reference of the Committee are:
  - a. To recommend refinements to the current university admission system so as to:
    - Align it with the restructured JC/Upper Secondary curriculum;
    - Allow universities/faculties more flexibility to select, from amongst a larger university-bound cohort, those that would best benefit from and contribute to the respective institutions; and
    - Ensure continued rigour and parity in the selection of students as we increase the student intake, particularly from within the polytechnic route.
  - b. To recommend an implementation timeframe for the proposed refinements to the university admission system.
- 1.14 The Committee held 8 meetings and consulted a cross-section of stakeholders in education, namely, the university deans and faculty, polytechnic lecturers, JC/Centralised Institute (CI) principals and teachers, and students from the universities, polytechnics and JCs.

## CHAPTER 2

### Current University Admission System

#### Main Components

- 2.1 In AY2003, NUS and NTU implemented the new admission system which was recommended by the 1999 Committee on University Admission System.
- 2.2 The main components of the current university admission system are as follows:
  - a. Minimum threshold for application. An 'A'-level applicant must obtain, at the same sitting, passes in at least 2 'A'-level subjects and must have attempted General Paper (GP) and Mother Tongue Language (MTL). For polytechnic graduates, a relevant diploma to the university course of study is required.
  - b. Composite admission score. Besides academic qualifications, SAT I and Co-curricular Activities (CCA) are included to compute the composite admission score for shortlisting and admission.
  - c. Additional assessment tools. Faculties may include additional assessment tools such as interviews and aptitude tests on top of the composite admission score to select applicants.
  - d. Special consideration. Borderline applicants and students with exceptional talents can be considered for admission to university.

#### Joint Admission Exercise

- 2.3 Currently, NUS and NTU conduct an annual joint admission exercise. Applicants submit a single form where they indicate up to 8 choices of courses at either NUS or NTU, in order of preference. NUS processes the submissions from the 'A'-level graduates for both universities while NTU handles those from polytechnic graduates. Eligible applicants receive one offer from either NUS or NTU.
- 2.4 With effect from AY2003, an on-line application system is available to all 'A'-level and polytechnic graduates who wish to apply for admission to NUS or NTU.

## Composite Admission Score

### 'A'-Level Graduates

2.5 For applicants with 'A'-level qualifications, the different components under the composite admission score are:

- a. 'A'-level examination results (75%). The 'A'-level results give an indication of a student's mastery of academic subjects and language skills, and hence, his level of readiness and preparation for university education. The grades of three 'A'-level subjects and two 'AO'-level subjects (i.e. GP and MTL) are used for the computation of the composite admission score. Each 'A'-level and 'AO'-level subject scores up to 20 and 8 points respectively, making up a maximum of 76 points.

In addition, applicants need to obtain a minimum of either a D7 grade in MTL at 'AO'-level or a pass in MTL 'B' syllabus. Applicants who do not meet this minimum MTL requirement but are otherwise eligible for university education can be admitted on a provisional basis. Such students can only graduate upon satisfying the minimum language proficiency requirement set by the universities.

- b. SAT I (25 %). SAT I assesses applicants' verbal and mathematical reasoning ability.
- c. Project Work or PW (10% from AY2005, and correspondingly, the weightage for 'A'-level examination results will be lowered to 65%). PW promotes creativity, curiosity and resourcefulness, which are qualities not captured in traditional time-based examinations or tests; and
- d. CCA (up to 5 bonus points). CCAs help to develop a student's character, leadership and other qualities.

2.6 The mix of components reinforces the initiatives and reforms in schools to promote critical and creative thinking, and gives focus to the holistic development of students. Individual faculties may choose to supplement the components with interviews or other aptitude tests. Currently, applicants to Medicine, Dentistry, Law, Communication Studies, Architecture, Industrial Design and the National Institute of Education's courses are required to attend interviews and/or sit for aptitude tests.

## **Polytechnic Graduates**

- 2.7 For applicants with polytechnic qualifications, the admission criteria are based on the following: Polytechnic results (60%); 'O'-level results (15%); SAT I (25%); and CCAs (up to 5 bonus points).
- 2.8 PW is not included for polytechnic students as the educational process at the polytechnics already involves a large degree of project-based activities.

## **Mature Applicants**

- 2.9 For mature applicants, three components are used: SAT I (50%); previous academic qualifications and/or entrance tests (25%); as well as interviews, employers' references and quality of work experience (25%).

## **Applicants with Exceptional Talent**

- 2.10 Currently, a small number of places are set aside for exceptionally talented applicants to be directly admitted into university. This includes winners at international Olympiad competitions and the National Science Talent Search. In addition, direct admission is extended to students who produce outstanding projects, either in school, or through research programmes conducted in collaboration with local universities. These include the Science Research Programme, the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Programme, and the Technology and Engineering Research Programme. Applicants who demonstrate excellence in areas such as the arts and sports are also considered.

## **CHAPTER 3**

# **Towards A Flexible & Differentiated University Admission System**

### **Key Principles**

- 3.1 The Committee is of the view that the university admission system plays a key role in shaping our education system and the profile of our undergraduates. Any changes to the university admission system must consider the impact on the university sector as well as the entire education landscape.
- 3.2 The Committee recommends that NUS and NTU take steps towards greater ownership of their admission criteria, leading eventually to full autonomy in admissions. In admitting students, both universities must be responsive to their mission and strategic objectives, as well as changes to the market demand for different types of graduates. Furthermore, as both NUS and NTU strive to achieve excellence, they must be in a position to compete for the best students. The Committee therefore recommends that NUS and NTU move towards a flexible and differentiated admission system for this purpose. This is also in line with the earlier proposal by the Committee to Review the University Sector and Graduate Manpower Planning which called for greater latitude for universities and faculties to adopt different admission criteria as we move towards a more diverse university landscape.
- 3.3 However, the Committee is cognisant of three main principles which remain relevant for university admission. They are:
  - a. The university admission system should continue to be based on the principle of meritocracy so as to uphold the quality and standing of our universities and their intakes. Meritocracy motivates and allows an individual to go as far as he can regardless of his family background. While academic achievements continue to be the primary yardstick to assess suitability for university education, the university admission system should allow a wider definition of merit such that individuals who have achieved excellence in academic and/or non-academic domains can be considered for university education.
  - b. The university admission system should retain its relevance to the broader objectives of our education system and motivate students

to develop the qualities essential for the future. It should reinforce the strategic thrusts of our education system and serve the needs of the universities in selecting candidates who will benefit from and contribute to their respective institutions.

- c. The university admission system should enable our universities to cater to the increasing diversity in our education landscape, especially at the upper secondary and pre-university levels.

## **Recommendation 1: Separate Admission Exercises**

- 3.4 The Committee recommends a change in the university admission process with the introduction of separate admission exercises under a revised broad university admission framework which NUS and NTU will continue to share for the time being.
- 3.5 With separate admission exercises from AY2004 onwards, each university will process its applications concurrently and make parallel offers to eligible applicants separately. For the convenience of applicants, there should continue to be a single point-of-contact for application. However, instead of ranking their choices across NUS and NTU courses under the current joint admission exercise, applicants will indicate their choices for entry into NUS and NTU separately, e.g. they can have two first choice courses, one for each university. Those who meet the NUS and NTU admission criteria will then receive two parallel offers, instead of only a single offer from just one university under the current joint admission exercise.
- 3.6 The merits of conducting separate admission exercises are as follows:
  - a. There will be open competition for the best students between NUS and NTU. This will encourage each university to raise the quality of their undergraduate education;
  - b. With the universities making competitive offers, it allows applicants greater choice and puts the responsibility of decision-making in their hands; and
  - c. With each university processing its own applications, universities and faculties will have more flexibility and leeway to customise the application process to suit their needs and to decide on offers to be made to applicants.
- 3.7 As a private university, the Singapore Management University (SMU)



conducts its own admission exercise independently, based on its own admission criteria. The Committee is of the view that it is desirable to have SMU participate in the single (point-of-contact) application system so as to make it even more convenient for those applicants who may choose to apply to all three universities in Singapore. Such applicants would then not have to go to three universities separately to apply for admission.

## **Recommendation 2: Broad University Admission Framework**

- 3.8 The Committee recommends that the existing university admission framework be refined to allow each university and its faculties more leeway to decide on their admission criteria. This will facilitate greater diversity in our university landscape and allow our universities to develop niches of excellence based on their strengths and character.
- 3.9 The revised broad university admission framework comprises the following components:
- a. A minimum threshold for application; and
  - b. A 2-tier admission framework consisting of a University Score to first shortlist applicants for faculties' consideration and a Faculty Score that will allow each faculty to identify the best candidates for the course of study. Each faculty will select applicants for admission based on a Combined Score comprising the University Score and Faculty Score. The inclusion of the University Score ensures that the selection of applicants for admission is still predicated on a foundation of common criteria, while the Faculty Score allows faculties greater flexibility to select applicants of a desired profile. The Faculty Score can comprise up to one third of the final Combined Score.
- 3.10 A diagrammatic representation of the revised broad university admission framework is shown at Annex B.

### **Recommendation 2(a): Minimum Threshold for Application**

- 3.11 A minimum threshold for application allows universities to set a requisite minimum standard for its applicants. Hence, the Committee recommends that NUS and NTU continue with the current practice of setting a minimum threshold for application, i.e. only candidates who meet the minimum threshold can apply.

### **'A'-level graduates**

- 3.12 The Committee recommends that the current minimum threshold for application remain unchanged. The applicant must obtain, at the same sitting, passes in at least two 'A'-level subjects and must have attempted GP and MTL.
- 3.13 The Committee suggests that the universities can consider adopting the equivalent of these minimum threshold criteria under the new Singapore-Cambridge 'A'-level curriculum framework which will be implemented with effect from 2006, for admission from AY2008.<sup>2</sup> The Committee also suggests that a similar equivalent be adopted for other recognised qualifications, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma, for university admission.

### **Polytechnic graduates**

- 3.14 The Committee recommends that the current minimum threshold be changed from the need for a relevant polytechnic diploma to one where an applicant with a polytechnic diploma in any discipline is eligible to apply. Faculties will decide if the applicants meet the prerequisites to undertake the university course. This can be implemented when the universities are ready to do so.
- 3.15 The Committee feels that such a change will increase the access of polytechnic graduates to university education and enable more polytechnic graduates who can benefit from university education to be considered. It anticipates that more courses of study will be made available to polytechnic graduates with the expansion of the university cohort participation rate from the current 21% to 25% by 2010.

### **Recommendation 2(b): University Score**

- 3.16 While there are merits to devolving more autonomy in admissions to the universities, the Committee recommends that for a start, NUS and NTU adopt a common set of admission criteria for the University Score. The University Score and its components should comprise the mandatory components sufficient to meet the universities' needs and more importantly, maintain standards, before allowing faculties the flexibility in setting their admission criteria for the Faculty Score. The selection of students is based on the final Combined Score.

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<sup>2</sup> AY2008 will see the first batch of 'A'-level graduates under the new Singapore-Cambridge 'A'-level curriculum framework applying for university admission.

- 3.17 The Committee suggests that the universities and faculties should specify in advance any subject prerequisites or minimum subject grade requirements to enable applicants to make informed choices in their courses of study.
- 3.18 The Committee recommends that for 'A'-level graduates, the universities set a University Score comprising 95% 'A'-level examination results<sup>3</sup> and 5% CCA. The 'A'-level results provide a good measure of the applicant's content knowledge whereas the CCA serves as a complement through providing a gauge of the applicant's non-academic qualities (such as leadership and teamwork) which universities consider desirable.
- 3.19 The Committee recommends that for polytechnic graduates, the universities set a University Score comprising 75% polytechnic examination results, 20% 'O'-level examination results and 5% CCA. The 'O'-level component is retained as it provides a measure of polytechnic graduates' academic background for university education *vis-à-vis* the more practice-based polytechnic education. In addition, it serves as a useful common benchmark to assess graduates from different polytechnics.
- 3.20 The Committee further recommends that SAT I be omitted as a required component in the University Score for both 'A'-level and polytechnic graduates. It also recommends that it not be mandatory for 'A'-level graduates to count their MTL grades in the University Score although they are still required to meet the minimum MTL requirement for admission.<sup>4</sup>
- 3.21 The current university admission system awards up to 5 bonus points for the applicants' participation in CCA. The Committee proposes that under the revised broad university admission framework, the CCA points be incorporated into the 100% University Score, and not as a bonus component.
- 3.22 With these changes, the Committee feels that the proposed University Score will signal the importance of our pre-university examinations, particularly the upcoming new 'A'-level curriculum and other accepted pre-university qualifications. It will also signal the importance of CCA for our students.
- 3.23 The Committee notes that the first batch of 'A'-level students who graduate under the new Singapore-Cambridge 'A'-level curriculum

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<sup>3</sup> For those with other internationally recognised qualifications such as IB diploma, the University Score can comprise 95% of the IB examination results and 5% CCA.

<sup>4</sup> The minimum MTL requirement for admission is a D7 for MTL or a pass in MTL B.

framework will apply for university admission in AY2008. It suggests that with the new 'A'-level curriculum, the universities consider counting GP (or Knowledge and Inquiry), Project Work, three H2 subjects and one H1 subject (out of which one must be a contrasting subject), together with CCA, towards the University Score. As NUS and NTU gain greater autonomy, they can then decide on the components of the new 'A'-level curriculum, including the number and type of subjects, to include as part of their respective admission criteria.

## **Recommendation 2(c): Faculty Score**

- 3.24 On top of the University Score, the Committee recommends that each faculty be given the flexibility to select their students by setting additional admission criteria. The Committee recommends that faculties be given the option to assign a Faculty Score based on one or more of the following components:
- a. Interviews
  - b. Specialised areas of study, including H3 offerings under the new 'A'-level curriculum and research projects (e.g. under the Science Research Programme)
  - c. Portfolio of work
  - d. Reasoning or aptitude tests
  - e. Outstanding performance in non-academic areas
- 3.25 Each faculty can select applicants based on a Combined Score comprising the University Score and Faculty Score. The Committee recommends that the Faculty Score can comprise up to one-third of the Combined Score.
- 3.26 Depending on the extent of differentiation between the admission criteria set by different faculties, students may need to prepare for a wider range of requirements. The Committee suggests that NUS and NTU should give students adequate notice to prepare for any new admission requirement, particularly for the content-based subjects.
- 3.27 In addition, the Committee is of the view that faculties should not over-test applicants and should only set admission tests when there is value in doing so. In addition, the universities should assess whether faculties'

proposed requirements place excessive weightage on academic performance, bearing in mind that faculties' requirements should continue to support the strategic intent and direction of a broad-based and holistic education towards which our schools are moving.

### **Recommendation 3: Changes to SAT I criterion**

3.28 Since 1999 when the recommendation to include SAT I as an admission component was accepted, there have been announcements on the changes to SAT I and the 'A'-level curriculum.

3.29 The Committee recommends that SAT I be omitted as a mandatory admission criterion from AY2004. This is principally because of the impending changes to SAT I in the United States from 2005, and the implementation of the new 'A'-level curriculum from 2006. In addition, the Committee notes that:

- a. According to studies by the Admission Offices of NUS and NTU based on the AY2003 university intake, there was a high correlation between the SAT I and the current 'A'-level results. The studies also revealed that for the AY2003 university admission exercise, only 199 'A'-level applicants gained admission to the two universities as a result of the inclusion of their SAT I results. In the same AY2003 exercise, the impact of SAT I on polytechnic students was also marginal as only 71 polytechnic applicants gained admission to NUS and NTU on account of their SAT I results.
- b. The overlap between the new SAT I and the new 'A'-level curriculum is likely to be higher. The new 'A'-level curriculum to be implemented from 2006 would, *inter alia*, focus more on thinking skills. The changes to SAT I in 2005 - from the current reasoning test to a more proficiency/content-based test, will make the test less suitable for our needs than when it was recommended for inclusion as part of the university admission criteria in 1999. Preliminary assessment of the new SAT I Writing section and General Paper has revealed some overlap in testing. The changes to SAT I will make the test more like our 'O'-levels and 'A'-levels.
- c. Feedback from students, teachers and principals revealed that the SAT I has imposed an additional burden on our 'A'-level students. They are spending time and effort preparing for SAT I, on top of their existing 'A'-level curriculum.

- 3.30 The Committee notes that with the omission of SAT I, the 'O'-level results of polytechnic graduates can serve as a common benchmark to compare the quality of the applicants from the different polytechnics for university admission.
- 3.31 The Committee has observed that polytechnic graduates are more practice-oriented than their 'A'-level counterparts, given the different educational training and experiences at their respective institutions. In order to select polytechnic graduates who can benefit from university education, the Committee suggests that universities and faculties should have the flexibility to use the most appropriate admission test(s) to select polytechnic graduates best suited to university education. Such test(s) will provide the universities with an objective assessment of the candidates' abilities across the different polytechnics.
- 3.32 As some applicants could have taken their SAT I earlier, the Committee recommends that NUS and NTU can allow these applicants to submit their SAT I scores for admission in AY2004 and AY2005. The universities will then assess such applicants based on the higher of the two scores – one with SAT I and the other without. A tabulation of the proposed scoring options for university admission is at Annex C.
- 3.33 However, the Committee recommends that faculties can, at any time, choose to include SAT I or any other aptitude tests as part of the Faculty Score if they deem the tests relevant to the selection of candidates. Faculties that do so will make public any such requirements in advance.

#### **Recommendation 4: Mother Tongue Language Requirement**

- 3.34 Currently, 'A'-level applicants have to obtain a minimum grade for MTL to apply for university admission. In addition, the MTL grade is computed as part of the composite admission score for university admission.
- 3.35 The Committee feels strongly that an individual's course of study at university, and his career options, should not be decided by his performance in MTL at pre-university so long as the minimum MTL requirement for admission is met.
- 3.36 The Committee notes that 'O'-level graduates have to meet a minimum MTL proficiency requirement but the MTL grade need not be counted as part of the applicant's score for JC admission. For university admission, 'A'-level graduates currently have to both meet a minimum MTL requirement (a D7 in MTL at 'AO'-level or a pass in MTL B syllabus) and include the MTL grade in the composite admission score. The Committee

feels that there could be some alignment between the MTL consideration for JC and university admissions.

- 3.37 The Committee therefore recommends removing the requirement that applicants' MTL grades be included in the proposed University Score for admission for 'A'-level graduates with effect from AY2004.
- 3.38 At the same time, the Committee recognises that it is important to continue to signal the importance of bilingualism as a cornerstone of our overall education system. Hence, the Committee proposes that applicants must continue to meet the minimum MTL proficiency requirement for university admission. Currently, applicants who do not meet this requirement but are otherwise eligible for university education can be admitted on a provisional basis. Such students can only graduate upon satisfying the minimum language proficiency requirement set by the universities. The Committee recommends that this practice be continued.
- 3.39 In addition, the Committee recommends that NUS and NTU can incorporate provisions for students who have done well in MTL to count their MTL grade, on top of the other subjects required, towards their University Score. Applicants who include their MTL grade will have their 'A'-level points re-based from 76 to 68 points.<sup>5</sup> This flexibility is aligned with the practice for 'O'-level applicants who can count their MTL grade within the L1R5 score<sup>6</sup> for JC admission. This will continue to motivate students and reward them for doing well in MTL. At the faculty level, those departments<sup>7</sup> which consider MTL as relevant to any of their disciplines can also recognise MTL as part of the Faculty Score.

## **Recommendation 5: Independent Admission**

- 3.40 The Committee is of the view that in a new university environment, NUS and NTU should be responsive and be in a position to compete with overseas universities, including campuses of overseas universities which

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<sup>5</sup> Currently, under the 'A'-level component of the composite admission score, five subjects, i.e. three 'A'-level subjects, GP and MTL are counted. The maximum attainable 'A'-level points is 76. With the removal of MTL as a mandatory component, the maximum attainable points will be reduced to 68 points. For applicants whose MTL grade is included in the 'A'-level component, their 'A'-level points will be adjusted from a base of 76 to a base of 68.

<sup>6</sup> Except that MTL can replace a subject in the L1R5 framework while for university application, MTL can be included on top of the requisite subjects.

<sup>7</sup> Currently, students who have obtained a distinction in their MTL will receive up to two bonus points if they choose to study MT-related courses/subject concentrations offered by NUS and NTU. Examples include Chinese Language and/or Chinese Studies (NUS); Malay Studies (NUS); South Asian Studies with two Tamil modules (NUS); Communication Studies (NTU); and BA (Education) with specialisation in Chinese Language and Literature or Malay Language and Literature (NTU).

- are expected to be established in Singapore. In line with this development, the Committee recommends that the two universities should, over time, be given full autonomy to decide on student admission.
- 3.41 For a start, the Committee recommends that each university can have full flexibility to determine the profile of up to 10% of its intake using its own, independent criteria. Such criteria should continue to be merit-based but at the discretion of the universities. This flexibility will be the first step towards allowing the universities full autonomy in admissions over time.
- 3.42 The Committee is of the view that NUS and NTU should continue to give special consideration to applicants with outstanding strengths, independent of their 'A'-levels or polytechnic results. This could include applicants who have outstanding talents in a particular field of study or have done exceptionally well in SAT I. It could also include those who have achieved excellence in non-academic areas, subject to their meeting the academic standards that the universities or faculties deem adequate.
- 3.43 In addition, winners at international Olympiad competitions and the National Science Talent Search will continue to be considered for direct admission into university. Other applicants who have demonstrated excellence in areas such as the arts and sports can also be considered. This will continue to ensure that applicants with special talents have an avenue for university education.
- 3.44 The Committee suggests that NUS and NTU can use this autonomy to give special consideration to admit students with the following: those with all-round achievements; those with strengths in particular fields; or those who have achieved excellence in non-academic areas.

## **Recommendation 6: Other Categories of Applicants**

### **Applicants with Other Internationally Recognised Qualifications**

- 3.45 The Committee recommends that the current provision for applicants with internationally recognised qualifications be continued.
- 3.46 For applicants with IB qualifications from local schools, the Committee recommends that the universities work out the admission criteria when more details on the new JC curriculum and IB in the local schools are available.



## **Mature Applicants**

- 3.47 The Committee recommends that universities continue to admit mature students in a separate queue from school-leavers. The Committee also recommends that the admission criteria for mature applicants can be decided by individual faculties. Faculties should nevertheless bear in mind that selected applicants should show a good grasp of content knowledge, which can be measured through past academic qualifications or any admission test(s). Recognition of non-academic qualifications such as work experience and motivation should also continue to be taken into consideration.

## **Conclusion**

- 3.48 The Committee is of the view that having separate admission exercises and refining the current university admission framework will introduce more flexibility to the university admission system. More importantly, the Committee's recommendations ensure that shortlisted applicants are of a requisite standard to pursue university education, while allowing the universities and faculties more autonomy in the selection of students. The move towards a flexible and differentiated university admission system will enable NUS and NTU to be better placed to compete and select the best students. The Committee believes that such changes in university admission are necessary as the university and school landscapes evolve.
- 3.49 A comparison of the Committee's recommended university admission framework against the current admission framework is tabulated at Annex D.

## CHAPTER 4

### Proposed Implementation

- 4.1 To allow more applicants to benefit from the changes to the admission criteria, the Committee recommends that the changes be implemented as soon as practicable, from AY2004 subject to universities making the necessary adjustments in time. These are elaborated below:
- a. **Separate Admission Exercises** will be conducted by NUS and NTU from AY2004.
  - b. **Minimum threshold for application.** For polytechnic graduates, the expansion of the minimum threshold to include all diplomas instead of only relevant diplomas can be implemented when the universities are ready to do so.
  - c. **Combined Score.** The proposed University Score will be implemented from AY2004. As for the Faculty Score, this can be adopted by faculties as and when they are ready.<sup>8</sup> Faculties should make public their admission requirements in advance of the actual implementation so that students will have adequate preparation time.
  - d. **CCA.** The proposed incorporation of CCAs into the main University Score (i.e. it will no longer be a bonus component) will be implemented wef AY2004.
  - e. **MTL.** The MTL grades will be excluded from the computation of the University Score for admission for 'A'-level graduates wef AY2004. However, those who wish to submit their MTL grades to count as part of the University Score can continue to do so.
  - f. **SAT I.** This will be omitted as a mandatory admission component for 'A'-level and polytechnic applicants wef AY2004. As some applicants could have taken their SAT I earlier, they can choose to submit their SAT I scores for the AY2004 and AY2005 admissions. NUS and NTU will then assess such applicants based on the higher of the two scores – one with SAT I and the other without SAT I.

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<sup>8</sup> Currently, the following faculties/departments impose additional criteria on top of the composite admission score:

- a) NUS – Law, Medicine, Dentistry, Industrial Design and Architecture
- b) NTU – Communication Studies, National Institute of Education's courses

In addition, faculties can, at any time choose to include SAT I or any other aptitude tests as part of the Faculty Score if they deem the tests relevant to the selection of candidates. Faculties that do so will make public any such requirements in advance.

- g. **Independent admission.** NUS and NTU will each have the flexibility to admit up to 10% of their intakes based on criteria defined by each university wef AY2004.
- 4.2 The Committee recommends that equivalent credit systems under the IB framework and other recognised qualifications should be made known by 2006 or the earliest opportunity to give students sufficient notice.
- 4.3 A list of the Committee's recommendations and the proposed implementation timeline is at Annex E.

## COMPOSITION OF THE UNIVERSITY ADMISSION COMMITTEE

### **Chairman**

Prof Chong Chi Tat  
Provost & Deputy President  
National University of Singapore

### **Members**

Mrs Chan Jee Kun  
Director, Curriculum Planning & Development  
Ministry of Education

Prof Er Meng Hwa  
Deputy President  
Nanyang Technological University

Mr Winston Hodge  
Principal  
Raffles Junior College

Ms Esther Lai  
Principal  
Meridian Junior College

Mr Lim Chee Hwee  
Director, Higher Education  
Ministry of Education

Assoc Prof Lawrence Loh  
Associate President  
National University of Singapore

Mr Low Wong Fook  
Principal  
Singapore Polytechnic

## **Resource Persons**

Mr Philip Ong  
Deputy Director, Planning  
Ministry of Education

Prof Ivan Png  
Vice-Provost, Undergraduate & Graduate Education (till 31 Dec 2003)  
Kwan Im Thong Hood Cho Temple Professor, School of Computing  
National University of Singapore

## **Secretariat**

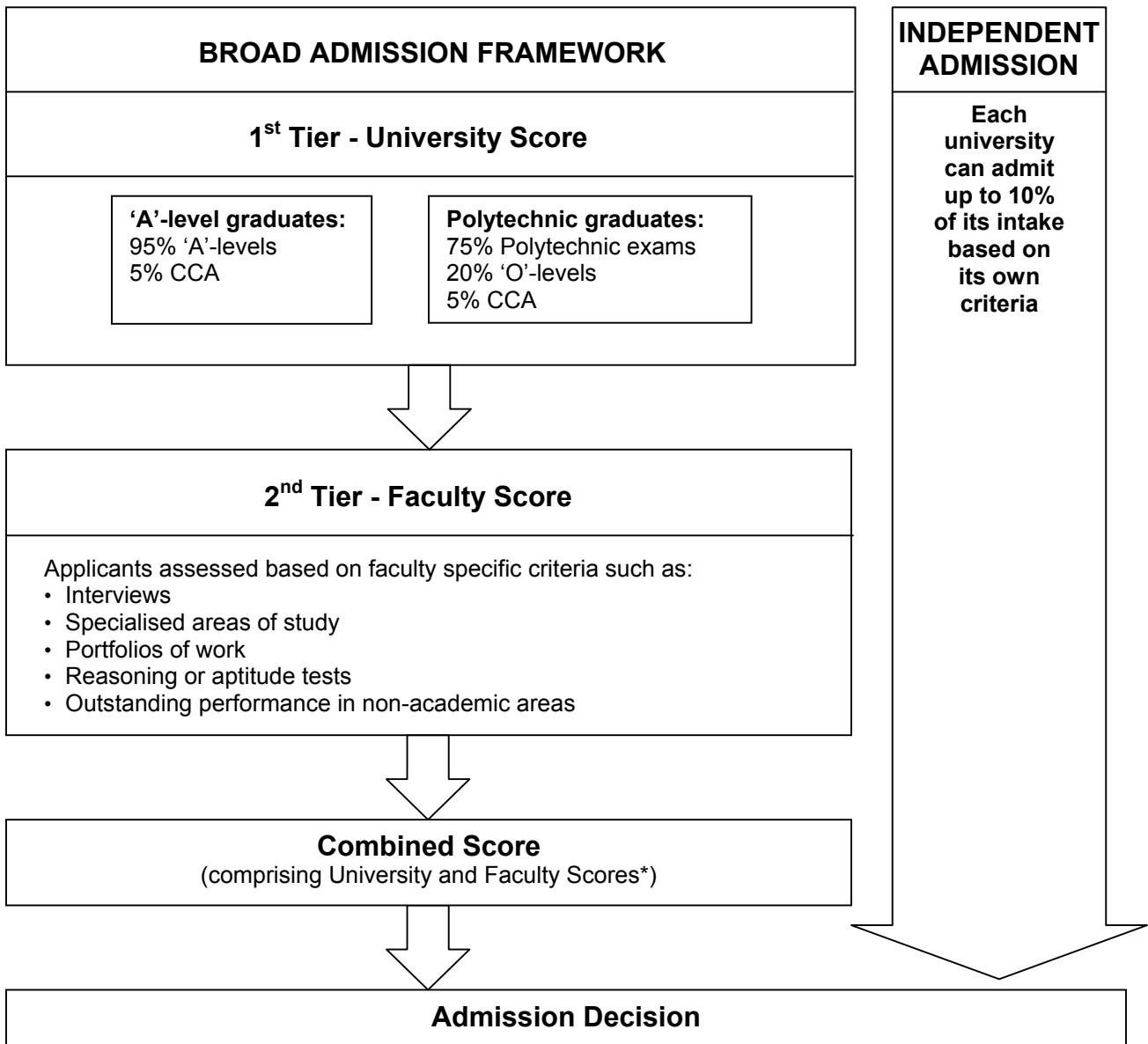
Ms Tan Cheng Pheng  
Assistant Director, Higher Education  
Ministry of Education

Ms Julia Chan (till 31 Dec 2003)  
Senior Head (Policy), Higher Education  
Ministry of Education

Ms Stephanie Lim (from 1 Jan 2004)  
Senior Head (Policy), Higher Education  
Ministry of Education

## A FLEXIBLE AND DIFFERENTIATED UNIVERSITY ADMISSION FRAMEWORK

- NUS and NTU will have their own admission exercises.
- The proposed broad university admission framework comprises a University Score and a Faculty Score, which together make up a Combined Score.
- Each university has the flexibility to determine the profile of its students up to 10% of its intake.



\*The University Score will make up a minimum of two-thirds of the Combined Score while the Faculty Score will make up a maximum of one-third of the Combined Score.

**PROPOSED SCORING OPTIONS  
FOR UNIVERSITY ADMISSION IN AY2004 & AY2005**

Table 1: 'A'-level Graduates

Option	'A'- levels	SAT I	CCA	Remarks
a	75%	25%	Up to 5 bonus points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Option (a) is the current scoring formula under the composite admission score while Option (b) is the proposed formula if the applicants choose not to submit their SAT I scores. The universities will consider the higher of the two options for university admission in AY2004 and AY2005, as some applicants could have already sat for SAT I earlier.</li> <li>▪ From AY2005, 10% of the 'A'-levels component will be allocated to Project Work.</li> </ul>
b	95%	-	5% ( <u>included</u> in 100% score)	

Table 2: Polytechnic Graduates

Option	Poly results	'O'- levels	SAT I	CCA	Remarks
a	60%	15%	25%	Up to 5 bonus points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Option (a) is the current scoring formula under the composite admission score while Option (b) is for applicants who choose not to submit their SAT I scores.</li> <li>▪ For those who submit SAT I scores, the universities will consider the higher of the two options for university admission in the AY2004 and AY2005 exercises.</li> </ul>
b	75%	20%	-	5% ( <u>included</u> in 100% score)	

**COMPARISON BETWEEN  
CURRENT UNIVERSITY ADMISSION FRAMEWORK &  
RECOMMENDED UNIVERSITY ADMISSION FRAMEWORK**

	<b>Current Framework</b>	<b>Recommended Framework</b>
<b>ADMISSION EXERCISE</b>		
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual joint admission exercise conducted by NUS and NTU.</li>   <li>▪ Applicants rank their choices across NUS and NTU and receive only one offer from just one of the two universities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From AY2004, each university conducts its own admission exercise under a broad admission framework.</li>   <li>▪ Applicants rank their choices for courses separately for NUS and NTU.</li>   <li>▪ Applicants can receive competitive offers from both NUS and NTU.</li> </ul>
<b>BROAD ADMISSION FRAMEWORK</b>		
<b>Minimum Threshold</b>		
2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To apply for university, 'A'-level graduates need to meet minimum requirements of passes in 2 'A'-level subjects and attempts at GP and MTL.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From AY2004, minimum 'A'-level criteria for application to continue to apply.</li>   <li>▪ From AY2008, the universities can adopt the equivalent minimum criteria under the new Singapore-Cambridge 'A'-level framework.</li> </ul>
2b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To apply for university, polytechnic graduates need a relevant diploma.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To apply for university, polytechnic graduates need a diploma in any discipline. This can be implemented when the universities are ready to do so.</li> </ul>



	Current Framework	Recommended Framework
<b>2-tier Admission Framework - Combined Score</b>		
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Currently, the universities shortlist applicants by the composite admission score. Some faculties re-rank applicants based on a total score comprising the composite admission score and applicant's performance in other components. (see Point 5 below).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the 2-tier admission framework, applicants will be selected based on a Combined Score comprising the University Score and Faculty Score. The University Score ensures that selection is predicated on a foundation of common criteria, while the Faculty Score allows individual faculties greater flexibility to select applicants most suited to their course of study.</li> <li>The Faculty Score can comprise up to one-third of the Combined Score.</li> </ul>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> tier: University Score</b>		
<b>(A) 'A'-level Graduates</b>		
4a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Composite admission score comprises 75% 'A'-levels, 25% SAT I and up to 5 bonus points for CCA.</li> <li>Applicant's best 3 'A'-level subjects, GP and MTL grades make up the 'A'-level component of the composite admission score.</li> <li>Faculties' subject prerequisites or minimum subject grade requirements are stated upfront.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From AY2004, applicants will be shortlisted based on a University Score of 95% 'A'-levels and 5% CCA.</li> <li>Applicant's best 3 'A'-level subjects and GP make up the University Score. (see Point 4b below)</li> <li>Faculties' subject prerequisites or minimum subject grade requirements are stated upfront.</li> <li>From AY2008, when applicants would have taken the new 'A' levels, the universities can consider counting GP (or Knowledge and Inquiry), Project Work, 3 H2 and 1 H1 subjects (out of which one must be a contrasting subject) for the University Score.</li> </ul>

	<b>Current Framework</b>	<b>Recommended Framework</b>
4b	<p><b>Mother Tongue (MTL) requirement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Applicants have to meet minimum MTL proficiency requirements, i.e. a D7 in MTL or a pass in MTL 'B'.</li> <li>▪ MTL grades counted in composite admission score.</li> <li>▪ Bonus points are awarded for good performance in MTL for admission to relevant courses at NUS and NTU.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mother Tongue (MTL) requirement from AY2004</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To continue with current minimum MTL proficiency requirement, i.e. a D7 in MTL or a pass in MTL 'B'.</li> <li>▪ MTL grades excluded from computation of University Score.</li> <li>▪ Universities can consider allowing students who have done well in MTL to count their MTL grade, on top of the required number of subjects, towards their University Score. This can be done by re-basing their score from 76 to 68 'A'-level points.</li> <li>▪ Faculties which specify MTL as relevant subjects can count applicants' MTL grades as part of the Faculty Score.</li> </ul>
<b>(B) Polytechnic Graduates</b>		
4c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Composite admission score comprises 60% polytechnic results, 15% 'O'-levels, 25% SAT I and up to 5 bonus points for CCA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From AY2004, applicants will be shortlisted based on a University Score of 75% polytechnic results, 20% 'O'-level results and 5% CCA.</li> <li>▪ Faculties' subject prerequisites or minimum subject grade requirements are stated upfront.</li> <li>▪ Universities and faculties can consider, over time, designing appropriate admissions test/s to select applicants best suited for university education.</li> </ul>

	<b>Current Framework</b>	<b>Recommended Framework</b>
<b>SAT I</b>		
4d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mandatory component for both 'A'-level and polytechnic graduates for admission.</li> <li>▪ SAT I constitute 25% of the composite admission score.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No longer a mandatory criterion wef AY2004 for both 'A'-level and polytechnic graduates.</li> <li>▪ For AY2004 and AY2005 admissions, both 'A'-level and polytechnic applicants can submit their SAT I scores in their applications. The universities will shortlist them based on the higher of the two scores – with SAT I and without SAT I.</li> <li>▪ Faculties can have the flexibility to use applicants' SAT I scores as a component of the Faculty Score.</li> </ul>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> tier: Faculty Score</b>		
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Some faculties that conduct aptitude tests and interviews for shortlisted applicants, e.g. Law and Medicine, currently re-rank applicants based on a total score comprising the composite admission score and the applicant's performance in the aptitude test and interview.</li> <li>▪ Due consideration given to a small number of borderline applicants through assessment of interviews, project work, CCA as well as other non-academic criteria such as evidence of passion and promise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Each faculty can assign a Faculty Score (which can comprise up to one-third of the Combined Score) via additional admission criteria to select applicants.</li> <li>▪ The Faculty Score can be based on one or more of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interviews</li> <li>b. Specialised areas of study (including H3 subjects under the new 'A'-level curriculum and research projects)</li> <li>c. Portfolios of work</li> <li>d. Reasoning or aptitude tests</li> <li>e. Outstanding performance in non-academic areas</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Faculty Score can comprise up to one-third of the Combined Score.</li> </ul>

	Current Framework	Recommended Framework
<b>Special Consideration / Independent Admission</b>		
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Universities set aside small number of places for exceptionally talented students. Currently, the universities allow winners at international Olympiad competitions and the National Science Talent Search to be directly admitted into university. Other applicants who have demonstrated excellence in areas such as the arts and the sciences will also be considered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ From AY2004, each university can admit up to 10% of its intake based on its own, independent criteria.</li> </ul>

**SUMMARY OF  
UNIVERSITY ADMISSION COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS  
AND THE PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE**

S/N	Recommendation	Remarks
1	Separate Admission Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From AY2004, NUS and NTU will conduct separate admission exercises under a broad university framework which the universities will continue to share.</li> </ul>
2	Broad University Admission Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This framework comprises the following components:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. A minimum threshold for application; and</li> <li>b. A 2-tier admission framework consisting of a <u>University Score</u> to first shortlist applicants for faculties' consideration and a <u>Faculty Score</u> that will allow each faculty to identify the best candidates for the course of study. Each faculty will select applicants for admission based on a <u>Combined Score</u> comprising the <u>University Score</u> and <u>Faculty Score</u>. The inclusion of the <u>University Score</u> ensures that the selection of applicants for admission is still predicated on a foundation of common criteria, while the <u>Faculty Score</u> allows faculties greater flexibility to select applicants of a desired profile.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
2(a)	Minimum Threshold for Application	<p><u>For 'A'-level graduates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The current minimum criteria for application remain unchanged, i.e. he must obtain, at the same sitting, passes in at least two 'A'-level subjects and must have attempted GP and MTL.</li> <li>• The Committee suggests that the universities consider adopting the equivalent of these minimum threshold criteria under the new JC 'A'-level curriculum framework which will be</li> </ul>

S/N	Recommendation	Remarks
		<p>implemented with effect from 2006, for university admission from AY2008.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee suggests that a similar equivalent be adopted for other accepted pre-university qualifications, such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma, for university admission.</li> </ul> <p><u>For Polytechnic graduates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relaxation of current minimum threshold from the need for a relevant diploma to one where an applicant with a polytechnic diploma in any discipline is eligible to apply. This can be implemented when universities are ready to do so.</li> <li>• This will increase access to university education for polytechnic graduates and enable more polytechnic graduates who can benefit from university education to be considered.</li> </ul>
2(b)	University Score	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a start, NUS and NTU will adopt a common framework for the University Score. From AY2004, 'A'-level applicants will be shortlisted based on a University Score consisting of 95% 'A'-levels results and 5% CCA. For polytechnic applicants, the University Score comprises 75% polytechnic results, 20% 'O'-level results and 5% CCA.</li> <li>• From AY2004, performance in CCAs will be incorporated as 5% of the total University Score (100%), i.e. it is no longer a bonus component.</li> <li>• The University Score will make up a minimum of two-thirds of the Combined Score.</li> </ul>

S/N	Recommendation	Remarks
2(c)	Faculty Score	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each faculty can impose additional admission criteria, on top of the University Score, to select applicants. Currently, some faculties already practise this. The universities can continue this practice and extend it to other faculties <u>as and when</u> they are ready to exercise it.</li> <li>• The Faculty Score can be based on one or more of the following components: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interviews</li> <li>b. Specialised areas of study (including H3 subjects under the new 'A'-level curriculum and research projects)</li> <li>c. Portfolios of work</li> <li>d. Reasoning or aptitude tests</li> <li>e. Outstanding performance in non-academic areas</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Faculty Score can comprise up to one-third of the Combined Score.</li> </ul>
3	Changes to SAT I Criterion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From AY2004, SAT I will be omitted as a mandatory criterion for both 'A'-level and polytechnic graduates.</li> <li>• For AY2004 and AY2005 admissions, applicants can submit their SAT I scores for consideration. NUS and NTU will shortlist them based on the higher of the two scores – with SAT I and without SAT I.</li> <li>• Faculties can have the flexibility to use applicants' SAT I scores as a component of the Faculty Score if they deem the test relevant for selection of candidates. Faculties that do so will make public any such requirement in advance.</li> </ul>
4	Mother Tongue Language (MTL) Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants have to meet minimum MTL proficiency requirement for admission i.e. D7 in MTL or a pass in MTL 'B'.</li> <li>• MTL will be omitted in the calculation of the</li> </ul>

S/N	Recommendation	Remarks
		<p>University Score from AY2004.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applicants who have done well in MTL can submit their MTL grades on top of the other subjects required, towards their University Score, which will be re-based.</li> </ul>
5	Independent Admission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From AY2004, each university can have full flexibility to determine the profile of up to 10% of its intake, using its own, independent criteria.</li> <li>Criteria should continue to be merit-based but at the discretion of the universities.</li> </ul>
6	Other Categories of Applicants	<p><u>For Applicants with Other Internationally Recognised Qualifications:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universities will continue the current practice of admitting applicants with other internationally recognised qualifications.</li> <li>For applicants with IB qualifications from local schools, the universities can work out the admission criteria when more details on the new JC curriculum and IB are available.</li> </ul> <p><u>For Mature Applicants:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universities will continue to admit mature students in a separate queue from school-leavers. The admission criteria for mature applicants can be decided by the faculties.</li> </ul>