Module bidding at NUS giving way to new allocation system

Students being consulted before system starts in August next year

Fabian Koh

Students from the National University of Singapore (NUS) will have a new system to register for modules, starting in August next year, that may not require them to bid for what they want to study in a semester.

In a circular sent to students on Tuesday seen by The Straits Times, NUS said it will be implementing a new system from the 2019/2020 academic year, to "better manage module selections based on your needs and preferences".

ST understands the university is considering replacing its bidding system with one in which students will be allocated the modules instead.

According to sources, the new system will see students submitting a list of up to 20 modules along with their preferred lecture and tutorial slots, in order of preference.

In allocating the modules, it will look at factors such as a student's faculty, declared major and minor, and year of study.

In the current Centralised Online Registration System, in place since 2003, students have to bid for modules over a few rounds using points in their student accounts.

Bid points are given at the start of every semester, and can also be attained through feedback exercises.

Students ballot for tutorial slots for each module, based on a list of ranked preferences. A town hall meeting with students was held

> **According to sources, the new system will see students submitting a list of up to 20 modules along with their preferred lecture and tutorial slots, in order of preference. In allocating the modules, it will look at factors such as a student's faculty, declared major and minor, year of study, and whether he is in a double degree or other programmes.**

by representatives from the NUS Student Union on the evening of May 28, ST understands.

In response to queries, Professor Bernard Tan, NUS senior vice-provost (undergraduate education), said that the university is consulting students to gather feedback on the proposed new system, which is expected to be piloted in August next year.

"The university regularly reviews our internal processes and systems to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivering education-related services to our students. We are considering a new system that can provide adequate module places to better meet students' interests and needs," said Prof Tan.

Business student Robin Lim, 23, who will be starting his third year

next month, said: "With everyone having to dump their points, you can expect to see inflation in the bids for popular modules."

Singapore Management University is the only other university using a module bidding system, called BOSS (Bidding Online SyStem). It is an "efficient system of allocation" that has "proven to be fair and effective" over the years, said an SMU spokesman.

Other local universities are already using the allocation method for students to register for classes.

At Singapore University of Technology and Design, first-year students are assigned modules based on their cohort class groupings. Those in their second year and above register for modules through a student portal during an enrolment period. Modules are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

At Nanyang Technological University, students register for courses at the start of each semester through the Student Automated Registration System. They will either get the course they want, or be placed on a waiting list. There is then a period where students can drop modules, or swop them based on the slots available.

fabkoh@sph.com.sg