

FAQ for the Notification of Grade Profiles and Course Places for Singapore-Cambridge A-level and Local Polytechnic Diploma Applicants for the Academic Year 2020/2021 University Admissions Exercise

1. What is the purpose of the Indicative Grade Profiles and how can it guide me in my application to the University?

The purpose of providing the Singapore-Cambridge GCE A-level Grades and Polytechnic Grade Point Average (GPA) is to assist applicants in assessing their competitiveness for the various undergraduate courses in NUS. Applicants should therefore use the relevant profile to guide them in their selection of course choices when they submit their application.

2. How are A-level graduates considered for admission?

Admission of Singapore-Cambridge GCE A-level graduates to the University is based on an applicant's overall A-Level academic performance comprising the grades of six A-level subjects as follows:

- Best three H2 and one H1 content-based subjects, with at least one content subject from a contrasting discipline
- General Paper (GP) or Knowledge and Inquiry (KI)
- Project Work (PW)

The best Mother Tongue Language (MTL) subject grade (e.g. H1 MTL or O-level higher MTL) will be considered only if the candidate provides the result for the University's consideration. The University will include the MTL subject grade in the admission consideration only if it raises the competitiveness of the candidate. More information can be found at <http://nus.edu.sg/oam/apply-to-nus/singapore-cambridge-gce-a-level/admissions-requirements>.

3. How are polytechnic graduates considered for admission?

From the AY 2020/2021 admissions exercise, admission of polytechnic graduates to the University will be based on their polytechnic academic results, i.e. Grade Point Average (GPA). Some NUS undergraduate courses will only consider polytechnic graduates with accredited diplomas. Please refer to the list of accredited diplomas at <http://nus.edu.sg/oam/apply-to-nus/polytechnic-diploma-from-singapore/subject-pre-requisites>.

4. How should A-level graduates interpret the information indicated in Table 1?

Table 1 shows the indicative grade profile of A-level graduates who were offered admission in Academic Year (AY) 2019/2020. The grades indicated at the 10th and 90th percentiles are for the three H2 and one H1 content-based subjects, in that order. The grade profile assumes the grade C for General Paper and Project Work. The 10th percentile grade profile refers to the grades attained by the last candidate of 90% of the successful applicants who were offered admission. For example, if the 10th percentile grade profile is ABC/A (three H2 / one H1), it means that bottom 10% of the applicants offered places scored below the grades of ABC/A. If the 90th percentile grade is AAA/B, it means that the top 10% of the successful applicants scored above AAA/B.

5. How should polytechnic graduates interpret the information indicated in Table 2?

Table 2 shows the polytechnic GPA of those who were offered admission in AY 2019/2020 at the 10th and 90th percentiles. The 10th percentile GPA refers to the GPA attained by the last candidate of 90% of the successful applicants who were offered admission. For example, if the 10th percentile GPA profile is 3.56, it means that bottom 10% of the applicants offered places attained GPA that is below 3.56. If the 90th percentile is 3.95, it means that the top 10% of the successful applicants attained GPA above 3.95.

6. Why is the grade profile of only the bottom 10% of applicants who were offered admission and not the last student made known?

The 10th percentile grade profile serves as an indicator of the cut-off point for each course. The actual cut-off point is not provided as there may be outliers in the intake for a given year, whereas a 10th percentile grade profile provides a more stable and accurate indication of overall quality of the students who were offered places.

7. Why do the grade profiles not take into account offers that were made under Aptitude Based (Discretionary) Admissions?

Since 2004, the University has introduced the Aptitude Based (Discretionary) Admissions framework where students can be offered admission based on criteria other than their academic grades. This would include, typically, special talents, leadership skills or an outstanding record of co-curricular activities and demonstrated passion/aptitude relevant to the course of study. The academic performance of students who are offered under this scheme will not be indicative of the academic requirements for admission and are, therefore, not included in the indicative grade profile of offers. From Academic Year 2017/2018, NUS may admit up to 15% of our annual intake under Aptitude Based (Discretionary) Admissions. While the admission process will remain largely the same, a higher proportion of places to consider students for Aptitude Based (Discretionary) Admissions will provide more room for the university to shortlist and admit students from more diverse background and talents

8. Why is there a variation in the A-level Grade Profile or Polytechnic GPA for the various courses?

As admission to the University is based on competition amongst applicants for that year, the applicants' choice of courses and available course places will determine the admission requirements. Hence, the representative grade profile for a more competitive or popular course may be much higher compared to another course.

9. What are the chances of me being admitted to a particular course if I have attained the A-level Grade Profiles or Polytechnic GPA as indicated in the tables?

The A-level Grade Profile and Polytechnic GPA are based on last year's admission requirement. Each year, the A-level Grade Profile and Polytechnic GPA may differ depending on the number and performance of applicants and the places available for the course. This means that meeting the previous year's (AY 2019/2020) A-level Grades or Polytechnic GPA are only indicative and does NOT guarantee admission to the course for following year (AY 2020/2021). Moreover, it should be noted that besides GPA, the Singapore-Cambridge O-level results of polytechnic applicants were also taken into consideration in the AY 2019/2020 admissions exercise.

10. What is the success rate of applicants to the various courses?

The success rate is not an accurate indicator as students are allowed to include as many as 5 or 8 choices in an application and only one offer is made. A successful applicant offered the first choice, for example, would not receive an offer for the subsequent choices he/she has applied for even if the grades are good enough, and it would be incorrect to interpret that the applicant had been unsuccessful for the subsequent choices.

11. I was not successful in my application to a course that requires an interview and/or test even though I have met the A-level Grade Profile or Polytechnic GPA as indicated in the Table. Why is this so?

Undergraduate courses such as Architecture, Dentistry, Industrial Design, Landscape Architecture, Law, Medicine, Music, Nursing and Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) require additional assessment such as interviews, auditions, selection tests and portfolios as part of the admission requirement. The processes for interviews and selection tests are done rigorously. For instance, an applicant selected for the Medicine interview will go through multiple panels of interviewers who will not be given the academic results of interviewees. Selection to these competitive courses will be based on academic merit and the applicant's performance at the interviews and tests.

Please refer to the subject pre-requisites at <http://nus.edu.sg/oam/apply-to-nus/singapore-cambridge-gce-a-level/subject-pre-requisites> and <http://nus.edu.sg/oam/apply-to-nus/polytechnic-diploma-from-singapore/subject-pre-requisites> for details.

12. I would like to appeal for admission as my application was unsuccessful. Should I appeal for the courses with A-level Grade Profile or Polytechnic GPA that is similar to my A-level grades or Polytechnic GPA?

The admission criteria for AY 2020/2021 may vary from the information set out in the Tables due to changes in applicants' preferences and number of vacancies from the last academic year. Applicants are advised to appeal for courses that require A-level grades and Polytechnic GPA that are close to the A-level grades or Polytechnic GPA they have obtained. They must also satisfy subject prerequisites for the courses they wish to be considered.

13. What is the breakdown in the course places for the faculties/schools since this will help me assess how competitive these courses are?

The University publishes course places to reflect the total number of enrolled freshmen students where the majority has not decided on their area of specialisation. Freshmen in some faculties/schools do not select their majors/specialisations in their first year of study and will read modules in many subjects so that they can decide on their area of specialisation after 2 or 3 semesters of study in the University. You may wish to visit <http://www.nus.edu.sg/registrar/statistics.html> which provides a summary of past years' undergraduate student enrolment statistics.

14. Why has the University not released the grade profile of other qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate (IB) and NUS High School diplomas?

Local applicants with IB and NUS High School qualifications are relatively fewer in number compared to those with the Singapore-Cambridge GCE A-levels and Singapore polytechnic diplomas. The sample size of applicants with these two qualifications is too small to arrive at a grade profile that is an accurate reflection of the academic requirements for the various undergraduate courses. The grade profile for these two groups of students are therefore not included.

15. How will students with the NUS High School or IB diploma applying for admissions be assessed by the University?

In the case of IB, the score in the IB diploma will be used to evaluate the students for admissions, while NUS High School diploma recipients will be evaluated on the strength of their graduation CAP and other academic achievements. Additional achievements that demonstrate exceptional ability in an area, exceptional achievements in research projects and various CCAs will also be taken into consideration in deciding the outcome. The exact requirements will vary depending on the specific course and is ultimately determined by the strength of the applicant pool each year, the relative performance of the students with other students taking similar examinations, and where available, the past performance of students who have matriculated with the same qualification.

Prepared by:
NUS Office of Admissions

18 December 2019

