

NUS' bonus admission points benefit more

1,050 applicants gain entry into first-choice course this year, compared with 700 last year

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The National University of Singapore's (NUS) move to award bonus admission points for first-choice courses has enabled more incoming students this year to win a place in their top-choice course.

Figures provided by NUS show that 1,050 applicants landed a place in a course they listed as their top choice this year because of the bonus point scheme. The university's intake for the year was 7,800.

Last year, when NUS started the scheme to award 1.25 bonus points for an applicant's first choice, about

700 students benefited.

The bonus points apply only to courses where entry is based purely on converting a student's grades into points, and not to courses such as medicine and law, where students are assessed on their aptitude and interests through interviews.

When announcing the move, NUS had said that analysis of admission data showed bonus points can make a difference in close cases.

It means, for example, that a student with 81 points who applies for communications as his first choice has an edge over another with 82 points who lists the same course as his second choice.

The university's initiative is in line with the Ministry of Education's move to expand aptitude-based admission into post-secondary institutions and universities.

Since 2017, NUS and the Nanyang Technological University have been able to admit up to 15 per cent of students under the Discretionary

A BETTER CHANCE

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MSR. RAJES, a polytechnic business diploma holder who hopes the bonus points scheme for putting a course down as her first choice would give her an edge to study economics and sociology at NUS next year.

Admission Scheme, in which applicants who fall slightly short of the entry score for a degree course can be considered based on their aptitude in the field, and talents in various others, including the arts and sports. Previously, they had set aside only 10 per cent of places for the scheme.

Professor Bernard Tan, senior vice-provost in charge of undergraduate education, said: "We want to support and encourage students who have worked hard and are passionate about a career in a particular field – be it business, computing or the social sciences."

He noted that students passionate about their choice of study tend to perform better. "The students are a lot more driven and motivated after being admitted into a programme that they are passionate about."

Prof Tan added that more students this year were shortlisted under the Discretionary Admission Scheme. Close to 5,000 students

were shortlisted this year, and in the end, 1,200 were admitted under the scheme. Last year, 3,700 were shortlisted.

Polytechnic business diploma holder R. Rajes, who plans to study economics and sociology at NUS next year, hopes that the bonus point will give her an edge.

"NUS is difficult to get into and economics is very popular, so I am hoping that putting it down as my first choice will give me a better chance to get a place. After being involved with volunteer projects, I am really interested in looking at the economics of poverty to understand the issue better."

She also welcomed the move by the universities to use broader criteria for admission than grades.

"I have been very involved in social enterprise activities in the last two years. It will be good if that can count for something," she said.

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