SAT no longer a must for entry to SMU

University does away with reasoning test for most applicants following feedback from JC and polytechnic students

By SANDRA DAVIE
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

STUDENTS applying for admission to the Singapore Management University will no longer need to sit for the American Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT), unless they are applying for its double degree programmes and scholarships.

The decision to scrap the reasoning test as an entry requirement was taken following feedback from junior college and polytechnic students.

They wanted the freedom to choose whether or not to take the SAT. So students can still submit their SAT scores for admission and it will give them an advantage when they are stacked up against others with similar grades.

SMU’s admissions director Alan Goh described the change as “two bites of the academic cherry”.

Other than the SAT scores, SMU uses examination results, co-curricular activities, personal essays and interviews to assess students for admission.

The university was the first to introduce the SAT scores as an admission tool when it opened in 2000.

The National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) followed suit last year, but ditched this year on the recommendation of a government committee.

The committee said it would overlap with the new A-level curriculum that begins in schools here in 2006.

This was also a key reason for SMU revising its SAT requirement, said Mr Goh, stressing that SMU is not doing away with the SAT completely.

He said: “At SMU, the SAT has not been an experiment, but is characteristic of our American-style education and an integral part of our holistic approach to the admissions process.”

He pointed out that despite the SAT requirement, the number of applications each year has increased.

“Places have been oversubscribed annually by eight to nine times. The SAT component to the SMU admissions criteria has not proven to be a barrier for our recruitment,” he said.

Students eyeing SMU welcomed the move.

Six junior college students interviewed said preparing for the SAT is time-consuming, now that NUS and NTU want to include project work as an admission requirement from next year.

National serviceman Terence Tan, 19, who has a place to study business in NTU, said he did not apply to SMU because of the SAT requirement.

Mr Tan, who scored three As, said: “I didn’t have time for the SAT when I was in the JC. I was considering sitting for it while doing my NS, just so that I can apply to SMU. I am glad I don’t have to now. I feel that my A level results are good enough.”

Attending SAT preparatory courses will be a thing of the past for students who want to apply to SMU as the university has done away with the reasoning test requirement after gathering feedback from junior college and polytechnic students. But SAT will still be needed for its double degree programmes and scholarships.