New entry criteria for universities from 2008

By Jane Ng

THE three universities have spelt out their admission criteria for 2008, in line with the introduction of the new A-level curriculum next year. Students will need two passes in the new H2 subjects — equivalent in rigour to A-level subjects — and to have attempted General Paper or Knowledge And Inquiry, a new interdisciplinary subject, in the same sitting.

Subjects in the new curriculum are divided into three levels of difficulty: H2 is equivalent to A level; H1 will cover half the content at H2 level; and H3 is the most advanced level — independent research or undergraduate modules at university, for instance.

As part of the change, the criteria for admission to some courses at the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) will be relaxed.

For example, A-level maths, now required for the computer engineering course in NUS,

MORE CHOICES

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NTU SPOKESMAN on the benefits of relaxed admission criteria

will be replaced by H1 mathematics.

The deputy director of NUS’ office of admissions, Mr R. Rajaram, said the new curriculum gave faculties a chance to re-examine their admissions criteria.

"There was no H1 equivalent before. Now they've looked at the curriculum, they see it's sufficient and not necessary to ask for a H2 prerequisite," he said.

An NTU spokesman added that relaxing the prerequisite provided more choices for students when it came to applying for university courses.

"This will allow students who have taken H1-level subjects to go for courses they previously may not have been eligible for," she said.

Singapore Management University has its own admission approach, based on a combination of academic results, co-curricular activities, Scholastic Assessment Test scores, interviews and personal essays.

Students who enter junior college next year will take three H2 and one H1 content-based subjects, at least one of which is a subject from a contrasting discipline.

This means an arts student must take a maths or science subject, and vice-versa.

They will also do General Paper, project work and mother tongue.

Under the revised system, students will study a minimum of seven subjects, two more than required now.

However, it does not mean a heavier workload because the subjects will be offered at varying levels of difficulty.