SINGAPORE : From 2007, Singapore's universities - NUS, NTU and SMU - will allow National Servicemen who have completed their full-time National Service to matriculate earlier.

They can do so during the various universities' special terms - otherwise they would start university in July-August of that year.

The move follows the Defence Ministry's decision in June 2004 to reduce the NS duration from 30 months to 24 months for those who enlist from December 2004.

The first batch of NSmen who served 24 months will be finishing their full-time service sometime at the end of this year.

Each university has two special terms some starting as early as mid-April.

Students may take a number of modules during these special terms that count towards graduation.

This means they may graduate one semester earlier should they wish to do so.

However, those enrolled in degree courses that are not on a modular curriculum structure like NUS Medicine, Dentistry and Law may only choose to take non-credit gaining enrichment courses or be involved in research projects.

These students will not be able to graduate earlier.

The universities are making no changes to their current academic calendar as well as current admissions process.

This means female students and non-NS liable male students who apply to be admitted in the same year cannot attend special term classes before July/August. - CNA/de