UNIVERSITIES’ FRESHMEN INTAKE HITS RECORD HIGH

They also say students are coming in with better A-level, poly results

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IT IS boom time for the three local universities. Not only did they receive a record number of applications — over 30,000 — but they have also given out a record number of places.

The National University of Singapore (NUS) will take in 6,400 freshmen — 400 more than last year — when the new academic year opens next month. Nanyang Technological University (NTU) will welcome 5,300 — 600 more than last year.

Singapore Management University (SMU) will have 1,300 students in its city campus, 200 more than last year.

All three universities said they had to raise their intakes to cater to the larger incoming A-level and polytechnic cohorts. The A-level cohort alone numbered 13,000, compared to last year’s 11,900.

All three universities also claimed to have pulled in students with better A-level and polytechnic results.

Although official figures are not available, the junior colleges had reported that the number of A-level students with three As and an A1 for General Paper had gone up.

NUS admissions dean Tan Thiam Soon said: “NUS believes strongly that all those deserving of a place in the university should have a place. We also made more places available across all faculties, so that students can follow their passion and interests in picking a course.”

The university, which has the largest intakes for the arts and social sciences and engineering faculties, said it had to raise the bar as applicants had better-quality passes this year.

For example, to enter the arts and social sciences faculty this year, students need at least one B and two Cs. Last year, they could have got in with three Cs.

Over at NTU, which has given places to 1,100 polytechnic graduates, the aerospace engineering course was popular. Places in the double-degree courses were also keenly fought for.

SMU has netted more males this year — 55 per cent, up from 35 per cent two years ago. The six-year-old university puts this improvement in sex ratio down to stepped-up marketing efforts among national servicemen.

Places given out under the discretionary admission scheme have grown in number at NUS and NTU, with both universities reporting an increase in students admitted under it.

The scheme, running since 2004, lets the two universities admit up to 10 per cent of their first-year students based on criteria other than just the entry examination results, such as their sporting talents, leadership skills or community service.

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