Students have GST to thank

Universities rule out fee increases – for now

TAN HUI LENG
huileng@mediacorp.com.sg

THE Goods and Service Tax (GST) may climb up by 2 percentage points, but students in local universities need not worry – for now.

The three major universities here have ruled out any fee increase for the upcoming academic year which starts in August.

In circulars sent to students, the National University of Singapore (NUS) and the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) said tuition fees will be maintained at the current rate.

At both universities, the fee freeze applies to all current and incoming students of government-subsidised programmes – both undergraduate and graduate.

With GST set to rise from 5 to 7 per cent, the Government had pledged last December to suspend school fee hikes.

Now, the universities have followed suit.

At the Singapore Management University (SMU), incoming undergraduate students will pay $7,500 for their first academic year. This will be revised to $8,300 for their subsequent years of study.

All three universities last announced fee hikes last year.

The SMU adopted the fixed fee model last year to assure students that total tuition fees are locked in and remain unchanged for the entire duration of study.

This means that full-time NSmen who are due to enter SMU this year will pay the rate they were promised when they enrolled earlier.

There are no changes to graduate students’ school fees at SMU.

In addition, the NUS will absorb the GST increase even “while the costs of running the university’s programmes will rise with general inflation and higher costs”. NTU will also absorb the increase.

The announcement brought relief to some students.

“It doesn’t really benefit me, but the freeze reduces the impact of the GST increase,” said NTU second-year communications studies student Scott Teng.

Both NUS and NTU will review their tuition fees in the next academic year.