Hope in hand, UNSW students meet local varsity officers

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THE dilemma weighs on his mind. He prefers his daughter to study here, but the chances appear slim. If she were to go to Sydney, Mr VC Venkatesan would have to accept the University of New South Wales’ offer by this week to ensure her visa will be ready for the new semester.

The university will then ask the Singapore permanent resident for proof of liquid assets worth two years of tuition fees, or close to $60,000. “If she doesn’t get into local universities, we’re in big trouble,” said Mr Venkatesan, who sought assurances yesterday from officers of local universities at UNSW Asia’s Tanglin campus.

But, as he and other parents and students found out, assurance is hard to come by. With a cohort of Dragonyear girls entering the universities this year, spaces are limited, said Mr Venkatesan.

At press time, the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) received over 65 applications, with a similar number for the National University of Singapore (NUS), while the Singapore Management University (SMU) had more than 30 at its UNSW Asia helpdesk alone. Applications close next Monday, and the universities will announce the list of successful candidates by the end of next month.

SMU senior admissions manager Zann Foo said: “The results of some are quite good, but this is not true for many.”

The universities are reviewing applications and appeals. Minimum criteria must be met, and decisions made on merit, they stressed. Most of the students TODAY spoke to were in the August intake and do not qualify for UNSW’s scholarship offer to its pioneer intake.

For many, it means they have to aim for NUS, NTU and SMU. “I hope they’ll give us special consideration. All we want is an education, and a proper one, at that,” said student Ernest Tan, 22.