

UNIVERSITY



HIGHER EDUCATION OFFICE

Guidance for Graduated Students

Greetings to our newly minted alumni!

Now that you have your A-level results, there will probably be questions you have about universities and courses. This guide may come in handy when you are making your decision.

Firstly, some words of counsel, when it comes to choices:

1. **Autonomy.** Don't pick courses because they are popular or prestigious, or because others recommend them: pick courses because you decided so. Take ownership for your choices.
2. **Interest and aptitude.** People who excel are those whose interests and aptitude can sustain the length and rigour of the course. It's no fun if you have to keep straining yourself academically—interest alone cannot sustain excellence.
3. **Check assumptions.** Before you select a course, it is a good idea to actually look at the modules you will be studying, particularly if you are selecting fields you have little experience in: are you drawn towards them?
4. **Balance between realism and idealism.** Ask yourself: What is realistically possible, with your achieved grades? Think positively and openly – the best choices lie at the intersection of interest with reality.
5. **Openness of mind.** Sometimes, the offers that come may not be your first choice. When facing rejection, keep an open mind, and give value to that which values you. The best thing you can do for yourself is to keep moving forward and excel in the field which chooses you!

Local universities

- 1) All applications to local universities are done **online**, via their individual admissions portals. You will find the following links useful:
 - NUS: <http://www.nus.edu.sg/oam/apply-to-nus/singapore-cambridge-gce-a-level/admissions-requirements>
 - NTU: <https://admissions.ntu.edu.sg/UndergraduateAdmissions/Pages/ALevel.aspx>
 - SMU: <https://admissions.smu.edu.sg/admissions/singapore-cambridge-gce-a-level>
 - SUTD: <https://www.sutd.edu.sg/Admissions/Undergraduate/Application>
 - SUSS: <https://www.suss.edu.sg/full-time-undergraduate/how-to-apply>
 - SIT: <https://www.singaporetech.edu.sg/applying-to-SIT/admissions-overview>
- 2) There is a **deadline** for application. This would be mid to late Mar 2020. Check the respective universities' websites directly for exact details.
- 3) When listing down priority of choices, your rank order matters: admission is primarily merit-based. Two things are important here: the **Indicative Grade Profile (IGP)** and your **University Admission Score (UAS)**.

Check out the **IGP** of your courses of interest—available on the respective universities' websites—this indicates the representative grades of the 10th and 90th percentiles who gained entry in the previous year. What is reflected is **3 H2 + 1 H1 content subjects**.

If you take 4 H2s thus, the lowest of your H2s is converted into a H1 score. If you take 3 H2s and 1H1, all the scores are directly taken into account.

The IGP assumption is that PW and GP are C grades. E.g., a major that quotes 90th percentile as "AAB/B" means that at the 90th percentile of admission, students achieved H2 subject grades of A, A, B and H1 content subject B. The assumption is that PW and GP are C grades.

To calculate actual UAS: Take the total score of 3 H2s + 1 H1 content subject + GP + PW. This means your maximum score possible is 3x20 (H2s) + 3x10 (1H1 + GP + PW) for a total of **90**.

The following table shows the scores:

Score	H2	H1
A	20	10
B	17.5	8.75
C	15	7.5
D	12.5	6.25
E	10	5
S	5	2.5
U	0	0

Example: If a student scores the following: GP A, PW B, 4H2s = AABB, the score would be:

- 3H2s (A, A, B) = $20 + 20 + 17.5 = 57.5$
- Lowest H2 converted to H1 (B) = 8.75
- GP (A) + PW (B) = $10 + 8.75 = 18.75$
- **Total UAS = $57.5 + 8.75 + 18.75 = 85$.**

This is equivalent to a published UAS of AAA/A, where the assumption is that GP/PW are C grades. (IMPORTANT: there could be specific subject/grade requirements for different faculties. Check the University/Department websites for updates. The yearly profile may also change, depending on the year's applications).

Our counsel: When choosing your course options, you will want to be realistic, by ensuring that your UAS is at least close to, or at, the IGP of your desired courses, at the minimum 10th percentile. The best situation would be where both your UAS and grades are at/beyond the published IGP.

4) **Personal statements:** reflect on the best sides of yourself, and highlight how and why you are a match for the course of study. Don't be afraid to advocate for yourself: focus on your strengths and who you are, not what you are not. Talk about academic as well as soft skills, which are relevant to the field of choice. Use your activities (both within and without school) wisely: do not just list achievements, but reflect on what you learnt in the process. Keep it concise. For those of you applying to Medicine, you can refer to our other guide, *Approaching the Personal Statement for Medicine*, for more details.

5) **Yale-NUS.** Apply directly via the Yale-NUS portal (not Common App!): <https://apply.yale-nus.edu.sg/apply/>.

Note that you require two subject teacher recommendations. You should approach your teachers **early and personally**, before triggering them a ping on the Yale-NUS portal.

Important: Ping your **Civics Tutor** for the Counselor Recommendation and Secondary School Report.

6) **For more FAQs**, you may find the following links to the respective universities' detailed responses useful:

- NUS: <https://www.askadmissions.nus.edu.sg/>
- NTU: <https://askntu.ntu.edu.sg/home/ntu/ExploreFaq.aspx>
- SMU: <https://admissions.smu.edu.sg/faqs/admissions-and-applications>
- SUTD: <https://www.sutd.edu.sg/Admissions/Undergraduate/FAQs>
- SIT: <https://www.singaporetech.edu.sg/applying-to-SIT/faqs>
- SUSS: <https://www.suss.edu.sg/about-suss/resources/faqs#/path/Full-time-Undergraduate/>

7) **Discretionary/apptitude-based admissions.** Discretionary admissions are applied for on the basis of exceptional talent/ability. Some examples which the universities cite: winning an international Olympiad medal, National Representative in arts/sports, having key leadership positions in organisations outside of school. Refer to the relevant FAQs in the links above for more details. You do not need to apply under discretionary admissions if your UAS qualifies you for the course.

When applying under discretionary admissions, choose what to reflect wisely. Avoid spamming: the universities limit you to a range of 3-10 activities. Thus, highlight your most exceptional achievements. I.e., activities for which you have won awards, show sustained involvement in, and where you may hold key positions/be a key contributor.

When it comes to supporting documents, it is a good idea to give only what is required: Advocate for yourself: your certificates, awards and personal statement should speak for your exceptionalism. You should only ask for a reference if it is a stated requirement.

Overseas Universities (especially for NS boys)

- 1) You are required to **follow all our INTERNAL timelines and procedures for application.** You apply as a student of RI. Keep in touch with us at: <http://www.ri.edu.sg/school-life/higher-education-office>.
- 2) There is no rush for application currently, as the previous cycle has not ended. We will update the timelines for the 2020/2021 cycle by end May, once the new dates are out. Keep a lookout then.
- 3) You should not be creating any UK/US accounts at the moment. It will not be valid for the new cycle.
- 4) **When to come in:** if you are considering overseas applications, you will want to try to come in for a first counselling session by about April/May, so that we can work with you on a proper and timely application strategy. NS boys: it is alright if you cannot come in during the next few months due to

BMT—try to come in after. You will have more than sufficient time if you can come in for your first appointment by July. 😊

- 5) **Approaching your tutors for recommendations: Keep alert on timelines from July onwards.** A proper application takes months of effort to build, and also requires the aid of your teachers and our office. Everyone needs time to help you, so be considerate when you approach your tutors. **Do so early (i.e., between mid-Jul to early-Oct).** When exactly depends on what you are applying for. You can refer to our updated timeline by end May. Do **not** leave things to the last minute.

All the best in your applications!

Your teacher-counsellors,

Higher Education Office