

Local universities increase fees, citing rising operating costs

By CALVIN YANG

ALL six local universities have raised their tuition fees for the new academic year, largely to pay for rising operating costs, including that of creating online learning systems, they said.

Since 2010, university fees have gone up every year.

The fee hikes for local undergraduates this year range from 0.6 per cent to 8 per cent – similar to previous years.

But for most undergraduate courses, the increase is about 1 to 1.5 per cent for the new intake, the Ministry of Education said.

As with previous hikes, the increase will be bigger for permanent residents and foreigners than for citizens.

At SIM University (UniSIM),

fees are based on modules taken in a particular year and fee hikes can affect all students. The remaining five universities use a cohort-based fee model, so only new students will be affected.

Tuition fees for male students who applied for places before national service will be pegged to their date of offer acceptance.

At the National University of Singapore (NUS), fees for most courses will rise by about 1.5 per cent for local undergraduates, but will jump by about 5 to 8 per cent for a handful of courses – dentistry, medicine, law and music.

For instance, fresh law students can expect to pay about \$12,400 a year – 6.4 per cent, or \$750, more than the previous fee of \$11,650, while new music undergraduates will pay \$11,950 a year – 8 per cent, or \$900, more than

the previous fee of \$11,050.

Nursing is the only NUS course with no fee increase this year.

Professor Tan Eng Chye, its deputy president of academic affairs and provost, said the cost varies across different degree programmes, depending on the faculty, equipment and operating costs, among other things.

The fee hike at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is about 1.3 per cent for Singaporeans in most courses. Its biggest rise of 3.8 per cent, or \$1,200 a year, is for medicine.

Professor Kam Chan Hin, its senior associate provost of undergraduate education, said the revised fee will partially defray inflationary costs and costs of improving students' learning experience. This includes implementing "flipped classrooms" where stu-

dents learn content online outside of the classroom and then discuss questions in class.

Freshmen at UniSIM can expect to pay about 2 per cent more for an entire degree course.

The increase was due to higher operating costs, particularly the manpower cost of holding smaller seminar-style classes, and the development cost of its e-learning infrastructure, it said.

All six institutions said that financial help – scholarships, bursaries and loans – is available.

Former Anderson Junior College student Won Jia Min, 19, who plans to study history at NUS or NTU this year, said: "Even though the fees have risen, I will still apply. Singapore universities are reputable and to study at a local university is a privilege."

✉ calyang@sph.com.sg

Fees will go up by...

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

■ **Fee hike for most courses:**

About 1.5 per cent

■ **Bigger fee hikes:** About 5 per cent, or \$1,200, for dentistry and medicine; 6.4 per cent, or \$750, for law; and 8 per cent, or \$900, for music

NANYANG TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

■ **Fee hike for most courses:**

About 1.3 per cent

■ **Bigger fee hike:** About 3.8 per cent, or \$1,200, for medicine

SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

■ **Fee hike for most courses:**

About 1 per cent, or \$100

SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND DESIGN

■ **Fee hike for most courses:**

About 2.2 per cent, or \$250

SINGAPORE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

■ **Fee hike for most courses:**

About 1 per cent

■ **Biggest fee hike:** About 3.4 per cent, or \$400, for culinary arts management

SIM UNIVERSITY

■ **Fee hike for most courses:**

About 2 per cent

Note: Fees are for Singaporean undergraduates each year.