

SIT and SUSS draw growing number of applications

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Polytechnic graduate Bernice Teo, 19, is waiting to hear if she has scored a place this year to study accountancy at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT).

It will be tough going, though.

SIT has received 14,000 applications, 1,000 more than last year, for 2,600 places in 41 degree courses.

About 6,000 will be shortlisted for the aptitude-based admission process that SIT uses.

There was more demand for courses where there are good job prospects, for example, computing,

allied health fields, including nursing, and accountancy.

Miss Teo said: "I am impressed that a high number of SIT graduates ended up getting a place in the firms they interned with. I also like the fact that the internship is a long one – up to a year, so you are more likely to do real work."

And possibly secure a job, too.

SIT, which requires its students to take up eight-month to year-long internships, reported recently that of its first batch of 82 accountancy students who went on internships, 69 received job offers upon graduation at the end of last year.

These applied, practice-based degrees are gaining bandwidth with young Singaporeans, going by the

record number of applications to SIT and the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), two universities which require their students to go on internships.

Like SIT, SUSS was oversubscribed, with 4,900 applications for 580 places in eight degree courses, including its early childhood education and business analytics courses.

Nearly 80 per cent of SIT's applicants were polytechnic diploma holders, while 17 per cent were A-level applicants keen on the allied health, accountancy and computing courses. SUSS said 62 per cent of its applications came from polytechnic students.

SIT director of admissions Kelly Koh said employability is one big

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factor for the students' choices.

"With the economic slowdown, school leavers want to go into fields where there will be good job prospects," he said, adding that SIT was making a name for itself for producing best-in-class specialists.

To assess if a student has aptitude for a particular field, it uses interviews and portfolio assessments to look for attributes and qualities beyond academic performance.

Students go through two interviews, and employers are invited to sit on the interview panel to select those for courses such as the hospitality degree programme.

Shortlisted applicants for the health science courses such as nursing and occupational therapy will be

put through multiple mini-interviews. This is similar to the system used by medical schools at the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University.

SUSS provost Tsui Kai Chong said the university's new business analytics course had over 800 applicants for 40 places. "Analytics is a growth sector and there is a clear shortage of professionals in the field."

A-level holder Christopher Tan, 22, who is hoping to study business analytics at SUSS or computing at NUS, said: "My brother, who graduated last year with a business degree, is still looking for a permanent job, so for me, it was a reality check."

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