

EDUCATION

Passion is key to early poly entry, say students

Three teens who enrolled in courses via Early Admission Exercise offer some useful advice

Sean Lim

Goh Xue Er was initially demoralised by her grandparents' reaction to her decision to study veterinary technology at a polytechnic.

Her grandparents asked her why she did not go to junior college after she got her O-level results last year and told her that being a doctor was better, as a vet has no future.

But her mother was supportive of her passion in taking care of animals and said: "Do what you want."

Xue Er, 17, chose to study for a diploma in veterinary technology at Temasek Polytechnic (TP) via the Early Admission Exercise (EAE).

The EAE, introduced last year, allows conditional admission to poly courses based on students' abilities and interests, prior to the O-level or ITE final exams.

Around 3,000 students matriculated at the polytechnics in the first EAE intake.

DO YOUR RESEARCH

Know what you are getting yourself into and go for it.



MELIA HO, who did Early Admission Exercise (EAE) research on Temasek Polytechnic and is now a student there, sharing a piece of advice with potential EAE students.



Goh Xue Er chose to study for a diploma in veterinary technology at Temasek Polytechnic. She has loved animals since she was a toddler. She decided to apply for the diploma course via the Early Admission Exercise as a back-up plan, just in case her O-level results did not make the mark. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SOH SANDY ANNE

Xue Er has loved animals since she was a toddler. About three years ago, her mother introduced her to horse riding, which sparked a passion for horses.

Since then, she would go riding with her mother during weekends.

It was this love for animals that motivated her to enrol in the veterinary technology course, which teaches her how to care for and treat animals, among other things.

Xue Er, who has two dogs, said: "I feel spiritually connected with them (animals)."

When she was introduced to the EAE through a talk last year, she was unsure if she should try. But she decided to do so as a back-up plan, just in case her O-level results did not make the mark.

Xue Er said she "did not want to do hardcore studying" in junior college and preferred more hands-on learning in a polytechnic.

She advised students applying for EAE: "Make sure you have enough passion. The interviewers will know if you don't."



Despite being Singapore's youngest mobile application trainer, Reagan Goh was not complacent about getting a spot in Nanyang Polytechnic's business informatics course via the Early Admission Exercise. ST PHOTO: CHEW SENG KIM

LIMITED ONLY BY IMAGINATION, NOT BY SKILLS

He may be Singapore's youngest mobile app trainer, but 18-year-old Reagan Goh was not complacent when it came to the EAE.

"I thought I wouldn't get it because there is a lot of competition out there," he said.

Since then, he has been working on his passion for information technology at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP), where he accepted an offer via the EAE last year for a diploma course in business informatics.

His passion was ignited by an application-creation course he attended when he was 12 years old. In 2012, he founded AppElit, which specialises in coaching app development.

He said only NYP offers a hybrid course in IT and business, which is his interest. "NYP is well known for its established partnership with multinational corporations and it will be easier for me to get an internship for my final year."

He is not worried about talk that it is harder to enter a local university from a poly. He was offered a Diploma-Plus programme by NYP, which gives him a higher chance to enter university, he said.

"The skills I learnt in poly can be applied to any workplace along the way," he added.

Reagan advised potential EAE students to attend open houses, ask questions and "see what they really want in life".

STAY TRUE TO YOURSELF

A baking course in Secondary 3 stirred Melia Ho's passion for food.

Her parents had taken her to ABC Cooking Studio at Ngee Ann City where she learnt to bake strawberry short cake and mille crepe cake.



Melia Ho has a passion for food and applied for Temasek Polytechnic's diploma in applied food science and nutrition via the Early Admission Exercise. PHOTO: COURTESY OF MELIA HO

It was the first time Melia, 17, took such a class, even though she has been helping out in the kitchen at home since she was in Primary 5.

She found out during her EAE research that TP offers a diploma in applied food science and nutrition and she applied for it.

The TP student said: "I have always been amazed by how different ingredients can interact with each other."

Her passion for food science was so strong, she wanted to get started

as soon as possible. "I'm very sure this is what I want to do and I want to study something I'm passionate about," she said, adding that a JC route would be slower as she would have to "go through the whole study cycle".

Melia said her parents "encouraged me to do my best in it". Her advice for potential EAE students? "Know what you are getting yourself into and go for it."

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What to consider when applying via the Early Admission Exercise

Rather than just looking at a course or a polytechnic, a student should start with a cluster of courses matching his interests, said Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) registrar Thambyrajah T.

He also advised Early Admission Exercise (EAE) applicants to look at the curriculum and modules offered in the courses.

One way to do this, for example,

is to visit the NYP EAE centre, where parents and their children can explore the courses available.

There are also education and career guidance counsellors who can help students identify their interests and possible career paths, so that they can make an informed decision.

Mr Thambyrajah said students should also take into considera-

tion their different learning styles when applying via the EAE.

"Some enjoy applied learning and real-world exposure, thus they would benefit from our curriculum and working experience with companies. Some students are certain of their passion while others are less so."

Sean Lim