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Singapore's new University of the Arts

Who can apply? What are their career prospects?

Applications for the first intake to the university, formed by an alliance between Nafa and Lasalle, will close on March 31



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The first university to focus on the arts in Singapore will take in its inaugural batch of students in August.

Applications for the University of the Arts (UAS) opened on Oct 2, 2023, and will close on March 31.

Plans for the new university were first announced in 2021 by then Education Minister Lawrence Wong, who said the UAS will be formed by an alliance between the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (Nafa) and Lasalle College of the Arts.

UAS will validate, confer and award the degree programmes through Nafa and Lasalle, in fine arts, design, media arts and the performing arts.

Both institutions will continue to offer their own programmes.

UAS, a private university supported by the Government, will operate out of the National Design Centre in Middle Road, as well as the existing campuses of Nafa and Lasalle.

It was reported previously that the university is expecting an intake of more than 700 students.

DO YOU NEED A PORTFOLIO OR TO HAVE TAKEN ART AT O LEVELS TO APPLY TO UAS?

Admission to UAS is based on the criteria set by Lasalle and Nafa.

There is no prerequisite for an applicant to have taken O-level art or to have previous formal education in art, said a UAS spokesperson.

"Students are assessed on their potential in artistic talent and creativity through either a submission of their portfolio and statement of intent, or audition, depending on their discipline and degree programme," she added.

Applicants with a relevant diploma from Nafa, Lasalle or a recognised institution may be considered for direct entry into the second year of a bachelor's degree programme.

Students applying for undergraduate programmes at Lasalle and Nafa will need to meet minimum entry qualifications. These include passing at least two A-level subjects at H2 level and General Paper, a local polytechnic diploma, an International Baccalaureate diploma or other relevant equivalent qualifications.

Other requirements will vary by programme.

For instance, performing arts programmes, such as music,



Students of Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts' Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Performance Making programme presenting their original works at the University of the Arts' open house. ST PHOTO: SHINTARO TAY



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Students of Lasalle's Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Musical Theatre programme performing a musical theatre piece during the University of the Arts' open house. PHOTO: UNIVERSITY OF THE ARTS

dance and acting, will require an audition, while visual art programmes, such as fine arts or animation art, will require portfolios. Some courses may include a requirement for English-language proficiency.

Applicants can go to the websites of Lasalle and Nafa for specific entry requirements for each programme.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE CAREERS AFTER A STUDENT GRADUATES?

UAS will offer 27 degree programmes through Lasalle and

Nafa, including those set to drive new areas in the creative economy.

The UAS spokesperson said there are three potential career pathways for graduates.

They could work as full-time staff in traditional creative sectors, such as in museums, galleries or theatre groups. They could also work as freelancers and learn how to start their own businesses. Or, they could become independent artists, including fine artists and performing artists.

"The value of higher arts education and the skills it imparts are now widely appreciated beyond

the arts and cultural sector. Every industry needs creative thinking and good design," said the UAS spokesperson, adding that over the years, arts graduates have done well in sectors such as healthcare, transportation, consulting and financial services.

"The recent Budget announcement, with greater investment and support in the arts, will help to drive transformation efforts in the arts sector and make the arts more accessible to all Singaporeans, including mid-career workers who wish to pursue an education in arts institutions," she added.

HOW WILL MY CHILD BE PREPARED FOR FUTURE WORK IN THE ARTS INDUSTRY?

All students will go through career skills and industry-based learning modules as part of the UAS common curriculum.

The career skills module will provide students with the soft and hard skills to help them search for internships and jobs. Students will also take classes in personal branding and effective communication.

The industry-based learning module offers real-world experi-

ence through internships and projects, so that students can apply the skills learnt in a practical setting and make industry connections for their future careers.

Undergraduates will be guided to source for their own internships.

Both Nafa and Lasalle have previously also sent their students on internships with a range of companies in the creative sector, as well as companies from technology and other non-arts sectors which have creative roles for designers.

In addition, UAS will have a team of career services professionals to prepare students to pursue each pathway through career electives and workshops.

Professor Kwok Kian Woon, vice-chancellor of UAS, said its students should cultivate a "willingness and nimbleness to engage with the evolving world over a lifetime, making sense of past conditions, responding to present-day complexities and imagining plausible futures".

The UAS spokesperson said there will be financial support, scholarships and bursaries as the university aims to "nurture a dynamic network of arts educators, practitioners and researchers from diverse backgrounds".

Existing Nafa and Lasalle scholarships, merit awards and bursaries are also open to UAS students. These are awarded based on academic results and a track record of achievements in related arts and creative industries.

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