

Polytechnic Foundation Programme (PFP) Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions about the PFP

1. Will the GCE O-Level examination become irrelevant now that eligible Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students may opt for the PFP instead?

The GCE O-Level examination continues to be the key school-leaving national examination for students completing 10 to 11 years of general education. Students who have completed their GCE O-Level examinations may be eligible to progress on to a variety of different post-secondary options. The GCE O-Level examination therefore provides greater flexibility of choice for students.

The PFP, on the other hand, is a competitive one-year through-train programme to polytechnic that is offered as an alternative to the Secondary 5 year. The PFP offers a practice-oriented curriculum taught by polytechnic lecturers to better prepare polytechnic-bound Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students for entry into the relevant polytechnic diploma courses.

2. Will the current syllabus for Sec 4N(A) students be affected?

The current Sec 4N(A) syllabus will remain unchanged.

3. Is the PFP available at all the polytechnics? What courses are being offered?

All five polytechnics offer the PFP. More than 80% of polytechnic diploma courses are offered under the PFP. For the full list of available courses, please refer to https://pfp.polytechnic.edu.sg/PFP/pfp_courses.html.

4. How should I decide whether the PFP is suitable for me?

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students should first think about whether they are suited for, and would like to pursue applied learning in the form of a polytechnic education. Students are then advised to identify and select courses based on their interests, aptitudes, and future career plans. Students are also encouraged to contact the polytechnics to obtain more information on the courses offered, and to discuss their options with their teachers, parents, and seniors.

Alternatively, students should also consider other viable pathways available to them, such as the Secondary 5 route, or available programmes in the Institute of Technical Education (ITE), including the Direct-Entry-Scheme to Polytechnic Programme (DPP).

5. Are there any awards that I can apply for as a PFP student?

Each polytechnic offers scholarships to deserving students entering the PFP. For more information, please refer to the websites of the respective polytechnics.

Eligibility

6. Who can apply for the PFP?

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who have sat for their GCE N-Level 2020 as a school candidate, and have met both the following requirements are eligible to apply:

- Obtained an ELMAB3 aggregate not exceeding **12** points at the GCE N-Level examination, prior to deducting any CCA bonus points; **and**
- Met the following subject-specific requirements¹:

For Courses featured in <u>Group 1</u>	Minimum Required Grades
English Language Syllabus A	3
Mathematics (Syllabus A / Additional)	3
One of the following relevant subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Science (Physics, Chemistry)Science (Physics, Biology)Science (Chemistry, Biology)Food and NutritionDesign and Technology	3
Any two other subjects excluding CCA	3

For Courses featured in <u>Group 2</u>	Minimum Required Grades
English Language Syllabus A	2
Mathematics (Syllabus A / Additional)	3
One of the following relevant subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Principles of AccountsLiterature in EnglishHistoryHumanities (Social Studies, Geography)Humanities (Social Studies, History)Humanities (Social Studies, Literature in English)GeographyArt	3
Any two other subjects excluding CCA	3

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who have sat for GCE O-Level examination subjects in 2020 (and those who sat for GCE O-Level Mother Tongue in 2019) may use the following grade conversion table for computation of their ELMAB3 aggregates:

GCE O-Level Grade	Converted Grade
A1-B3	1
B4-C6	2
D7	3

The O-Level grades of E8 and 9 will not be considered for computation of the ELMAB3 aggregate score. If a student has taken the same subject at both the GCE N- and GCE

¹ For the list of polytechnic diploma courses in Group 1 and Group 2, please refer to https://pfp.polytechnic.edu.sg/PFP/pfp_courses.html

O-Level examinations, only the better grade will be computed towards his/her ELMAB3 aggregate to determine PFP eligibility.

Students are also advised that eligibility to apply for the PFP does not guarantee placement in a PFP course. Placement is subject to the availability of vacancies and in open competition with other eligible applicants based on merit.

7. Are Normal (Technical) students able to apply for the PFP?

No. Secondary 4 Normal (Technical) students will continue to benefit from other available progression pathways such as the two- or three-year *Nitec* courses at ITE that provide a strong skills-based foundation in preparation for employment.

8. Are Secondary 4 Express and Secondary 5 students able to apply for the PFP?

No. These students should use their GCE O-Level results to apply directly to polytechnic diploma courses at the Year 1 level via the Joint Admissions Exercise (JAE) or Direct Admissions Exercise (DAE) in January 2021.

9. Are current Secondary 5 students able to apply for the PFP using their results in their Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) year?

No. Students who are currently in Secondary 5 are encouraged to complete their secondary education and sit for the GCE O-Level examinations. They may subsequently apply to courses in the polytechnics and ITE upon completion of their GCE O-Level examinations at the end of their Secondary 5 year.

10. If a student does not do well for his/her GCE O-Level examination upon completion of Secondary 4 Express or Secondary 5, can he/she still apply for the PFP?

No. The PFP is designed to provide one year of foundational learning to prepare well-performing Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students for entry into polytechnic diploma courses, in lieu of Secondary 5. Secondary 4 Express and Secondary 5 students who do not qualify for entry to the polytechnics can explore other options, such as retaking their GCE O-Level examinations, applying for admission to a relevant ITE course, etc. Apart from preparing them for a career relevant to their training, students may also use their ITE certification to apply for admission to polytechnic if they subsequently meet eligibility requirements.

11. Are Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) through-train students who had completely bypassed the GCE N-Levels eligible for the PFP?

No. Students must have sat for the GCE N-Level examinations in 2020 to be eligible for the PFP.

12. Are candidates from non-MOE schools able to apply for the PFP?

The PFP is designed primarily for eligible Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students from MOE secondary schools. However, well-performing students from Pathlight School, Prison School, and the Singapore Sports School who meet the eligibility criteria may apply for the PFP to continue their education journey in our polytechnics.

Application Process

13. How may a student apply for the PFP?

The PFP admissions exercise will commence in January 2021 following the release of the GCE O-Level examination results. Eligible Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students will receive a copy of 'Form P', which includes:

- i. Students' computed raw ELMAB3 aggregate scores (excluding CCA points);
- ii. The list of PFP courses that students are eligible to apply for; and
- iii. A unique PIN code, which students should use to create their application accounts on the PFP portal at https://pfp.polytechnic.edu.sg/PFP/pfp_application.html.

All Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who intend to apply for the PFP should report for Secondary 5 on 4 January 2021, even if they have met the PFP eligibility criteria based on their GCE N-Level results received in December 2020. Eligible students will subsequently be able to submit their applications for the PFP upon release of the GCE O-Level results. If their applications are successful, they will be required to attend classes up till the last Friday of January. The polytechnics will contact PFP-bound students regarding enrolment and matriculation in February / March 2021.

14. How many course choices do students have?

Eligible Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students are allowed to submit up to five PFP course choices in their application. Students are strongly encouraged to consider their course choices carefully together with their parents and teachers and make decisions according to their interests and aptitudes. As admission to PFP courses may be highly competitive, there is no guarantee that students will be offered a place in a course within their 5 choices. Students may then be offered a place in another PFP course with remaining vacancies.

15. Does a student who is confident of getting into the PFP with his/her ELMAB3 aggregate still have to report for Secondary 5 in January?

Being eligible to apply for the PFP does not guarantee placement into a PFP course. As PFP application results are only released in late January, it is important for Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students to continue with Secondary 5 and not miss the first month of the Secondary 5 curriculum, which prepares students for the GCE O-Level examination.

16. Can students leave school immediately after accepting a PFP offer?

No. All PFP-bound students will be required to attend classes up till the last Friday of January.

17. Will students be required to pay school fees for January?

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who accept a PFP offer and eventually enrol in the PFP will not be required to pay school fees for January.

18. Will students have to buy Secondary 5 textbooks and other materials?

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who meet the PFP eligibility criteria and intend to apply for the PFP should consult their schools directly on the textbooks and materials they need to purchase.

19. What should students who are interested in both PFP and the Direct-Entry-Scheme to Polytechnic Programme (DPP) do, given that DPP application is in December and PFP application is in January?

Before applying for the PFP and/or the DPP, students are encouraged to consider carefully their interests and strengths, as well as the courses offered under both programmes.

For more information on the PFP and DPP, as well as the courses offered, students may refer to the PFP website (<https://pfp.polytechnic.edu.sg/PFP/index.html>) or the DPP website (<https://www.ite.edu.sg/admissions/full-time-courses/higher-nitec/direct-entry-scheme-to-polytechnic-programme>). One option for Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who are interested in both the PFP and DPP is to first progress to Secondary 5 and then apply for both the PFP and DPP upon release of the GCE O-Level examination results in January.

20. Can students apply for both the PFP and DPP at the same time?

Yes. However, if the student is offered a place in both the PFP and DPP, he/she may only accept one course offer. Students who accept both offers will have both offers voided.

If the student have already accepted his/her DPP offer, his/her secondary school will contact him/her if he/she is eligible for PFP and the collection of the PFP eligibility form (Form P), after the release of the GCE O-Level results. If the student decides to apply for and accepts his/her PFP offer in January, he/she will need to apply for withdrawal from the DPP course. Applicant can apply for refund of his/her DPP enrolment fees, subject to ITE's approval.

21. Can students appeal for a different course in the PFP if they do not like the one offered to them?

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who have been offered a place in the PFP may submit an appeal for a change of course through the PFP portal upon the release of the PFP posting results. Alternatively, they may reject their PFP offers and continue with Secondary 5.

Students who have submitted their appeals through the PFP portal will be able to check their results on the same portal. **Students who are successful in their appeal** will have three working days to accept or reject their new PFP offer, following which the offer will be voided. They will **not** be able to reinstate their original PFP offer (i.e. the original PFP offer will be void regardless of whether the student accepts the new PFP offer). If the appeal is unsuccessful, he/she has the option of accepting the original PFP offer or rejecting the offer and continuing with Secondary 5.

22. Why can't all PFP-eligible students be offered a course of their choice?

Admissions to PFP courses are highly competitive and based on merit. Students may speak to the course counsellors at the respective polytechnics during the PFP application and acceptance period in January to learn more about the various PFP courses. Students can also choose not to accept PFP offers that were not among their choices. These students can instead continue with Secondary 5, which allows them the option of re-applying for polytechnic admission for a course of their choice upon completion of their GCE O-Level examinations.

23. Are CCA grades considered for admission to the PFP?

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students are only eligible for the PFP if their raw ELMAB3 aggregates (excluding CCA Bonus Points) are less than or equal to **12** points.

After determining students' eligibility for the PFP based on their raw ELMAB3 aggregates, CCA bonus points are taken into consideration for posting to a PFP course, which is carried out by merit in open competition against other applicants. CCA bonus points for the PFP are computed as follows:

CCA attainment Excellent: 2 bonus points
CCA attainment Good: 1 bonus point

Example:

Subjects	Grades
English	2
Mathematics	2
Science	2
Humanities (Social Studies, Geography)	2
Mother Tongue	2
CCA	Excellent

Raw ELMAB3 = 10

Net ELMAB3 = 10 - 2 (CCA bonus points) = 8

24. Can students combine their GCE N-Level results from different years for ELMAB3 aggregate computation?

No. The computation of ELMAB3 aggregate will only include the results from the GCE N- or GCE O-Level examinations in the academic year that immediately precedes the students' applications. The only exception is for Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students who have sat for their GCE O-Level Mother Tongue (MT) examinations in the **immediate preceding year i.e. during their Secondary 3 Normal (Academic) year**. These students are allowed to use the better of their GCE N-Level or GCE O-Level MT results (including their O-Level MT results in Secondary 3 in the preceding year) in the computation of their ELMAB3 aggregates.

25. Are there courses that are suitable for students with specific learning needs?

Secondary 4 Normal (Academic) students with special educational needs are advised to consult the polytechnics' Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support Offices to discuss the range of PFP courses available, requirements for each course, and support available for students with SEN, before submitting their PFP application. More details on the SEN Support Offices can be found on the websites of the respective polytechnics.

Post Application and Acceptance

26. Are students allowed to transfer to a different PFP course or polytechnic from what they have enrolled in?

Students who have enrolled in a PFP course are strongly encouraged to complete the PFP course that they are enrolled in and are not allowed to transfer to a different polytechnic once they have accepted their PFP offer.

27. Are students allowed to transfer to a different diploma course in the same polytechnic after completing the PFP?

Students are encouraged to continue on to their pre-selected polytechnic diplomas after completing the PFP. Students are therefore advised to carefully consider their PFP course choices at the point of application and acceptance. Requests for transfers will only be considered on a case-by-case basis, and the polytechnics' rules regarding course transfers apply to all students, including PFP students. Students should contact the individual polytechnics for more information.

28. What happens if students discontinue or fail the PFP?

Students who discontinue or fail the PFP may apply for admission to ITE's *Nitec* programmes. Students who wish to pursue their GCE O-Level examinations may register as private candidates, or approach their secondary schools for re-admission in January the following year, subject to availability of vacancies. Students are not allowed to repeat the PFP. They are encouraged to remain committed to the PFP and progress to their pre-selected polytechnic diploma courses upon successful completion of the PFP.

29. Are Financial Assistance schemes available to PFP students?

There are PFP Bursary schemes disbursed by the polytechnics that help students cope with the cost of polytechnic education. Please contact the polytechnics for more information.

Progression after Completion of the PFP

30. How are students assessed during the PFP? Upon completion of the PFP, will students be admitted into the first or second year of polytechnic courses?

The assessment structure for the PFP foundational year comprises a mix of coursework assignments, projects, class tests and/or end-of-semester examinations to ensure that students will be able to cope with the rigour of the diploma course. Upon passing all their PFP modules, students will progress to the first year of their pre-selected polytechnic diploma courses.

31. Are PFP students able to apply to local universities without GCE O-Level qualifications?

All polytechnic graduates, including PFP students, may apply to local universities upon completion of their polytechnic diploma courses. Applicants will be assessed based on their polytechnic academic results, as well as any other academic and non-academic achievements presented for admission. Interviews and aptitude tests may also be administered. Diploma graduates with PFP qualifications will not be disadvantaged even though they do not have GCE O-Level qualifications.

32. Is the PFP recognised at the workplace?

The PFP is not a work-ready qualification on its own. Upon successful completion of the PFP, students are expected to matriculate into their pre-selected polytechnic diploma courses to obtain a diploma qualification.

(Information updated as of November 2020)