



COR160
Essential Academic Writing Skills

Tutor-Marked Assignment 02

July 2017 Presentation

TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT 02

This tutor-marked assignment is worth 45% of the final mark for COR160 Essential Academic Writing Skills.

The cut-off date for this assignment is [2355hrs on 13 October 2017](#).

Submit your solution document in the form of a *single* MS Word file on or before the cut-off date shown above.

Additional instructions:

1. You will need to indicate clearly on the front page your name, student ID, course title and assignment number. Note also the following:
 - ✓ Spacing (between the lines): 1.5 or double spacing
 - ✓ Font style: Arial or Times New Roman preferred
 - ✓ Font size: 12 preferred (min 11 and max 13)
2. Summarise using your own words as much as possible. You must document all information that you use from another source, or you will be penalized severely. You must acknowledge these by using the APA documentation style. This includes both **in-text citations** and **end-of-text referencing**.
3. If you copy from the work of another student, regardless of the course or programme, **you will be severely penalized**. You are **not permitted** to re-use material from past assignments whether in part or in full. All of the above actions can result in your **failing the TMA**.

* Remember that **accurate** and **proper** documentation of information from secondary sources is essential because SUSS takes a very serious view on ***plagiarism***. All information from secondary sources will be detected by the Turnitin software that your assignment will be put through in Canvas and anything that is not acknowledged and properly documented will be taken as an instance of plagiarism and your assignment may be failed.

Scope

You will find chapters 12a (Critical Reading), 12b (Summary, Paraphrase, Quotation), 12c (Synthesizing) and 12d (Synthesizing Sources) in your COR160 textbook useful. Refer also to the relevant on-line study units.

Learning outcomes

- Cite sources in writing using the proper citation and referencing style.
- Evaluate information critically from various sources to respond to a task.
- Synthesise information from various sources in writing in response to a given task.
- Develop a rhetorical structure of an essay.
- Apply persuasive argumentative writing strategies in response to a given task.

Question 1**Parliament: DSA scheme for pupils to enter Secondary 1 directly to be expanded**

UPDATED MAR 8, 2017, 12:45 AM

Calvin Yang

SINGAPORE - More students whose talents and achievements lie beyond doing well in examinations will have a shot at getting into their desired secondary schools with the expansion of the Direct School Admission (DSA) scheme.

From next year, all secondary schools can reserve up to 20 per cent of their non-Integrated Programme places for pupils entering via the DSA scheme. The non-Integrated Programme route prepares students to sit the N or O levels at the end of their secondary school education.

The scheme, which was introduced to recognise pupils' achievements in non-academic areas such as sports and the arts, grants Primary 6 pupils places in secondary schools before they sit the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). Education Minister (Schools) Ng Chee Meng said in Parliament during the debate on the ministry's budget on Tuesday (March 7): "With this expansion, students can better access schools with suitable programmes via DSA, to nurture their strengths, talents and interests."

Schools will also refine their DSA selection process.

By 2018, pupils applying for DSA will not need to sit general academic ability tests. These tests, said Mr Ng, "inadvertently put undue focus on general academic abilities, rather than identifying specific strengths."

Schools can use a range of assessment tools, such as interviews and auditions, to admit students under the DSA. Students may be admitted via the scheme if their specific talents are a good fit for the schools' niche programmes, such as sports, the arts and specific academic strengths such as mathematics and languages.

Noting that DSA should not be seen as an entry ticket to popular schools, Mr Ng added: "Schools will focus on identifying students with specific talents and move away from recognising strong general academic abilities.

"Students with strong general academic abilities would already be able to qualify for the school with their PSLE results."

The DSA application process will be simplified. From 2019, pupils can apply for DSA through a centralised portal, using a common application form. Currently, pupils apply to individual schools, which have their own application process.

The expansion of the DSA scheme means lifting the DSA admissions cap of 10 per cent for autonomous schools and 5 per cent for schools with niche programmes. The cap for independent schools will remain at 20 per cent.

However, specialised independent schools such as the NUS High School of Mathematics and Science and schools offering the Integrated Programme (IP), where students bypass the O levels, will continue to have full discretion in admission. The Education Ministry said schools with IP on average take in 35 per cent of their students via the DSA scheme.

The DSA scheme, which was introduced in 2004, has been criticised for deviating from its original intent of recognising pupils' achievements in areas beyond grades, and giving academically bright pupils early entry to choice secondary schools.

Last year, the ministry announced it would review the DSA to refocus the scheme to better recognise talents in specific areas.

There were 16,000 DSA applications last year – 1,000 more than in the year before. About 2,800 pupils were successful in getting a place via the DSA.

Mr Ng said about half of those who secured a spot were admitted into the Integrated Programme.

- Adapted from article by Calvin Yang in the *The Straits Times Online* on MAR 8, 2017, 12:45 AM

There has been much debate in the Singapore Parliament and public sphere with regard to the recent move by the Singapore government to expand the DSA scheme for pupils to enter Secondary 1. The expanded DSA scheme currently allows students to apply based on academic or non-academic strength and talent. The two articles provided below reflect some of the debate regarding this issue.

Should the expanded DSA scheme for pupils entering Secondary 1 be further revised for it to be reserved only for non-academic talent?

In **about 1000 words**, write a persuasive argumentative essay defending your position in order to argue for your particular stance on this issue. Other than providing supporting arguments for the position you take on this issue, you **MUST** anticipate objections and provide counterarguments to write the paper. Relevant information for you to gather would be:

- Definition of the expanded DSA scheme
- Issues (educational, economic, social or etc.) surrounding the current expanded DSA scheme allowing applications from both academic and non-academic domains
- Arguments for upholding the current expanded DSA scheme allowing applications from both academic and non-academic domains
- Arguments against upholding the current expanded DSA scheme allowing applications from both academic and non-academic domains

(100 marks)

Guidance Notes

1. Your **reasoning must be good**.
2. Strengthen your argument with relevant **examples and illustrations**.
3. You may include any additional but *relevant* information to the ideas that have already been given in the scenario and articles.
4. You should **use at least 7 research sources** to help you write your essay. The given articles are considered as a separate research source each and can count towards the 7 research sources.
5. You are to use credible and reliable sources to help you write this essay. **Marks will be deducted for non-credible and unreliable content.**
6. Remember to use accurate grammar, correct sentence structures and a tone appropriate to academic writing. **Marks will be deducted for poor English.**

Article 1:**Schools, stop the 'kiasu' practice of using DSA to 'chope' bright kids**

PUBLISHED MAR 31, 2016, 5:00 AM SGT

MOE should stop schools from using the Direct School Admission scheme to reserve places for students with academic talent. The scheme should go back to its main purpose: let in students gifted in the arts or sports.

By: Sandra Davie, Senior Education Correspondent

Last year, 126 secondary schools admitted 2,700 students through the Direct School Admission (DSA) scheme. This is a programme which allows students to secure a Secondary 1 place even before they sit the Primary School Leaving Examination.

The DSA was introduced in 2004 to let secondary schools broaden their admission criteria beyond PSLE scores. Schools can admit students strong in sport or the arts, for example, and do so even before the PSLE results are out.

According to the Ministry of Education (MOE), 60 per cent of students who secured places through DSA over the last five years live in Housing Board flats. This compares with 81 per cent of Singaporeans overall who reside in HDB flats.

It also said that of the 126 schools enrolling students through this scheme, 18 are Integrated Programme (IP) schools, which offer a six-year scheme allowing students to skip the O levels.

But it declined to say how many of the 2,700 students were admitted to IP schools or the proportion of DSA students in IP schools who reside in flats.

The DSA scheme has quickly become popular as parents began to see it as a way for their children to enter schools that offer the IP.

The DSA scheme and the profile of students who get into secondary schools this way came under the spotlight early this year when Jalan Besar GRC MP Denise Phua, who heads the Government Parliamentary Committee for Education, said in Parliament that it is an "open secret" that the DSA benefits children who have more resources from a young age.

She was referring to parents who engage coaches and send their kids to special classes to prepare them for the DSA.

Ms Phua brought up a valid point, but there is a more urgent reason why the scheme needs to be reviewed.

Not many people are aware of it, but some schools have been using the DSA scheme to admit students on the basis of academic strength. This includes admitting those from the Gifted Education Programme (GEP), an elite programme for the academically gifted.

Like Ms Phua, I had been concerned about the lack of diversity in the top schools, so I cheered the move when the DSA scheme was launched in 2004.

I thought - at last a scheme that allows secondary schools, including the top ones, to admit students based on not just their academic ability, but also their talent in sport and the arts. It will draw a different group of students and inject more diversity into the student bodies in the top secondary schools.

But sadly, within a few years, both schools and parents started gaming the system.

DIRECT ADMISSION FOR THE EXAM-SMART?

Top schools used the scheme, to use a local slang word, to "chope", or reserve, not just the top sports or arts talent, but also the top academic talent, including those from the GEP. Under MOE guidelines, schools can set aside a certain proportion of places to be given to students under the DSA.

Specialised independent schools such as the NUS High School of Mathematics and those offering the IP can take in up to 100 per cent of their students through the DSA. But according to MOE, they take in only 50 per cent through this scheme.

Independent schools offer 20 per cent of their places and autonomous schools offer 10 per cent under the DSA. Those with MOE-approved niche programmes, such as football, can reserve 5 per cent of their intake for the scheme.

Going by several parents' accounts, it appears that in the most competitive schools, like Raffles Institution, at least half the students they admit through DSA are "academically talented", including those from the gifted education scheme.

Based on past conversations with many parents and school officials over the years, my estimate is that about half or more of the 2,700 students admitted under the DSA scheme went to schools offering the IP from Secondary 1.

Many of these students would be from the GEP, and likely would have got into their choice schools based on PSLE scores anyway.

So clearly the DSA scheme has become another way for the exam-smart, academically bright pupils to secure places in the premier schools early, ahead of the PSLE.

This surely contradicts the core objective of the DSA scheme, which is meant to give those with other talents, including in sports and the arts, a chance to shine.

According to the MOE website, the scheme "seeks to promote holistic education and provide students an opportunity to demonstrate a more diverse range of achievements and talents".

I agree with a mother who complained that the scheme made no sense to her after her sports-loving daughter failed to land a place in an IP school last year.

She argued: "The PSLE already advantages academically strong pupils and the Government then starts a special scheme that will allow a small number of students to be assessed on their other talents.

"But what happens is that it becomes yet another scheme that favours the academically bright kids."

Parents like her are right to ask why children in the GEP should compete for places through this scheme when, by all accounts, they would do well enough in the PSLE to get into the secondary schools of their choice.

In 2012, MOE released figures showing that 40 per cent of those admitted to these schools via DSA would not have got in on their PSLE scores. But flip the figure around and it means that 60 per cent would have got into these schools based on their PSLE results.

The ministry also said schools taking part in the scheme are allowed to admit students on the basis of their academic and non-academic strengths.

I am not saying that top schools should not aim to attract the academically brightest - just that they already do that through their high entry scores, which exceed 250.

So, they should use the DSA to admit those talented in other areas, be it in the sports or arts.

MOE should relook the DSA scheme and stop letting schools use academic criteria as the basis to admit students under this scheme.

Instead, it should insist that the schools' admission criteria for the DSA meet the core objective of the programme - to recognise a diverse range of talents in non-academic areas.

It should not, emphatically not, be an extra avenue for schools to be "kiasu" (afraid to lose) and "chope" the bright students first.

Article 2:**Don't shut bright kids out of DSA**

PUBLISHED *The Straits Times Online Forum* APR 8, 2016, 5:00 AM SGT

I disagree with senior education correspondent Sandra Davie's suggestion that schools exclude Gifted Education Programme (GEP) pupils from the Direct School Admission (DSA) scheme ("Schools, stop the 'kiasu' practice of using DSA to 'chope' bright kids"; March 31).

Her suggestion rests on the presumption that the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) already advantages academically strong pupils.

However, the popular belief that GEP pupils will definitely top the PSLE is not true. This is because the GEP is not designed to prepare them for the PSLE.

In fact, I have met parents who have chosen not to let their children join the GEP because of a lack of focus on the PSLE.

GEP pupils are not unconditionally selected by schools for the DSA. They, too, have to pass interviews and tests.

Schools are understandably keen to accept GEP pupils who have proven the ability to excel, especially those who have won accolades for their performances in global competitions.

Rather than supporting schools to further develop these gifted students for the country, there has been fierce criticism over such perceived privilege.

Every year, only about 1 per cent of pupils in a cohort, or roughly 500 children, enter the GEP.

Even if all of them were offered places in secondary schools under the DSA, this would amount to just around 18 per cent of the 2,700 students accepted last year.

For a small country, with people as its only resource, we have to be careful not to "villainise" a group of children while advocating the interests of another.

A holistic education includes the arts, sports, music and also academic studies.

We should come together to find more ways to ensure that those who are gifted in any way are not disadvantaged by their family backgrounds in their educational paths.

William Tan Whee Kiem

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