



Nanyang Technological University, Singapore tailors English teaching support with Linguaskill



"We're very satisfied with Linguaskill and the results that it provided. It is good for our students and helps their overall learning and experience at NTU Singapore, and is something we would like to repeat going forward."

Serena Tan Siew Koon, Assistant Manager for Graduate Studies,
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Nanyang Technological University Singapore (NTU Singapore) is internationally recognised, both for its teaching and research excellence and its commitment to innovation in education. It wanted to ensure that it was delivering tailored English language support to international postgraduate students, through better testing of their writing, speaking, listening and reading proficiency. By using Linguaskill's computer-based testing NTU Singapore now has a detailed picture of students' English skills, enabling the provision of tailored support to help them improve.

Providing personalised support through online testing

NTU Singapore is one of the world's top institutions for subjects such as engineering, technology and science. While a relatively young institution, inaugurated in 1991, it is regularly ranked in the top 10 for both teaching and research within international indexes. Its main campus in western Singapore is frequently listed as one of the most beautiful in the world.

As well as research excellence, NTU Singapore is also known for innovative teaching initiatives, which aim to help millennials learn more effectively in the digital age. These innovations include its flipped classroom model of learning, which combines digital lessons and team-based learning in smart classrooms.

NTU Singapore has more than 100 nationalities on its campus and as all teaching is in English, postgraduate students have to demonstrate proficiency before beginning their courses. As Serena Tan Siew Koon, Assistant Manager for Graduate Studies explains, 'All international students need to meet initial requirements around English in order to be accepted by NTU Singapore. Although we measure scores from internationally recognised tests like TOEFL, these do not fully demonstrate the required language skills for graduate study. Many students are weak in speaking and written communication, so we wanted to use an accurate and reliable English test to know their weaknesses and support them to overcome these.'

About Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore)

A research-intensive public university, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) has 33,000 undergraduate and postgraduate students. In 2018, NTU was placed 12th globally in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings. It was also ranked the world's best young university (under 50 years old) by QS for the fifth consecutive year.

ntu.edu.sg

About Linguaskill

Linguaskill from Cambridge Assessment English is a quick and convenient online test based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standard. Designed to help organisations assess groups of candidates, it enables higher education institutions and employers to easily check English levels, providing fast, accurate results and clear individual and group reports.

cambridgeenglish.org/linguaskill

About Cambridge Assessment English

Cambridge Assessment English is a not-for-profit department of the University of Cambridge. It produces the world's leading range of qualifications and tests, for learners and teachers of English, including Cambridge English Qualifications, Linguaskill and IELTS. Taken by over 5 million people every year, these exams are backed by the work of the largest dedicated research team of any English language test provider.

cambridgeenglish.org

A simple online test for students and administrators

NTU Singapore therefore looked at how it could better test postgraduate students enrolling on its PhD and Master's courses, beginning in the School of Materials Science and Engineering. It therefore researched potential tests that would help it – and its students – gain a better understanding of their English skills in writing, speaking, listening and reading in order to assist them with any necessary improvements.

Amongst its requirements were that the test should be simple to administer, intuitive for students and have the ability to deliver results that could be easily understood by both the student and the institution quickly. This led NTU Singapore to trial Linguaskill for 28 international PhD and Master's students within the School. Linguaskill provides a fast, easy-to-use method of testing writing, speaking, listening and reading skills through online tests, producing detailed reports that map student results to the international CEFR standard. As a computer-adaptive test, Linguaskill automatically adjusts questions based on previous answers, providing a better experience for students and faster results.

'We chose Linguaskill as being an online test meant there was no paper required and being computer-based appealed to the engineering mindset,' said Serena Tan Siew Koon. 'Linguaskill was very convenient to run for our students, who were able to take all four skills within our computer facilities. It also fits with our ethos of being innovative and embracing technology to help our students.'

Delivering better understanding of strengths and weaknesses

While it was the first time such testing has been carried out, NTU Singapore is already pleased with the results. These have been shared with students, and are being used to personalise English support and encourage their own learning in specific language areas.

'From the individual test reports we have been able to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of every student,' adds Serena Tan Siew Koon. 'This is being used to inform the English language course we run alongside our postgraduate programmes, helping the tutors to tailor content to specific needs. Students are also very positive about the test – they appreciate how simple it is to take and how it gives them insight into their skill levels, and areas for potential improvement.'

New graduate students join the School of Materials Science and Engineering twice a year, in August and January. Due to the positive results of the Linguaskill trial, NTU Singapore is now looking at continuing to use the test for its next batch of students. 'We're very satisfied with Linguaskill and the results that it provided. It is good for our students and helps their overall learning and experience at NTU Singapore, and is something we would like to repeat going forward.'