More than 30,000 students took the O-level examinations last year and will be receiving their results today. This is the third of a five-part daily series on the results and the developments in the educational institutions that students can join after the examinations.

Why they gladly traded JC for poly

Some thrive on hands-on learning or discover keen interest in a subject

By SANDRA DAVIE SENIOR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

More than 5,000 polytechnic students move to the junior colleges each year. To enter a junior college, a student’s LIR score – based on O-level results for English and five relevant subjects – must not exceed 20 points. Polytechnics require that the total score for English and four other subjects not exceed 20 points. But for popular courses such as biological science and banking and finance, applicants need to score below 12 points to be successful.

If you qualify for both routes but are undecided on which one to take, start by considering your academic preferences. If you like a more structured and guided curriculum, with a school-like environment, the junior college path may be what you are looking for. Students who are strong in academic subjects should consider the junior college route as well, especially if you love literature or mathematics, and you want to delve deeper into these subjects. However, if you are inclined towards a learning approach that is more hands-on, with more project work, the polytechnics could be more suitable.

To help students decide on the course they want to pursue in the polytechnic, guidance counsellors offer them an idea of the kind of careers that would suit a student. For example, some polytechnics look for an applicant’s involvement in co-curricular activities such as the drama club or the debating club when they apply for courses in hotel and tourism management or event planning.

Which of the 2 routes is best for me?

I am likely to do well enough to qualify for both the polytechnic and junior college (JC) routes, and I am still undecided between the two. I like the polytechnic route because more JC students make it to the local universities. How do I know which route I am more suited for?

First, know the basic entry requirements. To enter a junior college, a student’s LIR score – based on the O-level results for English and five relevant subjects – must not exceed 20 points. Polytechnics require that the total score for English and four other subjects not exceed 20 points.

If you qualify for both routes but are undecided on which one to take, start by considering your academic preferences. If you like a more structured and guided curriculum, with a school-like environment, the junior college path may be what you are looking for. Students who are strong in academic subjects should consider the junior college route as well, especially if you love literature or mathematics, and you want to delve deeper into these subjects.

However, if you are inclined towards a learning approach that is more hands-on, with more project work, the polytechnics could be more suitable.

Which of the 2 routes is best for me?

By SANDRA DAVIE SENIOR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

The STs Times senior education correspondent Sandra Davie answers a student’s question on choosing the junior college or polytechnic route.

The Straits Times (Pg B4)
Date: 12 Jan 2015
Headline: Why they gladly traded JC for poly

Some thrive on hands-on learning or discover keen interest in a subject

By SANDRA DAVIE SENIOR EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

MS YEO Xiang Jie, 21, attended St Andrew’s Junior College and considered taking A-Levels before switching to Temasek Polytechnic to study aviation management.

Although she started two years later than her secondary school peers, she is glad she is finally pursuing a course she is interested in.

Mr Christopher Lee, 23, joked that he took the long, scenic route to polytechnic.

He completed two years of study in Catholic Junior College and sat A Levels before realising he wanted to be involved in events and project management.

After completing his national service, he enrolled in the events management diploma course at Singapore Polytechnic. Now into his third year, he has no regrets. He is enjoying his studies and maintains a near perfect grade point average. When he finishes his studies this year, he intends to work for a few years before considering university studies.

Ms Devere Lim, 19, though, made up her mind to drop out of junior college after her first year to pursue her dream of becoming a chef. She hopes to enrol in a culinary science course this year.

Figures from the Ministry of Education (MOE) show that 40% of 5,000 students switch from junior college to polytechnic each year.

Most do so in the middle or the end of the five-year course. Several students make the switch second, third or even after completing their A Levels.

On the flip side, the numbers going the other way are small. MOE said only 50 to 60 polytechnic students move to the junior colleges each year.

Mr Christopher Ly (above) and Ms Yeo Xiang Jie completed their A-levels before enrolling in polytechnic.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER LY, SEAH KIANG PENG