

MEDIA RELEASE

8 July 2019

NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC PILOTS AI-POWERED PLATFORM FOR EARLY ADMISSIONS EXERCISE

Virtual assistant deployed to enhance the polytechnic's EAE selection process

EVA, the first virtual assistant deployed to pilot the automation of Early Admissions Exercise application write-ups, reviews and engages applicants via an online chat

Value propositions for online chat:

- Additional dimension for applicants to be considered and shortlisted for interviews*
- Better engagement during face-to-face interviews*

Singapore, 8 July 2019 — Meet EVA, the first-of-its-kind virtual assistant that Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) has “hired” to provide support for the polytechnic’s Early Admissions Exercise¹ (EAE). Using machine learning and a chat interface, the virtual assistant will review the EAE applicants’ write-ups, and allow applicants to highlight their passions and aptitudes via an online chat. Students keen to gain admission in courses offered by three of NP’s academic schools through this year’s EAE will be part of the pilot programme to trial the use of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and predictive analytics to enhance the EAE selection process.

Developed by NP in partnership with Singaporean AI company Impress.AI, EVA demonstrates how deep-tech solutions can be used in an admissions exercise to increase engagement with prospective students and improve administrative efficiency.

Additional opportunity for applicants to showcase potential

The three academic schools participating in the pilot of EVA for this year’s EAE are Business & Accountancy (BA), Film & Media Studies (FMS) and Health Sciences (HS).

Typically, EAE candidates are shortlisted for a face-to-face interview based on their application write-ups. With EVA, applicants to courses offered by the three schools will gain an additional opportunity to proactively showcase their passion and suitability for their chosen course, via an online chat.

Leveraging its intelligent chatbot technology, EVA will interact with every applicant to the three schools to better understand his or her aptitude and competencies. Applicants’ responses through the online chat will help NP’s assessors better understand their personality and interests, as well as their

strengths in areas such as leadership and teamwork. The online chat questions will be customised for each school in accordance with their preferred requirements (see Annex A for more information). By drawing insights from the online chats, the interviewers will be able to better engage shortlisted applicants during their face-to-face interview sessions.

Automated review of application write-ups in 2 hours

EVA will process the review of about 4,000 EAE application write-ups from NP's three academic schools in the pilot trial

Automated review of write-ups can be completed within two hours, compared to 470 hours via manual review

The three schools collectively receive over 4,000 EAE applications a year, accounting for about 40% of the total number of EAE applications received by NP annually. A team of academic staff typically reviews all application write-ups manually. It takes approximately 470 man-hours to review the write-ups for all courses across the three schools, before shortlisting candidates for face-to-face interviews.

With EVA, the expected time taken to review the applicants' submissions will be significantly shortened to two hours, thanks to EVA's predictive engine capability, which can automatically read the write-ups submitted by all applicants who have listed BA, FMS and HS courses as one of their three EAE course choices.

Manual review to ensure no deserving applicants are omitted

EAE applicants to the three NP Schools included in the pilot of EVA can be assured that they will not be disadvantaged. NP staff will review the applications of all students who have not been selected by EVA, to ensure that no deserving applications are missed. Insights from the online chat will also be taken into consideration during the manual review to provide a more holistic assessment of applicants' suitability. Applicants whose write-ups and chat responses meet NP's shortlisting criteria will be shortlisted and invited for a face-to-face interview, even if they had not been shortlisted by EVA.

“Ngee Ann Polytechnic is excited to be harnessing the power of innovative technologies to improve admissions selection and enhance student engagement while lightening the administrative workload for educators. With projects like EVA and the recent OpenCertsⁱⁱ, we hope to do our part to heed the call for transforming public sector processes and services for the benefit of the larger community. We will continue to invest in such efforts, which are also aligned with our vision to be a future-ready campus,” said Mr Clarence Ti, Principal, Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

The new AI-empowered platform will go live from 11 to 15 July, during the EAE's shortlisting stage. Students applying to courses from the three schools will be notified by SMS and email to complete the online chat.

For media queries, please contact:
Sangeetha Naidu
Manager, Corporate Communications
Tel: +65 6460 6232
Email: sangeetha_naidu@np.edu.sg

About Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Ngee Ann Polytechnic started in 1963 and is today one of Singapore's leading institutions of higher learning with over 14,000 enrolled students in over 40 disciplines. It seeks to develop students with a passion for learning, values for life, and competencies to thrive in a global workplace.

<http://www.np.edu.sg>



ⁱNot applicable for EAE for working adults as the application criteria are different and take into consideration their relevant work experience.

ⁱⁱOpenCerts is a blockchain-based platform developed by the Government Technology Agency, Ministry of Education, Ngee Ann Polytechnic and SkillsFuture Singapore. The platform offers an easy and reliable way to issue and validate digital academic certificates that are tamper-resistant. For details:

<https://www.np.edu.sg/media/Documents/Releases-Advisories/2019/Media%20release%20on%20OpenCerts%20.pdf>

BACKGROUNDER ON ONLINE CHAT VIA EVA

O-Level and ITE students who have applied for courses offered by three of NP's academic schools via the Early Admissions Exercise (EAE) this year will be part of the pilot programme to trial the use of NP's virtual assistant EVA. These schools are Business & Accountancy (BA), Film & Media Studies (FMS) and Health Sciences (HS). Leveraging its intelligent chatbot technology, EVA will interact with every applicant and its conversations with the applicants will allow NP to gain a better understanding of their aptitude and competencies.

How does it work?

1. SMS Notification and Email Link to Online Chat with EVA

Applicants will be notified via SMS about an email from NP that provides them with the links and login steps to chat with EVA. This email will be sent to the registered email account used in their EAE application. Applicants may use a PC, laptop or mobile device to interact with EVA from 11 to 15 July 2019.

Currently, only applicants who have listed courses from BA, FMS and HS as one of their three EAE course choices will be invited to chat with EVA. As the online chat with EVA is customised for each school, applicants who have applied for courses across these schools will be required to complete more than one online chat. For example, a student who has applied for a course from BA and another from HS will receive an email from NP with two links, one for each school, to chat with EVA.

2. Online chat with EVA




Once the applicants have successfully logged on to EVA, they can begin the online chat, which will take about 30 minutes with optional breaks in between sections. However, applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the online chat in a single session. The applicants' interactions with EVA are unique to each school, with questions focused on the relevant aptitude and competencies required for the specific school. The chat may include questions that shed light on their personality and behavioural traits. Applicants for certain schools may also be requested to submit their e-portfolios or participate in a behavioural styles questionnaire.

3. Findings from online chat with EVA

The applicants' responses through the online chat will shed some light on their personality and interests, as well as their strengths in areas such as leadership and teamwork. The insights drawn from the online chat will be used by the interviewers when engaging shortlisted students during their face-to-face interviews.

Applicants will be contacted by SMS by the school if they are shortlisted for a face-to-face interview at NP. The final selection and conditional offer will be based on both the applicant's interview performance and portfolio.

Screenshots of EVA's introductory message for the three respective schools

<p>NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC School of Business & Accountancy (BA)</p> <p>Hello Veer! I'm Eva.</p>  <p>Greetings from Ngee Ann Polytechnic! Welcome to the Early Admissions Exercise (EAE) at the School of Business & Accountancy. Thank you for your interest in our course(s) in your Early Admissions Exercise (EAE) application.</p> <p>This online chat has 3 sections. Each section is timed. You may find it easier to do the sections on a laptop or tablet.</p> <p>Before providing any personal data, Ngee Ann Polytechnic invites you to carefully read its Privacy Statement and impress.ai's General Terms & Conditions which includes important information on why and how the institution processes your personal data.</p> <p>Click on the "I agree" button at the bottom of this window to indicate your agreement to the above. If not, please feel free to end the chat by closing this window.</p> <p>I agree</p>	<p>NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC School of Film & Media Studies (FMS)</p> <p>Hello Amara! I'm Eva.</p>  <p>Thank you for choosing to pursue your studies at the School of Film & Media Studies. We would love to find out more about you and kindly request some of your time to complete this questionnaire in the comfort of your home. If you have an online portfolio, please have the hyperlink prepared.</p> <p>This questionnaire has a total of 3 sections and will take about 30 minutes to complete.</p> <p>Before providing any personal data, Ngee Ann Polytechnic invites you to carefully read its Privacy Statement and impress.ai's General Terms & Conditions which includes important information on why and how the institution processes your personal data.</p> <p>Click on the "I agree" button at the bottom of this window to indicate your agreement to the above. If not, please feel free to end the chat by closing this window.</p> <p>I agree</p>	<p>NGEE ANN POLYTECHNIC School of Health Sciences (HS)</p> <p>Hello Affan! I'm Eva.</p>  <p>Greetings from Ngee Ann Polytechnic! Welcome to the Early Admissions Exercise (EAE) at the School of Health Sciences. The School of Health Sciences (HS) has been developing students into healthcare professionals since 2005. Thank you for your interest in the Nursing / Optometry course in your EAE application.</p> <p>I would like to know you better by asking a few questions. The chat has 2 sections and will take about 40 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong responses when answering these questions.</p> <p>Before providing any personal data, Ngee Ann Polytechnic invites you to carefully read its Privacy Statement and impress.ai's General Terms & Conditions which includes important information on why and how the institution processes your personal data.</p> <p>Click on the "I agree" button at the bottom of this window to indicate your agreement to the above. If not, please feel free to end the chat by closing this window.</p> <p>I agree</p>
---	---	---

Scan the code to view an explainer video on EVA



