

## NUS strictest with on-campus drinking



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SINGAPORE - A YouTube video earlier this month showing a drunk freshman telling racist jokes to a camera has kick-started a debate on the appropriateness of on-campus drinking.

First-year Singapore Institute of Management (SIM) student, Justin Wee, 24, was captured on video spewing vulgarities and passing derogatory comments on Malays and Indians.

The video has also raised concerns over youth drinking, which is on the rise here say experts, reported The Straits Times.

In a study released in March this year, the Institute of Mental Health found that those aged 18 to 34 are twice as likely to drink excessively and binge drink.

It is not illegal for undergraduates to drink or buy alcohol as the legal drinking age here is 18.

But when it comes to setting the ground rules for on-campus drinking, the National University of Singapore (NUS) is the strictest, according to The Straits Times.

There is a blanket ban on drinking while on the premises, except for designated eateries which sell alcoholic drinks.

Unlike the other universities, NUS also does not allow alcoholic drinks to be sold at convenience stores on campus.

However, all 20 undergraduates interviewed were unaware of the school's policy on drinking.

At the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), alcohol is sold at various eateries and minimarts on campus.

An NTU spokesperson said the school does have any specific rules on drinking but does not condone "unruly and inconsiderate behaviour" from students.

Students at the Singapore Management University (SMU) are allowed to consume alcohol in any of the common areas of its downtown campus.

The school's Lee Kong Chian School of Business has a bar, but students can also bring in drinks from pubs and convenience stores nearby.

Restaurant-owners near the local universities and on campus say they have not had encounters with drunk undergraduates.

While many students were unclear about the schools' policy on drinking on-campus, those interviewed by the paper expressed strong views about their legal right to drink and their ability to exercise personal discretion and responsibility.

Students like NTU engineering student Jon, 24, share that drinking is a social activity for those in their age group, as well as a way for them to relax.

NUS student Mr Zerh Chang Thai, 24, stressed that undergraduates are adults, and "should be responsible for their own actions".

And even if there are rules, they should not come across as "authoritarian", added SMU law undergraduate Miss Diedre Grace Morgan, 22.

Associate Professor Paulin Straughan, who teaches sociology at NUS, says the issue is on educating youth on the risks of overdrinking, as young people "will drink if they want to".

A few other undergraduates have also gotten themselves into trouble for drinking.

In 2009, a group of eight NUS undergraduates who ran naked from one hostel to another on the campus were expelled from their hall of residence.

They admitted that they were high on alcohol at the time.