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The HKDSE results are due out on July 13, but you shouldn't wait until then to start thinking about what you're going to do afterwards. You might not get the results you wanted, but if you have a plan for every outcome, you'll avoid stress on the day.

Young Post asked Hok Yau Club Student Guidance Centre director Ng Po-shing for some useful advice to make sure you're prepared for any eventuality.

Ng's advice is to expect the unexpected and start planning early. Some students are overly confident about their DSE results so they don't do anything before results day.

But this isn't a good idea, as anything could happen. If you don't get the scores you expected and you don't have a backup plan, you will end up stressed. When you're stressed, you're unlikely to make the best decisions.

"With a detailed plan, your nerves are less likely to take over. A calm and positive mind helps you handle any challenges on the big day," says Ng.

Depending on your results, you might want to change the courses you are applying for. You can modify your programme choices from July 14-16 on your Joint University Programmes Admissions System (Jupas) account.

Ng stresses that one of the most important things to remember is that although the modifying period is from July 14-16, each candidate is assigned only a 24-hour period in which to change their choices. You won't be able to change this period or change your choices outside of these 24 hours. Your slot will be assigned at random. You can check which time slot you have been assigned by logging on to your Jupas account from June 14 at 9am. Remember you can only change your choices once.

Ng stresses the importance of predicting the best, average and worst outcomes. He suggests devising several strategies based on these "expected" scores. If you get excellent results, you can stick to your original plan or put your favourite but competitive programme as your first choice [A1]. Just remember that the third choice [A3] serves as a crucial backup choice which is likely to guarantee your spot at university.

"2015 Jupas admissions scores of nine Jupas participating institutions serve as a good indicator. Bear in mind your overall DSE score should be higher than the median score of your selected course [in A3]," says Ng.

If you think your score won't be very high, Ng suggests applying for non-

Jupas programmes, which range from degrees and higher diplomas to certificates at places like Hong Kong Shue Yan College, Hang Seng Management College, the Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) and other recognised higher education institutions.

A mock exam release, which is organised by some schools a few days before the official results are released on July 13, is another good way to prepare.

It's a good way to familiarise yourself with how to change your course choices in Jupas and university admissions forms.

"Most mock releases will also arrange mock admissions interviews for students who are applying for higher diplomas or associate degrees," says Ng.

"Students can identify their weaknesses and get nervous blunders out of the way before attending the real one," he adds.

If you get a 5** in every subject,

but a level 2 in your English Language or Chinese Language (level 3 in these subjects are minimum university requirements for Jupas applicants), Ng says you can repeat Form Six and combine your DSE results.

An alternative route into university is through associate degrees or higher diplomas. Holders of these qualifications can apply for some degree courses. For example, City University has Advanced Standing One and Two systems.

An alternative way into university is through associate degrees or higher diplomas

These standing systems offer students who have completed associate degrees or higher diplomas, with good academic results, admission into the second or third year of a degree programme. If you don't think your DSE results will get you into university, it might be worth checking out the entry requirements for the Advanced Standing Systems and planning which

associate degree or higher diploma you could take to get you into university further down the line.

Ng says that students who get a total score of around 20 in five subjects have a lower chance of getting into a bachelor degree programme. If this applies to you, Ng suggests looking at programmes which have a specific formula for calculating students' admission score. That way, you know whether your score is high enough.

Another option if your score is around the 20 mark is to apply for the bachelor programmes at non-Jupas institutions like Hong Kong Shue Yan University and Chu Hai College of Higher Education.

Students who score less than 20 should consider putting associate degrees or higher diplomas as higher choices, despite the intense competition for these programmes.

If you didn't score level 2 in five subjects, you can apply for the Diploma of Foundation Studies at IVE or the Diploma Yi Jin at the member institutions of the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education, like the Hong Kong Institute of Technology.

Most importantly, remember that not getting the DSE results you hoped for isn't the end of the world. There are plenty of opportunities out there, no matter what your skills and qualifications are, and going to university isn't the only path to success.

For 12 university admissions interview blunders, and how you can avoid them, visit yp.scmp.com



The DSE results will be released on July 13, but prepare for every scenario now to avoid stress on the day, writes **Ben Pang**

Don't DSEpair, be prepared