

Singapore Schools See Increased Demand for AEIS Exam Coaching

Admissions Preparation Gains Traction as International Student Numbers Rise

Schools and private education centres in Singapore are reporting a marked increase in the number of international students seeking structured preparation for the Admissions Exercise for International Students (AEIS). This centralised test, administered by the Ministry of Education, determines placement into government primary and secondary schools. As competition for places intensifies, the demand for targeted AEIS exam coaching has grown, with providers expanding their programmes to meet the needs of students from China, Vietnam, Indonesia, Myanmar, and other countries in the region.

The AEIS assesses English, Mathematics, and general reasoning ability at a level appropriate to the applicant's age group. For students who did not previously study under Singapore's national curriculum, the format and content can present significant challenges. The growing interest in AEIS exam coaching reflects a broader trend: families view a Singapore education as a gateway to English-medium higher education and as a stable environment for their children's academic development.

What the AEIS Covers and Why Coaching Matters

The test consists of two papers. The first is English, which tests grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills appropriate for the year level the student is applying to join. The second paper covers Mathematics, with questions that expect familiarity with the Singapore syllabus. Unlike some other international school entrance tests, the AEIS does not feature a verbal reasoning or non-verbal reasoning section. This narrow focus means that preparation must be tightly aligned to the curriculum used in local schools.

Many international students have strong computational skills but struggle with the problem-solving and language demands of the Mathematics paper, which presents word problems in English. Similarly, the writing task in the English paper requires a command of sentence structure and paragraph organisation that may not be part of the student's previous schooling. [AEIS exam coaching](#) programmes typically address these gaps by providing practice papers, guided instruction in the Singapore method for Mathematics, and intensive English-language development tailored to the test's requirements.

The Ministry of Education releases sample test questions, but these are limited in number. Coaching centres supplement these with their own materials, built from years of observing the

test's structure and difficulty level. For students who arrive in Singapore only weeks before the test, such coaching can be essential for understanding the pace and style of questions they will face.

Programme Structures and Delivery Modes

Preparation courses vary in length and intensity. Some providers offer full-day programmes that run for several months, combining English and Mathematics instruction with test-taking strategies. Others offer part-time sessions in the evenings or on weekends, designed for students who are already attending a local school but need additional support to bridge gaps in their knowledge. A smaller number of centres provide one-on-one tutoring for students who require individualised attention.

In recent years, online delivery has become more common, particularly for students who are still abroad and plan to take the AEIS after arriving in Singapore. Live-streamed classes and recorded lessons allow students to begin preparation before their relocation. However, most education professionals interviewed for this report emphasised that face-to-face interaction remains important for building the confidence and spoken English skills that the test does not directly assess but that schools consider during placement.

The typical cost of a full AEIS exam coaching programme ranges from moderate to high, reflecting the specialised nature of the instruction. Providers often include mock tests, progress reports, and consultation with parents as part of the package. Some centres also offer supplementary modules in subjects such as Science or Higher Chinese, though these are not required for the AEIS itself.

How Parents Choose a Coaching Provider

With many options available, parents tend to evaluate programmes based on several factors. The track record of past students, the qualifications of instructors, and the alignment of materials with the current syllabus are among the most commonly cited considerations. Transparency about class sizes and the ratio of teacher to student is also important, as smaller groups generally allow for more individual feedback.

Location matters too. Centres situated near areas with high concentrations of international families, such as those in the east and central regions of Singapore, tend to attract more students. Some providers operate in dedicated premises with classrooms and libraries, while others hold sessions in shared spaces such as community centres or private tuition centres.

Parents are also increasingly looking for programmes that include an orientation component, helping students adjust to the cultural and behavioural expectations of Singapore schools. This can cover topics such as classroom etiquette, how to address teachers, and the school

uniform code. While not part of the test, these elements affect how smoothly a student transitions into a new school environment.

Regulatory Environment and Quality Standards

The AEIS itself is administered by the Ministry of Education, but coaching centres are not directly regulated by the ministry. Instead, they fall under the purview of the Committee for Private Education (CPE), which sets standards for private education institutions in Singapore. Centres that offer AEIS exam coaching must register with the CPE if they operate as private schools, though smaller tutoring operations may fall outside this requirement.

The lack of a standardised curriculum for coaching programmes means that quality can vary. Some centres employ former MOE teachers or graduates with teaching diplomas. Others rely on university students or freelance tutors. Parents are advised to ask about the instructors' experience with the AEIS specifically, rather than general teaching experience. The best programmes tend to be those that have been operating for several years and can point to a consistent record of students passing the test and being placed in their preferred schools.

There have been occasional reports of centres making exaggerated claims about their success rates. The Ministry of Education does not release school-by-school placement data for AEIS students, so such claims are difficult to verify. Parents should approach any guarantee of admission with caution. The AEIS is a competitive test, and placement outcomes depend on the student's performance on the day as well as the availability of vacancies in the desired schools.

Outlook for the Coaching Sector

The demand for AEIS exam coaching shows no sign of slowing. Singapore's reputation as a safe, high-quality education destination continues to attract families from across Asia and beyond. The government has maintained a steady intake of international students, and the AEIS remains the primary route for those seeking a place in the mainstream school system. As long as this pathway exists, the market for preparation services will remain robust.

Providers that can demonstrate strong outcomes and a clear alignment with MOE expectations are likely to thrive. Those that rely solely on marketing without delivering substantive instruction may struggle as parents become more discerning. The trend toward longer, more immersive coaching programmes suggests that families are willing to invest significant time and money in the hope of securing a good placement.

For students, the decision to undertake AEIS exam coaching is often a practical one. The test is a one-time opportunity in a given academic year, and the stakes are high. A strong performance can open doors to schools with good reputations and strong academic

programmes. A weak performance may mean a placement in a less desirable school or a delay of entry by a full year. In this context, the time spent in preparation is seen as a necessary investment.

The broader education landscape in Singapore is also evolving. The introduction of subject-based banding in secondary schools and changes to the primary school leaving examination format have not yet directly affected the AEIS, but some coaching centres are already updating their materials to reflect the shift in emphasis from rote learning to applied thinking. How quickly these changes will trickle down to the AEIS remains to be seen, but coaching providers are watching closely.

In the meantime, the core components of AEIS exam coaching remain English and Mathematics, delivered in a structured, test-oriented format. For families planning a move to Singapore, enrolling in such a programme is increasingly seen as a standard part of the relocation process, as essential as securing housing and opening a bank account. The sector has matured from a niche service into a recognised part of the international education ecosystem in Singapore.