

New institute: Diplomas to degrees

By SIA LING XIN

ANATIONAL institute, set up to help diploma holders upgrade their qualifications to a degree from foreign universities, will start classes from August – a year ahead of schedule.

The Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), which was established last year, will be offering eight degree programmes – in fields such as culinary arts and video-game design – from five top overseas institutions.

For a start, about 500 vacancies in all will be available across the eight courses, but the exact number for each course will depend on the demand and ideal cohort size.

The institute aims to increase this number to 2,000 in five years' time.

Classes are starting ahead of time because the SIT has made good progress on this major effort, said Dr Ng Eng Hen, Minister for Education, yesterday.

In a debate on the Budget es-

timates for the Education Ministry (MOE) yesterday, he said that the SIT and other higher institutes of learning will act as engines to power Singapore's next phase of growth as a knowledge- and innovation-driven economy.

The renowned universities that the SIT is partnering will "add value and recognition to our polytechnic diplomas as they provide advanced standing", he said.

Polytechnic graduates will also be able to obtain degrees after only two years instead of three or four years, he added.

Singaporean students will have their course fees subsidised by the MOE.

Other than fresh polytechnic graduates, those with work experience are encouraged to apply.

This is because "their maturity and real-world knowledge will bring valuable perspectives into the classroom and add value to the strong industry relevance of SIT's degree offerings", an SIT spokesman said.

Polytechnic student Vanessa

OVERSEAS UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

Overseas University	Programme Offered
Technical University of Munich (TUM), Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
University of Newcastle upon Tyne (NU), UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Technology with Honours in Naval Architecture ◆ Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Technology with Honours in Marine Engineering ◆ Bachelor of Engineering in Marine Technology with Honours in Off-shore Engineering
DigiPen Institute of Technology (DigiPen), USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor of Science with specialisation in Real-Time Interactive Simulation/Game Design ◆ Bachelor of Arts with specialisation in Production Animation/ Game Design
Culinary Institute of America (CIA), USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor of Professional Studies in Culinary Arts Management
University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Bachelor of Science in Hotel Administration

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Chua, 18, welcomes the SIT, as she does not want to go abroad.

She plans to apply for its hotel-administration course after graduating next year.

She said: "There are many people who cannot afford to go

overseas because of the high costs involved. It's a great idea to bring some of those programmes here, and I like how they are tailored to match polytechnic education so that it takes only two years."

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