

SIT, Newcastle Uni in talks to offer 3 new degrees



The mechanical engineering, chemical engineering and human nutrition courses will start next September if the deal is sealed, said Newcastle vice-chancellor Chris Brink. PHOTO COURTESY OF NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

BY JENNANI DURAI

BRITAIN'S Newcastle University is in talks with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) to offer three more degree courses in Singapore from next year.

The new courses – in mechanical engineering, chemical engineering, and food and human nutrition – will admit students next September if the deal is sealed, said Newcastle's vice-chancellor, Professor Chris Brink.

"These were niche areas that needed to be filled, and we were looking to increase our presence here, so it was a mutual fit," he said.

Prof Brink was in town for the graduation of the first batch of students from Newcastle's naval architecture degree programme, offered at Ngee Ann Polytechnic under the Polytech-

nic-Foreign Specialised Institutions initiative.

The programme was built as a seamless progression to a bachelor's degree for selected students from Ngee Ann Polytechnic's marine and offshore technology diploma course and Singapore Polytechnic's marine engineering diploma course.

Newcastle also currently offers a Bachelor of Engineering degree in marine technology through SIT, with specialisations in marine engineering, offshore engineering and naval architecture.

The SIT offers industry-oriented degree courses for students with polytechnic diplomas, in partnership with overseas universities.

Newcastle University has a large School of Marine Science and Technology with nearly 1,000 undergraduate and graduate students – nearly 90 per cent of whom are international stu-

dents, Prof Brink said.

"We've been doing marine science and technology for a long time, and there's been a long history of Singaporeans coming to study in Newcastle," he said.

Around 50 Singaporeans enrol in Newcastle University in England every year, a fifth of them in the School of Marine Science and Technology.

Among the marine school's distinguished Singaporean alumni are Mr Choo Chiau Beng, chief executive of Keppel Corp, and Mr Ong Poh Kwee, managing director of Sembawang Shipyard.

The British university plans to increase the enrolment of students in the naval architecture programme at Ngee Ann Polytechnic from 80 to 100. The two new engineering programmes will admit 70 students each for their initial intake, while the food and human nutrition course will admit 60.