

# University of Manchester, SIT offer new nursing degree

BY JENNANI DURAI

NURSING diploma holders who want to study for a degree now have another avenue available to them.

It comes in the form of a new tie-up between the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and the University of Manchester (UOM). The British university, ranked among Britain's best for nursing, will offer a two-year direct honours bachelor's degree in nursing in conjunction with SIT starting in September this year. It will take in 70 students.

Speaking at the signing ceremony at Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) yesterday, Education Minister Ng Eng Hen said nurses were "critical to the foundation of daily health-care operations", as they make up about 40 per cent of the staff in public hospital groups. He also announced that SIT – which runs foreign university degree courses on polytechnic campuses here – had secured 20 scholarships from health-care groups for students in the programme.

Professor Karen Luker, dean of the nursing school at UOM, said the training of nurses worldwide was increasingly being delivered through university degree courses.



**Education Minister Ng Eng Hen, who was at the signing of the tie-up yesterday, speaking to students at a simulated operating theatre in NYP. The new course will offer 70 places. ST PHOTO: ASHLEIGH SIM**

es. "No one questions that doctors need degrees, but when you see the complexities of what nurses have to do, you have to wonder why they don't either," she said.

The course will be conducted at NYP, which is one of two polytechnics here that offer a nursing diploma course. Together with Ngee Ann Polytechnic, it graduates around 1,000 registered nurses a year.

The programme will supplement the graduate nurses produced by the National University of Singapore's Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies, which takes in 80 to 90 undergraduates a year. Other ways for those wanting a degree include courses at private institutions, such as the one by the

Singapore Institute of Management with the University of Sydney, and the course run by the Singapore Nurses Association with Australia's La Trobe University.

According to Ministry of Health figures, about 20 per cent of registered nurses in the public health-care sector hold degrees.

Having a degree will put registered nurses on a fast track to leadership positions, said Ms Wong Luan Wah, director of the School of Health Sciences at NYP.

She added that the programme was developed in consultation with the Ministry of Health. This means it will pay special attention to particular areas of need in Singapore, such as long-term palliative care.