

SIT degree course to boost energy sector's skilled manpower

By **MATTHIAS CHEW**

SINGAPORE'S first specialised undergraduate degree for power engineering will start next September at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) with 60 students.

The full-time course will teach them both the engineering and

management aspects of the energy business.

Done with Britain's Newcastle University, the two-year course for diploma holders will lead to a Bachelor of Engineering in Electrical Power Engineering degree.

The new course will inject fresh blood into the sector, Second Minister for Trade and Indus-

try S. Iswaran said at the signing ceremony to mark the two institutions' partnership yesterday.

Outlining the sector's manpower challenges, he told reporters that the median age of its workers is 48.

He also said that 2,400 trained professionals are needed over the next decade.

This programme, he said, "is an essential component" of efforts to develop badly needed new expertise in the sector.

Tuition fees for the course, to be held at SIT's Nanyang Polytechnic satellite campus, are being finalised, programme director Woon Kok Meng said.

Diploma holders can apply for

the course early next year.

The Government has said that SIT will become Singapore's fifth autonomous university by 2014. Besides degrees offered in partnership with overseas universities, it will also offer its own degrees.

The tie-up with Newcastle University is the second that SIT has inked this week.

On Monday, it formalised its partnership with Trinity College Dublin to offer degrees in physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Also held at Nanyang Polytechnic, the two courses started last month and will help meet the needs of the increasing number of elderly people in Singapore.

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