Local universities to offer more places this year, bringing total to 14,000

By Sandra Davie

The Education Ministry will open up more university places this year, bringing the total number of places at the six universities, including the Singapore Institute of Technology and SIM University to 14,000.

This means the Government will reach the target of providing university places for 30 per cent of an age group a year earlier than planned.

Education Minister Heng Swee Keat announced this in a Facebook post today as he congratulated SIT on being gazetted an autonomous university.

With the new status the five-year-old SIT can confer its own degrees, unlike before when it awarded only joint degrees with overseas institutions, such as Glasgow University and the Technical University of Munich.

The bulk of the new places announced by Mr Heng will come from the expansion of SIT and UniSIM.

UniSIM in Clementi will add three full-time degrees to its part-time offerings for working adults. The courses in marketing, finance and accountancy will offer 200 places.

SIT, which currently offers niche degrees from overseas universities, will run its own programmes from next year in infrastructure engineering, software development and accountancy. These courses will add another 200 places to its yearly intake of 1,500.

But even as he announced the good news of more university seats, Mr Heng stressed the expansion is done in a careful way, to match students' aptitudes.

He said in his post: "Even as we create more places, we want our students to be able to meet the rigours of the programmes, and at the same time, to make the best use of opportunities as our economy grows and becomes more diverse."

He added that MOE will press on to meet the 2020 target - to provide publicly-funded university spaces for 40 per cent of every cohort by 2020.

The government will also support the part-time degree route, enabling another 10 per cent of Singaporeans to get a degree.