SIT to accept record 2,080 students this year

It will offer five new degrees in areas with ‘huge demand’ for specialists

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The university for polytechnic upgraders – the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) – will offer five new degrees and take in a record 2,080 students this year.

SIT, which used to offer only degrees in partnership with overseas universities, started offering its own degrees last year, when it took in 1,800 students.

This year, it will offer four of its own degrees – in building services engineering, pharmaceutical engineering, information security and hospitality business.

It will also offer a joint engineering degree in electromechanical systems, where students learn to design and develop complex systems that can range from a robot to a transportation system.

The degree is offered jointly with the DigiPen Institute of Technology from Redmond, Washington, which is renowned for its computer engineering courses.

Professor Tan Thiam Soon, president of SIT, said the new degrees are in areas where there is a huge demand for specialists.

“They are areas where our students will be able to find good jobs, have good career prospects and which will transform Singapore’s economy,” he said, noting that SIT’s aim is to nurture best-in-class specialists with deep knowledge and skills in a particular field.

Another course with good prospects is the building services engineering course.

SIT provost Ting Seng Kiong pointed out that the construction industry continues to grow at an average of 10 per cent yearly.

And all buildings in Singapore, old and new, must now undergo the Green Mark certification process by 2020 to be environmentally friendly. Singapore aims to have 80 per cent of all buildings attain the Green Mark certification by 2030.

Prof Tan said students entering the five new courses will spend eight months to a year on the work-study programme, which is designed to be more in-depth and structured than a traditional industrial attachment.

SIT, which now operates from an interim campus in Dover Road, has also set up an Enterprise & Innovation Hub (E&I Hub), where its students will work on projects suggested by firms.

Projects undertaken by students and faculty in the E&I Hub will be different, said Prof Tan.

“In many universities, they are projects brought in by professors that interest them. For SIT, we will ask the industry or firms to bring to us projects or problems they need to solve. In that sense, it will truly cater to industry needs.”

One course that will meet industry needs is the hospitality course.

Professor David Jones, head of the hospitality degree course, noted that SIT’s degree is called hospitality business and not hospitality management, which is focused more on the operations side of running hotels and events.

“What has been lacking that we at SIT are addressing is that, today, running a hotel chain is big business. It is not just about operations any more. It’s about understanding the business side of it,” he said.

With the additions, SIT will offer 36 degree courses, of which seven are its own. These include three of its own degrees in infrastructure engineering, software engineering and accountancy launched last year.

Its other partner overseas universities include the Technical University of Munich and the Culinary Institute of America.