More choices, more opportunities for learning

The Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), a key avenue for polytechnic graduates to earn a degree, will launch six new courses and raise its intake by another 300 places this year, bringing the total to 2,400.

SIT says it will offer a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Digital Media Design.

The final five of the Ministry of Education’s 15 kindergartens will open this year. The pre-schools are meant to pilot innovative teaching methods and share them with the pre-school sector.

The new year brings SkillsFuture credit, added uni places, and more kindergartens

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The new year will present Singaporeans with more choices and learning opportunities — from kindergartens to university education and beyond — and whether they want to hone their work skills or delve into research.

SKILLSFUTURE

This month, all Singaporeans aged 25 and above will receive a letter on how to activate their SkillsFuture Credit accounts. It will include a step-by-step guide on how to use their initial 250 worth of credits.

There is no cut-off date for when the money has to be used by, and there will be periodic top-ups, so people can save up for more expensive courses. It can also be used on top of other government subsidies. More than $4 billion has been set aside by the Government to fund this scheme in a bid to encourage Singaporeans to continue learning.

The scheme was announced in the Budget speech delivered last February by Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic and Social Policies Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

The credits can be used for approved courses in several areas, from aerospace to sports to healthcare. Singaporeans are free to opt for any course.

So far, the directory of courses launched by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) already lists 30,000 courses — from financial literacy to photography and cooking.

They are offered by more than 300 providers, such as the Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts, Singapore Institute of Management and Nanyang Technological University.

Another SkillsFuture initiative, the Earn and Learn work-study programme, is likely to be expanded this year, WDA said the scheme, in which students in technical and polytechnic education would be paid for their skills.

The health courses, aside from nursing, will take in 250 students with either a level qualifications or relevant diplomas in areas such as healthcare management.

The new degrees are in areas where there is a huge demand for specialists, given Singapore’s rapidly aging population.

To address this, SIM University and SIT will offer a Bachelor of Social Work degree from this year.

The six new courses, added to the current 13 offered, will include a new course in Digital Media Design, and courses in photography, interior design and digital media.

The kindergartens are part of an ongoing National Institute of Education study of children’s development as they progress from kindergarten to primary school.

The year ahead

- Graduates courses
- More university places and degrees
- More MOE kindergartens