

SINGAPORE - Response for Singapore's first hospitality business degree has been overwhelming, with more than 500 applicants at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) vying for 100 spots.

The figures and other programme details were released at a press conference at Suntec Convention Hall on Wednesday.

The applicants - who ranked the degree as their first choice - will have to go through a selection process based on their grade point average and credentials, followed by two interviews to assess their interest and aptitude for the course.

Those who are successful will undergo a three-year programme. But candidates with a relevant diploma in hospitality will be fast-tracked to the second year, to specialise in areas like hotel management and business.

As students approach their final year of study, they will be part of an Integrated Work Study Programme, where they will work on a project with industry players for eight months to a year.

"With input from industry experts, the curriculum will offer students a full understanding of Singapore's hospitality industry but will at the same time train them to apply their skills globally," the programme director, Professor David Jones, said.

Industry professionals such as Mr Ian Wilson, senior vice-president of hotel operations at Marina Bay Sands, said the degree is long overdue and will ease the existing manpower crunch in the hospitality industry.

"Hotels are complicated places and we need great people to be successful - this programme will produce the graduates that the industry needs to grow," he added.

The institute's deputy president and provost Ting Seng Kiong said that the programme will groom students for top management positions by giving them a broad understanding of the entire spectrum of skills needed in hospitality - from operations and supply chain management to revenue management and investing.

"From there, students can specialise and when they eventually return to that broad base of skills at the top management level, they will feel comfortable because they have a good foundation."