

SIT to phase out early childhood programme

SINGAPORE – After offering a jointly-run early childhood degree programme with a respected foreign partner for three years, Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) will be phasing out the programme, as two of the Republic's newest universities begin sharpening their focus in the education landscape.

The SIT-Wheelock College programme will recruit its last intake next year, while SIM University (UniSIM) is set to offer a full-time degree programme in the same field.

Acting executive director for Wheelock College (Singapore) Linda Davis told TODAY that this is a “policy decision made by the Government of Singapore” to phase out the programme.

This is even though the programme's cohort has grown since its launch in 2012, from 42 to the largest intake of 67 this year.


But, she added: “We respect (the Singapore Government's) decision, and wish to assure our existing students, as well as those whom we ac-

cept to the programme next summer, that their completion will not be impacted. Wheelock will honour its contract and commitment to see them through their programmes.”

In response to queries, SIT said the move is part of its regular review of programme offerings, which allows it to refine its overall slate of programme offerings “in line with its Science and Technology focus”, and launch more degree programmes “in its own name”.

The university was originally set up to focus on offering joint degree programmes with overseas universities, but started introducing its own programmes in engineering, information and community and technology after becoming an autonomous university last year. Allied health offerings are also in the pipeline.

“SIT will continue to review its overall slate of programme offerings regularly, in order to remain nimble and responsive to the constantly evolving needs of the industry and community,” added the spokesperson.

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Dr Linda Davis
ACTING EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR, WHEELOCK
COLLEGE (SINGAPORE)

UniSIM's degree programme offerings span the arts and social sciences, business, human development and social services, and science and technology.

The Ministry of Education said UniSIM's current part-time degree programmes in early childhood offers a publicly-funded avenue for those interested in the early childhood sector.

“A new full-time programme will soon be launched by UniSIM. More details will be made available later,” a ministry spokesperson added.

Wheelock College has other education collaborations in Singapore and Dr Davis said the master's programme offered in partnership with SEED Institute — NTUC's training arm for early childhood educators — will continue.

Wheelock is also “actively exploring other programme options with SIT” and will launch a Professional Development Leadership Programme for Early Development for principals with SEED and Lien Foundation in the coming months, she added. **NG JING YNG**