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# 'Germany, S'pore can gain from skills, ideas exchange'

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**Linette Lai**

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Germany and Singapore have much to gain from a strong partnership, including the exchange of ideas and skills, said Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam yesterday.

Dual studies schemes – where German firms sponsor local polytechnic graduates for further studies – are an example of this, he said.

“We believe our strong partnership with German companies will see lasting win-win benefits,” Mr Tharman said.

He was speaking at the German Centre’s 20th anniversary celebrations last night.

“A workforce with deep skills will increase Singapore’s attractiveness as a base for companies to expand their operations and tap the opportunities that the region has to offer.”

As part of yesterday’s celebrations, six German companies awarded 14 polytechnic students scholarships under a dual studies agreement, where they will complete their university degrees in Germany.

Two more were awarded the local equivalent, for the first time, under a collaboration with the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) and the Economic Development Board (EDB).

Under the new scheme, called the Dual Studies Industry Sponsorship Pioneer Programme, students will have their university fees at SIT partially paid for by participating German firms. They will also get paid internships at their sponsoring firm.

One of the winners was 20-year-old Eyrica Lee, who graduated from Nanyang Polytechnic with a diploma in digital and precision engineering.

She will go on to read systems engineering at SIT and intern at pharmaceutical packaging company Uhlmann.

“It’s a chance to not only gain theoretical knowledge, but also practical knowledge through the internships,” she said.

She said part of the attraction was that systems engineering draws from a variety of engineering sub-fields.

“You’re not going into a very specific field of engineering, and you learn how to use the knowledge from various fields.”

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