

Boost for Earn and Learn Programme

✓ LEANNE CHUA

Polytechnic graduates now have more ways to gain industry experience and options to attain a degree, with enhancements to the SkillsFuture Earn and Learn Programme (ELP).

With the new joint-ELP agreement signed yesterday, students can take undergraduate courses at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) and Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), leading to a degree for selected programmes – SUSS' facilities and events management as well as infocomm technology.

The joint-ELP is an enhanced version of the programme that began in 2015.

The earlier programme also paired students with an employer in a related field of study, where they will have a 12 to 18-month contract to gain on-the-job training, experience and industry-recognised qualifications.

This was alongside the participants taking relevant modules in the polytechnics, lead-

ing to a specialist diploma.

The joint-ELP was one of three agreements signed yesterday by the five polytechnics, SUSS and SIT.

It was witnessed by Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) Ong Ye Kung and chief executive of SkillsFuture Singapore, Mr Ng Cher Pong.

Mr Ong said: "We want to promote the idea of learning for life, the idea that there are multiple pathways for all of us... to upgrade and deepen our skills."

BENEFICIARY

Temasek Polytechnic (TP) graduate Fu Deqi is one of those who will benefit from the agreements.

Miss Fu, 20, who graduated last month, may get to shave off a year in attaining her degree in facilities and events management while earning a polytechnic graduate's pay at a company related to her field of study at TP – integrated facility management.

As a joint-ELP participant, her on-the-job training at Ex-

celtec Property Management and completion of nine selected courses at SUSS will allow for credit exemptions of up to 50 credit units.

President of SUSS, Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, said the exemptions signal the school's recognition of the equal importance of academic knowledge and job experience.

"We hope this will encourage more working professionals to learn while they work and plan for their career progression."

For students such as Miss Fu, this opens up a new pathway to applied learning.

She said: "If you work and study at the same time, you can get knowledge of work and school and apply it together, so it is more efficient and helps me learn faster."

Principal and chief executive officer of TP, Mr Peter Lam, said the other four universities have indicated their interest in launching similar ELPs with the polytechnics.

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