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Headline: New dad goes for a degree under work-study scheme



Samwoh Corporation project coordinator Justin Kang has enrolled in SIT as a civil engineering student under the SkillsFuture Work-Study Degree Programmes. The electrical engineering diploma holder gets time off from work to attend classes in the four-year programme. PHOTOS: DIOS VINCOY JR FOR THE STRAITS TIMES

New dad goes for a degree under work-study scheme

Yuen Sin

After toying with the idea for a few years, project coordinator Justin Kang, 34, decided to go back to school to secure a degree.

But with his first child born three months ago, going for night classes was out of the question. The electrical engineering diploma holder also could not afford to take a break from work.

This month, he enrolled at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) as a civil engineering student under the SkillsFuture Work-Study Degree Programmes.

Thanks to a partnership between SIT and civil infrastructure company Samwoh Corporation, he will get time off from work to attend classes on Monday and Wednesday every week. He will also work from home before classes, which start at noon, and spend the rest of the week at work.

Mr Kang is currently overseeing infrastructure maintenance projects at Changi Airport. He will not have to take leave for the days spent at SIT during the four-year programme, and his salary and career will not be affected. His company will pay for three-quarters of his tu-

ition fees of about \$10,000 a year. In exchange, he will serve an 18-month bond after graduation.

Mr Daniel Tan, a senior manager of corporate development and communications at Samwoh, said the local firm, which was incorporated in 1975, is keen to send more staff for the work-study scheme or take in more apprentices under it, which can help build up the firm's talent pool.

He said: "There is a perception that civil engineering is tough work,

and good engineers are hard to come by."

Mr Kang said that he hopes to "understand the deeper science" behind operating procedures when it comes to his work in civil engineering, including paving roads. "For example, why do you have to wait for asphalt premix to cool to a certain temperature before opening it to traffic? Knowing the reasoning behind things like this can help me to find a way to make certain processes more efficient," he said.

Professor Ho Yew Kee, SIT's associate provost for SkillsFuture and staff development, said SIT has received encouraging feedback on the work-study scheme from students and employers.

"In a stiffer economic climate, employers can take this opportunity to upskill, reskill and 'deep-skill' their workforce," he said, adding: "These companies will have early access to talent and groom them."

Singtel's group chief human resources officer Aileen Tan said the SkillsFuture scheme is a "win-win proposition", giving its 11 apprentices the chance to hone their skills in a real-world setting, while developing a talent pipeline for the firm.

TOUGH TO ATTRACT TALENT

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MR DANIEL TAN, Samwoh Corporation's senior manager of corporate development and communications, on how the firm is keen to send more staff for the work-study scheme or take in more apprentices.

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WHAT'S ON OFFER

Courses that qualify for the SkillsFuture Work-Study Degree Programmes:

Singapore Institute of Technology

- Bachelor of Engineering with Honours in Information and Communications Technology (Information Security)
- Bachelor of Engineering with Honours in Information and Communications Technology (Software Engineering)
- Bachelor of Engineering with Honours in Electrical Power Engineering
- Bachelor of Engineering with Honours in Civil Engineering
- Bachelor of Hospitality Business with Honours
- Bachelor of Food Technology with Honours

Singapore University of Social Sciences

- Bachelor of Science in Finance with Minor

Sponsoring companies include:

- Standard Chartered Bank
- Singapore Power
- The Ascott Limited
- Defence Science and Technology Agency
- Government Technology Agency of Singapore
- Ministry of Defence
- Singtel
- Danlin Construction
- NU Systems
- Shincon Industrial
- Samwoh Corporation
- Ingredion Singapore