

Part-time study, full-time commitment

SkillsFuture Work-Study Degree Programme allows industry professionals and undergrads to upskill and gain work experience

✓ MAVIS WONG

Ms Natalie Tan's schedule is unlike that of most working professionals — she returns to school for two days in every six-day work week.

The 24-year-old attends six-hour classes at the Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) on Mondays and Wednesdays.

On the other weekdays and Saturdays, she coordinates subcontractors and electrical work projects.

The project manager at construction firm NU Systems is one of 40 students under the SkillsFuture Work-Study Degree Programme.

The programme allows employers from 16 partner companies to play a more involved role in developing talent for their industry.

"The only way for me to be a professional engineer is to get further education, but unfortunately my degree in construction management is not enough," said Ms Tan, who chose the programme as it is accredited by the Engineering Ac-

creditation Board Singapore.

She will have a degree in civil engineering at the end of the four-year programme.

Launched this year, the SkillsFuture Work-Study Degree Programme has 34 students under the Term-In/Term-Out mode and six under the Work-Day/Study-Day mode.

The former option is for undergrads while the latter is for returning industry professionals like Ms Tan.

LETTER OF SUPPORT

Students enrolled in the programme will graduate at the same time as their peers on the traditional degree pathway.

Those under the Work-Day/Study-Day scheme have to obtain a letter of support from their employer when they apply, to approve their taking time off work to study.

NU Systems general manager J.S. Tan said: "We believe our employees, when equipped with more knowledge and experience, will be able to help our company grow further. We're



Ms Natalie Tan and Ms Siti Anisa Abdul Malek. PHOTO: SIT

definitely supportive of Natalie."

Ms Siti Anisa Abdul Malek, 23, also enrolled under the new SkillsFuture scheme and is pursuing a degree in food technology.

Ms Siti will continue to work

as a lab technician at ingredient supplier Ingredion when her Work-Day/Study-Day schedule begins in the next trimester in January. She has been with the company for three years.

She previously pursued an advanced diploma in applied

food science under the Earn and Learn programme also offered by SkillsFuture.

Ingredion's vice-president of human resources for Asia Pacific, Mr Christophe Lange, said SkillsFuture is a great platform for fresh graduates to gain experience in careers related to their discipline of study.

He said: "We fully support the programme's initiative of offering mentorship, on-job training, and providing exposure to project management and presentation skills through hands-on experience in the early part of their careers."

Ms Siti is confident she can handle SIT's Work-Day/Study-Day schedule due to her experience in juggling work and studies.

Upon graduation, Ms Siti's job scope will include research and development of dairy products like ice cream and cheese.

She said: "I just have to keep a positive mindset and remember my priority, which is completing this degree."

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