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Headline: Degree or skills? Audience vote will count at ST Forum

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Clockwise from top left) Director for education and skills at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Mr Andreas Schleicher, SkillsFuture Singapore chief executive Ng Cher Pong, SMU president Arnoud De Meyer and SMU's law dean Goh Yihan. PHOTOS: ST FILE, MATTHIAS HO FOR THE STRAITS TIMES, SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

400 will cast votes at start and end of debate; team that swings more votes to its side wins

Those attending The Straits Times Education Forum on Saturday will not only get to hear the views of education experts on whether a degree or skills contribute more to one's success in life, but they will also get to participate in the debate by voting for or against the motion.

The audience of 400 people, made up of students, educators, parents and readers of The Straits Times, will be asked to choose to go with the motion, "You don't need a degree to succeed in life", or against it at the start and again at the end of the debate.

The debate team that manages to swing more votes to its side will be declared the winner.

Members of the audience attending the forum, presented by Singapore Management University (SMU), will also be invited to share their views on the issue.

Mr Andreas Schleicher, director for education and skills at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and SkillsFuture Singapore chief executive Ng Cher Pong will argue for the motion, while SMU president Arnoud De Meyer and the university's law dean Goh Yihan will debate against it.

Degrees have typically been associated with better job prospects and higher salaries around the world. In Singapore, degree holders draw higher starting salaries than diploma holders, and the earnings gap widens over the years.

However, in an age of technological advancements and disruptions in the workplace, degree holders are increasingly unemployed, or underemployed, in many economies.

The oversupply of degree holders has also had a dampening effect on graduate salaries. In such a climate, does the conventional thinking that a degree equals success still hold true? Or should young people be focused on developing skills in fields relevant to the economy in this new age?

The debate, to be held at the SMU School of Law Building in Armenian Street, will be moderated by Mr Patrick Daniel, consultant to Singapore.

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BOOK A PLACE

Date: Saturday

Time: 10am to noon (Registration begins at 9am, guests to be seated by 9.50am)

Location: Singapore Management University (SMU) School of Law Building, Basement 1 SMU Hall, 55 Armenian Street, Singapore 179943

Cost: Free for ST readers

Online registration: <http://str.sg/st-education-forum-2018>

Limited seats are available.