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Human resource (HR) practitioners will now be able to attend nationally accredited courses to boost their skills at the Singapore Management University (SMU).

On Thursday, the university signed a memorandum of understanding with the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) to offer Singapore Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) training modules to those in the HR industry.

The SMU had already been offering HR courses at its Centre for Professional Studies, catering mainly to its alumni. This was set up by the university two years ago to offer diplomas and certification programmes to working professionals.

The inking of the agreement means that the university's existing HR courses are now linked to the WSQ framework.

SMU president Arnoud De Meyer said the university conceived its own HR programme "to bridge a gap in the market".

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He added that alumni and industry partners had told the university human resource programmes provided externally lacked "academic rigour... and real-world applications for HR practitioners and people managers".

With the WDA partnership and funding, the programme can now be "expanded and enhanced to incorporate WSQ criteria", said Professor Meyer.

The SMU launched its enhanced HR programme in April this year with six two-day modules on subjects ranging from talent acquisition to performance evaluation and management.

The modules are conducted by the university's professors and industry veterans.

The university will launch another WSQ-accredited Leadership and People Management programme early next year.

Participants of the programmes will receive course fee subsidies of up to 70 per cent.