



Press Release

Minister for Higher Education and Skills launches SMU Academy

*SMU Academy will offer modules that are stackable towards Master's degrees,
and will award digital credentials*

Singapore, 26 April 2017 (Wednesday) – In support of the SkillsFuture movement, Singapore Management University (SMU) today officially launched its lifelong learning unit – SMU Academy. The launch ceremony was held in conjunction with DIGITEC 2017, a technology conference that is focused on digital capabilities such as blockchain, fintech, HR analytics, lean thinking and personalised learning, among other emerging areas of technology. The ceremony was graced by Mr Ong Ye Kung, Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Second Minister for Defence.

The setting up of SMU Academy, helmed by Dr Lim Lai Cheng as its Executive Director, is a critical milestone for Continuing Education and Training (CET) in Singapore and for SMU. To date, the University has established various specialised institutions offering professional continuing education programmes, in the areas of Finance, Financial IT, Human Capital, Leadership and People Management; as well as Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) courses. These programmes were previously offered through the University's training arms, namely the Financial Training Institute (established in 2007), the Centre for Professional Studies (established in 2012) and the Financial IT Academy (established in 2013).

Over the years, SMU has become a strong strategic partner of government agencies, corporations and PMEs at large. Its excellent track record is built on its practise-based and application-oriented curriculum. In addition, its strong partnership with industry enables it to be tuned in to the needs of various sectors. Recently, the University has also successfully implemented a Professional Conversion Programme to reskill mid-career professionals for the international trading sector.

Through its newly-launched Academy, SMU will dedicate more resources and ramp up its offering of professional continuing education programmes to support the government's Industry Transformation Maps (ITMs) and SkillsFuture initiatives. In particular, it will focus on the development of functional skills across industries as well as sector-customised competencies in SMU's niches of financial services, human capital, management and leadership, and technology and intelligent systems.

Since the start of the year, the Academy has begun offering new modular courses which can be stacked towards Graduate Certificates or Diplomas to be conferred by SMU, and which give credit recognition for modules that are relevant to the University's existing Master's degrees. One example is the Graduate Certificate in Communication Management & Strategy which comprises modules such as digital marketing, transmedia skills and story-telling, and data analytics, which may stack up towards the Master of Science in Communication and Management programme. These modular courses are currently supported under SkillsFuture Singapore.

SMU Academy is also a forerunner in awarding digital credentials to participants who have completed courses with professional certification, such as Fintech and Innovation, a workshop which is supported by the Financial Training Scheme. These credentials can accompany participants' CVs in

their LinkedIn or Facebook accounts, or job applications so that employers are aware of the candidates' job-related competencies.

SMU Provost, Professor Lily Kong, said, "In the context of a challenging Singapore economy and the transformation that is required of the workforce, SMU sees the opportunity to contribute significantly to adult education and lifelong learning in Singapore through the establishment of the SMU Academy. The Academy builds on SMU's reputation, and leverages its prime location in the city, faculty expertise, and well-developed ties with business and industry to offer a strong value proposition to adult learners, including our own alumni."

SMU Academy courses are quality assured by an academic panel and taught by faculty and practitioners who specialise in the relevant fields and have deep experiences in industry. All programmes are also geared towards the needs of adult learners, in support of SkillsFuture initiatives.

Dr Lim said, "Given the fast-changing economy that we are in, the modular courses that SMU Academy offer are practical and immediately applicable. These courses are industry relevant, and where applicable, are aligned to the ITMs, focusing on critical or emerging skills. As they are conducted on weekday evenings and Saturdays, they provide a good alternative for working professionals who may not have the time nor resources to take time off work or do a full Master's programme."

"The pedagogy for our adult learning programmes is also built around approaches which provide content online alongside face-to-face discussions. The use of Web 2.0 tools and e-learning platforms enable off-campus contact when needed. Our programmes also make good use of local and regional cases that have been developed and written over the years by SMU faculty. Moreover, classes may be in and out of seminar rooms, with site visits to enable participants to understand current challenges and varied environments," she added.

SMU Academy invites working adults to sign on as members of SMU Academy for free to receive basic benefits such as free access to lunchtime talks and public events at SMU. They will also receive a free personality and career profiling tool as well as discounts at shops and food outlets in and around SMU. Those who have attended a professional training course will get added benefits such as access to resources at SMU to keep abreast of what is new in their industry or profession.

The official launch took place before an audience of about 600 participants at DIGITEC 2017. Following the recommendations made by the Committee on the Future Economy, DIGITEC 2017 underscores the need for working professionals in all sectors to have a future-oriented mindset and consider new competencies needed in the face of massive disruption due to technological innovation. DIGITEC 2017 is organised by SMU in partnership with Principals' Academy, and supported by SkillsFuture Singapore, Workforce Singapore, Info-communication Media Development Authority of Singapore, Employment & Employability Institute, and Singapore Business Federation.

Enclosure:

- For more details on DIGITEC 2017, please visit <http://www.digitec.sg/>

About SMU

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's

mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. SMU education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning, and for its technologically enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes.

Home to around 10,000 undergraduate, postgraduate, executive and professional, full- and part-time students, SMU is comprised of six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law, and School of Social Sciences. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in interdisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU has an emphasis on generating rigorous, high-impact, and relevant multi-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities from USA, Europe, China and India, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector, through its research institutes, centres and labs. SMU's city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

About SMU Academy

SMU Academy is the professional training arm of Singapore Management University. With its pillars of Financial Services, Human Capital, Leadership & Management and Technology & Intelligent Systems, it leverages SMU's reputation and linkages to prepare our workforce with the competencies, capabilities and career resilience required for the future economy.

<http://academy.smu.edu.sg/>

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