SIT becomes 5th autonomous uni here

By AMELIA TENG

THE five-year-old Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) is now Singapore's fifth autonomous university, with the passing of a Bill in Parliament yesterday.

With the new status, it can confer its own degrees, unlike before when it awards only joint degrees with overseas institutions, such as Glasgow University and the Technical University of Munich.

Also, the Bill empowers the Government to guide its development, provide it with resources and ensure accountability for its use of public funds.

The addition of SIT to the list of Singapore's institutes of higher learning will also widen the diversity of tertiary options for students.

SIT offers more practice-oriented degrees with strong industry links, noted Education Minister Heng Swee Keat when he presented the Bill for debate.

He said: "By integrating a strong theoretical foundation with real-life applications, and by combining hard skills and a range of soft skills such as communications, problem solving and teamwork, graduates from the applied degree pathway can distinguish themselves."

Singapore's other universities are National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore Management University and Singapore University of Technology and Design.

SIT, set up in 2009, has 27 degree programmes which are all awarded by overseas universities.

But from this year, it will offer up to 200 places for its own new degrees in infrastructure engineering, software engineering and accountancy.

"We have high hopes for SIT... that it will develop into an innovative and distinctive institution that nurtures graduates to rise and soar in their chosen fields," said Mr Heng.

MPs welcomed SIT's new status and Minister Heng, in his reply to Mr Lim Biow Chuan (Mountbatten) said its graduates have been well-received by the industry in the last five years.

"MOE will also put in place a governance and quality assurance framework for SIT... to maintain the rigour of the programmes and ensure standards are maintained across the universities," he said.

He added that "a significant proportion" of its lecturers will have industry experience apart from academic qualifications.

Details on its campus plans will be announced later.
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