

SKILLSFUTURE FORUM

SGUnited Skills Programme has over 1,000 sign-ups to date

The programme has more than 6,500 training places available, spanning over 113 courses offered by 13 training providers

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ABOUT 1,300 people so far have signed up for the more than 6,500 training places available under the SGUnited Skills Programme, Education Minister Ong Ye Kung said on Friday.

The training places span over 113 courses offered by 13 training providers, he added. Mr Ong was speaking at a SkillsFuture forum, which marked the launch of this year's SkillsFuture Month.

The SGUnited Skills Programme is part of the SGUnited Jobs and Skills Package announced in May to support up to 100,000 job seekers amid the coronavirus pandemic, by way of job vacancies, traineeships and training opportunities.

The training programmes are heavily subsidised and offer trainees a monthly allowance while they undergo training over six to 12 months.

"The coming months will not be smooth sailing. Workers and companies will need to adjust, adapt, build new capabilities and seek out new opportunities," said Mr Ong, adding that the offerings will be built up further in the coming months.

For instance, a memorandum of understanding was signed between SkillsFuture Singapore, the Singapore Management University and eight companies on Friday, to launch a programme aimed at helping mid-career professionals, managers and executives (PMEs) pivot into new careers.

The SMU SGUnited Business and Digital Transformation Programme will comprise training, industry mentorship and real life business projects from the participating companies.

Noting that mid-career, mature PMEs



Mr Ong is calling on employers to "keep an open mind" in their selection of candidates for training, especially as there is "no obligation" for them to hire trainees after the programmes.
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are some of the most vulnerable now, Mr Ong called on employers to "keep an open mind" in their selection of candidates for training, especially as there is "no obligation" for them to hire trainees after the programmes.

"When we have all these skills programmes, the tendency is always for us to set high standards – nothing wrong with that – and be stringent in the selection of trainees . . . but this is, maybe, a peacetime mode of operation," he said.

Now, "we want to target groups that are more vulnerable, that need our help, need that six to 12 months' retooling at this stage of their career, in this current situation".

Victor Tan, chief executive officer of

mining and trading company Top International, one of the eight participating firms, thinks experienced PMEs can bring wisdom to the firm's young team – with the average age of employees being about 30 to 35 – and hopes that they will eventually join the firm.

It is also a good time to attract PMEs to join small and medium-sized enterprises, he added. "In normal times, they tend to focus more on multinational corporations."

Siek Food Industry deputy CEO Novelle Lim called it a "win-win situation", adding: "This programme will be customised for us based on our needs. And through this programme, I think the trainee can implement new initiatives into our processes, at the same time our people can

also learn from this." She added that the firm hopes to attract more talent as it is expanding.

The forum on Friday, organised by SkillsFuture Singapore and supported by *The Business Times* and *The Straits Times*, focused on how businesses and the workforce can be reshaped amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

It featured insight from industry players on a panel that included SkillsFuture Singapore chief executive Ong Tze Chin, Pan Pacific Hotels Group chief executive Choe Peng Sum, Greenpac chief executive Susan Chong, Ademco Security Group managing director Toby Koh and HRnetGroup executive director and chief legal officer Adeline Sim.