New Industry Graduate Diploma in Generative AI launched
to develop AI Bilingualists through real-world AI business projects

Builds on Strategic Collaboration between ASME, SMU Academy, and Straits Interactive

Singapore, 22 January 2026 (Thursday) – Building on the tripartite collaboration announced in November 2025, the Association of Small and Medium Enterprises (ASME), Straits Interactive (SI) and SMU Academy (SMUA), the professional training arm of Singapore Management University (SMU), are proud to announce the launch of **Singapore's first hands-on Industry Graduate Diploma (IGD) in Generative AI (GenAI), Large Language Models and AI Governance** [生成式AI、大语言模型与治理行业毕业文凭], aimed at developing a new generation of AI Bilingualists.

The IGD empowers business professionals to apply AI within their fields, turning AI from concept to capability. Launching in May 2026, the programme is designed to equip learners with the skills to design, deploy and govern real-world GenAI solutions, bridging business strategy with AI execution while embedding responsible AI practices. To earn the IGD, participants must complete all modules from two Advanced Certificates in GenAI, along with other programme requirements, to build a strong foundation in AI tool design for industry use.

Designed specifically for non-technical business professionals, the IGD aims to enable participants to apply GenAI across functions, such as customer service, compliance, human resources, learning and development, and marketing, without requiring programming expertise.

The IGD is part of a tripartite collaboration that brings together ASME's extensive SME network and reach, SMUA's academic rigour, and SI's industry leadership in AI and data governance. The collaboration was announced last November alongside the launch of '*AI Factory: AI Capability Guide for SMEs*', a book authored by SI's CEO and Founder Kevin Shepherdson, which serves as a blueprint for SMEs looking to integrate AI into their operations and a core learning resource for the programme.

A Graduate Diploma Built Around Real Business Impact

What sets the new IGD apart is its strong emphasis on applied, real-world learning. In addition to passing the overall examination, learners must either complete an Integrated Learning Project (ILP) or attend 16 enrichment workshops and/or networking sessions.

Learners who undertake the ILP are required to design and implement a real-world AI solution to address an actual business challenge. This ensures that they move beyond theoretical knowledge to develop hands-on AI capabilities, gaining practical experience in building, deploying and governing AI responsibly within real organisational contexts.

On the other hand, those who opt to fulfil the workshops and/or networking requirements will gain essential career-relevant skills, and valuable professional connections to support their career development.

Structured Pathway to Becoming an AI Bilingualist

The IGD is built on two stackable Advanced Certificates which equip learners with a strong foundation in responsible AI use and the practical skills to design and deploy GenAI applications.

- [Advanced Certificate in Generative AI, Ethics and Data Protection](#)
- [Advanced Certificate in Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) Apps Design and Prompt Engineering](#)

It provides a clear, stackable pathway into the SMU Industry Practice Master of Digital Economy (IPMDE), SMUA's flagship applied higher degree programme for working professionals seeking industry-relevant, future-ready capabilities in the digital economy. Designed as a flexible, modular degree anchored in real-world projects and industry collaboration, the IPMDE allows learners to deepen their expertise in digital transformation while continuing to work.

Together, these stackable qualifications enable learners to build AI literacy in a structured and sustainable way, progressing from practical, job-ready skills to postgraduate-level mastery. This initiative also supports SMU's expanded credit exemption framework for polytechnic post-diploma holders, widening access for individuals with non-degree qualifications to pursue higher-level education and accelerate their career advancement.

Commitment to raising SME AI adoption in Singapore

The IGD aligns with ASME's commitment to raising SME AI adoption through capability development, governance frameworks, and cross-sector collaboration, as outlined in its AI Adoption Policy Paper 2025. ASME also provides free community AI resources, hands-on workshops, and an experimentation space for SMEs to explore AI solutions as part of its push.

Ang Yuit, President of ASME said, "For SMEs, AI adoption is no longer optional, it is a competitiveness imperative. The Industry Graduate Diploma strengthens our ecosystem by ensuring that AI skills translate into real business capability, grounded in governance and practical application."

Jack Lim, Executive Director of SMU Academy, said, "This Industry Graduate Diploma is a strategic leap in how Singapore develops AI-ready business leaders. By integrating real-world client projects and governance frameworks directly into the curriculum, we go beyond teaching AI tools – we empower professionals to design and come up with AI solutions. Together with our partners, SMUA is committed to building a new generation of 'AI Bilingualists' who can translate business goals into responsible, real-world outcomes for Singapore's digital economy."

Straits Interactive's role in the programme is underpinned by its deep expertise in data protection, AI governance, and capability development. Through its Capabara Gen AI platform, it delivers Capability-as-a-Service to SMEs to help them harness Gen AI with no-code safely, sustainably and securely.

Kevin Shepherdson, CEO and Founder of Straits Interactive, said, "The Industry Graduate Diploma completes the vision of the tripartite collaboration by closing the gap between learning and doing. It supports the journey of the non-technical professionals towards becoming true AI Bilingualists – not just users of AI, but builders and governors of it. Through the AI Factory concept, we are equipping SMEs to convert their content, processes, and expertise into trusted AI systems, effectively manufacturing intelligence that drives real and sustainable economic value for Singapore."

Registration is now open. Click here to find out more.

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About The Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (ASME)

The Association of Small & Medium Enterprises (ASME) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1986 for entrepreneurs, by entrepreneurs. With wide-ranging services and programmes, ASME strives to equip member SMEs with the business knowledge and market opportunities to help them grow their businesses.

ASME, as the champion of a pro-enterprise Singapore, bridges the public and the private sectors to promote a more conducive business environment which facilitates the start-up, growth and development of a larger pool of SMEs. The two ASME flagship awards, The Entrepreneur of the Year Award and Singapore Prestige Brand Award, are in recognition of SMEs' successes.

ASME continues to roll out new SME-relevant programmes to enhance its position as THE business association For Entrepreneurs, By Entrepreneurs. For more information, please visit www.asme.org.sg

About Singapore Management University and SMU Academy

Established in 2000, Singapore Management University (SMU) is recognised for its disciplinary and multi-disciplinary research that address issues of global relevance, impacting business, government, and society. Its distinctive education, incorporating innovative experiential learning, aims to nurture global citizens, entrepreneurs and change agents. Home to over 13,000 students, SMU offers a wide range of bachelor's, master's and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas of Accountancy, Business, Economics, Computing, Law and Social Sciences, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas. It also offers a growing number of executive development and continuing education programmes.

As the professional training arm of the University, SMU Academy (SMUA) offers cutting-edge interdisciplinary programmes that support lifelong learning and help organisations meet reskilling goals to thrive in an ever-changing economy. SMUA integrates a practice-oriented, experiential, and interactive approach, integrating academic depth, real-world business cases, and interdisciplinary learning.

Through its city campus, SMU focuses on making meaningful impact on Singapore and beyond by fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. More information can be found at www.smu.edu.sg and http://academy.smu.edu.sg.

About Straits Interactive Pte Ltd

Straits Interactive delivers sustainable data governance solutions and AI capabilities that help organisations create trust in today's data-driven world. As trusted advisors to SMEs, MNCs, and data protection authorities

in the region, we provide comprehensive competency, consulting, and capability roadmaps in data protection and governance. We partner with top universities in the region and international certification bodies to offer advanced diplomas, degrees, and certification courses. Today, we offer our own line of software, digital content, and more than 40 courses covering data protection, data governance, and Generative AI.

Recently, our Capabara Capability-as-a-Service platform, which we deliver AI enhanced training, AI apps and hands-on advisory, won Meta's inaugural Llama Incubator Programme in Singapore. In 2023, ten years after its founding, Straits Interactive was honoured as one of the top ten "Outstanding and Promising Startups'' at the inaugural Action Community for Entrepreneurship (ACE) Startup Awards, an unprecedented national accolade celebrating exceptional startups in Singapore. For more information, visit https://www.straitsinteractive.com/

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For more information, please contact:

SMU
Huang Peiling
Assoc Director, Corp Comms
+65 98453361
plhuang@smu.edu.sg

SMU Academy
Cassandra Yeo
Cluster Head, Marketing & Communications
+65 9111-4229
cassandrayeo@smu.edu.sg

Straits Interactive Pte Ltd
Angela Schooling
Marketing & Communications Director
+65 9822 2625
angela@straitsinteractive.com

Clear Story for Straits interactive
Anna Scola
Head of Public Relations
+353 (0) 1 961 0048
anna@clearstoryinternational.com

Association of Small & Medium Enterprises
Celestyn Karuppiah
Strategic Communications and Planning Lead
Telephone: +65 6513 0894
Email: celestyn@asme.org.sg