

Media Release

SMU expands credit exemptions for Polytechnic post-diploma graduates and paves graduate pathway for ITE diploma holders through MOU

Singapore, 21 October 2025 (Tuesday) – SMU Academy, the professional training arm of Singapore Management University (SMU), marked its inaugural [SMU Academy Day 2025](#) (新大专业进修学院「学无界日」), themed *'The Upskilling Imperative: Bold Moves to Transform Your Talent'* (主题:「技能提升势在必行」), with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with five Polytechnics and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE). Guest-of-Honour Mr Tan Wee Beng, Deputy Chief Executive (Operations & Regulation) of SkillsFuture Singapore, and Professor Lily Kong, SMU President, witnessed the signing ceremony.

The first such partnership of its kind, the MOU formalises the recognition of relevant prior learning and professional experience, allowing Polytechnic advanced and specialist diploma (i.e. post-diploma) holders to receive credit exemptions towards SMU Academy's [Industry Graduate Diploma](#) (IGD) and [Industry Practice Master of Digital Economy](#) (IPMDE) programmes. It also establishes clear progression pathways for ITE diploma graduates to work towards these qualifications.

The signatories from the respective institutions were:

- Professor Alan Chan (Provost, SMU);
- Ms Low Khah Gek (Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Technical Education);
- Ms Esther Ho (Deputy Principal (Lifelong Learning & Enterprise Services), Nanyang Polytechnic);
- Mr Lim Kok Kiang (Principal & CEO, Ngee Ann Polytechnic);
- Mr Boo Chong-Han (Deputy Principal, Academic & Organisational Development, Republic Polytechnic);
- Mr Wong Jian Chang (Registrar, Singapore Polytechnic); and
- Mr Aw Tuan Kee (Deputy Principal/CEO, Temasek Polytechnic)

Under the agreement, eligible Polytechnic post-diploma graduates may receive up to six module credits, with an additional one to two credits for relevant work experience (final mapping of credits will be subject to programme relevance). For ITE diploma graduates, the MOU also establishes, for the very first time, a direct progression pathway into a graduate-level programme at SMU.

Significantly, this MOU expands SMU Academy's previous admission pathway, which required at least a Polytechnic diploma plus 10 years of work experience, by establishing clear progression routes for ITE diploma graduates towards graduate-level qualification. As the first inter-IHL initiative of its kind, it strengthens the lifelong learning ecosystem by reducing duplication and by shortening the time required to attain recognised qualifications.

Professor Lily Kong, SMU President, said, "In a world of constant change, standing still is the greatest risk. Learners must have a positive and proactive mindset towards lifelong learning, and institutions must collaborate more deeply than ever to create seamless pathways across different stages of learning. The impact of this MOU is significant: a deeper respect for the expertise our learners already bring, enabling a shorter time to achieve a degree, and greater and timely relevance for the workplace."

In thanking SMU's partners, she added, "The new pathway provides tangible opportunities for Singaporeans to keep moving forward and realise their aspirations. Together, we are strengthening the ecosystem that keeps Singapore's workforce resilient, adaptable and socially conscious."

Jack Lim, Executive Director, SMU Academy, said, "This MOU is a game changer in adult education. By working with Polytechnics and ITE, and creating new models of learning continuity, we enable Polytechnic post-diploma holders to fast-track their graduate-level studies at SMU Academy. At the same time, we are opening a new pathway for ITE diploma graduates, so they too can progressively advance towards graduate-level qualifications. In Academic Year 2023/2024 alone, ITE saw 11,964 graduates, and 749 learners completed the ITE Work-Study Diploma in 2024 — this reflects the strong pipeline of adult learners who stand to benefit from the opportunities enabled by today's MOU."

- End -

Enclosures:

- Annex 1 - Quotes from the ITE and Polytechnics
- Annex 2 - Exemption policy
- Annex 3 – Chinese translation

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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>.

Annex 1

Quotes from ITE and Polytechnics

Ms Low Khah Gek, Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Technical Education:

"We're pleased to sign this MOU with SMU Academy, creating stackable progression pathways for our diploma graduates to work towards graduate-level qualifications aligned with industry needs. ITE diploma holders will now enjoy a clear route to SMU Academy's programmes. What's particularly meaningful is how this recognises the value of our students' prior learning and professional experience, allowing them to build on their existing skills and achievements, and achieving graduate-level qualification within a shorter timeframe."

Ms Esther Ho, Deputy Principal (Lifelong Learning & Enterprise Services), Nanyang Polytechnic:

"NYP is pleased to collaborate with Singapore Management University (SMU) in offering module exemptions to NYP Specialist Diploma graduates articulating into SMU's Industry Graduate Diplomas and Industry Practice Master of Digital Economy Programme. This partnership underscores the strong industry relevance of our training, enabling our graduates to progress seamlessly through stackable pathways towards advanced qualifications at SMU. It reflects our shared commitment to supporting lifelong learning and developing industry-ready professionals who can thrive in an evolving economy."

Mr Lim Kok Kiang, Principal & CEO of Ngee Ann Polytechnic:

"With the growing interest in our Specialist Diplomas in Gen AI and technology-related fields, we welcome this collaboration with SMU. By creating this seamless pathway for NP's adult learners to embark on postgraduate programmes, this partnership will significantly boost their professional growth trajectory and position them well for career success. We look forward to deepening this partnership and paving the way for more learners across different fields to benefit."

Mr Boo Chong-Han, Deputy Principal, Academic & Organisational Development, Republic Polytechnic:

"At Republic Polytechnic, we have been intentionally deepening our focus on lifelong learning and flexible pathways, through RP ACE, modular skills courses, and industry-embedded curricula, to ensure our learners remain agile in a changing economy. This collaboration not only strengthens RP's mission to cultivate future-ready talent, but also leverages the collective strengths of the Institutes of Higher Learning in Singapore and SMU Academy to deliver greater value to adult learners, employers, and the national upskilling ecosystem."

Mr Wong Jian Chang, Registrar, Singapore Polytechnic:

"To equip our graduates with the skills and confidence to meet evolving industry needs, Singapore Polytechnic continually develops structured progression pathways beyond our diplomas and post-diplomas. We are delighted to partner with SMU to formally recognise our post-diploma graduates' prior learning and professional experience, granting them credit exemptions for the new Industry Graduate Diploma and the Industry Practice Master of Digital Economy."

Mr Aw Tuan Kee, Deputy Principal/CEO, Temasek Polytechnic:

"This partnership with SMU exemplifies the spirit of SkillsFuture in expanding and extending lifelong learning pathways for our adult learners. By recognising their prior learning and professional experience, we're enabling smoother advancement into postgraduate programmes that align with industry needs, empowering our lifelong learners to upskill with greater flexibility, recognition, and confidence."

Annex 2

Exemption Policy

Post-Diploma Qualifications

Learners enrolled in the IPMDE and IGD programmes may qualify for exemptions through several pathways. CET modules from all five local polytechnics are recognised. Learners who have completed an advanced or specialist diploma at a local polytechnic may be considered for exemptions.

- IPMDE: Up to six exemptions are permitted, inclusive of exemptions already granted for the IGD, with no double counting allowed.
- IGD: A maximum of four exemptions, or up to 30% of total number of modules, may be granted.

ITE Diplomas

Learners holding an ITE diploma are not eligible for credit exemptions into the IGD or IPMDE. However, under this MOU, a formal progression pathway has been established to enable ITE diploma graduates to build towards these graduate-level programmes. This extends the previous admission requirement of a local Polytechnic diploma with ten years of work experience, thereby broadening access to working adults who wish to further their studies.

Prior SMU Academy Modules

Exemptions are also available through the SMU Academy. Learners who have successfully completed relevant certifications or modules with SMU Academy may apply these toward the IPMDE programme electives. In such cases, up to six exemptions may be granted, with no double counting.

Work Experience

Exemptions may be considered on the basis of relevant work experience for IPMDE learners. Those with at least 10 years of full-time relevant professional experience are eligible for up to one exemption, while individuals with 15 years of experience may receive up to two exemptions.

Note: Applicants seeking exemptions based on work experience are required to submit a professional summary of no more than 1,000 words. This summary should demonstrate how their work experience reflects relevant technical or functional expertise, domain knowledge, and real-world problem-solving within one or more IPMDE domain areas.

Summary of Exemptions:

Exemption Pathway	IGD	IPMDE	Notes
CET Modules (From local polytechnics)	Up to 4 exemptions (or 30% of total IGD modules)	Up to 6 exemptions (inclusive of IGD exemptions; no double counting)	Completion of full Post-Diploma required
ITE Diplomas	NA	NA	Establishes formal progression pathway into IGD/IPMDE (No exemptions; admission criteria amended to include ITE diploma holders)

SMU Academy Modules	NA	Up to 6 exemptions (no double counting)	Learners who have completed relevant certifications or modules through SMU Academy may apply for exemptions towards the IPMDE Programme Electives
Full-time Relevant Work experience	NA	Up to 2 exemptions	(1) 10 years' experience = up to 1 exemption; (2) 15 years' experience = up to 2 exemptions; Note: Professional summary (max. 1,000 words) required

Annex 3
Chinese translation

Terms in English	
Singapore Management University	新加坡管理大学，简称：新大
SMU Academy	新大专业进修学院
SMU Academy Day	新大专业进修学院「学无界」日
Theme: 'The Upskilling Imperative: Bold Moves to Transform Your Talent'	主题: 「技能提升势在必行」
Industry Graduate Diploma (IGD)	行业毕业文凭
Industry Practice Master of Digital Economy (IPMDE)	数字经济行业实践硕士

Names and designations in English	
Tan Wee Beng Deputy Chief Executive (Operations & Regulation) SkillsFuture Singapore	陈伟明 精深技能发展局副局长
Professor Lily Kong SMU President	江莉莉教授 新加坡管理大学校长
Professor Alan Chan SMU Provost	陈金梁教授 新加坡管理大学常务副校长
Mr Jack Lim Executive Director, SMU Academy	林立杰 新大专业进修学院执行处长
Ms Low Khah Gek Chief Executive Officer, Institute of Technical Education	卢巧玉 工艺教育局总裁
Ms Esther Ho Deputy Principal (Lifelong Learning & Enterprise Services), Nanyang Polytechnic	何惠玲 南洋理工学院副院长
Mr Lim Kok Kiang Principal & CEO, Ngee Ann Polytechnic	林国强 义安理工学院院长兼首席执行官
Mr Boo Chong-Han Deputy Principal, Academic & Organisational Development, Republic Polytechnic	巫琮瀚 共和理工学院副院长
Mr Wong Jian Chang Registrar, Singapore Polytechnic	黄健昌 新加坡理工学院教务主任
Mr Aw Tuan Kee Deputy Principal/CEO, Temasek Polytechnic	胡传琪 淡马锡理工学院副校长兼副首席执行官

