NTU unveils master’s degree in museum course

Programme will cater to growing interest in arts and heritage fields

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Singapore’s first master’s degree in museum studies and curatorial practices was unveiled yesterday, in a move to meet the demand for experts in the growing arts and heritage fields which has seen record crowd numbers.

Offered by Nanyang Technological University, it will groom leaders in the administration, management, interpretation and development of these fields in both the public and private sectors.

The course, leading to the Master of Arts in Museum Studies and Curatorial Practices, was developed with the National Heritage Board (NHB).

The programme will start in August with about 20 students, who can opt to do it full-time, taking between one and three years, or part-time, between two and four years.

They have a choice of three tracks: museum studies, curatorial practices or a combination of the two.

The courses include curatorship, education and outreach, global art histories, planning and designing exhibitions for art galleries and public spaces, as well as creative and critical writing.

Students also have to complete a dissertation or a 10-week internship.

The pioneering programme will complement undergraduate courses such as the National University of Singapore’s Minor in Art History. Launched last year, the Singapore Management University’s Introduction to Museum Management course, launched in 2014, and NTU’s own double major in art history and English literature, launched in 2016.

At yesterday’s event, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu said the forces of globalisation were causing greater division and polarisation in society.

“To safeguard and promote the cultural heritage which makes us uniquely Singaporean, museums must continue to play a critical role in telling the Singapore story,” she added.

Official figures show growing interest in museums as well as heritage institutions and performing arts events.

The Singapore Cultural Statistics 2017 report, released last month, shows 9.2 million people attended arts and culture activities in 2016, a new high since 2012.

The figure includes 5.1 million visits to national museums and heritage institutions, up from 2.7 million in 2010. Attendance at ticketed performing arts events stood at 1.8 million in 2016, around 300,000 more than in 2010.

Government funding for these sectors has soared as well, from $495.9 million in 2010 to $712.7 million in 2016.

Applications for this year’s programme are still open, while applications for the second intake will start on Sept 1.

More information is available at http://www.adm.ntu.edu.sg/MA

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