SINGAPORE: About 1,500 students in Singapore have signed up for courses or degree programmes in the relatively new field of Service Science, Management and Engineering (SSME) since 2008.

These students hail from Nanyang Technological University, the National University of Singapore, Singapore Management University and the Institute of Systems Science.

SSME is a new academic discipline designed to produce students with the combined business, technology and social sciences skills needed in today's workforce.

On Wednesday, US computer giant IBM signed an MOU with the four academic institutions, extending an earlier agreement signed in 2007, on collaboration in service education and research.

SSME industry partners and IBM have also given out 31 national infocomm scholarships to students keen on pursuing this discipline.

Deputy chief executive of the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore, Leong Keng Thai, said the programme is in line with Singapore's ten-year infocomm masterplan, iN2015.

The plan sees the nurturing of a pool of highly skilled infocomm professionals as being critical to achieving the vision of an intelligent nation and a global city powered by infocomm.

- CNA/so