

NTU, NUS launch PhD exchange programme

Aim is to provide much broader, richer spectrum of course offerings

Jolene Ang

PhD students at Singapore's top two universities will be able to go on exchanges between them under a programme announced yesterday.

From June 1, eligible PhD students from the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Nanyang Technological University (NTU) can attend classes at the other institution.

This will result in a much broader and richer spectrum of PhD course offerings that students from both universities can benefit from, the

universities said.

Mr Teng Ting Shien, a second-year PhD student from the NTU School of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering who is reading food science, said it could help to have access to new professors who can guide his research. "In research, there's no limit or restriction to what you can get in touch with," said the 28-year-old. "You should broaden your views and connections, and get to know people who know different things. This way, you can learn differently and get some new ideas that may help."

Mr Teng, who has a bachelor's de-

gree in bio-engineering from NTU, has heard about what NUS has to offer from his younger sister, who read life science there.

"Their courses are similar to what we are doing in NTU - sciences don't change much," he said.

"But the approach to lessons is different. NUS focuses more on independent learning, with project-based assignments, while NTU does more lectures and tutorials... so with the student exchange, we will get a very different experience in terms of learning."

The exchange programme is open to full-time PhD students

who have completed at least one semester of study and have met the academic requirements of their home university.

While the two universities are traditionally seen as competitors, NTU president Subra Suresh said the exchange programme would "integrate the diverse and complementary strengths of NTU and NUS to provide a more comprehensive selection of course offerings for our PhD students".

Prof Suresh added: "As two top-ranked universities in the world, NTU and NUS compete globally. At the same time, as the two largest public universities in Singapore, we should also collaborate so that our combined strengths can benefit our students and bring greater value to Singapore."

In the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings released in June last year, NUS ranked 11th while NTU was 12th; in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings released last September, NUS was ranked 23rd and NTU, 51st.

NUS president Tan Eng Chye said: "This cross-pollination of ideas will energise the local research community, seed new partnerships and further strengthen Singapore's global reputation as a forward-looking research hub."

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Interacting together after the signing ceremony of the collaborative exchange programme for PhD students held at the NTU Research Techno Plaza are (from left): PhD student Teng Ting Shien from Nanyang Technological University; Professor Subra Suresh, NTU president; National University of Singapore president Tan Eng Chye; and PhD student Lim Si YIng from NUS. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE