

Fresh grads to get 4 education, training modules for free

16,000 of them from six autonomous universities to benefit from next month

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From next month, 16,000 fresh graduates from the six autonomous universities can each take four continuing education and training (CET) modules offered by their alma maters for free.

In a joint statement last Friday, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the six institutions said the move aims to help graduates access more opportunities across job sectors.

"This is in recognition that with the uncertain economic outlook, some fresh graduates may want to continue their learning and pick up additional skills to complement the competencies acquired in their undergraduate years," it said.

All Singapore citizens and perma-

nent residents graduating from full-time undergraduate degree courses this year will benefit.

They can take their pick from about 1,700 CET modules across areas such as data analytics, finance, professional communications and systems thinking.

SkillsFuture Singapore will provide a subsidy of 70 per cent of the course fees for these graduates, with the universities subsidising the remainder.

Education Minister Ong Ye Kung said last Friday in a Facebook post: "Final-year students in our autonomous universities (AU) will be graduating amidst a very weak labour market. But I want to assure you that MOE and your AUs are fully behind you."

He encouraged graduates to take up the CET modules, diversify their

skills, even if they are unrelated to their disciplines, and consider traineeships to build industry-relevant skills and professional networks.

The move to let fresh graduates keep learning comes after last Thursday's announcement of the SGUnited Traineeships Programme, which aims to provide up to 8,000 paid traineeship places.

To date, more than 280 companies have come forward to offer more than 4,000 spots.

The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) also released last Friday more details of its new Covid-19 relief package announced earlier last week to help students in financial difficulties.

Its 5,700 final-year undergraduates will receive an extra \$1,600 in credits to offset fees for courses

they can take as alumni, on top of the four CET ones they can take for free.

The credits are valid until June next year, and are on top of the existing \$1,600 in credits available to all alumni.

Graduates can also use the academic credits gained from selected CET courses and "stack" them towards a MiniMaster's Certificate, said NTU.

A MiniMaster's programme has half the academic load of a full master's programme, it said.

Course credits earned may count towards a full master's degree, which can be pursued later.

The National Institute of Education at NTU offers 12 such programmes in areas such as drama education and e-learning instructional design, and more will be added in the coming months.

Separately, the National University of Singapore (NUS) said it will launch 150 CET courses and more than 20 certificates of competency, like graduate certificates, for this year's graduating cohort.

The courses span areas such as data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, finance and accounting, as well as business and management.

NUS had earlier said last Thursday that it is opening up 200 full-time jobs and 800 paid traineeship positions across its faculties and research institutes, as well as in administration, for graduates.

Those who perform well in the traineeships – that can last up to a year – may be offered full-time positions.

NTU also plans to open up several hundred paid traineeships for final-

year undergraduates from all disciplines.

The spots will be available across its colleges, schools, research centres and institutes, as well as corporate and joint laboratories.

NTU president Subra Suresh said: "We have intensified our efforts to engage employers and create job openings. Our graduating seniors are naturally worried about uncertainties in the current job market and we are pursuing all possible avenues to help them in their job search."

The university is also setting aside \$270,000 to help its staff union members upgrade their skills.

A total of \$1 million will be available after taking into account matching support of up to \$30,000 from the NTU Branch of the Education Services Union, and government subsidies for approved courses.

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1,700

About this number of continuing education and training (CET) modules offered to 16,000 fresh graduates from the six autonomous universities from next month, from which they can pick four for free. All Singapore citizens and permanent residents graduating this year can take their pick of four modules, which will be subsidised by SkillsFuture Singapore and the universities. Final-year NTU undergraduates will get an additional \$1,600 in alumni credits to offset the fees for more CET courses.