

# THE STRAITS TIMES

## NTU medical school to award its own degree from 2029, concluding agreement with Imperial College



This marks the completion of the school's partnership with Imperial College six years from now, in 2028 as planned. ST PHOTO: KUA CHEE SIONG



**Amelia Teng**  
Education Correspondent

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SINGAPORE - Students joining the Nanyang Technological University's (NTU) Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine (LKC Medicine) in 2024 will graduate with a medical degree awarded solely by the university, unlike their seniors, whose degree certificates bear the names of NTU and the Imperial College London.

This marks the completion of the school's partnership with Imperial College six years from now, in 2028 as planned, NTU said in a statement on Monday (April 11).

Students who enrol this year or in 2023 and complete their five-year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery programme by 2028 will still receive the joint degree from both institutions.

LKC Medicine was set up in 2010 to meet Singapore's growing healthcare needs. It welcomed its first batch of students in 2013, who graduated in 2018.

Its curriculum is based closely on Imperial's curriculum, with adaptations to suit Singapore's needs. The medical school adopts team-based learning and early clinical exposure for students.

In the initial years, the dean of the faculty of medicine at Imperial also served as the dean of LKC Medicine, with Imperial playing a leading role in training key staff, said the statement.

It added that NTU appointed a new dean who provided "full-time leadership in Singapore" for the medical school in 2014, when it reached "a steady and mature state".

The school's faculty members are all now fully based in Singapore and include a number of clinicians from the National Healthcare Group, its primary clinical partner.

In Monday's statement, NTU president Subra Suresh said the collaboration between NTU and Imperial to establish Singapore's newest medical school has been a "major achievement".

"Having Imperial as our strategic partner was instrumental in NTU's efforts to build a top-quality medical school from scratch within a short timeframe," he said.

"This partnership between NTU and Imperial designed a unique curriculum for medical education that made use of the latest technology, and shaped the standards of teaching, learning and governance."

Professor Suresh added: "To date, four cohorts of medical doctors have graduated from LKC Medicine and are now contributing to Singapore's healthcare sector, and the fifth cohort will enter medical practice next month."

Professor Alice Gast, president of Imperial College London, said: "As we move to a new phase of our partnership, I am confident that the (medical) school will go from strength to strength and we look forward to more areas of collaboration with NTU."



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The two universities are exploring new areas of collaboration in postgraduate education and research in areas such as healthcare devices and systems, public health, sustainability, and climate change, drawing on their strengths in engineering, said the statement.

LKC Medicine was named after Lee Foundation founder and philanthropist Lee Kong Chian, following a landmark gift of \$150 million in January 2011.

It has a dual campus, made up of the Clinical Sciences Building in Mandalay Road and the Experimental Medicine Building at NTU's main campus in Jurong West.

Associate Professor Kenneth Mak, director of medical services at the Ministry of Health and LKC Medicine governing board member, said: "In the past decade, we have seen LKC Medicine grow from strength to strength, from a fledgling medical school to one that has successfully groomed several cohorts of healthcare practitioners who are resourceful, versatile, and able to innovate in the face of new challenges in a post-Covid-19 world.

"I am confident that the training and unique blend of education at LKC Medicine will continue to equip students with the knowledge and heart to make a difference to society."

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NTU board member Leszek Borysiewicz, who is also the chairman of cancer charity Cancer Research UK and the former vice-chancellor of University of Cambridge, said: "In the UK, it is common for established medical schools to help set up new medical schools and let them operate on their own once the new schools have found and proven their excellence...

"LKCMedicine is now ready to take the next steps independently and to build bilateral research relationships with Imperial and other partners, building on and enhancing LKCMedicine's reputation for teaching and research excellence."

In 2021, the medical school was the first in Singapore and fourth in Asia to receive the Aspire award for excellence in curriculum development. The accolade is developed by a group of leading international authorities in medical education and educational bodies, and recognises excellence in medical education.

In 2017, the Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) announced the end of its education agreement with American university Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), after seven years of building up Singapore's fourth university.

SUTD then said that it would continue partnering MIT, dubbed the world's best engineering school, in research.

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