

Mastercard and NTU Singapore Launch Masters Program to Boost Cyber Talent

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The Cybersecurity FlexiMasters program is tailored specifically for mid-career professionals wanting to enter the field, helping to address the regional shortage of qualified professionals. The course is the first of its kind in the Asia Pacific region.

Mastercard and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) have launched a new FlexiMasters program, the NTU-Mastercard FlexiMasters in Cybersecurity & Digital Trust, to strengthen expertise in combating the growing threat of cybercrime. This marks the first milestone of the Mastercard-NTU Joint Lab, an industry-university partnership announced in December last year, aimed at strengthening and growing the **cybersecurity** ecosystem in the Asia Pacific region.

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The graphic features a central image of a white and blue robot on a red pedestal, set against a dark background with a blue grid pattern. The text is in white and red, with the year '2024' in a large, stylized red font.

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The NTU-Mastercard FlexiMasters program was launched by Senior Minister of State Tan Kiat How, Ministry of Communications and Information (centre), with Professor Lam Khin Yong, Vice President (Industry) of NTU Singapore (left), and Ari Sarker, President, Asia Pacific at Mastercard (right). The program leverages Mastercard's cybersecurity expertise and NTU's global reputation for education and learning to train the next generation of cybersecurity talent in the region.

Cybersecurity is a rising challenge in the Asia Pacific region. There has been a 16% YoY increase in cyber attacks in the last year. Cyber threat intelligence has been marked as one of the four key skills gaps by the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore. At the same time, digital trust has been identified by Singapore's Infocomm Media Development Authority as one of the key capabilities to develop the country's digital economy.

The FlexiMasters program is tailored specifically for mid-career professionals, allowing them to pursue their educational goals on a part-time basis and tailor their studies around existing work or family commitments. It is the first part-time FlexiMasters program in cybersecurity within NTU's portfolio. More notably, the program is open to professionals from all backgrounds wanting to make an entry

into the field of cybersecurity. This will further help grow the pool of cybersecurity talent in the market by offering new opportunities to mid-career professionals who are looking to switch careers.

This program is part of Mastercard's efforts to support the region's cybersecurity efforts. In addition to the Mastercard-NTU Joint Lab initiative, Mastercard also announced last December its objective to establish its first Cybersecurity Center of Excellence for the Asia Pacific region, based in Singapore.

Mastercard's leading role in safeguarding global networks means it is uniquely positioned to offer insights into real-world cyber threats. In the last three years, Mastercard prevented over US\$35 billion in potential losses globally from fraud through its **AI-powered** cybersecurity solutions.

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This will be the first time Mastercard is involved in the development and co-delivery of a Masters level program. Its expertise provides a solid foundation for shaping the practical applications and requirements of the program, which have been seamlessly integrated into the curriculum. By leveraging Mastercard's global knowledge and insights and offering comprehensive modules developed by Mastercard, the program ensures that participants are immersed in real-world applications and highly trained to contribute to the cybersecurity sector.

The modules within the curriculum will be delivered by experienced NTU faculty members, in conjunction with Mastercard's global in-house experts. Mastercard experts will take the lead in conducting nine modules, with a teaching commitment of ten to 13 hours per module during the inaugural run of the program, while simultaneously training NTU's faculty to enable the university to independently carry out the program in subsequent iterations.

Senior Minister of State Tan Kiat How, Ministry of Communications and Information who was the Guest of Honour at the launch event of the FlexiMasters program, said, "Securing Singapore's digital ecosystem is crucial to our security and economy. At the same time, the cybersecurity sector provides exciting career opportunities for Singaporeans. Therefore, I am heartened to see private sector firms working closely with our Institutes of Higher Learning to equip our professionals with industry relevant skills, especially in advanced areas of Cyber

Threat Intelligence and Digital Trust. I look forward to more of such industry-academia collaborations to open up more pathways for Singaporeans interested in a career in cybersecurity.”

NTU’s collaboration with Mastercard to develop the new FlexiMasters program in Cybersecurity & Digital Trust is the latest addition to the University’s suite of FlexiMasters offerings, which ranges from business administration to healthcare management and data analytics to sustainable engineering.

Professor Lam Khin Yong, Vice President (Industry) of NTU Singapore, said, “The NTU-Mastercard FlexiMasters in Cybersecurity & Digital Trust represents a vital step towards fortifying the cyber landscape in the Asia Pacific region with industry involvement. This partnership addresses the critical skills gap and talent shortage in Singapore and in the region. As we launch this pioneering programme, we affirm our commitment to empower mid-career professionals, providing them with the knowledge and skills to excel in the ever-evolving field of cybersecurity. Together, we will help shape the future of digital trust and nurturing the next generation of cyber talent. We are pleased to launch this together with Mastercard, and we look forward to involving industry more in such initiatives as it brings with it a wealth of experience and domain knowledge that they have from being on the ground. This collaborative effort signifies a significant stride toward a more secure and resilient digital future.”

The new initiative is also in line with the University’s NTU2025 strategic plan, which aims to harness the science, art, and technology of learning to address education, a key pillar of the plan, which strives to promote lifelong learning.

Ari Sarker, President, Asia Pacific at Mastercard, said: “We remain steadfast in our commitment to cultivating the skills and expertise necessary to navigate the evolving landscape of digital threats. By empowering individuals and fortifying their knowledge, we not only contribute to the collective resilience against cyber threats but also elevate Singapore’s position on the global stage.”

Ajay Bhalla, President, Cyber and Intelligence at Mastercard, said: “Our ambition to continuously innovate to safeguard trust in our increasingly connected world extends beyond technological advancements to the heart of cybersecurity—nurturing the next generation of professionals. Through this world-leading Masters program we will enrich best-in-class talent to help deliver a safe and trusted digital ecosystem for the benefit of everyone’s future.”



(L-R): Karthik Ramanathan, Senior Vice President, Cyber & Intelligence Solutions, Asia Pacific, Mastercard; Professor Lam Khin Yong, Vice President (Industry) of NTU Singapore; Senior Minister of State Tan Kiat How, Ministry of Communications and Information; Matthew Driver, Executive Vice President, Head of Services, Asia Pacific, Mastercard; Professor Lam Kwok Yan, Executive Director, Digital Trust Centre, NTU Singapore; Ari Sarker, President, Asia Pacific, Mastercard, celebrating the successful industry-academia collaboration to strengthen cyber expertise in Asia Pacific.

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