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S\$70m to boost R&D manpower in Singapore

By Alvina Soh | Posted: 04 August 2011 22:17 hrs

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SINGAPORE: Some S\$70 million will be pumped into a new postgraduate programme to nurture research, innovation and enterprise talent in Singapore.

The Industrial Postgraduate Programme (IPP) is jointly developed by the Education Ministry, the Economic Development Board (EDB) and local universities.

Some 200 students will participate in the programme over the next five years.

The programme, which starts this month, aims to build a pool of postgraduate manpower with research and development skills and industry experience.

Students will undergo training in laboratories of private sector companies.

Education Minister Heng Swee Keat said this will foster interaction between academia and industry and provide the graduates with the best of both worlds.

Mr Heng also handed out scholarships to 120 aspiring scientists at A*STAR's annual scholarship awards ceremony on Thursday.

EDB said that the IPP garnered strong interest from both companies and the universities.

EDB added that the S\$70 million grant will fund the trainee's full tuition fees at locally-based universities, as well as their salary for up to four years.

Alvin Tan, the assistant managing director of the EDB, said: "Not only will companies be able to nurture and develop industry-ready R&D talent, they will also be able to leverage on the universities' capabilities to enhance their R&D capabilities.

"Universities will also have expanded opportunities to partner with industrial researchers to translate research into commercial applications."

The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the National University of Singapore (NUS) said a handful of students have already expressed an interest in the programme.

Professor Lam Khin Yong, chief of staff in the president's office at NTU, said: "This is kind of an alternative path where from very first day, they work in a corporate research environment.

"They have an opportunity to work on projects deemed relevant by the company and they are treated as an employee of the company, and they can continue to work for the company after graduation. So in way, the career path is more defined."

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A*STAR's annual Scholarship Awards Ceremony 2011.

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