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Draw a salary while studying for your PhD

By Gwendolyn Ng

Postgraduates enrolled in a new programme will be able to work and draw a salary as part of their studies.

Those enrolled in the Industrial Postgraduate Programme (IPP) as PhD students will spend time working on industry projects in home-grown and multinational companies.

Programme participants will be given a salary of up to \$3,300 a month. They will also have their tuition fees covered.

Open to Singaporeans and Singapore permanent residents, the programme is funded by an Economic Development Board (EDB) \$70-million grant, and will potentially benefit around 200 postgraduate students enrolled over the next five years.

The programme, which will begin in the next academic year, was announced by Minister for Education Heng Swee Keat yesterday at the Agency for Science, Technology and Research Scholarship's 10th-anniversary award ceremony, held at Fusionopolis.

Mr Heng said: "IPP graduates (will get) the best of both worlds, fostering interaction between academia and industry."

The IPP is jointly developed by the EDB and the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with Singapore and Singapore-based foreign universities, such as Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and the Technical University of Munich.

Postgraduate students at schools such as NTU, National University of Singapore and the Singapore Management University are eligible for IPP enrolment.

Asked which companies students would be able to work at, an EDB spokesman said the EDB is in talks with more than 10 local and international companies, including Rolls Royce and 3M.

Professor Lam Khin Yong, NTU Chief of Staff, said that response from companies had been good thus far.

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He said: "(For students), the opportunity to experience working in a corporate research-and- development environment is attractive. Trainees are expected to continue with the company after graduating and are more likely to be assured of a job. For companies, it's a ready pool of talent for them."

One student already enrolled in the pioneer batch of the IPP is Ms Lee Si Hui, 22.

The recent NTU student, who studied mechanical engineering, will be continuing her studies at NTU next week and will most likely be training - and thus earning her PhD - at the prestigious European Aeronautic Defense and Space Company, the parent company of aircraft-manufacturing company, Airbus.

Ms Lee, who earned her bachelor's degree last month, did not intend to further her studies at first.

She said: "Like most people, I thought of going to work after graduating so as to repay my study loan."

After listening to her professor, who recommended the IPP to her, she was sold.

She said: "Your status is like an employee, you work and receive a salary. But, at the same time, I get to pursue my studies and upgrade myself."



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