

Media Release

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STUDENTS TO GAIN MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH JOINT POLYTECHNIC-ITE PARTNERSHIP WITH TOMOWORK

Singapore, 3 April 2023 – ITE and all five Polytechnics in Singapore and TomoWork will sign a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** to work together to deliver impactful programmes for students and graduates with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The collaboration will provide career training and opportunities for young aspiring students who are interested in roles that are in demand upon graduation. This partnership is aligned with the **Enabling MasterPlan 2030**, which sets out the vision for Singapore to become an inclusive society and increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities to 40% in 2030.

The MOU will be signed by **Ms Low Khah Gek, CEO of the Institute of Technical Education, Mr Russell Chan, Principal & CEO, of Nanyang Polytechnic, Mr Lim Kok Kiang, Principal & CEO of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Ms Jeanne Liew Principal & CEO of Republic Polytechnic, Mr Soh Wai Wah, Principal & CEO of Singapore Polytechnic, Mr Peter Lam, Principal & CEO of Temasek Polytechnic, and Mr Mike Momota, CEO of TomoWork.**

The signing will be witnessed by Guest-of-Honour, **Ms. Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Manpower** and **Mr Joel Leong, Board Chairman of TomoWork.**

Prior to this MOU, there had been deepened collaborations to help SEN students: For example, the Talent Accelerator Programme (TAP) – which is in its third year – helps SEN students make the transition to working life through a 12-week preparatory experience. In 2023, the TAP will be held for the first time at Republic Polytechnic (RP), and RP will host 24 participants from all five polytechnics.

To achieve its goals, it is imperative to obtain the partnership and support of industry partners from the business sector. For this year's TAP, leading companies like **Bloomberg, EVCo, foodpanda, Google, LinkedIn, Micron, MSD Pharma (Singapore), Singlife, and Standard Chartered among others,** will be onboard, to support in the acceleration of career preparation opportunities. Besides learning from the industry, participants will also acquire critical soft skills, career skills & technical skills to prepare them for jobs of the future. At the end of TAP, the participants will showcase to the public their learnings on the stage at **Demo Day** (30 May 2023 at Republic Polytechnic).

The leaders of ITE and the five polytechnics strongly support this joint initiative:

Ms Low Khah Gek, CEO of Institute of Technical Education, said, “Many employers have already incorporated diversity as one of their core business values, but they may face challenges in its implementation. We are glad that TomoWork is able to plug the gap by connecting the differently-abled community, companies and institutions of higher learning to overcome these challenges together. We are proud to partner TomoWork in empowering students with SEN to be job-ready and future-ready.”

Mr Russell Chan, Principal & CEO of Nanyang Polytechnic, said, “This is a meaningful collaboration that will give excellent opportunities and exposure to students with Special Education Needs. As a polytechnic that believes strongly in industry connections, I am very heartened that partners have also come forward to

mentor and help. There is also much value in the peer relationships the students will form with each other through this shared experience, as they face the challenges of a fast-changing world together.”

Mr. Lim Kok Kiang, Principal & CEO of Ngee Ann Polytechnic, said, “We are delighted to partner with TomoWork to create more opportunities for our students to gain valuable professional and life skills that will open doors to fulfilling careers. Even as we are committed to fostering a supportive learning environment for our students, we are thankful for the many industry partners who are journeying alongside us. Together, we will build a more inclusive society in which our students can truly flourish.”

Ms Jeanne Liew, Principal/CEO, Republic Polytechnic said, “We are pleased to be expanding our existing partnership with TomoWork to provide our students and graduates with special educational needs the opportunity to sharpen their skills through TomoWork’s tailored career training programmes. This MOU reinforces our commitment to create a more caring and inclusive society that enables every person to fulfil their potential. As part of the TomoWork Talent Accelerator Programme (TAP), students can look forward to participating in inclusive and experiential activities at Republic Polytechnic's Xperiential Learning Centre, Singapore’s first large-scale inclusive outdoor adventure facility.”

Mr Soh Wai Wah, Principal & CEO of Singapore Polytechnic, said, “The concerted effort from the polytechnics, ITE and TomoWork is set to create a more inclusive social environment in Singapore for SEN learners to have greater access to learning and training resources as well as equal opportunities to succeed in life. As lifelong educators, we are privileged to be part of a meaningful partnership where we will shape the career training impact programmes to prepare the learners to be work ready and life ready for the roles that they aspire to pursue upon graduation.”

Mr Peter Lam, Principal & CEO of Temasek Polytechnic, said, “TP has enjoyed a good partnership with TomoWork since its inaugural run of the Talent Accelerator Programme in 2021. We are excited that through this MOU signing, the partnership with Tomowork will now include all Polytechnics and ITE, and we are very glad that students with SEN from all polytechnics and ITE can now come together to explore exciting career opportunities in growth industries like technology and finance.”

Mr Mike Momota, CEO of TomoWork, said, “We are very honoured to be here today to celebrate our meaningful milestone with very strong collaboration in the industry and all Polytechnics. Also, this is my privilege to contribute to the realization of Enabling Masterplan 2030. The deep understanding and warm support of our stakeholders have made us what we are today, and we feel grateful that we have provided a meaningful opportunity for the nearly 200 graduates through our partnership.”

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About Institute of Technical Education

The Institute of Technical Education (ITE) was established as a post-secondary institution in 1992, under the Ministry of Education. ITE is a principal provider of career and technical education and a key developer of national skills certification and standards skilling Singapore for the future economy. It offers three key programmes - (1) Pre-Employment Training for youths after secondary education (2) Continuing Education and Training for adult learners and (3) Workplace Learning and Work-Study Programmes with employers. Under its 'One ITE System, Three Colleges' Governance Model, ITE has three Colleges - ITE College Central, ITE College East and ITE College West. For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.ite.edu.sg>

About Nanyang Polytechnic

Established as an institution of higher learning in 1992, Nanyang Polytechnic's (NYP) academic schools offer quality education and training through 40 full-time diploma courses and common entry programmes. NYP also has a full suite of Continuing Education and Training (CET) options for lifelong learning, ranging from specialist and advanced diplomas to SkillsFuture-supported modules and courses. NYP's Asian Culinary Institute Singapore and the Singapore Institute of Retail Studies are CET institutes set up in partnership with SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to champion and transform Singapore's F&B and retail sectors respectively. A third NYP CET institute - the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning - also set up in collaboration with SSG, will spearhead the development of progressive workplace learning strategies and programmes for companies here.

For more information, please visit <https://www.nyp.edu.sg/>

About Ngee Ann Polytechnic

Ngee Ann Polytechnic started in 1963 and is today one of Singapore's leading institutions of higher learning with over 13,000 enrolled students in about 40 courses across diverse disciplines. It seeks to develop students with a passion for learning, values for life, and competencies to thrive in a global workplace. The polytechnic also supports Continuing Education and Training (CET) through its CET Academy, which offers a wide range of part-time programmes and short courses. It works closely with industry partners to curate programmes for emerging skills, develop talent pipeline for the industries and help adult learners stay agile in today's rapidly changing global economy.

www.np.edu.sg

About Republic Polytechnic

The first educational institution in Singapore to leverage the Problem-based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic (RP) has seven schools and one academic centre offering 37 full-time diplomas in Applied Science, Engineering, Management and Communication, Hospitality, Infocomm, Sports, Health & Leisure, and Technology for the Arts.

RP is committed to nurturing professionals with strong problem-solving capabilities through an innovative and entrepreneurial learning environment, based on a holistic and industry-relevant curriculum. RP's Academy for Continuing Education also offers a comprehensive suite of lifelong learning programmes to provide adult learners with skills upgrading opportunities. For more information, visit <http://www.rp.edu.sg>.

About Singapore Polytechnic

Established in 1954, Singapore Polytechnic (SP) is Singapore's first polytechnic. It has 10 schools that offer 30 full-time diploma courses and four common entry programmes for more than 12,800 students. SP adopts a proven creative teaching and learning framework and offers students a holistic, authentic and industry-relevant curriculum, innovative and vibrant learning spaces, and enriching overseas programmes.

The Polytechnic is committed to producing competent and versatile graduates who are also imbued with sound values so that they can be work-ready, life-ready and world-ready. Currently, SP has more than 223,000 graduates and among them are successful entrepreneurs, top executives in multi-national and public-listed corporations, and well-known professionals across various industries and leaders in government.

SP clinched the inaugural ASEAN People's Award in 2015 for its contributions toward the region's community-building efforts. SP is also the first polytechnic to be awarded the President's Award for the Environment in 2010 and the President's Social Service Award in 2011, as well as the President's Award for Teachers in 2017, 2018 and 2020.

Follow SP on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/singaporepolytechnic/> and Twitter and Instagram at @singaporepoly.

About Temasek Polytechnic

Established in 1990, TP is one of the leading institutions of higher learning in Singapore. Currently it offers 36 full-time diploma courses in the areas of applied science, business, design, engineering, humanities & social sciences and informatics & IT. It also offers over 40 part-time courses, up to the advanced diploma level. TP students undergo a holistic learning system that combines hands-on experience, character education and relevant life skills, in an enriching learning environment. The Polytechnic has also infused global realities into its programmes and developed a mindset on campus that embraces socio-cultural diversity. Believing in the possibilities of tomorrow, Temasek Polytechnic is committed to co-creating a better world with its stakeholders by nurturing the next generation of values-centred leaders, lifelong learners and future-oriented creators. For more information, please visit <https://www.tp.edu.sg>

About TomoWork

"Tomo" means friends in Japanese, representing a closely knitted global community coming together to empower the differently-abled community in improving their quality of life. Established in 2019, TomoWork Ltd is a registered charity in Singapore (Aug 2022). We envision a world where there is equitable opportunity for the disadvantaged so that they can live with dignity and feels a sense of belonging to society. We believe that being gainfully employed is the best way to improve dignity and quality of life. Hence, we are leveraging the diversity of stakeholders to join us in our mission. For more information, please visit <https://tomowork.org>