

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE REPORTING

Raising Capabilities of Singapore's Private Education Sector through Process Innovation and Manpower Development

1. Today, Mr Lawrence Wong, Minister of State for Defence and Education, announced two initiatives launched by the Council for Private Education (CPE) to enhance the capabilities of private education institutions (PEIs) at the Education Innovation Conference 2012.
2. Under the first initiative, PEIs are encouraged to adopt school management systems through the use of information and communications technology (ICT). These systems will streamline key business and administration processes, achieve better cost efficiencies, and enhance the learning experience of students.
3. The second initiative involves the development of a Specialist Diploma in Applied Learning and Teaching by Republic Polytechnic. The availability of this Specialist Diploma will enhance the pedagogy and instructional skills of teachers in the private education sector.
4. These initiatives will further develop and raise the quality of the private education sector and improve the ability of PEIs to deliver higher quality education.
5. In his speech, Mr Wong noted the role played by the private education sector in providing pathways for Singaporeans to upgrade their qualifications and skills. Said Mr Wong, "In line with our overall emphasis on quality education, we would like the private education institutions in Singapore to offer high-quality programmes, to support continuous learning and skills upgrading at all levels of our workforce. This is why MOE has been pushing for higher standards in private education."
6. Said Mr Henry Heng, Chief Executive Officer of the Council for Private Education, "These two initiatives address the crucial need for PEIs to raise their capabilities to achieve better learning outcomes. In the past two years, the Council has focused on ensuring that all PEIs have met the stipulated baseline standards. We will continue to work towards a higher quality private education sector so that students are assured of quality education."
7. Details on the two initiatives are in the attached factsheet.

About the Council for Private Education

The Council for Private Education (CPE) is a statutory board established in December 2009 to regulate the private education industry. The Council has implemented two schemes – the mandatory Enhanced Registration Framework and the EduTrust Certification scheme – to uplift and maintain standards in the private education sector. Besides its role as a sectoral regulator, the Council also provides student services and public education through its Student Services Centre, and promotes the development of the private education industry. For more information, please visit the CPE website at <http://www.cpe.gov.sg/>.

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FACTSHEET

Industry Development Initiatives to Raise Quality of the Private Education Sector

1. To raise the standards of Private Education Institutions (PEIs) in the areas of corporate governance, course administration, quality of educational provision and information transparency, the Council for Private Education (CPE) implemented the mandatory Enhanced Registration Framework and the voluntary EduTrust Certification Scheme in December 2009.
2. To further develop and raise the quality of the private education sector, the CPE will implement measures to enhance the capabilities of PEIs and improve the ability of PEIs to deliver higher quality education.
3. The first initiative involves process innovation via the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to encourage smaller PEIs to adopt school management systems. These systems will streamline key business and administration processes, raise the productivity of PEIs, achieve better cost efficiencies, and enhance the learning experience of students.
4. The second initiative involves manpower development. The quality of teachers can be linked to better educational outcomes for students in the long term. To enhance the pedagogy and instructional skills of teachers in the private education sector, Republic Polytechnic has developed and designed the Specialist Diploma in Applied Learning and Teaching (SDALT). SDALT will provide professional upgrading opportunities for teachers and improve overall academic delivery across the private education sector.

Adoption of School Management Systems

5. Industry feedback indicate that many PEIs can raise productivity, achieve better cost efficiencies, and enhance the learning experience of their students by leveraging more on ICT. This is especially so for smaller PEIs, many of whom lack the ability to undertake infrastructural improvements on their own. The CPE will therefore help smaller PEIs in the adoption of school management systems.
6. The CPE conducted a demand and needs survey on school management systems with PEIs earlier this year. The results affirmed that a one-size-fits-all model will not work. A modular structure is therefore adopted to give PEIs the flexibility and option to subscribe to different system modules which best suits their needs. PEIs will be given the option to choose between the Software as a Service (SaaS) model which is subscription-based, and the buy-and-own model. Therefore, PEIs may subscribe or buy-and-own school management systems, which would comprise some or all available modules.
7. The school management system will comprise a range of modules in critical areas in the daily operations of PEIs. The key modules include:
 - Student Registration and Student Contracts
 - Student Fee Management
 - Student Attendance Tracking
 - Course and Examination Administration
 - Uploading Assignments and Lecture Notes
 - Discussion Forums

- Customer Enquiries and Surveys
- Management Reports

8. To make the adoption of ICT affordable for PEIs, the CPE and IDA have been working with the industry to aggregate demand for school management systems and to link PEIs with suitable ICT vendors. Smaller PEIs can tap on funding through IDA's \$85.5 million SME Productivity with Infocomm Adoption and Transformation (iSPRINT) scheme, which supports 50% to 70% of the qualifying costs of ICT adoption by SMEs. This scheme will lower the barrier for PEIs to implement a consistent and efficient system for professional school administration, for quality and consistent student outcomes over the long run. PEIs will not only be able to defray costs in procuring school management systems to enhance productivity but will also be able to share common learning experiences in adopting ICT.

Improving Academic Delivery

9. Based on industry consultations and feedback, that there is a strong demand for a formal teacher training programme.

10. The Specialist Diploma in Applied Learning and Teaching (SDALT) has therefore been developed by Republic Polytechnic. It is aimed at enhancing the pedagogy and instructional skills of these educators. The programme is 280 hours long, and will be conducted on a part-time modular basis. It will cover teaching practices as well as curriculum design and assessment. The first intake will commence in July 2012. More than 1,000 PEI teachers are expected to be trained in the next five years.

11. Under the academic CET framework, Singaporeans and PRs who attend this programme will enjoy subsidies of 85% and 60% respectively.

12. The programme is voluntary, and will complement existing competency-based pedagogy courses such as the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) Advanced Certificate in Training and Assessment (ACTA), and Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education (DACE). These programmes are mandatory under the Workforce Development Authority's accreditation criteria for adult educators (including WSQ trainers, assessors and curriculum developers) engaged in the design and/or delivery of WSQ courses. Together, ACTA, DACE and SDALT present a host of complementary programmes to meet the diverse needs of teaching staff in the private education sector.