

MEDIA RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE REPORTING

Former Manager of School of Applied Studies pleads guilty to contravening Private Education Act

1. Jeremy Low, former manager of the now defunct School of Applied Studies (SAS), has pleaded guilty to the following contraventions of the Private Education Act¹:
 - Section 41(1)(a)(i) – Failure to perform the duties of a manager in keeping proper student records
 - Section 60(2)(a) – Failure to ensure that the SAS complies with a direction issued by the Council for Private Education (CPE) to refund students
2. Low, 32, was found guilty and fined a total of \$16,000, or in default face a combined jail term of sixteen weeks, for the above two charges. A third charge - of making a false statement to the CPE as part of the SAS' EduTrust certification application – was taken into consideration for purposes of sentencing in court today.
3. CPE commenced investigations on the SAS after receiving an anonymous complaint in October 2010, and was informed by the SAS that it had decided to cease operations due to financial difficulties. CPE's assistance was sought to place its 300 students in other private education institutes (PEIs). The CPE and the SAS held a joint briefing with affected students on 20 Oct 2010 to provide information on placement options, as well as administrative details such as procedures to claim outstanding course fees from insurance companies and escrow² banks. 108 students were successfully placed in nine EduTrust-certified PEIs through CPE's intervention. Of the remaining students, some had graduated, while others indicated that they did not require placement assistance, or were uncontactable.

¹ The Private Education Act can be found at www.cpe.gov.sg/legislation/private-education-act

² Under the escrow scheme, PEIs are not allowed to collect any money directly from their students. Instead, students are to deposit all their fees into the escrow bank account which their PEI has opened with any one of the CPE-appointed banks. Funds in the account are disbursed to the PEI on a regular basis only if specific conditions are met.

4. In the course of its investigations, CPE discovered that the SAS had collected course fees for a degree programme that had not been conducted. SAS did not comply with CPE's directions to refund the money to date.
5. In addition, Low has failed to ensure the keeping of proper records, which flouted the Private Education Act.
6. Said Mr Brandon Lee, Chief Executive Officer, CPE, "All PEIs have an obligation to their students. By taking errant operators and managers to task, CPE sends a strong signal to PEIs that they need to fulfil the obligations of the Private Education Act, or face punitive measures. We maintain a vigilant watch against errant PEIs and managers, and ensure that all PEIs meet the mandatory registration requirements and legislative obligations."

Issued by the Council for Private Education

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. Its mission is to raise standards in the private education sector through effective regulation, industry development and consumer education. To achieve this, 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 seeks to enhance the capabilities and quality of the private education sector through industry development. For more information, please visit the CPE website at <http://www.cpe.gov.sg/>.