School of Interdisciplinary Studies

The School of Interdisciplinary Studies (IS) provides Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students with a broad-based education to expand their personal and professional boundaries, enabling them to be more versatile and competitive in today's job market.

The School exposes students to a learning environment and curriculum that aim to excite them by igniting their passion and infusing them with that something extra. The emphasis is on developing students who are able to think critically, creatively and unconventionally, exude confidence and possess a wide range of knowledge, skills and perspectives outside their main disciplines. IS modules account for 15% of a student’s total curriculum hours and offer students the opportunity to learn across diverse areas within the following module clusters:

Prescribed Development Areas (PDAs)
- Communication
- Innovation and Enterprise
- Culture and Community
- Personal Mastery and Development

Cross Disciplinary Categories (CDCs)
- Arts and Humanities
- Business
- Science and Technology
- Design

In their first year, students take compulsory modules from the PDAs. The aim of these areas is to help students become socially responsible individuals, who are equipped with the skills to meet real-world challenges. In their second year, students can pursue electives from the CDCs. These modules are designed to get the students to think critically and explore opportunities in multi-disciplinary areas. Depending on their choice of CDC modules, students can gain insight into human experiences, social and business institutions, as well as scientific advances.

Mathematics in IS
IS also supports the teaching of Mathematics in NP. IS lecturers also conduct additional bridging mathematics classes for students who have weaker grades in O-level Mathematics, and ITE graduates. This helps these students improve their Mathematics proficiency so that they can cope with their various Mathematics modules in their respective disciplines.
DIPLOMA PLUS PROGRAMMES

The Diploma Plus Certificate in Foreign Languages (FL) is open to all students, as an enhancement programme. In this programme, students take six modules and attain a level of competency that enables them to take external qualifications such as the Japanese Language Proficiency Test and the Diplome d’Etudes de Langue Francaise Examinations, which are internationally recognised and which certify a candidate’s ability to communicate effectively across a wide spectrum of functions.

The Diploma Plus Certificate in Advanced Engineering Mathematics helps students gain admission into the university by strengthening their Mathematical foundation. This programme focuses on the Pure Mathematics section of the H2 A-Level Mathematics syllabus. NP students who attain this Diploma Plus Certificate will be considered to have A-level equivalent Mathematics and will be allowed to read modules carrying A-level Mathematics as a prerequisite when they pursue a degree at NUS.

The Diploma Plus Certificate in Business provides students with a basic understanding of the environment in which a business operates, and the management of a business and its critical resources. It helps to prepare non-business students for work in a business environment, as well as give a head start to those who wish to pursue a business degree after graduation.

Diploma Plus Programmes students have also participated in competitions and won top prizes. For example, in the Japanese Photo Essay Contest, a competition supported by the Japan Forum and the Embassy of Japan in Singapore, our students won the top prizes for both the Basic and Intermediate Level of the Tertiary Category.

TALENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME SEMINARS
The Talent Development Programme Seminars (TDPS) module offered by IS, provides an avenue for students to gain IS credit units by participating in external events and field trips designed to stretch their abilities. It is open to Level 2 and 3 NP scholarship recipients and nominated top-performing students.

LEARNING ACROSS CULTURES
IS also conducts vacation modules that enable NP students to learn about Singapore and its place in the world.

FACILITIES & STAFF
The School of IS is home to iSpark!, a student-centred studio designed to spark students’ creativity, and where students organise and attend workshops, seminars and exhibitions. Interesting features in the studio include Monkey Mirrors, which reflect different perspectives on the same thing and the Living Wall, a creative use of wall space to project messages.

IS lecturers continue to deliver quality broad-based education while conducting independent research and development work. IS lecturers have conducted workshops and courses for clients such as Caterpillar Logistics (Enhanced Spoken & Written English Course) and the Singapore Institute of Management (English Pronunciation Tips for Singaporeans, Clean Up Your Language).

COLLABORATIONS
As part of the Initiative for ASEAN Integration, the School was commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct training programmes for Cambodian and Laotian government officials. Several well-received English Language and Communication Skills courses were conducted in both countries in 2006 and 2007. Plans are in place for a similar course to take place in 2011 for Laotian officials. In addition, the School successfully conducted an English Communication for Managers and Administrators course for senior civil servants in Myanmar in early 2010, as part of the Singapore-Thailand Third Country Training Programme.

IS designed and conducted the fourth run of an English Language Bridging Course for Asian Nursing Scholars from January to April 2010. This training was commissioned by the National Health Group and SingHealth Services.

IS has been conducting the English Language Bridging course (ELBC) at Wuhan Overseas Education Centre (OEC) at the Wuhan University of Science & Technology (WUST), China, since its inception in September 2008. The ELBC levels up the English Language proficiency of China students enrolled in the NP-Wuhan Diploma in Logistics Management.

IS was invited to share NP’s National Education efforts and creative approaches for its World Issues: A Singapore Perspective (WISP) module at the annual Best Practices workshop organised by Nexus (Central National Education Office), Ministry of Defence, for its Singapore Armed Forces commandos in April 2007 and April 2008.

Under the Japanese Language Immersion Programme, 10 Enhancement Programme students attended language training at Osaka University as part of an annual exchange programme in October 2010. The students gained first-hand experience of the Japanese culture.

Under the Teaching Internship Programme, three Japanese interns from Osaka University attended several workshops and teaching practice sessions in NP in November 2010.