Where Businesses Take Flight
Why Ngee Ann Poly is the place to be for young entrepreneurs
GET THE XTRA EDGE

Future-proofing careers through courses at Ngee Ann’s CET Academy

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DIPLOMAS: PART-TIME / CONVERSION / ADVANCED / SPECIALIST
Acquire specialised knowledge in core areas or prepare for a career industry switch

EMERGING SKILLS
- Data Analytics
- Digital Media
- Entrepreneurship
- Financial Services & Governance
- Tech-enabled Services
- Advanced Manufacturing

WORKFORCE SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS
Get equipped with key competencies and skills for the workforce

SkillsFuture Singapore funding of up to 95% is available for selected courses. For more information, visit www.np.edu.sg/cet

For enquiries, contact us at media_enquiries@np.edu.sg.
ON COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

Ngee Ann’s Continuing Education & Training Academy offers curated programmes and future skills training for adult learners

ent “skills upgrading” and many would imagine going back to the school or classroom. But for Ms Doreen Low, learning came in the form of an overseas trip to Myanmar instead.

The owner of corporate services company, Aspri Group, participated in the Travel & Learn Programme, which aims to provide adult learners with overseas startup knowledge and networking opportunities. The study trip is among the initiatives rolled out by Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s (NP) Continuing Education & Training (CET) Academy, in line with the government’s call to lifelong learning for all ages through the national SkillsFuture movement.

“Through the Travel & Learn Programme, we were exposed to new business markets and opportunities available for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents,” said NP Principal, Mr Clarence Ti.

Meanwhile, individuals looking to upgrade their skills or switch careers will benefit from CET Academy’s formal courses, leading to a diploma, specialist diploma, advanced diploma or Workforce Skills Qualifications. Corporate training courses can also be customised to equip employees with up-to-date skills.

“Lifelong learning will be the new norm. As a ‘poly for all ages’, NP fundamentally plays a key role in helping Singaporeans of all ages stay relevant and current in their jobs and skills,” said NP Principal, Mr Clarence Ti.

As a ‘poly for all ages’, NP fundamentally plays a key role in helping Singaporeans of all ages stay relevant and current in their jobs and skills.

— Mr Clarence Ti, NP Principal

SNAPSHOTS OF SOME INTERESTING PROGRAMMES:

1. Artificial Intelligence in Finance (AIF)

Artificial intelligence is shaking up the financial sector in a big way. Industry professionals can stay abreast of its cutting-edge trends through the online 18-module AIF course, a partnership between NP and the London-based Centre for Finance, Technology and Entrepreneurship. Industry thought leaders will share key fundamentals and real-life case studies on topics ranging from basic artificial intelligence technology to the implementation of strategic-level artificial intelligence.

The enrolment for AIF is hitting 2,000. The programme’s anchor sponsors, OCBC Bank and UOB, alone have committed more than 1,000 training places for their staff. A 70 per cent fee subsidy from SkillsFuture Singapore is available for Singaporeans and Permanent Residents. For more information, visit aifinance.sg

2. SkillsFuture Series

In October 2017, SkillsFuture Singapore launched a new SkillsFuture Series of training programmes in eight emerging skills areas, anchored by local polytechnics, universities and ITE. In line with this, NP rolled out 12 SkillsFuture Series courses in the areas of Entrepreneurship, Advanced Manufacturing, Tech-enabled Services and Data Analytics. The Entrepreneurship series is led by NP, and includes curated short and modular courses pitched at different proficiency levels.

3. Startup Talent Factory

The Startup Talent Factory matches recent polytechnic graduates to jobs in startups, lasting from nine months to a year, with recommended starting salaries of $2,500. This allows them to build marketable skills in a fast-paced environment and experience the realities of startup businesses. It will also supply a pipeline of talent for startups to ease their hiring crunch.

4. Travel & Learn Programme

Network with seasoned entrepreneurs, hear insider business viewpoints and visit local incubators. These are among the experiences on offer in the Travel & Learn Programme, a flagship initiative of Ngee Ann Polytechnic.

The Travel & Learn Programme which was first launched in March 2017, helps business development professionals gain startup knowledge in a practical setting and connects them with local business owners to explore potential collaborations. Through the programme, participants are exposed to new business markets and opportunities available in China, India and South-east Asia.

For more information on upcoming trips, visit www.np.edu.sg/travelandlearn

5. Customised Courses

Organisations seeking to upgrade their employees’ skillsets can tap on CET Academy’s customised courses, which are tailored to meet the needs of individual companies. The CET Academy has developed courses for organisations such as PSA Singapore (Maritime Motion & Control) and SingTel (Deep Dive into Python).

Check out our full range of CET courses.
It might look small and unassuming, but this cap packs a mean punch. Equipped with artificial intelligence features, Vision helps the visually-impaired in their day-to-day activities by describing the world around them.

The wearer controls the device mostly through speech. This activates the processor mounted on the cap to translate the visual information into verbal messages which are narrated through a portable speaker. Leveraging the Amazon Alexa platform and python programming language, Vision is fitted with obstacle detection capabilities and will issue a warning beep if the user is about to collide with an object.

The brainchild of Class of 2018 Engineering Science graduates Jonathan Lee and Ang Hwee Leng, Vision was created after the pair participated in Runninghour, a race for runners with special needs.

While Mr Seah uses a cane to navigate and detect hazards on the ground, Vision helps him to distinguish those above his knee level. “It helps me to avoid walking into low-lying tree branches, signs or low beams that my cane might not detect,” he said.

Looking ahead, Jonathan and Hwee Leng hope to further improve Vision’s capabilities. Hwee Leng explained, “We would like to make the device more sensitive in detecting the user’s voice, especially in noisy environments, as well as improve its user friendliness.” The pair will also work on improving the device’s obstacle detection functions, so that hazards on the ground are detected and communicated to the user.

Meet the Telebot, Mdm Chew’s robot buddy. Her new friend has a screen for its head and trundles around on wheels. It can also read the news on request, and even dance to catchy tunes.

Developed by the students and staff from Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s (NP) Electrical Engineering division, the Telebot is a life-sized interactive humanoid that allows caregivers to stay in touch with seniors living alone. It also keeps them engaged in their daily lives, and acts as a social companion and guardian. For example, the “personal assistant” can help its “human bosses” remember to take their pills, and even connect them to family and medical professionals through video calls.

“Social isolation is a growing issue among the elderly in Singapore. We hope that the Telebot will keep them socially, emotionally and mentally engaged,” said Mr Li Yinbei, the NP lecturer who supervised the Telebot project.

While welcoming a robot into her home was not Mdm Chew’s initial idea of a support aide in her older years, the idea of being able to connect easily with her family members via video calls proved too attractive. “My daughter lives overseas and only returns to Singapore once a year, while my son lives with his family in Yishun. Seeing their faces on the Telebot’s screen makes me feel as if they are physically present with me,” said Mdm Chew.

Wei Feng, a final-year student who worked on the Telebot project, added: “It makes for more meaningful communication compared to a phone call, although it may not be the same as speaking with someone face-to-face. It is also easy to access and saves on commuting time.”

While the Telebot is programmed to function autonomously, caregivers can also control the robot remotely with a web-based application.

“For instance, if the user forgets where he or she has placed their medication, caregivers can guide the robot to lead them to the correct location in their homes,” said Wei Feng. “It is not meant to replace humans; rather, it allows older adults to stay sharp, and keep connected and active.”

“Contrary to our initial concerns that the seniors may hesitate to accept the robots, they are actually very happy and grateful to use it. They feel proud to have the opportunity to use this latest technology, and to be tuned into the digital world,” said Mr Li.
A video produced by a team of recent Ngee Ann graduates could save your life in a railway incident. “What to do in a train disruption” was designed, written and animated by five Class of 2018 Animation & 3D Arts graduates. Commissioned by SBS Transit, the series of informational videos – featuring animated characters – highlights the steps to take in the event of a train disruption.

“We faced the challenge of delivering a detailed message with specific instructions within a short span of time,” said Robyn Carillo, who was the project’s lead editor. “Thankfully, we managed to work around this by speeding up certain parts of the animation and eliminating unnecessary portions to keep the videos concise.” The videos will be shown on trains and stations along the North-east Line & Downtown Line.

“Getting to collaborate with a major transport operator like SBS Transit also gave us great hands-on experience in working with a real-world client,” said Robyn.

Mok Zijie’s Barrel may look like a simple plastic container, but this product can potentially improve the lives of Kenyans living in rural villages, who spend up to one-third of their day travelling to draw and transport home clean water. Given a product design brief to improve the natives’ access to clean water, Zijie aimed to tackle the issue with an effective, sustainable solution. The Class of 2018 Product Design & Innovation graduate designed Barrel, which can hold 90 litres of water. With its round shape, transporting water is hassle-free, as it can be rolled along the ground.

Barrel also contains a filtration system that distils the water within. The water first enters a mesh that removes large sediments. Next, a charcoal filter absorbs both toxic chemicals and small particles. The water then passes through a cloth filter before the final process of pasteurisation, ensuring that Kenyan natives will be able to enjoy clean water by the time they reach home.

Zijie also designed an instruction manual for Barrel, with infographics and visuals which can be easily understood by users of all ages. “I’m glad that I could work on a non-profit project that lets me help people in developing countries,” he said.

Travelling in a country with limited access to clean water was what prompted Class of 2018 Product Design & Innovation graduate Hong Li Xuan to devise ways to improve the situation. “While I was an intern in Laos for three months, my classmates and I had to buy bottles of water ourselves, as the water there was not sanitary,” she said.

But eco-conscious Li Xuan also wanted to reduce usage of these plastic water bottles. Collaborating with social and environmental services provider, The GoodWater Company, Li Xuan researched and designed a prototype adaptor for a water filter known as AquaPure.

The nifty device can be adapted to fit bathroom and kitchen faucets with different diameters. Its small size makes it easy for travellers to carry around.

“I thought it would be useful to produce a portable filter so that we can drink water directly from the tap whenever we are. With the AquaPure filters providing convenient access to clean tap water, I hope we can reduce our use of plastic bottles and our carbon footprint,” said Li Xuan.
City-hopping across Indonesia is not part of the job description of most interns. But then, Lynette Lau’s internship at Grab Indonesia was far from ordinary.

The Business Studies alumna who graduated in May this year travelled to cities like Medan, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Lombok to manage projects on her own.

“Grab Indonesia was rolling out an aggressive expansion strategy at that time. This gave me the opportunity to conduct preliminary analysis of new markets and coordinate operations across different cities,” said Lynette, who currently co-runs Picxels, a startup providing photobooth services.

Lynette’s eye-opening internship was part of Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s Global Entrepreneurial Internship Programme (GEIP), which lets students experience startup life as interns across innovation hubs worldwide.

The initiative is among a range of programmes run by The Sandbox, NP’s innovation and entrepreneurship arm, aimed at nurturing young entrepreneurs like Lynette and providing support for their business ideas to take shape.

Talent Pipeline for Startups
A recent addition to The Sandbox’s suite of initiatives is the Startup Talent Factory. Launched in May 2018, this placement and learn programme offers recent graduates nine-to-12-month career opportunities at startups. These jobs, with recommended salaries starting from $2,500, provide them with valuable, behind-the-scenes exposure to the dynamic culture of startups.

“There are two key elements that are critical for startups to grow and scale: funding and talent,” said Mr Patrice Choong, Director of The Sandbox. “The Startup Talent Factory aims to ease startups’ talent crunch issues by providing a pipeline of polytechnic graduates. At the same time, these graduates will have an opportunity to experience startup life while receiving a salary.”

A Module with No Curriculum
Signing up for an entrepreneurship module at Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) was what got fresh Biomedical Science graduate Muhammad Adam Ihsan hooked on starting a business. Halogram, his idea of a plastic cone that lets users display holograms on their phones, took off, earning him a small profit.

For Adam and other budding entrepreneurs, the Entrepreneurship Programme module offered by NP’s School of Interdisciplinary Studies provides a boost in their startup careers. With no fixed curriculum, students can personalise their own learning milestones, which may range from launching a new startup to growing an existing business or securing funding.

“Throughout the module, a lecturer-entrepreneur tag team ensures that students gain essential skills in business development, negotiation and networking, while acquiring real-world learning experience. "The flexible programme provided me with the time I needed to work on my Halogram business and allowed me to better appreciate the learning process," said Adam, who looks forward to developing his own startup in the field of biomedical technology.

More than 70 students have taken the module since it was first launched in October 2016.
A TESTBED FOR NEW BUSINESSES

Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s (NP) campus may look no different from those of other tertiary institutions. But beyond operating as a polytechnic campus, it also serves as a testbed for fresh business ideas.

Over ten startups are now part of NP’s Campus Ecosystem, a community of startups that aims to co-create new value through digital innovations in four key areas: Student Life; Teaching and Learning; Work Culture; and Work Processes.

Among the campus startups are two founded by NP alumni: KeyReply and Cialfo. KeyReply, which automates customer engagement through web and app bots, developed the chatbots for NP’s Open House and Freshmen Orientation programmes.

Meanwhile, Cialfo has made available its Companion platform − which streamlines the international university consulting process − to groups of NP students who may be keen on further studies in the UK or USA.

“We’re excited that NP can act as a testbed for these new innovations,” said NP Principal, Mr Clarence Ti. “The startups we work with aim to deeply enhance students’ and staff’s campus experiences, both in and out of class. As we’ve seen, the changes don’t have to be massive. Often, little conveniences have the greatest impact.”

“The changes don’t have to be massive. Often, little conveniences have the greatest impact.” – Mr Clarence Ti, NP Principal

AN OVERSEAS STARTUP EXPERIENCE

Angeline Tan may be just 21 years old, but the young entrepreneur already has a six-month work stint at Silicon Valley up her sleeve.

Her internship at a software company there was made possible through Ngee Ann’s Global Entrepreneurial Internship Programme (GEIP), which provides students with internship opportunities at some of the world’s leading innovation hubs.

Being immersed in a startup culture in Silicon Valley, which is home to tech giants like Facebook, Apple and eBay was inspiring. “It taught me to think bigger and be more creative with my own business,” said the Class of 2017 Business Studies graduate, who began her own fashion venture at youth hub, *SCAPE, while she was still at Ngee Ann.

THE GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURIAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME (GEIP): OUR STUDENTS AT STARTUPS ACROSS THE GLOBE

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<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Launched in</th>
<th>Interns since its launch</th>
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<td>Melbourne</td>
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A VISION FOR SERVICE-LEARNING

Partnership with World Vision to boost Ngee Ann’s Service-Learning efforts

In the two years since its launch, over 6,000 Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) students have benefited from the Service-Learning (S-L) pedagogy, which aims to imbue a sense of purposeful learning and active citizenship.

On 13 January 2018, these S-L efforts were further strengthened with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with World Vision Singapore, in a ceremony held on campus.

Under the agreement, NP will tap on World Vision’s global expertise in working with needy communities to expand international S-L opportunities. Some 20 students will be involved in World Vision’s Area Development Programme in Son Tra, Vietnam, that seeks to foster cross-cultural sensitivity and raise social awareness.

“This project, and others in the pipeline, will help to develop our students as global citizens. It will heighten their awareness of societal issues and cultural sensitivity while enabling more youths to be involved in World Vision’s mission to overcome poverty and injustice,” said NP Principal, Mr Clarence Ti, at the signing ceremony.

World Vision, with its network of field staff and volunteers, will also provide mentors for students under the Industry Mentors Network. The initiative aims to develop a pool of practitioners who offer professional industry and career guidance to students in small groups.

Students can also look forward to overseas internships at World Vision offices that will expose them to sustainable community development and social enterprise efforts across different cultures.

CHAMPIONING WORTHY CAUSES

Class of 2018 Business & Social Enterprise graduate Ernest Wong was so inspired by his Service-Learning (S-L) experience at Ngee Ann two years ago that he decided to start Camp Hiro to raise awareness of social issues among youths. But back then at the age of 18, he had little experience in managing his own social enterprise and leading a team.

Young social advocates like Ernest will now have more support and learning opportunities, thanks to the S-L Champs Network, which was launched on 13 January. Its goal is to nurture student involvement in social advocacy, even after completion of their S-L modules or Youth Expedition Projects.

Students in the S-L Champs Network will participate in social impact hackathons, youth summits and international S-L trips, which will enable them to undertake social action projects or champion social causes they are passionate about.

“I look forward to the resources and expertise that can be shared among all of us for the greater good through the S-L Champs Network,” said Ernest.

THE HEART OF HUMAN RESOURCES

Ho Wei Yee, Senior Manager, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, President’s Award for Teachers 2017 Finalist

I there is one thing that Ho Wei Yee wants to impress upon her students, it is that Human Resources is about people.

This is why she does not prescribe any textbooks for her courses, preferring to lean on her experiences as a top-flight HR expert in Citibank, JP Morgan, IBM and Ernst & Young to prepare her students for their chosen field.

She uses simulations, such as creating a mock assessment centre experience in class for students to assess job competencies. “I teach them to look beyond paper qualifications and identify skill sets in candidates like collaboration, leadership and integrity,” she says, emphasising how demanding the recruitment process can be.

“You need to be fair and try your judgement strictly to the individual’s performance and merits. HR has a lot to do with personal and professional ethics.”

UNDERSTANDING THE BUSINESS

One of her pet topics is how Human Resources has long ceased to be a mere supportive administrative function. It is now about meeting the strategic needs of each organisation.

Wei Yee draws on her considerable experience as she researches emerging developments within the industry, offering her students practical insights into how companies today are thinking and working differently.

One new tactic that is gaining traction among companies is the use of hackathons to spot talent, where candidates form teams to solve or “hack” a problem posed by the company. Wei Yee has begun using these as part of her teaching practice.

She is particularly proud of one she recently organised with BreadTalk, where over 90 of her students were challenged to help the company overcome its manpower crunch. They had to do this within a day, and pitch their solutions to representatives of the company in the evening.

Wei Yee knows she is not there to dictate knowledge to her students. “When I started teaching, I was the gatekeeper of knowledge, but now it has changed.

By adding real-time projects and group simulation exercises, I help the students acquire the knowledge for themselves. “I have become the facilitator, encouraging students to also learn from each other.”

(Adapted from a story previously published in Schoolbag.sg by the Ministry of Education)
Navigating Taiwan’s streets in a wheelchair during a Social Leadership Challenge gave Charmaine Foo a renewed sense of purpose and empathy for people with disabilities.

WHEELIN’ AROUND: As part of an experiential activity, we explored the city on wheelchairs. We had to take trains, cross roads and wheel ourselves up ramps. I realised that in order to make places friendlier for those with disabilities, we need to view issues from their perspective. For example, wheelchair-friendly restrooms may appear bigger but wheelchair users still face huge difficulties in opening and closing the door.

LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP: Interacting with different social leaders taught me that being a social leader goes beyond just feeling strongly for a cause. It means seeing your actions through and igniting that same desire in others to make a change.

SOUL SEARCHING: On a day trip to the mountains, we pitched tents, cooked our own food and did some reflection. Spending time away from the bustling city allowed the lessons from this trip to sink in and take root in our hearts.
The team plans to submit 52 to international film festivals in Toronto, Berlin, Busan and Melbourne. “As young filmmakers, it's a constant struggle to find enough resources and support to effectively tell our stories. But with encouragement from family and friends, as well as this Mediacorp collaboration, we were able to make a professional, polished film. This is really what filmmaking is about – people from different backgrounds and social classes coming together to tell a story,” said Amanda.

Hen Class of 2018 Film, Sound & Video (FSV) graduate Amanda Tan conceptualised the idea of a film based on her own father, she did not imagine that it would garner the attention of Singapore’s largest media broadcaster. Her short film, 52, which features local actor Lim Yu-Beng as the lead, was shortlisted through a pitch to Mediacorp, which provided resources and support for its production. It was among 11 films selected for the Young Creators Project, a partnership between Mediacorp’s digital entertainment platform, Toggle, and local polytechnics to nurture creative talent.

Amanda and her team – comprising fellow FSV graduates Vidonia Yeo, Toh Xin Li, Nurul Lidya Bte Zolkepli and Kenan Liew – produced 52 as their final-year project. The touching short film explores the relationship between an overqualified plumber father, Leong, and his son, James, who has a speech impairment.

Leong's character is inspired by Amanda's own father, who took on a lower-paying job after his retrenchment; while James's character reflects Amanda, who has had to battle stuttering for much of her life. “Initially, we were unsure if we could pull off this ambitious script,” admits Amanda. “We must have scouted 20 toilets for the plumbing scenes before we found the right one! Shooting the rainy finale scene was also tough, as the rain rig which we made failed. Thankfully, we found a ‘rainmaker’ who gave us a discount for his services.”

A FILM ABOUT DAD

Touching short film by Ngee Ann graduates now available on Toggle

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tell a story,” said Amanda.

A SYMPHONY OF ARTS AND HEART

Contributing to a worthy cause through the arts – that was the aim of Ngee Ann Polytechnic’s (NP) Arts Fiesta held from October 20 to December 2 last year. Nineteen arts and cultural CCA groups showcased their talent in dance, drama and music performances, while fringe activities included masterclasses and workshops. The event raised over $120,000 for NP’s Student Aid Fund, which provides support for needy students.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

● Team H2GO, comprising 10 Mechanical Engineering graduates and students did Ngee Ann proud at the Shell Eco-marathon Asia 2018. The team’s energy-efficient vehicle won the Most Innovative Hydrogen Newcomer Award and was the first runner-up in the Prototype-Hydrogen category. Over 120 student teams across 18 countries participated in the competition.

● Engineering Science students Arif Ahmad Woozer and Bertram Chen emerged champions in the Open Category of Startathon 2017, an innovation competition organised by NTU’s Nanyang Technopreneurship Center. Together with two team members from Temasek Polytechnic, they developed a prototype of a ventilated smart safety helmet that works in tandem with cloud-based personal assistant, Amazon Alexa.

● Two staff from the School of Life Sciences & Chemical Technology (LSCT) clinched prizes in the Environmental Sustainability category at the inaugural Cities of Love Award 2017, which recognises sustainable efforts by individuals and organisations. Assistant Director Mariam Mathew won the Individual Distinguished Award with her project on the Sungei Ulu Pandan Learning Trail. She also won the Corporate Merit Award, along with Manager Eng Boon Hwee, for their DIY Floating Wetlands project.