

New course for mid-career workers seeking environmental services skills

SkillsFuture credits can be used to offset fee for full-time, three-month programme

Lee Nian Tjoe
Senior Correspondent

From April 2025, mid-career workers looking to acquire skills needed in the environmental services sector will be able to take up a course at Temasek Polytechnic (TP) and use their SkillsFuture credits to offset the fee.

The SkillsFuture Career Transition Programme is a joint effort by TP, the Environmental Management Association of Singapore and the National Environment Agency

(NEA). The full-time, three-month course is the first such initiative for the industry, and will cover topics including robotics, automation, and outcome-based contracting for cleaning services. Details will be published on TP's website later in November.

"Through this programme, we hope to attract more talented mid-careerists to the environmental services sector with growth opportunities to build meaningful careers and do impactful work," said Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat, who announced the initiative

as part of an event commemorating Clean and Green Singapore Day on Nov 3.

DPM Heng was speaking at the event, which was held at the National University of Singapore's UTown, and organised by NUS and agencies including NEA, South West Community Development Council and National Parks Board (NParks).

DPM Heng also gave out the Environmental Services Star Award to individuals from the cleaning, waste management and pest management sectors. Among the 27 recipients of the award was Mr Noor Azmi Ranai, 41, a senior operations manager with CBM, a facilities management service company.

Mr Azmi, who has worked in this

field for more than 20 years, said: "I hope that more people see the value of this industry and how it has an important role in shaping society as a whole."

DPM Heng also gave an update on the take-up of the \$300 e-vouchers meant for households living in Housing Board flats to buy eco-friendly home appliances. As at October, 73 per cent of eligible households have redeemed their vouchers, a third of which have started using them.

In April, it was reported that there were 1.1 million HDB households which would be able to get the vouchers, which are valid until Dec 31, 2027.

"I encourage more households to also start redeeming them," DPM

Heng said.

Before speaking at UTown, DPM Heng had joined 160 students and staff of NUS in a tree-planting ceremony where 50 trees were planted. It brought the total number of trees on the NUS campus to 50,000.

Also among the participants at the tree-planting ceremony were Minister for Sustainability and the Environment Grace Fu, National Development Minister Desmond Lee, South West District Mayor Low Yen Ling, and representatives from participating agencies.

DPM Heng also launched the latest Public Hygiene Council's (PHC) CleanPod in West Coast Park. This is a shed where the public can get litter-picking tools like tongs and

pails to clean up the area.

CleanPods are intended to make it easier for the public to organise clean-up activities. There are now 21 CleanPods located at various parks, beaches and housing estates. More details on how to access the CleanPods are available on PHC's website.

NParks also launched a series of therapeutic horticulture programmes for the public to sign up.

The 20 programmes will be held from December 2024 to May 2025 at six therapeutic gardens, including Sembawang Park, Pasir Ris Park and West Coast Park.

The programmes are free and include activities like making scent bags, designing seed mandalas and gardening.

They will be conducted by trained facilitators, including NParks staff and volunteers, with each session lasting between one and 1½ hours. Registrations open from early December.

The programmes aim to improve participants' well-being by connecting with nature and promoting low-intensity exercise, among other things.

niantjoel@sph.com.sg