

# Coding a better tomorrow

*Mark Wee makes a switch from teaching English as a second language to programming*

Mr Mark Wee started out as an English teacher, but he developed an interest in technology while pursuing his business degree. He was amazed at how technology could automate tedious manual processes but the perceived steep learning curve gave him pause. He was eventually lured by the intellectual challenge the IT industry presented and by the impact that technology could make on lives.

“I tried learning programming on my own but software development was so foreign to me that the explanations I found online were incomprehensible jargon. At the rate I was going, I was not going to get anywhere beyond



developing simple web pages,” he said.

The 26-year-old then decided to enrol in the Graduate Diploma Systems Analysis (GDipSA) Programme at National University of Singapore’s Institute of Systems Science (NUS-ISS), a branch of NUS that develops business and digital professionals through its

**The Graduate Diploma Systems Analysis Programme has transformed Mr Mark Wee into a future-ready IT professional.**

PHOTO: MARK WEE

graduate and executive programmes.

Dr Leong Mun Kew, deputy director of NUS-ISS, said: “We engage IT leaders and experienced practitioners to understand their problems and issues. We want to ensure that the curriculum covers what is needed to do the job from beginning to end, and not just some of the pieces that you might find in the textbook.”

## AN INTENSIVE PROGRAMME

After a year of studies, Mr Wee graduated and is now a consultant at a homegrown IT consulting firm with operations spanning 20 countries.

From struggling to understand basic coding to developing an Internet of Things (IoT) product on his own, he attributes his success to the programme’s curriculum, which includes technical skills such as application

design and development, soft skills such as project and conflict management, as well as projects and an industry-immersive internship.

Dr Esther Tan, chief of the GDipSA Programme at NUS-ISS, said: “Of these 12 months, seven months are dedicated to intensive training in terms of lectures, workshops and projects.”

The next five months are spent serving an internship where “students can gain experience as an IT professional, and companies are able to prototype advanced technologies that they would like to explore,” said Dr Tan.

Although this programme was the most challenging and intense period of his life, Mr Wee asserts: “I have never experienced so much personal growth in such a short period of time. Enrolling in the programme is one of the best decisions I have made in my life.”