

# Non-lawyers can now boost legal knowledge for work



(From left) Associate Professor Umakanth Varottil, director of the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Law Academy, Mr Edwin Tong, Senior Minister of State for Law and Health, Professor Simon Chesterman, Dean of NUS Law, and Professor Susanna Leong, NUS Vice-Provost (Life Long Education), at the launch of the NUS Law Academy. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

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## NUS Law Academy caters to lawyers, other professionals to aid them in their industries

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Working professionals can now build up their legal knowledge in industry-specific areas through courses at the National University of Singapore's (NUS) Law Academy, which caters to both practising lawyers and non-lawyers.

Currently, the academy offers courses specialising in international arbitration, maritime law and criminal justice, but the dean of NUS law school, Professor Simon Chesterman, said courses in intellectual property and technology law will be introduced in future.

"From brushing up on skills to learning about a new area of law, our aim is to provide a suite of modules for the working learner," said Prof Chesterman at the launch of the Law Academy yesterday at the NUS Kent Ridge campus.

"Our hope is that the NUS Law Academy will become a vital part of Singapore's legal ecosystem, offering a range of graduate certificates and diplomas to meet the challenges of the future economy."

Senior Minister of State for Law and Health Edwin Tong, who was the guest of honour, said legal training is valuable, even for non-lawyers. "It trains the mind and helps one become more analytical."

On offer is a flexible graduate-level coursework programme that lets working adults attain a graduate certificate, graduate diploma or master's coursework degree.

The academy provides skill-based courses that are relevant to laws in specific industries, so professionals can remain competitive in the job market and make an impact on the future economy, said Mr Tong.

The current courses target lawyers and other professionals involved in arbitration, master mariners and engineers, as well as law enforcement officers.

The academy worked with agencies such as SkillsFuture Singapore, the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC), and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore to offer the courses.



The launch of the NUS Law academy took place at the graduation ceremony of 29 senior Home Team officers, who received certificates after completing a nine-month course in criminal justice.

The officers were the pioneer cohort of Graduate Certificate in Criminal Justice students, which was previously rolled out by the Faculty of Law at NUS and now comes under the NUS Law Academy.

Addressing the graduates, Mr Tong said the skills picked up through the course, combined with their practical investigation competencies and operational experience, made them more effective leaders.

"You've combined the best of both worlds. You are in a better position to guide subordinates and engage with AGC in case discussions and decision-making."



Deputy Superintendent of Police Michelle Tay (left), from the Criminal Investigation Department, and Assistant Superintendent of Police Koay Lean Seong, from Central Police Division. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

Among the graduates were Deputy Superintendent of Police Michelle Tay, from the Criminal Investigation Department, and Assistant Superintendent of Police Koay Lean Seong, from Central Police Division. Both graduated at the top of their class.

While it was a challenge to juggle daily work with assignments and weekly classes, ASP Koay said, he now has a better understanding of the role of police investigations in the criminal justice system.

Said ASP Koay, who leads the Commercial Crime Squad at his division: "A better understanding of the statutes and interpretations of the law also helps me break down the law into simpler terms when trying to help complainants."

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