

Part-time degree now available for nurses

For the first time, nurses can work while studying at a local university

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Nurses who wish to upgrade their skills and knowledge can now enrol in two new courses launched at the Nurses' Merit Award ceremony yesterday.

For registered nurses who wish to upgrade themselves with a degree, a three-year part-time Bachelor of Science (Nursing Practice) Degree is being offered by the Alice Lee Centre for Nursing Studies at the National University of Singapore.

This is the first part-time programme by a local university that allows registered nurses to work while pursuing their degree at the same time. The programme will start next month.

Enrolled nurses can also obtain a Certification of Compe-

tency in Administration of Medication by enrolling in the course run by the Institute of Technical Education College East.

At the event that honoured 101 nurses for their outstanding performance and dedication, Health Minister Gan Kim Yong encouraged nurses to never stop learning.

Speaking at the event at Concorde Hotel Singapore, he said: "Apart from the multiple education pathways, there are also growing training and development opportunities in the health-care sector for nurses to upgrade and progress in their career."

One of the award recipients was Ms Tan Mui Eng, deputy director of nursing at Mount Elizabeth Novena Hospital.

Ms Tan, 64, began her nursing career in 1977. She later went

to the United Kingdom to study ophthalmic nursing before returning to Singapore in 1980.

Throughout her years in nursing, Ms Tan has witnessed many changes. She said nurses now have more autonomy than in the past and young nurses are more vocal and ask more questions. Nurses also have more responsibilities today.

Said Ms Tan: "Patients nowadays expect you (the nurse) to be knowledgeable and not ask the senior nurses when you're unsure. However, they can clarify anything they're unsure of with the seniors."

Ms Tan is unfazed by rapid advances in technology, saying that healthcare meant always having to work with technology.

She said: "If you stay stagnant, you will be left behind.



(From left) Ms Koh Pei Pei and Ms Tan Mui Eng were among the nurses honoured yesterday. TNP PHOTO: GIN TAY

There will always be new machines and new operation processes."

Ms Tan is a strong advocate for nurses to upgrade themselves through education, believing that knowledge is power. She has encouraged nurses to complete their advanced diplomas and senior nurses to complete their degrees and masters.

She said: "Through continuous education, nurses can keep up with the relevant knowledge and skills."

Another recipient, Ms Koh Pei Pei, 30, began her nursing career at Alexandra Hospital in 2008.

Becoming a nurse never crossed her mind when she was

younger, but she was inspired by the nurses looking after patients during the Sars period. She said: "I became very passionate and I grew to love being a nurse."

Ms Koh is now an assistant nurse clinician at Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, where she oversees a ward and also grooms future nurses.

Although Ms Koh has a degree in nursing, she hopes to also do a Masters should the opportunity arise.

She said: "It's good to continue learning, and even in the hospital, you're always learning something new."

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