

Tertiary institutions boost efforts to impart emerging skills

Singapore

THE universities and polytechnics will ramp up efforts to train people in emerging skills such as machine learning, entrepreneurship and data analytics.

Senior Minister of State for Trade and Industry and Education Chee Hong Tat announced on Wednesday plans to equip the workforce for Fourth Industrial Revolution, or Industry 4.0.

Speaking at the annual SkillsFuture Festival, he said: "Industry 4.0 is not about replacing existing workers with machines or new workers. An essential component is the training of existing workers to equip them with the skills to use the new technologies."

To this end, the National University of Singapore (NUS) will play a key role in training, by starting a new Master of Science in Industry 4.0 next month to help workers keep pace with digital advances.

The new programme will cover areas such as data analytics, digital infrastructure and transformation systems, and includes an industrial attachment.

It will also provide customised training modules for companies, and so far the university has partnered 10 organisations, including United Overseas Bank and the Institute for Human Resource Professionals.

The institutes of higher learning will also continue to work with each other to develop "stackable" modular

courses in Industry 4.0.

For instance, NUS's Institute of Systems Science will partner Ngee Ann Polytechnic and Temasek Polytechnic to allow modules from the polytechnics' post-diploma programmes to be counted towards a Master of Technology.

In his speech, Mr Chee also provided an update on adult education, as part of the SkillsFuture Series, which are bite-sized courses offered by the institutes of higher learning on emerging skills.

Since 2017, the number of courses under the scheme has more than tripled from 400 to more than 1,500.

As at March, close to 40,000 participants have signed up for such courses.

Starting next month, to help individuals make informed choices, SkillsFuture Singapore will publish a series of regular reports called *Jobs-Skills Insights* by teaming up with job portals such as Burning Glass Technologies, Indeed.com and JobTech to analyse jobs data.

The information will be conveyed to students, working adults, enterprises and institutes of higher learning through reports, dashboards and articles.

Mr Chee also said businesses' expertise will be tapped to provide training, announcing that a new centre, where German engineering firm Bosch Rexroth will train and certify specialists who meet their standards, will be set up in Jurong Innovation

District, Singapore's advanced manufacturing campus.

"The Bosch Rexroth Regional Training Centre will train beyond the needs of Bosch Rexroth, and will open up its training opportunities to other companies in the industry," he said.

"We recognise that smaller enterprises may lack the resources to make significant investments in training. Hence, we have been working on a collaborative training model that will tap the capabilities of anchor companies to uplift industry sectors as a whole," Mr Chee added.

"The end goal is to grow the talent pipeline by attracting and training more workers for all companies within the sector."