

JOBS BOOST

Singtel to hire, train 500 staff over next two years in lead-up to 5G roll-out

Singapore

SINGTEL will hire and train 500 professionals in Singapore over the next two years as part of a collaboration with the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), the National University of Singapore (NUS) and Singapore Polytechnic (SP).

Of these, 150 will fill new 5G roles in areas such as network engineering, digital services and 5G product and platform development.

The rest will be trained in other emerging technologies such as the Internet of Things, cloud engineering and data analytics, Singtel said on Wednesday.

The telco will also retrain some 2,300 existing employees as it gears up for the roll-out of Singapore's nationwide 5G networks next year.

Last September, the IMDA announced that it would be working

with the telcos to create 1,000 positions in 5G expertise by the end of last year. Some of these positions will be filled by Singtel's prospective 500 employees, a group that will comprise both fresh graduates and mid-career professionals.

Communications and Information Minister S Iswaran visited Singtel's training headquarters at George Street on Wednesday, where he was briefed on the company's training efforts.

"Singtel's plans to recruit 500 over the next two years are an important part of developing the overall capability of our info-communications and technology (ICT) sector, but equally important is transforming the skill-sets of those who are already in Singtel," he said.

"Basically, what we need to do is work with the entire spectrum of Singaporean talent."

The training for Singtel employees will range from short courses spanning a few weeks to full-time academic programmes lasting a year or more.

Singtel's collaboration with NUS and SP comes under the 5G and Telecoms Programme Manager initiative, which helps industry partners identify and develop 5G-related training courses.

Training for supporting roles such as software developers will also be offered by the IMDA's TechSkills Accelerator (TeSA) company-led training programmes.

Singtel radio network quality manager Wang Zexin, 31, embarked on a 12-month training programme last month.

"5G has a lot of new components and features compared to 4G, and it's critical to upskill in order to do our

jobs well," said Mr Wang, who has been with Singtel for more than five years.

For example, he explained, managing 4G or 3G networks is mainly download-centric, because the bulk of the network usage is by consumers who are downloading data.

But 5G is expected to be tapped into more heavily by businesses for applications that will require a lot of uploading of data. "So a lot of coordination will be needed to balance (network usage) between consumers and enterprise use cases," he said.

Singtel and a joint venture between StarHub and M1 won the rights to build the Republic's two nationwide 5G networks.

Under IMDA's requirements, the telcos will have to provide 5G mobile network coverage to at least half of Singapore by end-2022 and scale up to nationwide coverage by 2025.