

New academy to boost digital skills of public service officers

It will kick off with 55 programmes; over 6,000 expected to be trained in first year

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Public service officers and leaders who are looking to improve their digital skills and become more equipped to lead digital transformation in their agencies will be able to sign up for training courses with an academy that was launched yesterday.

More than 6,000 public officers are expected to be trained within the first year of the launch of The Digital Academy, which is driven by the Smart Nation and Digital Government Group.

It will kick off with 55 programmes in areas such as applications development, data and analyt-

ics, as well as cyber security. Another 40 programmes will be available by the end of March next year.

Speaking at a virtual launch event, Senior Minister of State for Communications and Information Janil Puthuchery noted that Singapore's robust Covid-19 response – from implementing digital contact tracing to rolling out home-based learning for students – has shown how efforts to build up the public sector's digital capabilities and digital infrastructure have paid off.

He said that Singapore cannot slow down its efforts in building a digital government, adding that all public service roles require officers to achieve at least a foundational level of digital literacy.

“For public service leaders, myself included, we have to be famil-

iar with the issues to identify priorities and standards in the public sector's digital transformation. For the information and communications technology professionals at work amongst us, it's more than that. It means deepening your expertise while expanding and updating the skills and tools you are familiar with,” said Dr Janil.

The Institute of Systems Science at the National University of Singapore is the operations partner for the academy, and nine industry players have partnered it in curating the curriculum, with more to join in time to come. They include Amazon Web Services, Coursera, Google and Microsoft.

The courses will be delivered in multiple formats, including virtual and in-person lectures, workshops, tech talks and hackathons. There will also be on-the-job training opportunities.

In a keynote address at the virtual launch event, Ms Ng Wee Wei,

country managing director of Accenture Singapore, noted that 88 per cent of Singapore's citizens want government agencies to work with the private sector to develop more innovative public services, according to research by Accenture.

The establishment of The Digital Academy will make learning more accessible and complement efforts to help officers keep up with the pace of digital transformation, she added.

She also cited an Accenture survey which showed that one in two of those who had left the public service would consider rejoining the service out of a sense of civic duty and a desire to contribute to society. “Leaders would do well to build up this renewed sense of purpose to reimagine and enhance employee experience within public service agencies,” she said.

They can do this by leveraging scalable technology and changing

the perception of what the Government does through innovation, she added.

Public officers will be able to access information on course offerings at thedigitalacademy.tech.gov.sg

Those who are keen to apply for courses offered by the academy can do so through their organisation's training request system.

Mr Brandon Lee, 47, group director of the Transformation Support Group at Workforce Singapore, is interested in the courses related to digital leadership at the academy.

He added that the courses at the academy, which cover areas such as applying the right processes to lead digital transformation, are closely aligned to the specific needs of the public service. “(They) can help speed up... initiatives that are more appropriate to our operating context in the public service.”

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