



Career and Technical Education in Singapore

Singapore has made CTE a cornerstone of its economic development strategy. CTE takes place primarily at the post-secondary level. At the secondary level, students pursuing the Normal (Technical) route take practical-oriented coursework that prepares them for exams that qualify them for the Institute for Technical Education (ITE), the leading post-secondary CTE institution, offering one to two-year programs of study and in addition to the ITE, students interested in vocational education can also apply to one of Singapore's five polytechnics which offer around 150 three-year diploma programs.

Each year about 40 percent of graduating students enter one of the polytechnics and 25 percent enter the ITE. Students are drawn to the ITE and polytechnics as both offer hands-on, world-class education and training programs. These institutions have close connections to industry partners that set the standards, provide state-of-the-art equipment for instruction, and assess candidates for diplomas. The strong connection to employers ensures that graduates leave fully prepared to transition into employment in their fields. Students also have the option of pursuing a university degree if they so choose.

Singapore also knows that it must invest in and promote lifelong learning for all its citizens. It is making concerted efforts to support continuous learning, reskilling, and job placement through a national campaign known as SkillsFuture, which launched in 2016 following the recommendations of a high-level commission led by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. The commission, known as ASPIRE (Applied Study in Polytechnics and ITE Review), envisioned a coherent workforce-development system, beginning in middle school and extending throughout adulthood.

For young people, it included strengthened education and career guidance, "enhanced" internships, more overseas market immersion opportunities, and the development of individual learning portfolios. For those starting work, it included apprenticeships, known as "learn and earn" programs, and credits toward course fees for work skills-related instruction. And for adults, it included monetary awards for more than 8,000 courses offered by polytechnics, ITE, and universities, subsidies for mid-career professionals pursuing additional coursework, and fellowships.

Anchoring the system is a skills framework and set of qualifications, overseen by the SkillsFuture Council, a body led by the deputy prime minister and including leaders from industry, labor, and government. The framework outlines a body of skills and competencies in 34 broad industry sectors to help highlight skills and jobs in demand.

For more, see [here](#).