

Blueprint to build building skills gets off the drawing board

5-year plan aims to develop 43,000 workers with job smarts for industry's future needs

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Singaporeans in the building and construction sector will be able to use their SkillsFuture credit on 300 courses related to their industry.

A five-year manpower plan for the built environment sector was launched yesterday by the Building and Construction Authority (BCA), which signed a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on SkillsFuture initiatives with eight built environment sector associations, including the Singapore Contractors Association Limited and the Institution of Engineers Singapore.

Initiatives such as scholarship and sponsorship programmes, structured internships, SkillsFuture Study Awards, and an Earn and Learn programme for polytechnic and Institute of Technical Education (ITE) students will help to train 3,000 students and working professionals over the next three years.

The sectoral manpower plan—only the third after the hotels and retail sectors – aims to develop 43,000 workers with skills to meet the future needs of the industry.

Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong, speaking yesterday at an award ceremony for BCA scholarships for students at ITE College West, said: “We need people with specialist engineering and architectural skills to build higher and deeper and also to develop smarter, greener and more accessible buildings.”

By 2020, the plan aims to have 20,000 people trained in developing environmentally friendly buildings, 13,000 who specialise in 3D building modelling and virtual design, and 10,000 who can turn construction into a manufacturing process with more work done off-site.



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**MINISTER FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
LAWRENCE WONG**, on the future needs
of the industry.

The sectoral manpower plans were first announced by Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam in last year's Budget. They will eventually be launched for more than 20 key sectors, such as social services, healthcare as well as retail and food services.

Mr Wong said that the plan for the built-environment sector aims to draw more Singaporeans into the industry, provide better jobs for them, improve the skills of those in the sector and offer better career progression.

Yesterday, Mr Wong gave out 112 BCA scholarships to ITE students pursuing built environment courses. Two will start on the Earn and Learn programme in April, which lets students gain qualifications while working in companies.

Sherman Goh, 17, who is studying civil and structural engineering design at ITE College Central, was inspired to join the industry by his father, a former construction foreman, and is excited to start working at Kim Seng Heng Engineering Construction. He said: "This sort of learning cannot be taught by schools."

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