

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**MEDIA RELEASE****NEW MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN STUDENT PROTECTION AND INCREASE
INFORMATION TRANSPARENCY**

SINGAPORE, 21 October 2016 – The Committee for Private Education (CPE) will introduce new measures to strengthen the protection of students in the private education sector and increase information transparency for prospective students.

2. The new measures include:
 - a. Requiring Private Education Institutions (PEIs) offering External Degree Programmes (EDPs) to participate in a CPE-run annual Graduate Employment Survey, the results of which will be published at the institution level;
 - b. Requiring PEIs offering EDPs and programmes that articulate into EDPs to obtain EduTrust certification;
 - c. Requiring all PEIs to set appropriate minimum academic entry requirements for admitting fresh school leavers who do not have relevant working experience;
 - d. Imposing minimum financial requirements on all PEIs; and
 - e. Enhancing standards for EduTrust certification.

MANDATORY PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT SURVEY

3. It will be mandatory for all PEIs offering EDPs to participate in CPE's annual Graduate Employment Survey. This builds on CPE's pilot survey of 2014 graduates, conducted between December 2015 and June 2016.

4. The survey results will be published on CPE's website where the employment outcomes of each PEI will be reflected. This will better enable prospective students to make better informed education and career choices.

EDUTRUST CERTIFICATION REQUIRED TO OFFER EDPS

5. To strengthen protection for students, all PEIs that offer EDPs and programmes that articulate into EDPs will be required to obtain EduTrust¹ certification (4-year).
6. This will take immediate effect for new PEIs or existing PEIs that do not currently offer such programmes but intend to do so. Existing PEIs that already offer EDPs currently will have up till 1 June 2018 to obtain EduTrust certification, provided that they submit an application for EduTrust certification by 1 June 2017.

MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

7. PEIs will be required to set appropriate minimum academic entry requirements for fresh school leavers enrolling into EDPs and programmes that articulate into EDPs. PEIs will take reference from the following guidelines when setting their admission criteria:
 - a. Admission to an EDP will require:
 - i. GCE A-Level, IB Diploma, or other equivalent pre-university certifications; or
 - ii. polytechnic diploma or equivalent; or
 - iii. PEI qualification that provides direct articulation into an EDP.
 - b. Admission to a programme that articulates to an EDP will require:
 - i. GCE O-Level or equivalent; or
 - ii. *Nitec, Higher Nitec* or equivalent
8. These minimum academic entry requirements apply to fresh school leavers who do not have relevant working experience, and are in line with existing industry practices. By establishing these benchmarks explicitly, prospective students will be clearer about the pre-requisites for such courses. Individual PEIs may set more stringent entry requirements and should exercise due diligence in their admissions process to ensure that students are able to cope with their programmes.

¹ Currently, EduTrust is a voluntary quality assurance scheme for PEIs.

9. PEIs will have the flexibility to admit mature students who do not meet the above minimum academic entry requirements but have prior learning or work experience in the relevant fields. PEIs will have to seek CPE's approval for their criteria and demonstrate that they have the necessary systems and processes in place to assess applications from mature students.

10. The guidelines on admission criteria will apply with immediate effect to all new EDPs and programmes which articulate into EDPs. Existing PEIs will have up till 1 June 2017 to revise the admission criteria of programmes that do not currently meet the requirements.

MINIMUM FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

11. Minimum financial requirements will be imposed on all PEIs to strengthen student protection by ensuring that PEIs have adequate financial capabilities to operate. A minimum paid-up capital of \$100,000 will be required of all new PEIs with immediate effect and all existing PEIs will be required to meet a minimum credit rating by 1 June 2017.

ENHANCEMENTS TO EDUTRUST STANDARDS

12. The EduTrust standards will also be enhanced to place greater emphasis on academic processes and student education outcomes. The enhanced EduTrust standards will be released in January 2017 and will take effect on 1 June 2017. Only PEIs that have at least a 4-year Enhanced Registration Framework registration period will be able to apply for EduTrust certification.

13. Details of the requirements are in [Annex A](#).

14. Existing PEI students will not be affected by the changes. CPE will continue to review its regulatory framework regularly to safeguard the interests of students. Notwithstanding this, prospective students must do their research, and be aware of their rights and obligations, before they enrol in a PEI. PEIs should also align their programmes with industry needs and strive to achieve good employment outcomes for their graduates.

15. Mr Brandon Lee, Director-General (Private Education), SkillsFuture Singapore said, “As the sector matures, we need to ensure that institutions continue to have sound foundations on which to operate and deliver the quality of training that students expect. The new measures are aimed at doing so, and will provide additional safeguards for students who choose to enrol with Private Education Institutions. At the same time, we wish to remind students of the need to exercise due diligence by researching and assessing the suitability of the various education pathways available. We also hope that the enhanced information transparency will be useful in helping students make more informed decisions.”

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About SkillsFuture Singapore

SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) will drive and coordinate the implementation of the national SkillsFuture movement, promote a culture of lifelong learning and strengthen the ecosystem of quality education and training in Singapore. Through a holistic system of national SkillsFuture initiatives, SSG enables Singaporeans to take charge of their learning journey in their pursuit of skills mastery. SSG will also work with key stakeholders to ensure that students and adults have access to high quality and industry-relevant training that meet the demands of different sectors of the economy for an innovative and productive workforce. For more information, visit www.ssg.gov.sg

About Committee for Private Education

The Committee for Private Education (CPE) was appointed by SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) Board in October 2016 to carry out its functions and powers relating to private education under the Private Education Act. The CPE is supported by a team of dedicated staff from SSG to regulate the sector, provide student services, consumer education and facilitate capability development efforts to uplift standards in the local private education industry. For more information, please visit our website at <https://www.cpe.gov.sg>.

Annex A

	New Requirements	Details
1	Mandatory participation in CPE's graduate employment survey for PEIs offering EDPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enable prospective students to make informed education and career choices, PEIs that offer EDPs will be required to participate in an annual Graduate Employment Survey. This survey will be centrally administered by CPE to ensure independence and neutrality. • The survey results will be published on CPE's website at the institution level.
2	EduTrust certification requirement for PEIs that offer EDPs and/or programmes that articulate into EDPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursuing EDP programmes and/or programmes that articulate into EDPs typically involve significant investments by students. • To enhance protection for students, all PEIs that offer such programmes will be required to first obtain an EduTrust (4-year) certification. • This requirement takes immediate effect for new PEIs or existing PEIs that do not currently offer such programmes. • For existing PEIs offering such programmes that do not have EduTrust (4-year) certification, they must apply for certification by 1 June 2017 and attain EduTrust (4-year) certification by 1 June 2018.
3	Minimum academic entry requirements for all EDPs and/or programmes that articulate into EDPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admission to an EDP will require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GCE A-Level, IB Diploma, or other equivalent pre-university certifications; or ○ Polytechnic diploma or equivalent; or ○ PEI qualification that provides direct articulation into an EDP • Admission to a programme that articulates to an EDP will require: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ GCE O-Level or equivalent; or ○ <i>Nitec, Higher Nitec</i> or equivalent. • This will apply with immediate effect to all new EDPs and programmes that articulate into EDPs. • Existing PEIs offering such programmes which do not meet the stipulated guidelines will be given up till 1 June 2017 to revise the admission criteria for its programmes.

4	<p>Minimum financial requirements for all PEIs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum paid-up capital of \$100,000 will be required for new PEIs with immediate effect. • Currently, PEIs must have at least a Band 3 credit rating to apply for EduTrust certification. • The requirement for credit rating will now be extended to all PEIs as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PEIs that have a 1-year ERF registration period must have at least a Band 2 credit rating. ○ PEIs that have at least 4-year ERF registration period must have at least a Band 3 credit rating. • All existing PEIs must meet the minimum credit rating requirement by 1 June 2017.
5	<p>Enhancements to EduTrust standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As EduTrust certification aims to recognise PEIs that are able to consistently maintain high standards in key areas of management and in the provision of education services, the pre-requisites will be tightened. • Only PEIs that have at least a 4-year Enhanced Registration Framework (ERF) registration period will be able to apply for EduTrust certification with immediate effect. • EduTrust standards will also be enhanced to place greater emphasis on academic processes and student education outcomes through new requirements and greater score weightage. • Standards will be more outcome-focused to allow for greater flexibility and innovation in the design of PEIs' systems and processes. • The Guidance Document version 3.0 (GD3) articulating these enhanced standards will be released in January 2017 and will come into effect on 1 June 2017.