

Lecturers attribute recent trend to hands-on experience and maturity

ITE grads among top quartile of poly grads

AMELIA TENG, THE STRAITS TIMES

At 24, Ms Seow Mei Poh was older than her schoolmates when she joined Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) in 2014.

She had taken a longer route, going through a nursing course at the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) first.

As a nurse enrolled with the Singapore Nursing Board, she also worked for five years before joining NYP.

Her years of hard work have paid off, and the 28-year-old is now a registered nurse at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

She graduated last year among the top 5 per cent of her nursing cohort with a grade point average (GPA) of 3.92 out of 4. The hospital had sponsored her full-time study.

Like Ms Seow, close to 15 per cent of ITE graduates who enter polytechnics each year in the last five years do well enough to be in the top quartile of polytechnic graduates.

According to data from the Ministry of Education, these ITE upgraders perform even better in the infocommunication technology and health science courses.

About a third of them scored in the top quartile of their cohort, outperforming their



Ms Seow Mei Poh graduated with a GPA of 3.92 while final-year student Mr Samuel Ng's current GPA is 3.8.

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classmates who entered the polytechnics from secondary schools.

Since 2014, one in four ITE graduates have moved on to polytechnics every year, compared to one in five in previous years.

Lecturers said that many ITE students who join the polytechnics are more mature and hard-working.

Mr Tan Hong Yap, the section head for game design at Temasek Polytechnic, said: "They do have an advantage because they have some of the skills already. Some are better in hands-on, practical skills.

"They are also a bit older, more mature and responsible."

Mr Samuel Ng, 21, joined the course in 2015 after graduating with a Nitec in visual effects from ITE, where he earned a

perfect GPA of 4.

In secondary school, the Normal (Technical) student found his interest in video editing while watching movies and playing video games.

"ITE allowed me to continue doing what I enjoyed and gave me a solid foundation in designing," said Mr Ng, who is in his final year at polytechnic.

His current GPA is 3.8, and he is among the top 10 per cent of students in his cohort.

"I didn't really expect to do very well. I did struggle a bit at the start of poly because the learning curve is quite steep," said Mr Ng.

"In poly, we take five to six modules at a time compared to two to three modules in ITE."

But he pushed himself to learn.

Mr Tan, who was Mr Ng's supervisor, said he is one of the top students in the course.

"He fares better in skills like modelling because of his ITE foundation. He is very proactive and motivated to learn," said Mr Tan.

"He is also willing to take on leadership roles when needed."

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