

## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

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### ITE-WDA MUTUAL SKILLS RECOGNITION – CONCRETE STEP FOR SKILLS ADVANCEMENT BETWEEN *NITEC* AND WSQ

A collaborative effort between the Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) will enable adult learners to move flexibly between the two qualifications system, and enhance the accessibility and openness of the continuing education and training (CET) infrastructure, to help adult learners advance with skills.

2 WDA and ITE mutually recognise each others' qualifications system, namely the National ITE Certification (*Nitec*) system and the Singapore Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) system. Under this mutual skills recognition arrangement, adult learners who acquired skills certification through either the *Nitec* or WSQ system will be exempted from equivalent modules of the other system. Hence, they can move flexibly between the two systems to maximise their skills upgrading opportunities and attain higher qualifications within the shortest time possible.

3 The mutual recognition arrangement is possible because *Nitec* and WSQ are both skills-based, industry-focused qualifications system, where training is delivered in bite-size modules. Notwithstanding, both systems have evolved under different circumstances and serve different purposes. WSQ is mainly

targeted at adult workers, based on open access with no academic pre-requisites, and offers adult workers a clear qualification and progression pathway that is recognised by the industries. ITE's *Nitec* skills credentialing system<sup>1</sup> on the other hand, has a long history. Established since 1973, the *Nitec* credentialing system is well-established in Singapore and licensed overseas. ITE's state-of-the-art facilities and well-qualified lecturers have groomed many successful technical and skilled professionals.

4 Mr Tan Tuan Kah, Precision Engineering Specialist, from VDL Enabling Technologies Group (Singapore) Pte Ltd, is one of the many potential beneficiaries of this mutual recognition agreement. "The market is so competitive these days. The mutual recognition will give me more opportunities to upgrade my skills. It allows me to switch from either the *Nitec* or the WSQ system easily to take up training modules and obtain higher skill qualifications which I need to progress in my career," said Mr Tan.

5 On the collaboration, Mr Ong Ye Kung, Chief Executive of WDA, said: "In Singapore, we tend to draw a clear line between Pre-Employment Training (PET) and CET. But in reality the line is not so clear, because PET extends into CET and CET builds upon PET. WDA's collaboration with ITE builds a clear bridge between PET and CET, and gives skills-based training a collective identity."

6 Agreeing, Mr Bruce Poh, Director & CEO, ITE, said: "The close collaboration between ITE and WDA will further enhance the CET framework for upgrading efforts of adult learners. It offers them not only a wider choice of programmes - from WDA's bite-size competency units (ranging from a duration of 20 to 80 hours), to ITE's standardised modules (120 hours), but also the opportunity to acquire the final certification in either one of the two qualification systems. The closer partnership in skills standards development will not only minimise duplication of efforts and costs, but will also benefit industry."

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<sup>1</sup> The *Nitec* system was established in 2002. Prior to that, ITE offered six certification titles, namely, the Industrial Technician Certificate (ITC), the National Technical Certificate (NTC) Grades 1 and 2, Certificate in Business Studies, Certificate in Office Skills and National Certificate in Nursing

7 Underpinning the collaboration are four key thrusts adopted by ITE and WDA:-

- a) Sharing skills standards between ITE and WDA to design programmes and facilitate mutual recognition of skills;
- b) According credit exemptions to graduates for programmes where there is a minimum of 75 per cent overlap in curriculum and skills of both systems;
- c) Minimising duplication of efforts in skills standard development; and
- d) Appointing ITE as a CET Centre to deliver WSQ courses and issue WSQ qualifications.

8 ITE is currently a CET Centre for precision engineering WSQ and *Nitec* training modules. With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2008, adult learners can seek exemptions for their certificates in precision engineering from ITE and other CET Centres appointed by WDA. The alignment of skills standards and availability of courses for the remaining 11 sectors will be completed progressively in 2009.

9 For more information on the mutual skills recognition system and transferability of skills upgrading across *Nitec* and WSQ systems, please visit [www.wda.gov.sg](http://www.wda.gov.sg) or [www.ite.edu.sg](http://www.ite.edu.sg).

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**About Singapore Workforce Development Agency**

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) enhances the competitiveness of our workforce by encouraging workers to learn for life and advance with skills. In today's economy, most jobs require not just knowledge, but also skills. WDA collaborates with employers, industry associations, the Union and training organisations, to develop and strengthen the Continuing Education and Training system that is skills-based, open and accessible, as a mainstream pathway for all workers - young and older, from rank and file to professionals and executives - to upgrade and advance in their careers and lives.

For more information, please visit <http://www.wda.gov.sg>

**About Institute of Technical Education**

The **Institute of Technical Education (ITE)**, Singapore, was established as a post-secondary education institution in 1992 under the Ministry of Education. ITE is a principal provider of career and technical education and principal authority in developing national occupational skills certification and standards to enhance Singapore's workforce competitiveness. Under its "**One ITE System, Three Colleges**" Model of Education, ITE governs three Colleges, comprising **ITE College Central, ITE College East and ITE College West.**