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## MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKERS
## WITHOUT GCE N- AND O-LEVELS

### *Civil Service accepts Employability Skills System as alternative to formal educational qualifications*

*1.* Workers without GCE N- or O-levels can now join the Civil Service if they have attained the Employability Skills System (ESS) certification.

*2.* On 2 Apr 2007, the 60,000-strong Civil Service joined the growing group of 45 companies[1] in Singapore to recognise the ESS certification as an alternative criterion to academic results in its recruitment exercise.

<u>ESS</u>

3. The ESS, comprising the Workplace Literacy Series, the Workplace Numeracy Series and the Workplace Skills Series, includes basic skills in ICT, personal effectiveness and working as a team. Workers who upgrade their employability skills will receive ESS certification in the form of the nationally-certified Statements of Attainment. As at Mar 2007, a total of 32,458 workers have obtained such statements for their employability skills since the ESS was established. The information sheet on the ESS is attached at <u>Annex A.</u>

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[1] The list of companies is attached at <u>Annex B</u>.

*Civil Service Recognition of the ESS*

4.      The Civil Service will recognise the ESS Workplace Literacy and Numeracy[2] Level 5 in lieu of three GCE N-level passes; and the Career Readiness Certificate in lieu of three GCE O-level passes *(See table 1)*. The Career Readiness Certificate is the complete suite of all the ESS Workplace series.

**Table 1: Pegging of the ESS certifications to the GCE N- and O-level qualifications**

| Academic Qualifications | Alternative ESS Certifications |
|---|---|
| 3 GCE 'N' Level passes | Workplace Literacy and Numeracy Level 5 |
| 3 GCE 'O' Level passes | Career Readiness Certificate (operations) |

5.      This means that those with ESS credentials can apply to join Division 3 positions such as corporate support officers. Job seekers with ESS Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (level 5) and Career Readiness Certificate (operations level[3]), like other applicants with formal educational qualifications, are subject to the entry requirements when they apply for jobs at the various ministries.

6.      Civil servants who are at Grade 3 in the Division 4 schemes may be assessed for their eligibility to be promoted to Grade 2 if they have attained ESS Workplace Literacy and Numeracy (level 5) certification, provided they fulfil other promotion criteria.  ESS workplace literacy and numeracy qualifications will also be recognised for promotion from Division 4 to Division 3 positions.

7.      Said Ms Lim Soo Hoon, Permanent Secretary of Public Service Division: "Today's workforce is more diverse and many may have chosen competency-based training over the traditional route of formal education. The ESS is a good benchmark to see if the applicant has the necessary literacy, numeracy and soft skills."

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[2] ESS WPLN ranges from a scale of 1 to 8, Level 1 being the lowest and Level 8 being the highest.
[3] The modules under the ESS WPS are divided into 3 distinct levels of attainment, namely the operations level (level 5), the supervisory level (level 6) and the managerial level (level 8).

8.      Said Mr Ong Ye Kung, Chief Executive of Singapore Workforce Development Agency: "The Civil Service's recognition of ESS as an alternative to the GCE N- and O-levels will open up further opportunities for our workers.  It signals clearly to workers and employers that while formal academic qualifications remain important, it is not the only route to become employable and find jobs.  Our system cannot be an expressway with only one exit, such that if you missed it, you will end up at the end of the island.  Even if you miss the nearest exit, there must be alternate exits to help you reach your destination.  I hope that more private sector companies, industry bodies and training institutions will follow the lead of the civil service."

9.      The Subordinate Courts and the Ministry of Education, which have already sent their officers to be trained in the ESS, strongly support it.

10.     Mr Toh Han Li, Registrar of the Subordinate Courts, said: "ESS has provided our officers with more opportunities to upgrade their skill sets and to advance their career.  It will certainly motivate and spur our officers in our quest for organisation excellence."

11.     Mr Lu Cheng Yang, Director of Personnel from the Ministry of Education added, "WDA's Employability Skills System is an excellent pathway for MOE's Executive and Administrative Staff to upgrade their skills and further their development in the organisation.  MOE fully supports this initiative and is the first ministry to accept ESS certification as an alternative to GCE 'O' and 'N' levels."

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**INFORMATION SHEET ON SINGAPORE EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS SYSTEM**

The Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA) established the Singapore Employability Skills System (ESS) in Mar 2005.

The ESS comprises the Workplace Literacy (WPL) Series, the Workplace Numeracy (WPN) Series and the Workplace Skills (WPS) Series. There are altogether ten employability skills offered under the ESS, e.g., literacy, numeracy, and other workplace skills such as information communication technologies (ICT), communication and relationship management and problem solving. These employability skills are foundation skills to help workers become more effective at work. As the skills are transferable, they can be applied in different industries, thereby increasing the workers' mobility. Employability skills also form the critical skills which the workers could further build on to acquire broad based and specific skills in their respective industries.

As a viable alternative to the formal education route, the ESS offers adult workers who have missed out on formal education an opportunity to attain qualifications for their skills. The ESS certifications open up doors for the workers to move into new jobs or careers in a number of companies that now accept the ESS certifications as alternatives to the GCE N- and O-level qualifications. To date, there are 45 companies (not including the civil service and statutory boards) that have accepted the ESS certifications. The list of companies is found in Annex B.

Besides opening doors to workers to move into new jobs or careers, the ESS also enables workers to upgrade themselves as they are now able to apply to study specialised courses that stipulate minimum educational qualifications for admission. To date, 14 training institutions accept the ESS certifications as entry requirements.

**THREE SERIES UNDER THE ESS**

**A)	The Workplace Literacy (WPL) Series**

WPL is aimed at upgrading the English language proficiency of our workforce. It includes the skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in the English language.

**B)	The Workplace Numeracy (WPN) Series**

WPN covers the individuals' ability to use mathematics in a real-life context.

For WPL and WPN, participants need take a Computer Adaptive Test (CAT) conducted by the Centre for Employability Skills (CES) and be assessed for their current level of competency. A Statement of Attainment (SOA) will be awarded to the participant upon completion of the appraisal. The SOA is a nationally-recognised qualification indicating a person's level of proficiency. Based on the

appraisal results, the participant can then determine if there is a need for further training.

## C) The Workplace Skills (WPS) Series

WPS covers a range of specific workplace skills which are focused on generic workplace processes and skills. A SOA will be awarded to the trainee who has completed the programme and met the requirements. The list of workplace processes and skills, and their respective training modules are:

| Employability Skills | Related Training Modules | What the training is about |
|---|---|---|
| Information Communication Technologies | Basic ICT Skills Workplace ICT Application | • Operate common office equipment,<br>• Apply basic computer knowledge,<br>• Practice responsible use of ICT in the workplace. |
| Self-Management Work Related Life Skills | Personal Effectiveness | • Relate personal goals to organizational goals,<br>• Time management, maintain work-life harmony,<br>• Personal financial management,<br>• Gain and maintain employment. |
| Initiative & Enterprise | Initiative & Enterprise | • Initiate action for continuous improvement,<br>• Practice innovative and enterprising behaviours,<br>• Identify, evaluation and manage risks |
| Communication & Relationship Management | Communication & Relationship Management | • Communicate effectively at the workplace,<br>• Contribute towards improved teamwork<br>• Effective workplace negotiation skills |
| Problem Solving & Decision Making | Problem Solving & Decision Making | • Identify and anticipate problems<br>• Generate and evaluate alternative solutions<br>• Make and take responsibilities for decisions |
| Health & Workplace Safety | Workplace Safety & Health | • Observe workplace safety and health policies and procedures,<br>• Implement policies and programmes to maintain workplace safety and health,<br>• Establish and evaluate workplace safety and health system. |
| Life Long Learning Global Mindset | Learning & Personal Development | • Develop lifelong learning skills, such as taking responsibility for personal and professional growth,<br>• Acquire a global mindset and be responsive and adaptable to change. |

**CAREER READINESS CERTIFICATE**

The Career Readiness Certificate (CRC) is a key employability skills-based qualification in the Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) System. It will benefit and upgrade workers who do not have formal academic qualifications.

A CRC is awarded to individuals who have attained 10 Statements of Attainment (SOAs) in ESS modules (including the WPLN) or a combination of ESS and other WSQ modules. Three CRC types are currently available as shown in the table below:

| OCCUPATIONAL LEVELS | OPERATIONS | SUPERVISORY | MANAGERIAL |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Core Modules** | | | |
| | SOA Level | SOA Level | SOA Level |
| *Workplace Literacy Series Modules (WPL)* (Reading and Listening) | 5 (Reading) 5 (Listening) | 6 (Reading) 6 (Listening) | 7 (Reading) 7 (Listening) |
| *Workplace Numeracy Series Modules (WPN)* | 5 (Numeracy) | 6 (Numeracy) | 7 (Numeracy) |
| **Elective Modules** | | | |
| *Workplace Skills Series Modules* <br><br> 1. Basic ICT (BICT) <br> 2. Workplace ICT Application <br> 3. Problem Solving & Decision Making <br> 4. Initiative & Enterprise <br> 5. Communication & Relationship Management <br> 6. Personal Effectiveness <br> 7. Learning and Personal Development <br> 8. Workplace Safety & Health | Option 1: <br><br> Any 7 out of the 8 WPS modules at operation level <br><br><br> Option 2: <br><br> Any 5 out of the 8 WPS modules at operation level + Any 2 modules from other industry-based or SETA framework | Option 1: <br><br> Any 7 out of the 8 WPS modules at supervisory level <br><br><br> Option 2: <br><br> Any 5 out of the 8 WPS modules at supervisory level + Any 2 modules from other industry-based or SETA framework | Option 1: <br><br> Any 7 out of the 8 WPS modules at managerial level <br><br><br> Option 2: <br><br> Any 5 out of the 8 WPS modules at managerial level + Any 2 modules from other industry-based or SETA framework |

**LIST OF COMPANIES AND TRAINING INSTITUTES THAT HAVE ACCEPTED THE ESS**

**Companies**

1. AETOS Security Management Pte Ltd
2. BHG (Singapore) Pte Ltd (Seiyu)
3. Bok Seng Logistics Pte Ltd
4. Carrefour Singapore Pte Ltd
5. Cash Converters
6. Cathay Organisational Holdings Ltd
7. Cheers Holdings (2004) Pte Ltd
8. China Printing and Dyeing Holdings Limited
9. City Development Limited (CDL) – City Building Management Pte Ltd
10. Club 21
11. Courts
12. Esprit Retail Pte Ltd
13. ExxonMobil Asia Pacific Pte Ltd
14. Faber Tours
15. Frasers Centrepoint Limited
16. Gain City Best-Electric Pte Ltd
17. Giordano Originals (S) Pte Ltd
18. Hang Ten Enterprises (Pte) Ltd
19. Home-Fix D.I.Y. Store Pte Ltd
20. KH Security Agency
21. Koufu Gourmet Pte Ltd
22. Metro (Pte) Ltd
23. Mohamed Mustafa & Samsuddin Co Pte Ltd
24. Mothercare (S) Pte Ltd
25. Nam Ho Travel
26. National University Hospital
27. Novotel Clarke Quay
28. NTUC Fairprice
29. On Cheong Co (Pte) Ltd
30. Orchid Country Club
31. OTO Bodycare Pte Ltd
32. Premier Security Co-operatives Society Ltd
33. Presco Scaffolding & Services Pte Ltd
34. Prima Limited
35. Royal Sporting House (Singapore) Pte Ltd
36. Setsco Services Pte Ltd
37. Soup Restaurant
38. Singapore Workforce Development Agency
39. Superior Coach
40. Swiss Precision Industries Pte Ltd
41. Toys "R" Us Singapore Pte Ltd
42. Transinex
43. Wing Tai Retail Pte Ltd
44. WTS Travel
45. Yeo Hiap Seng Limited

**Training Institutes**

1. Air Transport Training College (ATTC)
2. at-sunrice The Singapore Culinary Academy and Spice Garden
3. Construction Industry Training Institute (CITI)
4. Institute of Technical Education (ITE)
5. Restaurant Association of Singapore (RAS)
6. Management Development Institute of Singapore (MDIS)
7. Real Estate & Construction Centre  (RECC)
8. Singapore Association of Convention & Exhibition Organisers (SACEOS)
9. Singapore Hotel and Tourism Education Centre (SHATEC)
10. Singapore Human Resources Institute (SHRI)
11. Singapore General Hospital
12. The Retail Academy of Singapore
13. Tourism Management Institute of Singapore (TMIS)
14. University of Nevada Las Vegas (UNLV)