
Media Release

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First-ever national level committee appointed by MTI formed to enhance creative capabilities for the design industry and wider economy through design education at the Institutes of Higher Learning

Move aims to produce design-trained workforce that can help Singapore businesses become more resilient, innovative, and competitive despite global uncertainty

SINGAPORE – Dec 14, 2020: Leading business leaders from design and non-design sectors, and academics from all 14 publicly funded Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) in Singapore have unified in the country's first-ever Design Education Advisory Committee (DEAC). The committee aims to influence and shape the quality of design education and to embed design into IHL education at the national level, with the goal of developing a resilient and design-trained workforce that can help businesses become competitive through human-centred innovation in the face of global disruption and economic uncertainty.

Launched by the DesignSingapore Council (Dsg) and appointed by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), the DEAC is the first-ever body of its kind and plans to be the go-to platform for design-education thought and practice leadership. The DEAC aims to lay the foundation for the development of industry-relevant education that will shape the next decade of design education and beyond. In the process, it also hopes to shape a brand of design education and creative capability that is unique to Singapore and worthy of global recognition.

By fostering education-industry amalgamation and collaboration, the DEAC intends to prepare Singapore's workforce for the new future, one shaped by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, increasing digitalisation and accelerated by the global pandemic, by equipping them with critical core skills – such as creativity, critical thinking, dealing with uncertainty – that will be in demand across all industries.

Said Minister of State for the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ms Low Yen Ling, "As the first of its kind design industry and education collaboration, the DEAC will play a vital role in ensuring an agile workforce equipped with the ability to understand changing user behaviour, and capable of innovating and solving complex problems. These valuable skillsets are key in enabling businesses to become more resilient and competitive, especially amid the current global uncertainty. The diverse expertise and experience of DEAC members will provide strategic and market-relevant insights that help the Institutes of Higher Learning shape their curricula to train graduates with skills that the industry needs."

Ms Jan Chua, Coordinating Divisional Director from the Ministry of Education's Higher Education Group said, "The IHLs work closely with industry partners to ensure that their curricula remain relevant and up-to-date. The DEAC will complement IHLs' existing efforts and provide additional perspectives to help IHLs ensure that their students will continue to develop design skillsets that will serve them well in the future economy."

The DEAC will work to shape direction and provide recommendations to strengthen the quality of design manpower pipeline for the short-, mid-, and long-term, covering practice initiatives, collaboration platforms and input on policies. It will also share global perspectives that could inform IHLs' planning and review of their



programmes, and access to overseas networks and resources for design education development. The DEAC will offer additional resources and opportunities for partnerships with industry and give advice on the application of the Skills Framework for Design to sharpen education development. In doing so it aims to serve as the “go-to” advisory platform for IHL design education and direction for the long term, and complement the IHLs’ existing efforts and own industry advisory structures.

The formation of the DEAC was one of the key recommendations mooted by the Design Education Review Committee, which was appointed in August 2017 by the Ministry of Communications and Information to look into strengthening the design education system in Singapore, develop design talent with transdisciplinary skillsets, and foster a workforce with design sensibilities. This was to help realise Singapore’s vision to become an innovation-driven economy and a loveable city by 2025.

The DEAC will be helmed by Mr. Low Cheaw Hwei, Head of Design APAC at Philips ASEAN Pacific. Mr. Low was appointed by Mr. Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, to be Chairman on January 17, 2020, for a two-year term commencing on April 1, 2020.

Said Mr. Low Cheaw Hwei, Chairman, DEAC, “Design is about solving problems and today, more than ever creative problem-solving capabilities have become needed core skills for all disciplines of work and professions, especially for an anomalous future we are stepping into. So, design is not solely for designers. The DEAC’s purpose is to raise the quality of our design education as well as to embed design capabilities into IHL education. We aim to do this by reframing the linear relationship between IHLs, industry and policy makers to shape an interdependent, collaborative-



community to boldly develop design led proficiencies and cultivate attitudes that will future proof ourselves.”

The DEAC consists of nine industry leaders and 14 IHL members who have been appointed by MTI. Additionally, to augment the work by the DEAC, a resource panel comprising international thought leaders and representatives from relevant sectoral agencies such as SkillsFuture Singapore, Workforce Singapore, Infocomm Media Development Authority, among others, has also been set up. The resource panel will share perspectives on future trends and research studies in their respective sectors.

To be convened at least four times a year, the first DEAC meeting was held on August 19, 2020. The meetings have seen the committee members delving into the three key themes of: “Improving perceptions and understanding towards the full potential and value of design among Singaporeans”, “Transforming design aspirations, education and training for students to establish core skillsets that are trans- and interdisciplinary in nature through a strong design-focused curriculum” and “Strengthening the relationship and collaboration between IHLs and industry, and establishing common ground”.

Said Mr. Mark Wee, Executive Director, Dsg, “We welcome the formation of the Design Education Advisory Committee as we believe it will shift the needle for design education in Singapore. By building stronger ties between the IHLs, employers and government, and sharing guidance on industry trends and emerging skills needed for our workers to thrive in the future economy, the Committee’s recommendations will help to increase the pipeline of our design talent and spur the growth of the design sector.”

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To view the list of Advisory Committee members and sectoral agency representatives on the DEAC Resource Panel, please see Annex A.

To view the DEAC media fact sheet, please see Annex B.

To view the DERC report and recommendations, please visit:

<https://www.designsingapore.org/resources/design-education-review-committee-report.html>.

About the DesignSingapore Council

DesignSingapore Council's (Dsg) vision is for Singapore to be an innovation-driven economy and a loveable city through design by 2025. As the national agency that promotes design, our mission is to develop the design sector, help Singapore use design for innovation and growth, and make life better in this UNESCO Creative City of Design. The Dsg is a subsidiary of the Singapore Economic Development Board. For more information, please visit www.designsingapore.org

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ANNEX A
DEAC Members:

| No. | Company / Organisation / IHL | Name | Designation |
|-----|--|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Studio Dojo | Mr Hong Khai Seng | Founder and Director |
| 2. | Kingsmen Exhibits | Ms Crystal Chu | Creative Director |
| 3. | United Overseas Bank | Mr Stuart Smith | Regional Head of Engagement and Design, UOB Digital Bank |
| 4. | Kinetic Singapore | Mr Pann Lim | Co-founder and Creative Director |
| 5. | Tribal Worldwide Asia Pacific | Mr Jeff Cheong | Deputy CEO at DDB Group Singapore, and President at Tribal Worldwide Asia & Singapore |
| 6. | STUCK | Mr Tze Lee | Co-founder and Director |
| 7. | Textile and Fashion Federation | Ms Ho Semun | Chief Executive Officer |
| 8. | DP Architects, Singapore | Mr Seah Chee Huang | Deputy Chief Executive Officer |
| 9. | Formwerkz Architects | Mr Alan Tay | Co-Founder, Principal Architect |
| 10. | Institute of Technical Education (ITE) | Mr Greg Chew | Deputy Director, School of Electronics & Info-Comm Technology |
| 11. | Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP) | Mrs Pang-Eng Peck Hong | Director, School of Design & Environment |
| 12. | Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP) | Mr Albert Lim | Director, School of Design |

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|-----|--|---------------------------------|--|
| 13. | Republic Polytechnic (RP) | Ms Emida Natalaray | Director, School of Technology for the Arts |
| 14. | Singapore Polytechnic (SP) | Ms Georgina Phua | Deputy Principal, (Development) |
| 15. | Temasek Polytechnic (TP) | Mr Lim Chong Jin | Director, School of Design |
| 16. | Nanyang Technological University (NTU) | Dr Ho Shen Yong | Associate Dean (Academic) in the College of Science |
| 17. | National University of Singapore (NUS) | A/Prof Cheah Kok Ming | Associate Professor, Deputy Head (Academic) - Immediate Past, School of Design and Environment |
| 18. | Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT) | A/Prof Jeanette Ng | Cluster Director, Design and Specialised Business Cluster |
| 19. | Singapore Management University (SMU) | A/Prof Gilbert Tan | Academic Director, Master of Science in Management |
| 20. | Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) | Dr Peter Chuah | Head, Visual Communication Programme, School of Business |
| 21. | Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD) | Prof Pey Kin Leong | Associate Provost, Undergraduate Studies & SUTD Academy |
| 22. | LASALLE College of the Arts (LASALLE) | Ms Nur Hidayah Abu Bakar | Dean, Faculty of Design |
| 23. | Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA) | Ms Sabrina Long | Dean, School of Art & Design |

Sectoral Agency Representatives on the DEAC Resource Panel:

| No. | Company / Organisation / IHL | Name | Designation |
|------------|---|------------------------|--|
| 1. | SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) | Ms Tracy Lee | Director, Industry Development Division 2 |
| 2. | Workforce Singapore (WSG) | Ms Sharon Chiew | Acting Director, Creative and Professional Services Division |
| 3. | Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA) | Mr Adrian Ong | Director, TeSA Programme Office |
| 4. | National Arts Council (NAC) | Ms May Tan | Director, Education and Development |
| 5. | Ministry of Manpower (MOM) | Mr Li Jingheng | Director, Workforce Strategy & Policy Department |
| 6. | Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) | Mr Joseph Zhang | Director (Manufacturing, Connectivity & Services), Industry Division |

Annex B

DEAC media fact sheet:

BACKGROUND

- The formation of the Design Education Advisory Committee (DEAC) is one of the five recommendations made by the Design Education Review Committee (DERC) to strengthen the links between the schools and industry.
- The Design Education Review Committee (DERC) released its report on 3 July 2019, following a two-year review. The committee was chaired by Mr Tan Pheng Hock and it made five recommendations to help guide the transformation of higher education for design in Singapore. **The objectives are to (a) Strengthen Singapore’s design higher education by enhancing existing design programmes in the Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs); and (b) Embed design in Singapore’s non-design higher education institutes, in order to increase the appreciation and use of design across different disciplines.** The recommendations were accepted by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI).
- The DERC report also identified five trends in the design sector that will impact manpower needs in the future economy:
 - (a) **Design as Catalysts:** As more companies integrate designers into their teams, designers will need to possess deep knowledge not only in their specific craft but also in business and technology;
 - (b) **Cultural and Organisational Transformation:** Designers play an important role in facilitating the development of human-centred problem-solving approaches to shape organisational culture based on empathy, communication and collaboration;
 - (c) **Systems Approach to Complexities:** As businesses continue to recognise the value of design in navigating complex systems, designers must better understand cultural nuances, relationships and the human psyche to deliver thoughtful and meaningful experiences;
 - (d) **Design for New Technological Platforms:** Designers are expected to be agile and versatile enough to design for omni-channels and must exercise empathy to create seamless solutions in a fast-evolving technological landscape; and

- (e) **Sustainability and Ethics:** Designers must be proficient in regulations governing data privacy, intellectual property, sustainability, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility.
- These five trends in the design sector and the growth in demand for emerging design roles suggest a rapidly changing employment landscape. All individuals need transdisciplinary skillsets to remain versatile in such an environment. The key to embedding essential design skillsets across different areas in our society is to enhance Singapore's education system across the Pre-Employment Training and Continuing Education and Training space.

FORMATION OF THE DEAC

- The DEAC has been formed to strengthen education and industry links, in order to develop and strengthen the quality of manpower with the relevant design skills needed by the design industry and wider economy. It is a standing committee comprising of design industry professionals, leading business leaders from non-design sectors, and leaders from the IHLs. The DesignSingapore Council will provide secretariat support to the DEAC.

Objectives:

- The DEAC will work with IHLs to provide, among other things:
 - a) Advice on how to better co-shape design education initiatives with industry needs;
 - b) Global perspectives that could inform IHLs' planning and review of their programmes;
 - c) Overseas networks and resources for curriculum development;
 - d) Additional resources and opportunities for collaboration with industry; and
 - e) Advice on the application of the Skills Framework for Design to sharpen education development.
- The DEAC will **complement existing platforms** for the IHLs to gather feedback from industry and sector agencies through:

- a) The inclusion of employers in the non-design sectors, in particular in the emerging design domains in experience design;
 - b) A wider representation of the IHLs with the inclusion of autonomous universities and arts institutions, polytechnics and the ITE;
 - c) International perspective and views from the international advisors; and
 - d) Policy input from sectoral agencies on one single platform.
- A monitoring and evaluation report will be produced at the end of each year, documenting the notes of meeting and key achievements of the DEAC.

COMPOSITION OF THE DEAC

- The composition of the DEAC is as follows:
 - a) Chairman: The Chairman's role is to provide leadership to the committee;
 - b) DEAC Members: The DEAC members' role is to represent the interests of the various institutions and sectors, and to provide guidance to further strengthen education and industry links. It will comprise design industry professionals, key industry leaders from non-design sectors, and leaders from the IHLs;
 - c) Resource Panel: In order to augment the work by the DEAC, a resource panel comprising both international thought leaders and relevant sectoral agencies such as SkillsFuture Singapore, Workforce Singapore, Infocomm Media Development Authority, among others, would be set up.
- Minister/MTI has officially appointed Mr Low Cheaw Hwei (Head of Design APAC at Philips ASEAN Pacific) to be the Chairman of the DEAC on 17 January 2020.

Structure of the DEAC:

