

spur or Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience, developed by the Ministry of Manpower and Singapore Workforce Development Agency (WDA), is an enhanced financial scheme to support training and development, and thus help Singapore organisations cope with manpower challenges as we enter a period of slower economic growth due to the global financial crisis.

Launched in December 2008, the two-year \$600-million SPUR aims to assist companies with the enhanced funding support to better manage their manpower during the downturn, save on manpower training costs and at the same time build stronger capabilities for the future. In addition, it seeks to upgrade the skills of local Singaporeans to perform better in their current jobs, or to enhance their employability in seeking new jobs.

Recently the Ministry of Manpower has expanded the list of courses under SPUR to cover 800 courses accredited under the Workforce Skills Qualification (WSQ) system.

Spur training programme widened to 800 courses

Govt hopes expanded scheme will persuade more firms to opt for retraining over layoffs

By ZAKIR HUSSAIN

A NEW Government-sponsored training programme has been expanded, in a move to help minimise the layoffs that are set to rise after Chinese New Year.

The latest expansion of Spur is the second since its launch in December, when it was only for courses at approved centres. About a fortnight ago, in-house training programmes were also included.

But the funding for them will be given on a case-by-case basis, said the Manpower Ministry and the Workforce Development Agency yesterday.

In addition, such companies must commit to a training package that includes Spur-approved courses, and to retaining workers in line with the recent guidelines on managing excess manpower, they added. These include having a shorter work week, flexible work schedule and flexible

NHG College has been accredited as a WSQ Approved Training Organisation in June 2007, and has 15 courses targeted at training Healthcare Assistants. College also has plans to develop and conduct another 6 courses for Patient Service Assistants and 5 courses for Pharmacy Assistants.

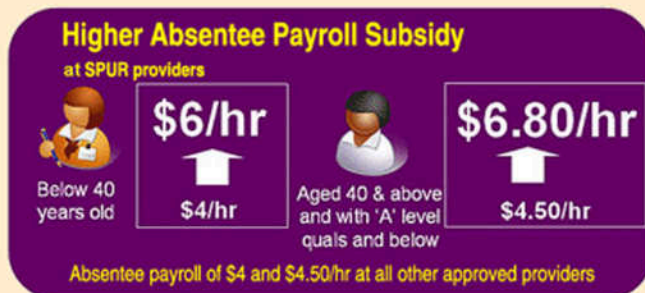
The 15 SPUR courses approved for enhanced course fees support and absentee payroll funding are as follows:

- Demonstrate understanding of basic human anatomy and physiology
- Use of medical terminology in work activities
- Work within a legal and regulatory framework in healthcare industry
- Comply with workplace safety and health policies and procedures
- Measure and record patient's vital signs
- Perform patient care activities
- Lifting, transferring and positioning of patients
- Assist patients with basic hygiene activities
- Assist patients requiring assistance with elimination and hygiene
- Assist patients with oral feeding
- Provide assistance to nutrition and dietetic services
- Assist patients in care of airway
- Perform 12-lead ECG
- Perform lifesaving techniques
- Perform last offices

How SPUR Helps Institutions

Institutions will now pay lower course fees and receive higher absentee payroll subsidy when they send their staff to attend the SPUR courses conducted by NHG College.

The course fee subsidy has been increased from 80-90% to 90% of course fee. The cap for absentee payroll subsidy for healthcare support workers will be raised from \$4.00/hr to \$6.00/hr if they are below 40 years of age, and from \$4.50/hr to \$6.80/hr if they are aged 40 and above with "A" level and below qualifications.



As Institutions gear up on staff recruitment, NHG College's SPUR courses offer a highly cost-effective option to train new entrants of healthcare support staff. This will also be very much aligned to support Government's call to hire and train mature and lower-skilled Singaporeans.