DESIGN EDUCATION REVIEW COMMITTEE REPORT
OVERVIEW

DESIGN 2025 VISION
Singapore to be a thriving innovation-driven economy and a loveable city by design

WE WANT
A global, resilient workforce that will use design to help Singapore thrive in the future economy. We need a workforce that:

- Consists of design talent with transdisciplinary skillsets
- Possesses design sensibilities for the wider economy

WE NEED
A sustainable design education system to nurture a pipeline of talent. We need Institutes of Higher Learning and training providers that:

- Provide more innovative and flexible ways of learning
- Support the professional development of design educators

5 RECOMMENDATIONS
to achieve an enhanced design education system

1. Strengthen industry links through a Design Education Advisory Committee
2. Impart design-led creative thinking skills to students across more disciplines
3. Support Continuing Education and Training for design professionals and educators
4. Create real-world design learning platforms for professionals
5. Empower everyone to learn about design through modular courses and learning communities

Strengthens industry links through a Design Education Advisory Committee
1. The Design Education Review Committee (DERC) released a report with recommendations to strengthen design higher education in Singapore.

2. The Ministry of Communications and Information appointed the DERC in August 2017. The DERC, which is chaired by Mr. Tan Pheng Hock, comprises key industry players, Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and public service agencies. Two sub-workgroups were established, comprising more than 30 members from the design industry, employers of designers, academics, as well as school leaders from the Autonomous Universities, polytechnics and the Arts Institutions.

3. The DERC envisions that by 2025, Singapore will have more innovative and flexible ways for people to learn about design, facilitated by design educators who are up-to-date in the latest industry needs and developments. Design talent will be equipped with transdisciplinary skillsets and the broader workforce, including non-designers, will possess design sensibilities.

4. The report identified five trends in the design sector that will impact manpower 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) **System 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.

5. 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 PET and CET space.

6. With the aim of strengthening the design education system in Singapore, the DERC was tasked to propose strategies to:

   (a) Strengthen Singapore’s design higher education by enhancing existing design programmes in 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.

7. To drive innovation for Singapore in the future economy, the report provides the following five recommendations:

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<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthen industry links through a Design Education Advisory Committee (DEAC)</strong></td>
<td>The DERC recommends the formation of a DEAC, which will comprise key industry leaders from design and non-design sectors, IHL leaders, representatives from public service agencies, and international thought leaders. The DEAC will help ensure that the design curriculum remains agile and adaptable to capitalise on economic and industry shifts. More details on the DEAC are provided in Annex B.</td>
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<td><strong>Impart design-led creative thinking skills to students across more disciplines</strong></td>
<td>Design-led creative thinking is best learnt in a transdisciplinary environment where people from different backgrounds work together to solve real-world problems. To widen the scope of design learning, the DERC recommends that IHLs consider establishing more platforms for students from different disciplines to come together to learn, practise and apply design-led creative thinking. To test this recommendation, SP will be the first polytechnic to prototype a transdisciplinary design-learning programme in their curriculum with “Let’s Design Together”. More details on this pilot programme are provided in Annex B.</td>
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<td><strong>Support CET for design educators and professionals</strong></td>
<td>The DERC recommends that CET programmes and incentives be enhanced to support the deepening of strategic, management, analytical and...</td>
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communication skills for design professionals. Potential initiatives include:

- Providing more DesignSingapore Scholarships and SkillsFuture Study Awards for individuals who have an interest in acquiring non-design skills; and
- Encouraging CET training providers to take reference from the Skills Framework for Design to develop CET programmes that can meet the skills gap and needs of the design and non-design sectors.

To ensure that design educators maintain industry relevance, the DERC also recommends:

- Developing a common skills framework to guide the professional development of design educators; and
- Including design educators in the SkillsFuture Study Award for the design sector.

| Create real-world design learning platforms for professionals | The DERC recommends the creation of more learning platforms where professionals can learn and hone design-led creative thinking skills by devising solutions to real-world social and economic challenges. The proposed experiential learning spaces will be sustained learning platforms beyond formal CET settings. To pilot this recommendation, the DERC proposes starting the “School of X” programme – a real-world learning platform that will offer opportunities for professionals to learn and practise design-led creative thinking, and to co-create solutions for the community. More details on this pilot programme are provided in Annex B. |
| Empower everyone to learn about design through modular courses and learning communities. | In line with the Design 2025’s vision of developing design as a national skillset, the general public can take ownership of their personal development, and embrace the spirit of lifelong learning by learning and applying design-led creative thinking. To this end, the DERC recommends: |
• Creating more modular courses in emerging design domains to impart critical skills in design concepts and design literacy to individuals at all stages of learning. Suitable design courses can be implemented under the existing eight emerging skills areas covered by the SkillsFuture Series, across three proficiency levels (basic, intermediate and advanced). This will allow individuals to identify relevant courses based on their skills level and career needs.

• Ramping up efforts to promote lifelong learning in design skillsets through ground-up learning communities throughout Singapore.

• Leveraging existing national movements such as the SkillsFuture Festival to organise learning platforms that will ignite public interest in wielding design as a novel and effective tool for problem-solving and innovation.

8. The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) has accepted the report and the recommendations set within. MTI and the Dsg will work closely with the industry, sector champions and other stakeholders to implement them at the appropriate juncture.

9. Members of the DERC include:

**Main Committee Members**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Designation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Tan Pheng Hock</td>
<td>Retired CEO</td>
<td>ST Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Chairman)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Simon Ong</td>
<td>Deputy Chairman</td>
<td>Kingsmen Creatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Workgroup 1 Chairman)</td>
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<td>Mr. Low Cheaw Hwei</td>
<td>Head of Design APAC</td>
<td>Philips ASEAN Pacific</td>
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<td>(Workgroup 2 Chairman)</td>
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<td>Ms. Agnes Kwek</td>
<td>Executive Director (till 13 May 2018)</td>
<td>DesignSingapore Council</td>
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<td>Mr. Mark Wee</td>
<td>Executive Director (from 14 May 2018)</td>
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<td>Head of Pillar, Engineering Product Development</td>
<td>Singapore University of Technology and Design</td>
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<td>Prof. Lam Khee Poh</td>
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<td>National University of Singapore</td>
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<td>Prof. Vibeke Sorensen</td>
<td>Chair, School of Art, Design and Media</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
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<td>Director, School of Design</td>
<td>Nanyang Polytechnic</td>
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<td>Mr. Tim Kobe</td>
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<td>Mr. Benjamin Mah</td>
<td>Director, Digital Transformation and Innovation</td>
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<td>Mr. Scott Maguire</td>
<td>Global Engineering Director</td>
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<td>Mr. Zahidi bin Abdul Rahman</td>
<td>Principal Architect</td>
<td>Zahidi A R Arkitek</td>
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**Workgroup Members**

The DERC also comprises representatives from the following organisations:

- LUNAR, McKinsey & Company
- IDEO
- Public Services Division
- Workforce Singapore
- Tan Tock Seng Hospital
- IBM Design Studio
- UBS Wealth Management APAC
- Ministry of Education
Participating IHLs

- Institute of Technical Education (ITE)
- Polytechnics
  - Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP)
  - Ngee Ann Polytechnic (NP)
  - Republic Polytechnic (RP)
  - Singapore Polytechnic (SP)
  - Temasek Polytechnic (TP)
- Autonomous Universities
  - Nanyang Technological University (NTU)
  - National University of Singapore (NUS)
  - Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT)
  - Singapore Institute of Management (SIM)
  - Singapore Management University (SMU)
  - Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS)
  - Singapore University of Technology and Design (SUTD)
- Arts Institutions
  - LASALLE College of the Arts (LASALLE)
  - Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA)