

FACTSHEET ON SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR UPGRADING AND RESILIENCE (SPUR)

What is SPUR?

1. The Skills Programme for Upgrading and Resilience (SPUR) is a new 2-year programme by the tripartite partners, to help companies and workers manage the economic downturn and invest in skills for the recovery. It will be funded by the Government at a cost of \$600 million over 2 years.
2. The objectives of SPUR are:
 - (i) **Cut Costs and Save Jobs** - Help companies to manage excess manpower and reduce retrenchment;
 - (ii) **Reskill and Upskill** - Help local workers including those retrenched, upgrade skills and convert to new jobs; and
 - (iii) **Build Capabilities for Recovery** - Strengthen our manpower capabilities to better position our workforce for the upturn

How will SPUR Help Employers and Workers?

3. SPUR leverages on the extensive national continuing education and training (CET) system to bring together a full range of skills upgrading programmes with enhanced financial support that companies and workers can tap on.
4. To help companies and workers, the number of training places at CET Centres will be doubled from 110,000 in FY08 to 220,000 in FY09. There are more than 60 pathways available for workers of all levels, from rank and file workers to Professionals, Managers, Executives and Technicians (PMETs), and this will further expand over the coming year. Training will cater to workers across different industries and skills levels, and will be highly modular to meet employers' and workers' needs.

SPUR for Employers

5. SPUR will help employers to manage their manpower costs and save jobs with enhanced support for course fee subsidies and higher absentee payroll for their local workers sent for training at CET Centres. This will enable employers to better manage their excess manpower during the downturn and upgrade their workers and capabilities to strengthen business competitiveness when the economy recovers. Employers can benefit in the following ways:

a. Higher Course Fee Support

Employers who send their employees to any CET Centre to attend WSQ/nationally certifiable courses will enjoy fee support of 90 per cent for courses at rank-and-file level, and 80 per cent for courses at PMET-level.

For all other courses at Approved Training Organisations, employers can continue to enjoy the Skills Development Fund support of up to 80% of course fees (capped at \$7/hour) for workers aged below 40, and up to 90% of course fees (capped at \$11/hour) for workers aged 40 and above.

b. Higher Absentee Payroll

Employers who send their employees to any CET Centre to attend WSQ/nationally certifiable courses will enjoy an increase in the absentee payroll cap of 50 per cent, to \$6/hour and \$6.80/hour for workers aged below 40 and those aged 40 and above with “A” level and below qualifications respectively.

For all other courses at Approved Training Organisations, employers can continue to enjoy absentee payroll capped at \$4/hour and \$4.50/hour for workers aged below 40 and those aged 40 and above with “A” level qualifications and below respectively.

These changes to the course fee subsidy and absentee payroll will take effect from **1 Dec 08**.

c. More Skills Upgrading Pathways

More training pathways for a wider range of industries and sectors are now available. Each pathway would help workers upgrade existing skills or attain new skill sets. Employers who were previously unable to send their workers for skills upgrading in a tight labour market can now utilise the downtime to upgrade the skills of their employees and their business capabilities.

d. Industry Upgrading. SPUR will also support customised industry-wide upgrading plans such as through NTUC’s Customer Centric Initiative with SPRING, to encourage service companies to use this period to upgrade their service levels, by enhancing their workers’ service skills through WSQ training.

SPUR for Workers

6. SPUR for workers will help unemployed workers redeploy to new jobs and help in-employment workers to upgrade their skills. These measures will better prepare our workforce to seize new opportunities in the economic recovery and strengthen Singapore’s competitive advantage. The key measures are:

a. Higher Course Fee Support

At the CET Centres, workers can enroll directly and enjoy the same highly subsidized funding rates as employers who send their workers for the same programme. Workers who attend WSQ/nationally certifiable courses at CET Centres will enjoy Government-funded support of 90 per cent for courses at rank-and-file workers, and 80 per cent for courses at PMET-level.

- b. Training Allowances
To help unemployed lower-skilled Singaporeans upgrade their skills so that they can be placed into better jobs for the long term, they may be eligible for a training allowance as assessed by the career centres at the Community Development Councils (CDCs) and NTUC e2i.
- c. More Skills Upgrading Pathways. Each worker will have a complete, individualised pathway from training to job placement, whether short redeployment courses, upgrading courses or longer conversion programmes.
- d. Job Search and Training Facilitation. Workers can approach the career centres at the CDCs and NTUC's e2i for assistance on training and job search. .

Who can Employers and Workers Approach?

7. MOM, WDA, SNEF, NTUC e2i and the CDCs will work in close partnership to reach out to employers and workers. Employers can contact SNEF while workers can approach the career centres at NTUC e2i and the CDCs, or the CET Centres directly, for more assistance with SPUR.

- **SPUR @ e2i** - Outreach to workers and unionised companies with a range of initiatives such as skills upgrading, career services, job redesign and facilitating industry-wide upgrading initiatives such as the Customer Centric Initiative (CCI).
- **SPUR @ SNEF** – Outreach to employers, support for development of HR capabilities to equip HR managers with skills relevant to manpower management in a downturn, HR advisory and consultancy services and support for training of workers in skills such as service skills.

Contact Information

8. For more information, please go to: www.wda.gov.sg or call 6883 5885