

## Joint Media Release

March 24, 2021

### **Sumitomo Life Insurance and Temasek Polytechnic join hands in delivering Singapore's first-of-its-kind Digital Talent Accelerator dedicated to Persons with Disabilities.**

Singapore, 24th March 2021 – Sumitomo Life Insurance (Sumitomo Life) and Temasek Polytechnic (TP) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to launch a **digital talent accelerator programme dedicated to persons with disabilities (PWDs)**. The MOU was signed by **Mr. Peter Lam, Principal & CEO of TP**, and **Mr. Toru Shiomitsu, Senior Executive Officer of Sumitomo Life**, witnessed by Guest-of-Honour, **Ms. Sun Xueling, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social & Family Development**.

**This strategic partnership between Sumitomo Life and TP aims to provide digital career training and opportunities for aspiring students who are PWDs, and interested in digital roles upon graduation.** In this intensive accelerator programme of **11 weeks**, about 30 graduating and alumni PWD students in TP can look forward to a **custom-crafted digital talent development journey**, which consists of:

- a) **Gaining real digital business project experience:** TP students will take on real digital business challenges provided by sponsoring organizations while receiving project mentorship and guidance from the sponsors' representatives.
- b) **Acquiring high-in-demand digital skills with certification:** A curated curriculum of online digital courses will be made available to TP students. All courses lead to certificates, which will add to students' credentials.
- c) **Deepening insights into different industries:** Invited industry speakers will share insights on industries, companies, functions, and roles to give TP students a better understanding of their careers and jobs.
- d) **Receiving personal mentorship from industry PWD mentors:** PWD students from TP will be given an opportunity to get personal mentors from PWDs who are already working in the industry.

In delivering this accelerator programme, Sumitomo Life, an employer of over 700 PWDs in Japan, will bring its decades of experience in hiring, engaging, and retaining PWDs as well as running talent accelerators for PWDs. Sumitomo Life, through their corporate initiative called **TomoWork**, will be dedicating several of its staff members to guide the accelerator programme on a full-time basis. They will be supported by **Hide & Seek**, a Singapore-based social enterprise.

For TP, this partnership is in line with the institution's goal of **nurturing future-ready talent in the digital era and providing better career training and opportunities to their PWD students**. This initiative also contributes towards building a more inclusive society by engaging multiple stakeholders from different sectors to join hands in supporting young talent development.

**Mr. Toru Shiomitsu, Senior Executive Officer of Sumitomo Life Insurance**, said: *"Co-existence, co-prosperity and mutual support have always been an integral management policy at Sumitomo Life, since its establishment in 1907. We are delighted to contribute to Singapore's society and PWD community through our partnership with Temasek Polytechnic. We hope this programme will ignite many young PWDs to actively pursue successful digital careers ahead of them."*

**Mr. Peter Lam, Principal & CEO of Temasek Polytechnic**, said: *"This collaboration with Sumitomo Life is an important initiative for TP as we are constantly exploring partnership opportunities that will provide meaningful workplace training opportunities for our PWD students and better prepare them for work and life. Through this partnership, our PWD students can look forward to taking up digital skills courses which are designed specifically for them, undergoing personal career coaching, interacting with industry experts and professionals, and working in teams on digital business challenges from corporate partners. These experiences will help our students better understand their talents and abilities, and be more confident in securing suitable employment upon graduation."*

### **Industry Partners**

To deliver a collective impact, the industry partners play a critical role in this collaboration. Leading organizations such as **Bloomberg, Certis, Insights** and **Wildlife Reserves Singapore**, as well as **YMCA of Singapore**, will provide real digital business challenges for the participants. To enable the acquisition of digital and other relevant skills to successfully complete the projects, **Bloomberg, Facebook, Microsoft** and **Tableau** are giving participants access to their proprietary online learning content which leads to certifications, while **Google, LinkedIn, NTT DATA SINGAPORE** as well as **Microsoft** will offer mentoring opportunities for the participants. Admitted accelerator participants will be able to achieve more in their personal and professional lives with access to **Microsoft's Enabler program**. The first of its kind, the program by Microsoft brings together partners and non-profits with an aim to remove barriers for a more diverse workforce. The Microsoft Enabler Program will offer job shadowing, internships, mentoring, opportunities in tech jobs and industry required training in cloud and artificial intelligence. This initiative is also supported by **SG Enable** and partners from **Singapore Business Network on DisAbility (SBNOD)** including **Bloomberg, Certis, Microsoft** and **YMCA of Singapore**.

**Mr Jessen Se**, a TP alumnus who graduated with a Diploma in Game Design & Development in 2019, is a very grateful beneficiary of **TomoWork's** connections. Jessen has Spinal Muscular Atrophy Type 2 – a motor neuron disease that causes the loss of motor functions. When looking for a game programmer job upon graduation, there were not many positions open to Jessen in the niche games industry. Thankfully, he found out about TomoWork from a TP lecturer, and went on to do a 2-month contract job with them, working on data visualisation. Subsequently, TomoWork found him employment as a programmer. ***"My job is about developing applications for the HoloLens 2, which is a relatively new technology. It feels great to be finally working, and at a pretty cool job as well"***, said a very happy Jessen.

The first run of the **digital talent accelerator programme** runs from **15<sup>th</sup> March 2021 to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021**. The MOU takes immediate effect and will be reviewed after a year for a longer-term collaboration.

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**About Temasek Polytechnic (TP)**

Established in 1990, TP is one of the leading institutions of higher learning in Singapore. Currently, it offers 37 full-time diploma courses in the areas of applied science, business, design, engineering, humanities & social sciences and informatics & IT. It also offers over 40 part-time courses, up to the advanced diploma level. TP students undergo a holistic learning system that combines hands-on experience, character education, and relevant life skills in an enriching learning environment. The polytechnic has also infused global realities into its programmes and developed a mindset on campus that embraces socio-cultural diversity. These ensure that TP graduates are ready for work or further studies, and to contribute meaningfully to the community. For more information, please visit [www.tp.edu.sg](http://www.tp.edu.sg).

**About Sumitomo Life Insurance**

Sumitomo Life was established in 1907, and is one of Japan's four largest insurance companies. Sumitomo Life sells individual, group life and specialized health policies as well as an annuity and administers pension plans in Japan. It is also actively engaged in overseas operations and maintains subsidiaries and/or representative offices in the United States, and Asia. Sumitomo Life is also a proud signatory of the Valuable 500, a global movement where the CEO pledge to put disability on the business leadership agenda. In Singapore, Sumitomo Life Insurance has invested in Aviva Singlife Holdings Pte. Ltd., which holds the Singapore Life Pte. Ltd. and Aviva Ltd legal entities. For more information, please visit <https://www.sumitomolife.co.jp/english/>.

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