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NEWS FLASH

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HOME

Biomedical courses a hit with upgraders

Working adults are enrolling for life science courses - a sure ticket to success for them.

by **Sandra Davie**

Bank officer Catherine Seet, 28, calls it her insurance against unemployment. Mrs Charu Choudhary, 35, a textile designer turned housewife, says it will be her ticket to a new career.

They are among several adults making a beeline for the biomedical science degree courses. In March, the institute, which runs courses for working adults, launched a Bachelor of Medical Sciences (medical chemistry) course and a Bachelor of Science in bio- technology course, in

collaboration with Macquarie University in Sydney. Over 50 students most them working adults, have signed up for the courses. In November, it will launch another life sciences degree course, which will award a Bachelor of Science in pharmaceutical management from the University of Bradford in Britain. More than 60 students have enrolled for this course, so far. Total course fees for the courses – which are taught from 7 pm to 10 pm three times a week over 3 to 4 years, estimated to be S\$30,000. The courses prepare students for a range of jobs in the biomedical industry – in areas such as pharmaceuticals, healthcare services and biotechnology. Those interested in enrolling for the November course must have A levels or a diploma in a related subject. Prospective students who lack a biology background can join the degree programme on completion of a 10 month foundation course.



AZIZ HUSSEN

Looking to build a new career, Mrs Choudhary - seen here with son Nikhil and daughter Nikita - has completed a foundation course and the Bachelor of Science (Hons) in Pharmaceutical Management.

Dr John Tholen, Director of the Biomedical Sciences department said "the enthusiastic response did not surprise him as many working adults here have cottoned on to the fact that the life sciences will soon play a big role in the economy". "Most of them want to take up the course because they realize there will be many job opportunities in the years to come and the recession has forced people to think of their long-time employment prospects" he said.

Dr Tholen has established a School for Biomedical Sciences, MD across the road from Dhoby Ghaut MRT station. When it is ready in November, the institute will be able to take in up to 400 students per annum. Miss Seet said she had wanted to apply; for the life-sciences degree, courses but was worried she, would lose out to fresh A-s level students. The A-level science student said, she thought of

doing a biomedical course after she nearly lost her job at the bank. "I want a degree that will guarantee me a job, or jobs, for life," she said, adding that, right now, she was not ready to give up her salary of \$2,000 a month because she has to support her patents. Mrs Choudhary, who is from Delhi, worked as textile designer before she moved to Singapore eight years ago. The mother of two completed the foundation course in July this year and now wants to apply enroll in the degree programme. She hopes the degree will help her build a career in the life sciences. "It's quite impressive how the life sciences industry has taken off here" she said. "Every day I read how the industry is growing by leaps and bounds; It's very promising."