

# First day of work for NTU's first batch of doctors

52 doctors from Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine start work today after five years of training

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The first batch of doctors from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) are looking forward to starting work today, after five years in training.

The 52 doctors from Singapore's newest medical school, the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, will start their postings at various healthcare institutions here.

The school was set up in 2010 by NTU and Imperial College London as part of efforts to meet Singapore's growing healthcare needs.

Its pioneer cohort was selected from more than 800 applicants and started school in 2013.

Dr Kiang Wen Wei, 24, who starts his postgraduate training in Tan Tock Seng Hospital's orthopaedic surgery department, said: "We've been adequately trained in terms of content and simulations and finally, we are able to make a real difference to patients, to do some good work."

Relating to patients is a key part

of the curriculum at the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine. From their first year, students learn clinical skills through feedback from role-playing patients.

The school also replaces traditional lectures with a "flipped classroom" model that sees students watch recorded video clips and go through materials ahead of class.

They then attend seminar-style classes and spend more time discussing and solving problems in groups.

The school also uses plastinated human bodies – cadavers preserved with plastic – to teach anatomy, along with an interactive table that displays life-size 3D images of full-body anatomy.

These novel methods of teaching attracted Dr Ang Jia Wei, even though the school had no track record at the time.

The 24-year-old, who starts her stint at Tan Tock Seng Hospital's general medicine department, chose NTU over the National University of Singapore (NUS) as she wanted to be part of something new.

"Both schools offered very attractive programmes, but I liked how NTU was trying to do things differently and improve how medicine is taught."

Her cohort mate, Dr Stewart Retnam, added: "The emphasis on communication skills made us aware of



(From left) Dr Stewart Retnam, Dr Ang Jia Wei and Dr Kiang Wen Wei are among the Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine's first cohort of medical students, who were selected from more than 800 applicants. ST PHOTO: GAVIN FOO

our strengths and weaknesses. It really helped to be put in a mix of scenarios – from asking patients questions, explaining mistakes or breaking bad news to them."

The 25-year-old, who is with Singapore General Hospital's orthopaedic surgery department, said that being posted on a three-week polyclinic stint earlier this year made him see the importance of family medicine.

"The patients we see in hospitals

are the sickest and the tip of the iceberg. So it was a huge benefit to see other types of patients in Singapore at the polyclinics, which are doing really good work, and be aware of the transitions of care," he said.

The Ministry of Health said last year that its aim this year is to have an annual intake of 500 students across the three medical schools here, a target that it is moving closer to.

The combined intake for the

RARING TO GO

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COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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**DR STEWART RETNAM**, on how relating to patients is a key part of the curriculum.

three schools last year was about 480, up from 336 in 2011.

NTU took in 120 medical students while NUS admitted about 300 students into its Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine last year.

The Duke-NUS Medical School, the first United States-style graduate medical school here, took in 63 students into its Doctor of Medicine programme.

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