

## \$200,000 cash grant for overseas Singaporeans looking to become NUS professors



The grant will have no service obligation or bond attached to it, but academics will have to fulfil four years of service in total to receive the full cash grant. PHOTO: CMG

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SINGAPORE - Academics looking to get a funding boost are in luck with the National University of Singapore (NUS) announcing on Tuesday (Aug 6) a new \$200,000 grant.

It is for talented Singaporean academics who want to join NUS as pre-tenure assistant professors.

The grant will have no service obligation or bond attached to it, but academics will have to fulfil four years of service in total to receive the full cash grant.

Education Minister Ong Ye Kung announced the grant at the inaugural Singaporean Researchers Global Summit held at the Regent Singapore.

"This grant will be an enhancement of the Singapore Teaching and Academic Research Talent (START) scheme, for returning Singaporeans committed to be appointed as assistant professors on the pre-tenure track.

"If you are at the early stage of your career, this will get you started to do good research work," Mr Ong said.

He added that as of now, around 50 per cent of tenured faculty members at local universities are Singaporeans. But the pre-tenure pipeline, Mr Ong said, is not as strong, and needs to be built up.

"We want to continue to have a strong core of at least 50 per cent Singaporean faculty. It applies to science (Stem) subjects, and it also applies to the social sciences and humanities," said Mr Ong.

Stem encompasses science, technology, engineering and mathematics fields.

NUS will be the first university to offer this grant under the START scheme. Other universities in Singapore may also come on board within the next few years, said the Education Ministry (MOE) in a statement.

Under the grant, each academic will receive a total of \$200,000 in cash, paid in two instalments.

The first \$80,000 will be paid after two years of service. The remaining \$120,000 will be paid after four years of service in total.

The MOE will fund 50 per cent of the cash bonus, with the other half being funded by the awarding university.

Professor Ho Teck Hua, senior deputy president and provost at NUS said: "This money can be used to carry out research. We will select as many academics as possible, and want to cast the net wide to find Singaporean academics to return home."

"These scholars tend to be located in the United States and Europe, but who are qualified to work in our universities."

"We are particularly excited in inviting humanities and social sciences academics to return to Singapore as well, and we would like to have a bigger ratio of humanities scholars in Singapore," Prof Ho added.

Academics can apply for this grant if they have not spent more than two years as an assistant professor on the pre-tenure track, or if they have no previous or current service obligations with any organisation in Singapore.

Those who are current or previous recipients of any MOE scholarship or awards under the START Scheme are not eligible for this grant.