SINGAPORE: The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has launched its Global Summer Studies Programme which allows students to take a summer course at any of nine universities worldwide.

For a start, the programme is only for NTU students, but it may eventually be open to polytechnic and junior college students.

Tsinghua University in China, and the University of California are just some of the partners in NTU's Global Summer Studies Programme.

Under the programme, students spend four to six weeks during their mid-year vacation earning credits at a university overseas.

Courses range from engineering and science to the humanities.

NTU says it is also looking into opening up the programme to non-NTU students.

Sonny Lim, Director, International Relations Office, Nanyang Technological University, said, "Poly students can already transfer with their diploma into NTU so it will be open to them. Rules are stated actually also allowing students as young as second year JC to participate in these classes."

Depending on the university that the students choose, the cost of the summer programme could range from under S$1,000 to about S$7,000.

NTU assures all needy students that financial assistance schemes will be available.

The school has set aside S$2.5 million for financial assistance schemes this year.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic community has also stepped in with different forms of funding for students going on summer programmes.

Plans for a summer school at NTU are also underway.

The Singapore Management University (SMU) and National University of Singapore (NUS) also run their own summer programmes in partnership with over 14 universities.

Partners of NUS include Yale, Lund University (Sweden), Fudan University, California Institute of Technology, Georgia Institute of Technology, Korea University, and the University of New South Wales.

Partners of SMU include the University of British Columbia, University of St Gallen, Switzerland, and the Arizona State University.

Global cooperation between universities has gained intensity in recent years as more students look to an overseas experience as an integral part of their education.

For example, next year, the 15th World Conference on Cooperative Education is going to be held in Singapore from June 26-29.

The event will bring together more than 500 educators and employers from over 40 countries to discuss how they can work together to develop work-integrated learning programmes for students.

Work-integrated learning programmes combine classroom learning and work experience, and are increasingly being demanded by multinational employers. - CNA/rms