SINGAPORE: The Singapore Management University (SMU) has launched its very own School of Law - its fifth school so far.

Its aim is not just producing more lawyers but professionals with a good understanding of commercial and corporate law beyond Singapore.

SMU’s new Law School will welcome its first batch of 90 students in August this year.

SMU officials say entry requirements into SMU’s Law School will be similar to other courses, and tuition fees are now under review by MOE.

The private university is promising a unique approach in producing lawyers with a difference.

Professor Howard Hunter, President, Singapore Management University, says: "We're focusing the curriculum on developing what we call contextualised teaching of Law to produce lawyers who will be ready for corporate and commercial practice, with a considerable attention being placed on comparative and international aspects of the practice of Law which is natural within Singapore because so much of our trade and business here has transnational applications."

This means introducing compulsory core classes such as Comparative Legal Systems and Economic Analysis of Law.

Students will also have to take classes, about 30 percent of the total coursework, that are not directly related to Law, such as Financial Accounting, and even a course on Work and Family.

Associate Professor Low Kee Yang, Interim Dean, School of Law, Singapore Management University, says: "It is critical that they should understand how these concepts and principles apply in actual environment. For example, as a corporate lawyer, you need to understand not just corporate principles; you need to understand how corporations work and the issues and the dynamics of the corporate workings. And we also want to have lawyers who have a good appreciation of how law works across borders."

Students have an option of a four-year degree or a five-year double degree programme.

Sheena Quek, 1st Year Accounting Student, Singapore Management University, says: "Accountancy and Law are both very specialised degrees and each in itself provides a lot of opportunities. Law and Accountancy complements each other very well."

Ng Cheng Han, 1st Year Accounting Student, Singapore Management University, says: "I believe combining Law and Accounting would be a very good avenue for a great career."

There are now 16 faculty members which will grow to a strength of about 40.

Eventually, when the programme is in full swing, it will have about 480 students, about 120 from each year. - CNA/so