



DAS Academy

ENABLING EXCELLENCE

MEDIA ADVISORY

DAS ACADEMY CELEBRATES 2023 GRADUATION CEREMONY, AWARDING OF FIRST MASTER SCHOLARSHIP IN SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

Bolstering Singapore's core of special educational needs professionals with triple milestones

SINGAPORE, 20 SEPTEMBER 2023 – The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) Academy, the training arm of DAS, will celebrate its annual graduation ceremony on 20 September 2023. A total of 56 graduands who have completed Specialist Diploma and Master courses in dyslexia and special educational needs (SEN) will receive their certifications.

The DAS Academy will also present the new DAS - DAS Academy Scholarship to its first recipient, as part of its efforts to spur more individuals to join the SEN sector to cater to rising demands; and announce the accreditation of one of its programmes by an international authority in dyslexia.

New Scholarship for Master in Arts Programme

The first recipient of the new DAS - DAS Academy Scholarship, Tina Tan, will receive her award during the ceremony. Since 2013, Tina has been volunteering at SPARK, a charitable organisation supporting families with loved ones with attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) in Singapore and is now its Vice-President. As the mother of a teenage boy with dyslexia, ADHD and autism; Tina is able to identify with parents facing the same challenges and is actively involved in parent coaching in the area of ADHD. Her motivation for pursuing the MA SEN/ALN (Additional Learning Needs) is to gain a theoretical grounding for her work. Being aware of the high rates of co-occurrence amongst people with learning differences, Tina hopes that the programme will equip her to help children beyond ADHD. She will commence her course in November 2023.

The scholarship does not come with a bond but has a unique contribution requirement whereby the recipient of the scholarship will give back to the community. Tina has presented her plan to engage and support parents and DAS educational therapists with regards to ADHD. The field was selected as research suggests that there is a 30 to 50 percent overlap between dyslexia and ADHD. With over 3,000 students enrolled in DAS, there could be 1,000 students with ADHD attending classes at DAS centres.

The scholarship aims to support individuals seeking a mid-career switch to the SEN sector but lacking the financial means to acquire the required capabilities. It is opened to Singaporeans or Permanent Residents and applicants from all professional backgrounds. DAS is looking at admitting two candidates into the programme over two application periods each year. The total scholarship fund is S\$173,000.



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“Both passion and competence are crucial in the delivery of specialist interventional support to children with hidden learning abilities such as dyslexia and ADHD. Through the scholarship, DAS hopes to empower those with a strong desire to positively impact young lives to take that bold leap of faith. MA SEN/ALN are robust programmes that will equip them with the capabilities to cater to varied needs of struggling learners, thereby strengthening Singapore’s core of SEN professionals. This is in line with our goal of being a world-class organisation dedicated to help people with dyslexia and other specific learning differences (SpLDs) achieve their potential,” said Dr June Siew, Head of DAS Academy.

MA SEN/ALN is a unique SEN training programme designed to provide for the continuous professional, academic and personal development of participants. Past course participants include school leaders and teachers, SEN officers, as well as parents and caregivers of learners with a range of SEN.

Valedictorians of the 2023 Cohort

This year’s graduation ceremony will see four valedictorians sharing their motivation, learning experience and aspirations with their cohort of graduands from Specialist Diploma in Learning Support for SpLD, Specialist Diploma in Educational Therapy and MA SEN. Although hailing from different backgrounds, all of them embody a common resilience, dedication and commitment to making a positive impact in the field of SEN.

Stella Wye, a primary school teacher and a mother to a child with ADHD, took up the Specialist Diploma in Learning Support for SpLD to better support her child’s learning journey.

Pamela Rodriguez from the Philippines has showcased incredible dedication to her studies by completing first the Specialist Diploma then MA SEN/ALN via a combination of in-person and online learning over the pandemic period.

Elaine Therese Solomon Reynoso executed a mid-career switch from a student care teacher to a SEN educator because of a student with dyslexia she had encountered. She found strategies to help him and focused on simplifying learning for him. He was her catalyst for the career switch.

Hu Ying is also a mid-career switcher from real estate to SEN as an Educational Therapist who supports SEN students who struggle with Chinese literacy. Upon passing the examination to become an assistant Chinese teacher in an international school, she encountered many children with dyslexia, ADHD, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other SpLDs who need her support. That was a turning point in her life to pursue new knowledge and skills in SEN.

Elaine and Hu Ying earned their places as valedictorians for the Specialist Diploma in English and Chinese support respectively due to their consistent good academic achievements and performance throughout their teaching practicums.



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First Course to be Accredited by IDA outside of US – the DAS Academy Specialist Diploma for Educational Therapy

At the ceremony, DAS Academy will also celebrate the accreditation of the Specialist Diploma in Educational Therapy by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) on 4th May 2023.

The [accreditation](#) underscores the Specialist Diploma in Educational Therapy 's quality, rigour and relevance in producing educators who engage in intensive supervised practicum experiences that are sufficiently designed and staffed to promote applied mastery of the principles and practices of structured literacy in the service of preventing reading failure and remediating off-track readers with profiles characteristic of dyslexia.

"The Specialist Diploma in Educational Therapy offered by DAS Academy provides initial training for all Educational Therapists teaching on the MOE-aided DAS Main Literacy Programme at DAS. This year, the diploma has been accredited by IDA and is the first course outside the United States to have this honour. The minor adjustments during the accreditation process reflect how the DAS approach is closely aligned with the IDA's Structured Literacy Approach, one that adheres to IDA's Knowledge and Practice Standards (KPS). This accreditation reaffirms that the diploma has met the exacting standards set by the IDA, equipping students with the knowledge and skills to make a profound impact on the lives of individuals with dyslexia and other SpLDs," said Mr Lee Siang, CEO of DAS.

IDA's accreditation programme rigorously reviews educator preparation programmes based on an accreditation model that is aligned with IDA's knowledge and practice standards for teachers of reading. This provides programmes with a comprehensive standards-based reading preparation framework to guide the development of its curriculum.

The Specialist Diploma in Educational Therapy course is designed as a part-time specialist qualification to empower educational therapists at the DAS to effectively support students receiving intervention at the DAS learning centres. It equips DAS educational therapists with theoretical knowledge and practical skills to build the literacy skills needed by dyslexic students from primary to secondary school. This part-time specialised training is conducted over three modules designed to run consecutively over nine months.

Media Invitation

You are cordially invited to attend the DAS Academy Graduation Ceremony 2023:

Date **Wednesday, 20 September 2023**

Time **0900 - 1100 hours**

Location **HDB Hub Convention Centre Auditorium,**

Basement 1, HDB Hub, 480 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh, Singapore 310480



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Please RSVP by **19 September 2023, 6PM** to The Right Spin PR via charmaine@therightspin.com.sg or +65 8200 3160.

We look forward to seeing you at the graduation ceremony. Thank you.

- End -

ABOUT DAS ACADEMY

Mission: Enabling Excellence

Goal: To be a world-class academic institution providing education and research in the area of special education needs.

The DAS Academy is a Private Education Institution (PEI) registered with the Committee of Private Education (CPE). Led by a multi-disciplinary team of lecturers with extensive experiences in teaching learners with dyslexia and associated learning differences, the DAS Academy aims to enable excellence through its programmes from foundation to tertiary levels, namely, the Master of Arts in Special Educational Needs (MA SEN), validated by The University of South Wales, UK. The MA SEN enables practitioners working with people with special educational needs or those in education-related fields to develop professionally, and distinguish themselves in the growing field of special needs.

The DAS Academy certificate courses & workshops will provide a continuance of support that children with learning differences receive from its Learning Centres at their schools and homes. The courses and workshops enable parents, caregivers, educators and professionals to learn techniques and be equipped with various skills and tips to help a child with learning differences. Skills that will not only help the child read and write better, but also develop automaticity and fluency in these areas.

The Specialist Diploma in Specific Learning Differences offers a unique opportunity for continuing professional development and is designed to meet increasing demands for higher education in the field of specific learning differences.

Finally, the DAS Academy also conducts customised training for corporations, professionals and educational bodies. Lecturers have conducted training in other countries such as Hong Kong. Furthermore, training is being conducted for the Ministry of Education's SEN Officers. There is at least one SEN Officer in every primary school in Singapore and in selected secondary schools.

ABOUT DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE (DAS)

Registered in 1991, the Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) is today a vibrant Social Service Agency with almost 300 full-time and part-time staff who provide a wide range of programmes for persons with dyslexia and



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specific learning differences (SpLDs) in Singapore. DAS Educational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists and Specialist Psychologists provide services to over 3,500 preschool, primary and secondary school students in 13 centres all over Singapore.

DAS recognises that children with dyslexia and SpLDs require a comprehensive and holistic range of programmes and services. SpLD Assessment Services, the DAS assessment arm, conducts assessments in areas such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), school readiness and more. The Main Literacy Programme which is part-funded by the Ministry of Education supports over 3,000 primary and secondary students and provides critical intervention in areas such as reading fluency and comprehension, spelling and writing. Besides the Main Literacy Programme, DAS, through its Specialised Educational Services (SES) Division, also offers support in Mathematics, Chinese, English Exam Skills and Science. Through SES, DAS also offers programmes in non-academic pursuits such as Speech and Drama and ArtVenture.

Increasingly, DAS will provide support for dyslexics who are also impacted by other SpLDs such as ADHD, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and non-verbal learning differences. Additionally, young adults in Institutes of Higher Learning will be able to access assessment and specialist tutoring services. Presently, DAS needs to raise over \$2 million each year to provide bursaries for its lower-income students.

The DAS training arm, DAS Academy, provides certificate courses, diploma and masters level courses for the professional development of special needs and mainstream teachers and other educational professionals with the aim to build a pool of expertise in Singapore for support of students with learning differences. The DAS Academy also provides courses and workshops for parents and caregivers.

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