

Prime News

NUS student graduates twice in one week

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A PASSION for **mathematics** prompted a Chinese national at the **National University of Singapore** to take the subject as a minor, c top of courses for his computing degree.

And by the end of his third year, Mr Dai Bing Tian, 23, had completed 12 modules, double the number needed for a minor subject and j four shy of that needed for a degree in **mathematics**.

So he asked for permission to complete a maths degree, got it and did it.

Now, the student from Huangshi, a city in Hubei, central China, has become the first person in NUS' 24-year history to graduate with t bachelor's degrees at the same time - one in science for his mathematics courses today and one, with honours, for computing on Thursday.

Mr Dai, who came here in 1999 on a Keppel Corporation scholarship, said: 'I wanted to learn more in university and I didn't feel it was burden to take extra classes, especially since I'm interested in maths. When I realised I needed just a few more modules to qualify for maths degree, I decided to get permission to complete them.'

NUS allowed him to do two degrees simultaneously as it was sure he could, thanks to his consistently good grades.

Vice-provost for education Lily Kong said: 'Some students might want to pursue their varied interests by doing two degrees, but their results and recommendations from professors have to show they're worth their salt.'

Mr Dai said he owes his two degrees to his classmate and girlfriend, Singaporean Chia Li Shi, 23, who was also taking a computing degree.

'Initially, I was too lazy to get permission to do my second degree. But my girlfriend asked me every day: 'Have you gone to ask yet?' I did it.'

He is boarding at her family's Delta Avenue flat. They plan to marry when he gets his master's in computing.

His parents, Mr Dai Chang Xiang, 58, and Madam Zhou Hong, 53, who are in town for his graduation, are also staying there. His father said: 'We're very proud of him.'

NUS' graduation ceremonies begin today.

President S R Nathan, NUS' chancellor, will be at today's ceremony, with Deputy Prime Minister Tony Tan and Acting Education Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam.

Over the next 10 days more than 9,000 students will receive degrees. More than 6,000 are undergraduates, the rest graduates.

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