



Ong Ye Kung says AI replaces tasks not whole jobs at NUS forum on 7 September

Description

Minister for Health Ong Ye Kung told about 250 students and academic staff at the Kent Ridge Ministerial Forum on Monday (7 September 2026) that artificial intelligence is replacing certain tasks most of the time, not entire jobs. Channel NewsAsia reported the annual National University of Singapore forum from the University Cultural Centre.



Minister Ong Ye Kung speaking at the Kent Ridge Ministerial Forum at NUS on 7 September 2026. Photo: CNA/Alyssa Tan

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Tighter graduate market, not mass displacement

Mr Ong, who is also Coordinating Minister for Social Policies, pointed to Graduate Employment Survey figures showing the share of graduates in work six months after graduation fell from 92.9 per cent in 2023 to 88.9 per cent in 2025. He called that a more competitive market rather than a stagnant economy.

Employers face their own shifts, from electric vehicles to ageing healthcare demand. In some firms, he said, AI is automating routine tasks that new hires once handled, which can raise the baseline of what those hires are expected to do.

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Ong Ye Kung at a public appearance. Photo: PMO

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Tasks fall away, jobs redesign

Some specific roles such as programmers, editors and translators may be replaced, he said, but large swathes of work remain. Healthcare staff still want AI to cut routine record-taking, rostering and diagnostic support. An interior designer and a MICE executive he spoke to use AI for renderings or artwork while still coordinating clients, contractors, themes and partners.

The consistent feedback, he said, is that AI is a tool that redesigns jobs rather than a force that triggers mass displacement, at least for now.



National University of Singapore wordmark. Credit: NUS

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Mastery and holistic hiring

Mr Ong urged graduates to build mastery in a craft they care about, and to take imperfect first offers as a starting point rather than a settling point. He also asked employers to cool an internship-and-credentials arms race and to weigh resilience, discipline and character beyond GPAs alone.

Singapore remains competitive and is still creating jobs, he told the forum, with open trade links, tripartite cooperation and stable institutions as backing.

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