Hospitality management

> UniRazak’s new postgrad programme

is market-driven

Despite the ups and downs of the economy, and numerous unanticipated events, the tourism, hotel and food services industry, has not performed too badly in most parts of the world. Indeed, tourist arrivals in Malaysia reached a record of 23.6 million in 2009. Tourism is the second highest contributor of foreign earnings to the Malaysian Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is a measure of the country’s national income in a given year. The Malaysian hotel industry too, has had a reasonably healthy growth, due in large part to the strong growth in tourist arrivals and occupancy rates.

While the prospects of the hospitality industry appear to be promising, operators and employees in the industry should be aware of, and be ready to respond to, challenges that are likely to exert positive or negative influences.

In view of market changes, the hospitality industry has a pressing need for a new breed of operators and employees. Those with higher academic qualifications, more current and relevant skills, and greater adaptive abilities would have an edge in responding to market changes. To meet such demands, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UniRazak) has designed a new master’s degree programme to upgrade existing operators and employees as well as produce new industry entrants who are well equipped with fundamental underpinnings of hospitality, cutting edge knowledge of the industry, and specially trained adaptive capacity.

UniRazak is in a position to launch such a new, market-driven programme due to the depth, experience and innovativeness of its Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management (FHTM). The faculty adopts a student-centred learning approach of teaching-learning.

For example, students have been actively involved in developing new tourism products across the country. Over the past four years, different batches of students have continued the faculty’s involvement in identifying and developing new tourism products in towns such as Besut, Kuala Kangsar, Hulu Selangor and Pekan.

The new post-graduate programme, Master of Science in Hospitality Management, is being launched for UniRazak’s September 2010 intake. It has been certified by Malaysian Qualifications Agency, and approved by Ministry of Higher Education.

The programme is designed for those who have chosen or plan to be at the frontier of new knowledge development in the field of hotel, tourism or food service management.

The programme adopts a new, innovative approach towards learning, commonly known as Project-Based Learning. The objective of Project-Based Learning is to provide students with the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge, management principles, communication skills, marketing, strategic planning and other courses in a realistic environment.

Students are required to examine a site, conduct situational analysis, develop a master plan for tourism development for the area, design potential hospitality/tourism products and forecast and appraise the project’s viability. Students will study and examine tourism sites alongside renowned academicians who will monitor the progress throughout their term of study. At the end of their study period, they are expected to present feasibility hospitality projects.

The curriculum comprises of six core components that cover in-depth the fundamentals of the hospitality industry. Besides four electives, students have to choose one out of three tracks, namely hotel, tourism or food service management. The duration of study for Master of Science in Hospitality Management is 1½ years (full-time), whereby classes will be held on Friday (6pm - 9pm) and Saturday (9am - 6pm). In each semester, students will take four modules, including on-site analysis.

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