

## A successful year for UCSI University's MyCenTHE

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KUCHING: UCSI University can take heart in a successful year for its Malaysian Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education, better known as MyCenTHE, which has been spearheading the drive to reshape the domestic tourism and hospitality industry through education. Involving some of Malaysia's foremost education providers – both public and private – MyCenTHE is on track to achieve a nationwide rollout and new clusters were launched in Penang and Sabah this year. The original two clusters, launched by UCSI in Sarawak and Kuala Lumpur, have established themselves and another cluster is set to launch in Johor. MyCenTHE is on course to strike a better balance in an industry that is facing a dearth of qualified personnel. Only around 16 per cent of tourism industry personnel possess the minimum qualification of a diploma. The tourism and hospitality industry is expected to grow threefold by 2020 and MyCenTHE is set to equip 50 per cent of the workforce with a diploma or a degree. These developments were captured in a book titled 'Value Innovation in Tourism Human Capital Development' by UCSI University vice-president (Strategic Projects) Assoc Prof Dr Wong Kong Yew. Launched by Minister of Higher Education Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin during MyCenTHE's first anniversary celebration, the book also detailed outreach programmes like an initiative that offered scholarships to poor Penan children. UCSI's unique work-based learning (WBL) curriculum is used as a benchmark for all MyCenTHE members and Wong explained that it had to be continually fine-tuned to match the requirements and best practices of an ever-changing industry. Feedback is frequently sought from industry players and graduate abilities were stacked up against the industry's needs. The result is a dynamic two-year Diploma in Hotel Management that offers students up to 10 times the hours of industrial exposure when compared to conventional programmes. "The WBL curriculum was designed to address the long standing mismatch between graduate capabilities and industrial expectations," explained Wong. With the launch of Le Quadri – UCSI's very own boutique hotel – students have the luxury of obtaining that exposure in-house. Boasting a fine dining restaurant, a patisserie and a lounge, the hotel has begun taking in guests and students have the perfect opportunity to apply what they learn while getting paid in the process. It is worth noting that internship opportunities also abound at the university's many industrial partners like Pullman Hotel, the Grand Margherita Hotel and the Riverside Majestic Hotel. Industrial partners have been impressed to the point where graduates of the WBL curriculum were guaranteed a job at these hotels, subject to availability. To find out more about UCSI University's Diploma in Hotel Management, visit the university's Open Day on Dec 22 and 23 from 9am to 6pm, call counsellors at 082-455255 or email to [www.askswk@ucsi.edu.my](mailto:www.askswk@ucsi.edu.my). For more information, visit its website at [www.ucsi.edu.my](http://www.ucsi.edu.my).