GAINING work experience overseas is a valuable addition to one's resume.

And this was certainly the case for 16 students from UCSI University, Sarawak campus when they recently secured coveted internships at luxury hotels and resorts in Japan and Singapore.

Michele Kong Suet Mei and Rebecca Tan Shuh Ying were selected for five-month internships at the renowned Niseko Village Ski Resort in Hokkaido, Japan. The resort has been widely regarded as one of the world's premier ski holiday destinations.

Both interns said that the exposure they received was invaluable.

"It's a totally different environment and work culture compared to Malaysia," said Rebecca, adding that she learnt new things on a daily basis.

"Everything happened at a fast pace. I had to master the booking system, reply emails, act on feedback, offer quality service to the many guests and arrange pick-ups besides managing the daily check-ins and check-outs," she said.

For Michele, it was the steep learning curve she had to navigate upon her arrival as well as getting over the initial jitters as it was her first time going overseas on her own.

"It's a challenge to work with so many people from different countries; to learn from each other and to voice our opinions on various issues," she said.

"The internship is going well for me and it is a nice change to be able to experience it in a foreign country," added Michele.

Rebecca said it was impressive to see how they retained the uniqueness of the Japanese culture while displaying an Aussie laidback approach at the same time.

Taking the lead from their foreign colleagues who spoke Japanese fluently, the girls have signed up for language classes, saying that this will boost their career prospects.

They also credited the varsity for grooming them for success.

UCSI University, Sarawak campus chief operating officer Lu Huong Ying said the experience would boost the students' employability.

"The varsity's learning system also taught me how to prioritise tasks according to urgency and this helped me at Niseko as I was required to get things done in a timely manner," she said.

She also acknowledged the integral role played by the varsity in setting up the internship.

The duo's positive experiences were shared by their 14 friends who are currently on six-month internships at premium hotel chains in Singapore such as the Marina Mandarin and the Conrad Centennial Singapore hotel.

Commenting on the internships, UCSI University, Sarawak campus chief operating officer Lu Huong Ying said the experience would boost the students' employability.

"The university endeavours to give its students a wholesome hospitality education through unique placements like these," she said.

She added that the exposure would equip the students with the business acumen of the global economy and teach them to appreciate different business cultures and perspectives.
Michele (left) and Rebecca during their transit at Osaka before heading to Hokkaido.