

THE Malaysian biotechnology industry is currently suffering a serious skills shortage. According to the Malaysian Biotechnology Corporation (BiotechCorp) Human Capital Development Report 2009, all industry players involved in their survey cited that the industry is lacking in persons who are highly skilled in hard and soft skills.

According to UCSI University's Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, Associate Professor Dr Hon Wei Min, this is among the main reasons those in the biotechnology industry need to continue their studies to strengthen the nation's human capital asset.

This is also why UCSI University introduced a new, one-of-a-kind postgraduate degree — MSc Biotechnology with Business Management. The programme aims to provide students with business and laboratory research skills to produce postgraduates who are equipped with both skills set. The programme is coursework-based and guarantees completion within one and a half years for full-time students, and two years for part-timers. Those pursuing this postgraduate programme will be doing their research and other laboratory work in UCSI University's brand new laboratories.

In addition to the MSc Biotechnology with Business Management, UCSI University's Faculty of Applied Sciences also offers MSc Biotechnology which is designed to provide graduates with in-depth understanding of the



Biotechnology takes a new turn

concepts and techniques of the specialised areas of Biotechnology to meet the growing demands of the biotechnology industry. The programme also trains students in laboratory management and technical skills.

The Faculty also offers MSc Applied Sciences for individuals who are more interested in research and research-based work. The programme has two compulsory courses:

Research Methodology for Scientists and Academic Communications. Students in this postgraduate programme would also be encouraged to present their research papers at seminars and conferences, as well as publish them in scientific journals.

In late 2008, BiotechCorp, an agency under the purview of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) announced that they

expect to see 112 more biotechnology companies with BioNexus status.

Companies with BioNexus status are equivalent to those with Multimedia Super Corridor status, which means they receive tax breaks and government grants for research.

With biofuels and materials in the biotech industry expected to grow at a rate of around 15 per cent, there would be an estimated 8,500

knowledge workers required by the year 2013. Thus, there would be an estimated shortage of 5,000 knowledge workers in the industry by that time.

As such, there is an urgent need for those in the biotech industry to pursue their postgraduate studies to ensure that they are not left behind.

UCSI University's biotechnology postgraduate programmes aim to augment the nation's

capital asset for the biotechnology industry, and drive the country forward in its quest to be a developed country equipped with a skilled and knowledgeable biotech workforce.

To find out more about UCSI's biotechnology postgraduate programmes and activities, visit its open days from 7 to 9 May (10am – 5pm). Alternatively, visit UCSI's website at www.ucsi.edu.my.