

Self-learning MBA courses

> Students have diversified background and rich experience

BY CHOW EE-TAN

APIONEER faculty of Asia e University (AeU), the School of Management was conceived to meet the demand for building capacity, improving human capital, and enriching talent locally, regionally and globally.

The school offers a comprehensive range of programmes, in particular, its business administration programmes. The courses are based on core curricula that are industry-relevant and practical-driven. They are directed at producing qualified, employable and productive human capital to face the demand and pace of global business.

Besides the highly in demand Master of Business Administration (MBA), there are also Doctor of Business Administration (DBA), Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) and a non-MQ programme, Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA). The School of Management also offers relevant and practical programmes such as Master in Management (MIM) and Master of Human Resource Management (MHRM).

School of Management dean Prof Datuk Dr Sayed Musthaq Hussain says what sets their MBA programmes apart from those offered at other universities is their students.

"Our students are mature, working adults who already occupy executive positions. Some are lecturers from other colleges, some are businessmen and some have overseas working experience."

"We are proud to say that our students come from a diversified background, bringing with them rich experiences. Other universities have students with a few working years experience but we have students with more than 10, 20 years of working experience," he says.

Sayed says MBA programmes are normally focused on one of three areas, namely business leadership, entrepreneurship and managerial skills. The MBA at AeU is more catered to the requirement of managers.

"There are a large numbers of managers

and their functions are very common. The core structure of our courses is to build up human capital with stronger managerial skills."

He says another strength of the department is that they have faculty members who are "very experienced and who have been in the corporate sectors". "In that sense, we have wider and better choices in our lecturers. On average, they are more mature, learned and experienced," says Sayed, who himself is a practising economist who has played the role of advisor for governments and has served in the United Nations for 22 years.

AeU's "blended learning" model suits the courses well, he adds. "A big component of our lecture is through online self-learning, and we have 10 hours of face-to-face classes. We believe our students are mature and committed, and this model suits those who are working."

He says the system gives their students more convenience and flexibility, including taking a break when they need to travel and extended time for assignments.

Every year, between 60 and 100 MBA students graduate from the faculty; among them, 10% are overseas students. AeU also conducts international programmes in countries like Sri Lanka, Somalia, India and Hong Kong. This is in line with their intention to spread their wings to the 32 Asia Cooperation Dialogue member countries, for which AeU was established.

Sayed believes the MBA programme will continue to grow, and the university is playing a crucial role in upgrading the workforce to give them better exposure and a global outlook. Although there are many universities offering MBA courses, he expects AeU to see about 40% growth per annum in the next five years.

Meanwhile, Doctor in Business Administration (DBA) caters more to consultants and lecturers, and takes between three and four years to complete, including one-year coursework and a dissertation.

There is also the Executive MBA (EMBA) programme that can be done in a year. It is a non-MQA programme, with fewer subjects and lower entry requirements. Started recently, meanwhile, is the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) programme that targets young working adults who are not graduates.

Sayed says another programme that is gaining popularity, in particular, for those working in the human resource industry, is the Master in Human Resource Management. Another programme, Master in Management, focuses on general management and administration, and is not just useful for managers but also for public servants.

Two new courses that have been approved by the government and will be running soon are Graduate Diploma in Management and Graduate Diploma in Accounting.

Sayed says the school is looking to have more programmes, in particular, those geared towards higher-level executives. One of them is the International EMBA programme.

"Many of our people do not have international working experience. In our International EMBA programme, we will give them options to be sent abroad to work for a short stint."

"This will be two-prong. While the students go out overseas, we also invite the overseas universities to come here to give lectures. This can be a mechanism of connectivity with other countries. With the internet, knowledge is easily shared and spread," he concludes.

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Sayed says the blended learning model suits working adults.