

PRESS RELEASE

RP's Open House 2014 features two new diplomas to offer students a wider range of career options

RP's new Aquaculture Centre and Diploma in Marine Science and Aquaculture are the first of their kind at a polytechnic in Singapore

Singapore, 31 December 2013 – As business and consumer needs have evolved over the years, new industry segments have emerged. With a view to filling the gap in skilled manpower by providing courses that are industry-relevant, Republic Polytechnic (RP) has introduced two new diplomas to serve the growing industry sectors of Marine Science and Aquaculture, and Human Resource Management.

Building expertise in sustainable aquaculture and marine science

Not so long ago the ocean's bounty seemed without limit. Today, 70-80 per cent of the world's fish stocks are over-exploited, or close to depletion. Locally, Singaporeans consume 140,000 tonnes of seafood a year, and with Singapore's Ministry of National Development targeting to increase local production of fish for consumption from about 7 per cent to about 15 per cent, the importance of "sustainable seafood" has grown, both to businesses and consumers alike.

Aquatic farming, or aquaculture, contributes to sustainable production, but it is not without its challenges. For example, carnivorous fish species such as groupers and red snappers bred in aquaculture facilities are fed fishmeal, a product made from ground dried fish. With the rapid development of aquaculture, demand for fishmeal is expected to outpace supply. Besides its limited availability, fishmeal is also a relatively expensive ingredient. As such, researchers are now looking into the possibility of feeding carnivorous fish soy and other alternative sources of protein.

The new **Diploma in Marine Science and Aquaculture (DMAC)** is the first full-time Pre-Employment Training (PET) programme across tertiary education institutions in Singapore focusing on these issues and more. The diploma, which will take in its first batch of 50 students in 2014, will focus on marine biology and conservation, aquaculture technology and marine coastal ecology. Students will also learn about seafood species, sustainable production systems, and the management of marine and aquatic health.

On the first day of Open House - 9 January 2014, RP will also officially launch its **Aquaculture Centre, "The Aquaria"** – a 180-square-metre laboratory facility that will focus on research in the areas of marine science and feed formulation for food fish species. **This combined indoor and outdoor facility will be the first of its kind in a local polytechnic.** The opening of the centre will be graced by Guest-of-Honour Dr Maliki Osman, Minister of State, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Defence.

Both the DMAC and the Aquaculture Centre will equip students with the requisite skills and knowledge in using advanced technologies to support the setup of aquaculture facilities. Graduates will be able to pursue careers such as aquarists, aquaculture laboratory technicians, farm managers and marine conservation executives in oceanariums and marine reserves.

The modernisation of local fish farms and the opening of two oceanariums (the Marine Life Park and River Safari), will see demand for skilled manpower in this field increase. Non-governmental organisations like the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Marine Stewardship Council have indicated that with the increased awareness of sustainable fishery practices, more farms will need to be audited and certified by skilled professionals to meet sustainable aquaculture standards. DMAC graduates can also look forward to robust employment in overseas aquaculture production facilities.

“Almost half of all fish and shellfish consumed around the world are now produced through aquaculture. As retailers and consumers grow more aware about choosing seafood from sustainable sources, it will be key to train more professionals in sustainable aquaculture techniques and practices,” said Mr Ashley Chua, Covering Director, School of Applied Science, Republic Polytechnic.

“RP’s new Aquaculture Centre and the Diploma in Marine Science and Aquaculture will ensure that our students are ready to contribute to this rapidly growing sector when they graduate,” he added.

Filling the talent gap in the Human Resources (HR) industry

As Singaporean companies look to expand regionally by acquiring businesses overseas, one of the key challenges facing their HR managers will be the task of modifying their HR management practices to ensure that their business culture is quickly adopted by the organisation they are taking over. RP’s new **Diploma in Human Resource Management with Psychology (DHRMP)** will address these pertinent issues and more.

The HR industry is poised to see an increase in demand for skilled professionals, particularly as Singapore positions itself as a human capital hub, capable of managing the operations and staff of companies in the region. The diploma integrates the latest scientific understanding of human behaviour and motivation with training in specialised HR management skills, ensuring graduates will be competent in managing cross-border human capital in a multicultural environment.

Upon graduation, DHRMP students will be equipped to support SMEs and MNCs in their HR functions, across diverse areas such as compensation, employment laws, labour relations, people development, performance and talent management, diversity and international staff management, and industrial-organisational psychology.

Mr Warren Wang, Director of RP’s Centre for Enterprise and Communication, said, “Given Singapore’s status as an MNC hub for the region, companies seek HR professionals with a working knowledge of International Human Resource Management. This trend is also prevalent amongst local SMEs that have plans to expand overseas.”

“Moreover, industry research suggests that a significant number of HR professionals in Singapore have entered the profession without any HR-related qualifications. By combining International Studies and Psychology with Human Resource Management, RP’s new diploma will provide students with a strong foundation to help fill the existing talent and training gap.” he added.

RP will take in 50 students in the first batch for this diploma.

In November this year, RP also successfully launched its **Part-time Diploma in Business Practice (International Human Resources Management)**. This diploma for working professionals looking to upgrade their skills is currently accepting applications for its second intake starting in April 2014.

Prospective students can look forward to finding out more about these and other existing courses that RP offers at Open House 2014. Activities such as the Polytechnic Education Forum will allow students and parents to understand what a polytechnic education is about and make informed choices.

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About Republic Polytechnic

The first educational institution in Singapore to leverage Problem-Based Learning approach for all its diploma programmes, Republic Polytechnic (RP) has six schools and two academic centres offering thirty-seven diplomas in Infocomm, Engineering, Applied Science, Technology for the Arts, Sports, Health & Leisure, Events and Hospitality, Enterprise, and Communication.

Republic Polytechnic is committed to nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial learning in an environment that develops problem-solving skills and lifelong learning opportunities. Its holistic, broad-based curriculum, covering culture, enterprise development and cognitive processes, prepares students for an active and meaningful role in society.

Republic Polytechnic strives for excellence and has achieved various international and national accreditations, including ISO9001, ISO14001, OHSAS 18001, SS540, Singapore Quality Class, People Developer, Innovation Class, and Service Class.

For more information, visit www.rp.edu.sg

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