

Initial demand for 5,000 oil-gas workers

Mary Chin DE 19.04.2012 10

KOTA KINABALU: Given the initial manpower requirement of the Sabah Oil & Gas Terminal (SOGT) in the next few years and the integrated requirement for skilled labour to support the oil and gas industries, the demand for such workforce is estimated to be around 5,000 workers.

Lecturer Edward Wong Kie Yih said this in his career talk on the Role of Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah Oil & Gas Academy (TAS Academy) for university and college students in conjunction with the recent Sabah Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition 2012 (SOGCE 2012).

"In the light of this development, in addition to training engineering technicians, this year, TAS Academy is committed to training for skilled labour necessary to support both upstream and downstream oil and gas industries, especially scaffolders, riggers, painters and pipe fitters," he said.

Based on the findings of the most recent survey, Wong said all skilled workers in both the upstream and downstream categories are earning not less than RM2,500 per month.

He said the oil and gas sector requires wide-ranging personnel such as civil, mechanical and chemical engineers, electrical and electronics engineers, architects, oil and gas market researchers, welders, chemists, draughtsmen, sales and marketing personnel, and personnel for project management & operations.

According to Wong, TAS Academy graduates are in demand by oil and gas companies involved in the Sabah Oil & Gas Terminal (SOGT) project.

Since its opening by the then Head of State, Tun Hj Ahmadshah Abdullah in 2008, TAS Academy has produced about 200 graduates in five batches.

The lecturer disclosed that Batch 1 of 45 students have successfully completed BTEC (Business & Technology Education Council) Level 3 Advanced Diploma, and are cur-

rently under employment with Malaysia International Shipping Corporation (MISC), the leading international shipping line of Malaysia. BTEC Level 3 Advanced Diploma is a vocational qualification.

"On average, our graduates in the market receive a gross salary of RM4,000 per month, inclusive of allowances. As most of our students are from poor rural families, this will lift many rural families out of the depths of poverty," he pointed out.

Answering a question, Wong said TAS Academy will offer the following programmes in the coming intake – Diploma in Electrical Engineering Technician in Oil & Gas; Diploma in Instrumentation Engineering Technician in Oil & Gas; Diploma in Mechanical Engineering Technician in Oil & Gas; and Diploma in Process Engineering Technician in Oil & Gas.

Common subjects for all programmes include Health, Safety and Environment; Hazards and Effect Management; Emergency Response Procedures; Instrument Simulation; Transport Simulation; Separation Process Simulation; and Basic Offshore and Safety Emergency Training.

TAS Academy's vision is to become a premier Academy for skill and knowledge advancement through high quality specialised programmes and research in oil and gas and other related industries. Its mission is commitment to be a reputable global market provider through the development of high quality and specialised oil and gas training programmes.

"We aspire to be the first licensed private higher education institution in Sabah with a primary focus on oil and gas industries. The Academy is recognised as a BTEC International Centre of Learning."

Currently, the Academy has collaboration with Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC), UK; Edexcel, London, UK; School of Engineering and Information Technology, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Sabah; Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM); MISC Berhad; and FPSO



Edward (right) receiving a token of appreciation from the Exhibition Director, Johan Amilin Abdul Samad.

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On semi-skilled workers in the oil and gas sector, Wong lamented that there is not enough local manpower as 30pc to 50pc of them are made up of Indonesians and Indians.

"Other issues centre on the lack of proficiency in technical English and the lack of 'safety first' mindset. Another concern is that local manpower is attracted to offers of higher remuneration overseas."

Given the current scenario, he said the oil and gas sector has come up with the following recommendations:

- Increase intake of trainees and programmes in technical/vocational institutions with more oil and gas curricula, and in English, and internationally recognised certification.
- These institutions must foster alliances with international providers.
- Awareness campaign in schools for Form Four and Five in collaboration with companies on Open Day.
- Promote the National Dual Training System (SLDN).