
NEWS RELEASE

UOB Regional Staff Graduate With FICS Certification In Corporate Relationship Management

The SMU-UOB FICS Certification Programme in corporate relationship management is the latest in the Bank's suite of FICS programmes designed to raise professional standards and service excellence

Singapore, 13 January 2011 – A group of United Overseas Bank (UOB) corporate bankers received their Financial Competency Standard (FICS) Certification in corporate relationship management at the UOB Plaza today. The Programme is jointly launched by the Bank with the Singapore Management University (SMU).

Since the launch of the Programme in September 2010, over 100 of the Bank's Singapore and regional officers (with two to five years of corporate lending experience) from China, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand have been trained. Benchmarked against industry best practices and also designed to suit the training needs of overseas bank officers, the Programme is offered by the Financial Training Institute (FTI) at SMU and accredited by The Institute of Banking and Finance (IBF) under the FICS competency framework.

The Bank started its FICS collaboration with the SMU as early as 2008 with programmes in private banking and wealth management. The corporate relationship management certification is the latest result of the joint effort.

Addressing his UOB staff yesterday, Mr Wee, who is also the chairman of the FICS Steering Committee, said, "At UOB, we are committed to developing a culture of performance excellence. I understand that to date, within the industry, UOB has the highest number of corporate bankers with an FICS certification. This reflects our continued commitment to further elevate professional standards and service excellence. This is only the start. We have more hard work ahead of us to help our staff continually upgrade their professional skills and service levels."

Mr Wee added that he was pleased to note that the FICS certification has gained industry acceptance as the competency benchmark for corporate bankers. He also reminded UOB staff to have the right philosophy and mindset when serving customers.

The graduands of the Programme had to undergo an intensive training programme covering an extensive curriculum that includes banking products, evaluation of client needs, credit risk assessment, structuring credit facilities, account planning, servicing, monitoring and compliance. Whilst it was challenging having to cope with work and the Programme, the participants rose to the challenge and found the Programme deeply rewarding.

“What I took away was more than just a certificate,” said Jacqueline Ong, a commercial banking relationship manager with UOB Singapore. “It is the knowledge that I picked up, and the confidence that I gained which are truly the most valuable. Now, I have an even more holistic and deeper understanding of the various subjects of corporate lending, which allowed me to serve my customers better.”

The same sentiments were echoed by our overseas graduands.

“The Programme has sharpened my skills in credit assessment. I am now more confident in cross-selling the Bank’s suite of facilities. Recently, I assisted in securing a trading facility for my UOB Thai customer to finance their business in Singapore. I was also able to better advise them on the relevant documentation. My customers were happy as we provided them convenience as a one-stop solution provider,” said Janrawee Wattanasin, a relationship manager from UOB Thailand.

“The Certification Programme for Corporate Relationship Management is a result of concerted efforts by the public, private and academic players to raise the professional standards of corporate bankers. SMU’s Financial Training Institute is proud to be part of this endeavour. We are committed to deliver quality continuing education for banking and financial professionals. Through a combination of written tests, case studies, role play and interview, the SMU-UOB FICS certification programme for corporate relationship managers trains and assesses candidates on the comprehensive performance criteria set out in the Financial Industry Competency Standards (FICS). We congratulate this group of bankers for their hard work and success in meeting the rigorous professional standards,” said Associate Professor Annie Koh, Dean of Executive and Professional Education, SMU.

In ensuring high competency standards are maintained across the financial industry, the Bank recognises the importance of a standard examination to be developed and offered to all banks. Hence, UOB also championed the introduction of a common assessment for the industry. This is a milestone initiative pushed for by the Bank.

During the above graduation event, IBF CEO Ms Ong Puay See said, "Today's graduation ceremony is noteworthy as it represents the culmination of many months of deliberations between IBF and the industry to put together a minimum set of standards for Corporate Bankers in Singapore. UOB has indeed been our strongest supporter when IBF rolled out the inaugural Corporate Banking Common Examination."

UOB is now working with the two institutions on an advanced programme for bank officers with more than five years of corporate lending experience.

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About United Overseas Bank

United Overseas Bank Limited (UOB) is a leading bank in Asia. It provides a wide range of financial services through its global network of over 500 offices in 19 countries and territories in Asia Pacific, Western Europe and North America, including banking subsidiaries in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and mainland China.

In Singapore, UOB is a market leader in the credit and debit cards business, and the private residential home loan business. It is also a key player in loans to small and medium enterprises. Its fund management arm, UOB Asset Management, is one of Singapore's most awarded fund managers. UOB is rated among the world's top banks by Moody's Investors Service, receiving B for financial strength, and Aa1 and Prime-1 for long-term and short-term bank deposits respectively.

UOB also plays an active role in the community, focusing on children, education and the arts. It has organised the prestigious Painting Of The Year Competition and Exhibition since 1982, and supports Very Special Arts Singapore which provides art programmes for the disabled. In recognition of its contributions to the arts, UOB has been conferred the National Arts Council's Distinguished Patron of the Arts Award for the sixth consecutive year. UOB has also established the annual UOB Heartbeat Run to raise funds for charity. www.uob.com.sg

About the Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU's mission is to generate leading edge research with global impact and produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy. It is known to be a pioneer for its interactive and technologically-enabled pedagogy of seminar-style teaching in small class sizes which remains its unique hallmark. Home to 7,000 students, SMU comprises six schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Information Systems, School of Law and School of Social Sciences, offering a wide range of bachelor's, master's and PhD degree programmes in business and other disciplines. With an emphasis on generating rigorous, high impact cross-disciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance, SMU faculty collaborates with leading foreign researchers as well as partners in the business community and public sector through its research institutes and centres. Through executive education, the University provides public and customised training for working professionals in meeting the needs of the economy. Close relationships with leading universities, including The Wharton School, Carnegie Mellon, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, allow SMU to draw on their academic and research strengths in various collaborations. The SMU city campus is a state-of-the art facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with the business and wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

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