

Accredited drone pilot training available soon



Datuk Fajura Juffa Mohd Mustafa Kamal (right) showing a UAV, together with Limkokwing's University International Academic Compliance Unit associate director Noor Nasriyah Osman (left), SA Strat Aero Plc chief executive officer Iain McLure (second from right) and Mark Wharry.
Picture by AIZUDDIN SAAD

By **ROZANA SANI** - October 4, 2017 @ 12:10pm

LIMKOKWING University of Creative Technology (LUCT) has entered into a global strategic partnership with UK-based commercial drone training provider, Strat Aero Plc to better harness the full potential of the unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV).

With the partnership come November — the university will be offering professionals and hobbyists a course on Applied Unmanned Technology Qualification (AUTQ) from Strat Aero.

The course is accredited by the United Kingdom Civil Aviation Authority.

Drones go beyond being tools for just capturing videos and pictures from an aerial view. “The use of unmanned aerial technology is changing how we work and live across a myriad of professions, including how we respond to human and environmental challenges,” said LUCT vice president for corporate & student affairs, Datuk Fajura Juffa Mohd Mustafa Kamal.

“In large areas and where travel by vehicle is often time consuming, drones are taking on various tasks like crop and livestock monitoring in agriculture, traffic control and surveillance operations by law enforcement agencies,

inspections of complex structures in industries like oil and gas, search and rescue and asset protection during disasters,” she added.

Meanwhile, Strat Aero’s director of training Mark Wharry said that a drone is an aircraft and therefore, those operating one must think like a pilot.

“Drone pilots must have a grounding in what it means to be in aviation. Whether you are flying a plane or operating a drone, one should be able to integrate safety aspects by being mindful of other airspace structures and users,” he said.

Wharry was formerly chief instructor for the British Royal Air Force and the UK Military and is an expert in designing training for unmanned pilots.

Thus far, 10 LUCT staff have been successfully trained to deliver the AUTQ course to external learners and students alike.

The two-week course included modules like Aerospace Asia ATC (Air Traffic Control), Air Law, Airspace Classification and Aviation Charts, Navigation and GPS, Operations Procedure and Documentation, Pre-Planning Documentation, UAV Flight Safety and UAV Principles of Flight.

Wharry explained that the programme comprises ground school and flight school; where the former covers 15 core topics while the later covers field based practical flight training and assessment. “Students practice in pairs to maximise flight time. Comprehensive instructional materials, all of which have been tested — underpin the delivery of the qualification,” he said.

He added that graduates with the AUTQ are taught to understand the UAVs, fly safely and deliver professional results through

industry-designed modules than just fly their drones.

With regards to that, Fajura said the university will also be offering four additional specialist training courses of four days duration each: Image Capturing from UAVs, UAV Inspection Techniques, UAV Survey Techniques and Police and Security Applications.

“Separately, there are plans to embed or offer a Strat Aero designed elective in several of our degree courses for the February semester next year. This will enable hundreds of our students from relevant programmes to graduate not only in their own disciplines but also as qualified UAV flyers thus enhancing their skills set and professional employability,” she said.

Initially, students in four faculties — Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment, Faculty of Design Innovation, Faculty of Information Communication Technology and Faculty of Multimedia Creativity will be able to take advantage of the qualification.

Fajura added that other than LUCT in Malaysia, there are plans to offer the short course and elective in Africa where LUCT has established campuses including Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho.

Strat Aero CEO Iain McLure said Limkokwing is the master franchisee for the programme developed by the company and is expected to be the launching for it to penetrate into countries in the Southeast Asia region.

“This is the second location where we offer our programme. We also offer AUTQ in Taiwan,” he said.