



## Banking on the future

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GIVEN FINTECH'S importance to Hong Kong's thriving banking scene, the demand for well-rounded finance students has never been this higher before. To make grow future talent, Citibank University Banking has partnered The Chinese University of Hong Kong Business School to provide students with real-life finance experience.

The program aims to introduce university students to the key elements of banking through a series of classroom lectures and site visits guided by veteran bankers from Citibank.

Since its launch in 2004, more than 600 university students have attended the banking course and received in total of over 350 hours of teaching on the fundamentals of banking and finance. The 13th edition, which started last week and will go on until April, has 42 CUHK business students.

Weber Lo, Citi country officer and chief executive officer of Hong Kong and Macau, said the ever-changing banking and finance sectors now required a totally different skill set from bankers and it was the best if young people was aware of the current financial trends at the earliest.

"The world is changing at every second, so is the banking system. Being future compatible is really the key. That's why we are committed to nurturing talents and deploying our knowledge and experience to help our future leaders grow. Through the banking course, we hope that students can gain essential skills and insights to prepare their future career," Lo said.

Kalok Chan, dean of CUHK Business School, said the program was the icing on the cake for the university's current banking course. "One of the highlights is that it is led by Citibank seasonal bankers, who stand at the frontline of work. Their practical knowledge and experience is really precious and we hope students can get a true sense of what skills are required in the real workplace," he said.

Apart from 30 hours of classroom lectures given by bankers, it includes a visit to Citibank branch, a term test and group project.

The course module includes a wide range of seasonal topics, ranging from bank marketing and branding, credit cards, markets and securities services to wealth management products, advisory services and corporate social responsibility.

Citi's head of cards and unsecured lending, Lum Choong-yu, who was also a lecturer last year said that when the industry was moving towards smart technology era, many banks not only look for business students, but also those equipped with technical knowledge of computer and online platforms.

"Online banking services and digital money transfer have become increasingly crucial in our business. How to deliver a secure and easy-to-use platform is always the questions that we need to consider," he said.

"Students need to have insight on what the market is looking for and how we can create products and services that will stand out from our competitors."

At the end of each lecture, there would be an approximately one-hour question-and-answer session. "I really suggest student to ask more. We can't include everything in the program. So if you are curious about working in finance, we are more than happy to share," Lum said.

Another lecturer Wayne Fong, head of corporate affairs at Citibank, underscored the importance of learning corporate social responsibility.

"CSR is becoming more mainstream as forward-thinking companies embed sustainability into the core of their business operations to create shared value for business and society. Sustainability isn't just important for people and the planet, but also is vital for business success," he said

"From giving away a portion of our company's proceeds to charity, to implementing greener business operations, it not only helps to create a better society, but also teaches us that every step of our own has its consequences."