

Academic ventures in Ras Al Khaimah's hospitality sector

At the World Travel and Tourism Council Summit, held in Dubai in April, much of the debate revolved around the global shortage of trained and qualified hotel sector workers.

In recent years, tourism has become a vehicle for economic development and diversification in the UAE, an ambition that the emirate of Ras Al Khaimah is seeking to realise. However, sustaining the rapidly developing sector requires a constant influx of trained professionals to fuel and maintain its growth, which the World Travel and Tourism Council predicts will grow by five per cent a year between 2007 and 2016.

In light of this growing demand and the booming nature of the industry, several hospitality management schools in the UAE are planning to launch in the coming months.

The biggest academic venture in the hospitality sector is Ras Al Khaimah's Hospitality Training Campus, located at the International Hospitality Trade and Training Zone. Funded jointly by the Ras Al Khaimah Government's Investment and Development Office and the US-based Argentum Development Company, the 36-hectare campus will accommodate 15,000 students.

Also in Ras Al Khaimah, but on a smaller scale, will be the internationally recognised hotel management school Vatel. The school is scheduled to receive students in January to prepare for the 2.5 million visitors expected to visit the emirate by 2012, as well as supply manpower to nearly two dozen five-star hotels that are planned in the region.