Sky's the limit

With air travel likely to soar, two new engineering degrees equip professionals with the right skills to succeed, writes Chris Davis

international view through completing various carefully designed teaching and practical activities," he stresses.

Jointly offered by the department of mechanical and aerospace engineering of HKUST, in partnership with École Nationale de l'Aviation Civile (ENAC), the MSc in aeronautical engineering is geared towards those keen to enter the profession, or those already working in the field who wish to enhance their knowledge.

ENAC is the largest aeronautical university in Europe and the only aviation-oriented university in France offering a wide and complete panel of aeronautics-oriented degree-bearing programmes and continuing and professional education programmes.

Huang says the programme complements the existing undergraduate and graduate curricula in mechanical and aerospace engineering, giving students exposure to the various core aspects of aeronautical engineering and how they are used in the real world.

Prospective students include graduates from aeronautical engineering and related disciplines, as well as professionals in industry, government or other institutions, and fresh graduates with good academic records.

There is a need to attract more people to the industry, and upgrade skills

PROFESSOR XIN HUANG, HKUST

Despite economic and political challenges, the aviation industry is anticipating exciting times ahead, with the global fleet of aircraft predicted to double over the next two decades while the appetite for air travel is significantly on the rise. Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) believes the master of science in aeronautical engineering and the MSc in international air transport operations management (IATOM) will help to strengthen the pipeline of talent required to work in the aviation industry.

"With Asia as the world's fastest growing aviation market, there is a need to attract more people to the industry and upgrade the skills of those currently working in it," says professor Xin Huang, programme director for the IATOM and MSc in aeronautical engineering.

Against the backdrop of a global shortage of qualified aircraft engineers, Huang says Hong Kong has the world's busiest airport in terms of cargo handling, and acts as the hub of many of the world's leading airlines. In 2015, it handled 4.38 million tonnes of cargo.

The International Airport Transport Association (IATA) says more than 5.8 billion passengers are expected to fly this year, up from 5.6 billion last year, the fastest growth being in Asia.

"New talented aeronautical engineering professionals are needed to join the local aerospace industry each year to carry out extensive airframe services, engine services and airline inspection services," says Huang.

He believes the addition of a third runway at Hong Kong's international airport will create an even bigger demand for talented executives and managers who need technical knowledge managerial skills and a thorough understanding of the regulatory context involved in air transport.

Huang says the IATOM and MSc in aeronautical engineering have been designed to address market needs and challenges. "The programmes on offer will also help students gain an