Leading change with food expertise

AS chronic diseases such as diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular conditions become increasingly common, the importance of nutrition in healthcare is gaining more recognition. Dietetics has emerged as a critical field that combines science and compassion to improve health outcomes across all stages of life.

At the University of Cyberjaya (UoC), the Bachelor of Dietetics (Honours) programme prepares students to meet this growing need, equipping them with both theoretical knowledge and real-world experience to make a meaningful impact.

The role of a modern dietitian extends far beyond recommending healthy meals. Dietitians work in hospitals, schools, community clinics, corporate wellness, sports nutrition and food industries.

They advise individuals recovering from illness, support sustainable eating initiatives and collaborate with food companies to develop nutritious products.

With a curriculum that integrates nutritional science, psychology and public health, UoC equips its graduates to meet the evolving demands of the dietetics profession.

UoC dietetics students put nutrition principles into practice during a hands-on food preparation session in the Dietetics Lab.

"Our Dietetics programme is designed not only to provide a strong academic foundation but also to develop research skills, critical thinking and practical experience," said programme coordinator Dr Hanisah Rosli.

"Through clinical placements and exposure to real-world scenarios, our students gain valuable hands-on experience that prepares them for diverse roles in healthcare and nutrition.

"We also collaborate with community stakeholders to promote health awareness, nutritional equity and sustainable well-being.

"We train students to become leaders in healthcare who can address issues like chronic disease, food insecurity and health inequity through compassionate and evidence-based care."

Practical exposure is a key element of the programme. Students gain hands-on training through placements at hospitals, community health centres and food service operations.

They are also encouraged to join research and public outreach projects, ensuring they graduate with the confidence to apply their learning in diverse settings.

Second-year student Tenmullai Arunasalam shared her journey: "I have always been curious about the link between food and health. I noticed how fatigue and low energy could be tied to something as simple as iron deficiency. Studying dietetics has helped me connect my personal interest with professional knowledge.

"Now, I feel equipped to guide others in making better health decisions, using a combination of science and empathy."

Graduates can find work opportunities in sectors ranging from hospitals and non-governmental organisations to wellness centres and research institutions.

Nutrition pathways

Join the varsity's Open Day on Aug 23 and 24. Register at *https://cyberjaya.edu.my/openday-2025*

UoC is open every weekend during its Welcome Weekend, happening every Saturday and Sunday from 10am to 4pm.

Meet its education counsellors, explore its modern facilities and discover how your passion for food and health can become a rewarding career.

■ To learn more, call the UoC team at 03-8313 7000. For enquiries about its programmes, contact 011-1112 3344 (for new Malaysian students) or 011-1112 3390 (for new international students).

Waves of change in coral care

THE International Medical School (IMS) at Management and Science University (MSU) successfully hosted the eighth edition of MyCoral CARE (Coral Awareness and Restoration Education), an eco-marine project, from July 18 to 20 in Kampung Mangkok and Pulau Geluk in Terengganu.

This was the second coral restoration endeavour of the year by IMS, following a successful inaugural international edition in Ambon, Indonesia, in conjunction with the 15th edition of the MSU Education Tour, a joint effort with Pattimura University (Unpatti).

A total of 106 participants joined the environmental outreach initiative, comprising 67 MSU students, two lecturers, five staff and alumni, 27 international participants and five community divers. The international delegation represented Universitas Brawijaya, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Universitas Pattimura, North Sichuan Medical College, as well as Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta.

MyCoral CARE 8.0 marked another milestone in MSU's marine conservation and community outreach efforts.

A key highlight of the programme was the launch of the MyCoral Community Learning Centre (CLC), officiated by IMS dean Prof Dr Mohamad Khairuddin Abd Wahab.

The newly launched CLC in Kampung Mangkok stands as a community learning hub made possible through the collaboration between MSU, Persatuan Nelayan Kawasan Setiu and the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia (APPGM) – Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

The CLC was built with a full green technology concept, powered by solar energy and innovated by researchers from MSU's Faculty of Information Sciences and Engineering (FISE) under the MySolar Project.

As part of MSU's knowledge transfer programmes, CLC was established to foster a stronger connection between MSU and the wider community. These programmes are designed to promote sustainable engagement by addressing pressing environmental and human capital challenges through collaborative solutions.

MSU received RM40,000 in funding from APPGM-SDG for the development of the centre. This funding was granted in recognition of the success of the previously conducted MyCoral Community Diver Project. The launch also included the handover of the appointment certification for MyCoral Community Divers.

The three-day programme also featured a series of impactful activities, including a workshop and free health screenings for the local community in Kampung Mangkok; coral awareness sessions in Kampung Mangkok; coral restoration and beach-cleaning activities at Pulau Geluk, held in collaboration with the Fisheries Department and Dorken Reef Resources; and mangrove restoration efforts in Kampung Mangkok.

MyCoral 8.0 was supported by the World Wide Fund (WWF) Malaysia, DOF, Universitas Brawijaya, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Universitas Pattimura, Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and Dorken Reef Resources.

Building on such collaborations, MSU stands among the top universities in Malaysia and globally, prioritising student development to enhance graduate employability. The university blends technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with traditional academic curricula to enhance competencies through industry internships, community and creative entrepreneurship and global exposure.

MSU offers various skills enhancement programmes designed to improve students' competitiveness. The Graduate Employability Skills (GEmS) and Personal Enrichment Competencies (PEC) programmes focus on enhancing students' soft skills.

As an applied, enterprise, holistic and international university, MSU offers foundation, undergraduate, postgraduate and flexible programmes through an entry system that facilitates admission of students from all walks of life, with the aim of transforming lives and enriching the future.

■ For more information on MSU's programmes, contact 03-5521 6868, email info@msu.edu.my or visit *www.msu.edu.my*

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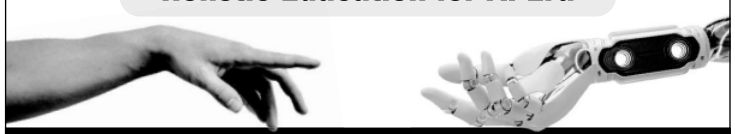

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Gateway to global medical excellence

THIS September, a new cohort of students from RUMC – the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) and University of Dublin (UCD) Malaysia Campus – will begin their medical journey in Dublin, where they will spend the first two-and-a-half years of their studies.

The programme's unique structure allows students to experience world-class medical education at RCSI or UCD, two of Ireland's most prestigious institutions, before returning to Malaysia to complete their clinical years.

The Foundation in Science programme is now accepting final applications for its August intake, while the Undergraduate Medicine programme is making its last call for the September intake.

While some students prepare for Dublin, others will explore RUMC's revolutionary Bachelor of Science in Medical Informatics programme, set to be launched in September.

Unlike traditional digital health or biomedical informatics programmes, RUMC's Medical Informatics addresses the growing demand for professionals who can navigate both clinical environments and technological innovation.

RUMC prepares future doctors with a transnational medical experience that blends global learning and local clinical excellence.

This programme combines clinical knowledge with advanced data analytics, artificial intelligence (AI) and healthcare system design.

Students not only explore cutting-edge medical devices and innovations but also learn to design, develop and optimise technologies that play a vital role in accurate diagnosis and effective treatment.

The interdisciplinary curriculum blends computer science, biology, engineering and healthcare, equipping students with skills to harness emerging technologies like AI and 5G to address medical and operational challenges.

With RUMC's strong connections to the medical device manufacturing sectors in both Penang and Dublin, students benefit from industry collaborations and the guidance of expert faculty members.

Graduates can build careers in hospitals, research institutions, medical device companies, and healthcare IT firms, taking on roles such as chief technology officer, medical informatics specialist, hospital technology manager, biomedical engineer, medical researcher or precision medicine analyst.

B40 scholarship support

RUMC has established support mechanisms for B40 families pursuing the Medical Informatics programme. B40 families can now apply for the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) education funding, allowing qualified students to access the education they deserve.

■ For details, visit *www.rumc.edu.my*, email enquiry@rumc.edu.my or call +604-217 1999.

From dentistry to health informatics

AFTER enrolling in the credit transfer programme for the Bachelor of Dental Surgery at International Medical University (IMU) Malaysia, Darrshini Parthibhan completed her first phase of study at the institution and successfully graduated from the University of Adelaide in 2022.

With the ever-growing emphasis on data-driven decisions, Darrshini developed a keen interest in the field of data analytics, while also wishing to maintain her healthcare background.

While exploring academic pathways that merged these two fields, she discovered the Master in Health Informatics and Analytics (MHIA) programme at IMU.

As an IMU alumna, she was already familiar with the institution's reputation for academic excellence and innovation.

After speaking with the programme director and reviewing the curriculum, Darrshini was convinced that it aligned perfectly with her aspirations.

Having a purely scientific background, embarking on data analytics was not an easy choice. However, the one-year programme is exceptionally well structured, encompassing comprehensive modules.

It provides a solid and practical foundation for students of various backgrounds. The thoughtful pace of instruction, depth of expertise among faculty and hands-on assignments and projects greatly facilitated Darrshini's learning.

She was also fortunate to be part of a diverse cohort of peers from various professional fields, which enriched the overall learning experience through collaborative knowledge sharing.

Although challenging at first, the unwavering support and guidance from the faculty and lecturers empowered her to follow her interests with confidence.

Beyond technical competencies, the programme also emphasises essential soft skills that are highly sought after in today's job market.

Darrshini was pleased to secure a position approximately one month after graduating. Her current role allows her to apply the knowledge gained during her studies in a practical setting.

While the specific tools and software used in industry may vary, the strong foundational training provided by the programme enabled her to adapt quickly and effectively.

Transitioning into this new field never meant leaving dentistry behind. The knowledge gained over the course of her undergraduate studies is what has brought Darrshini here, and she is deeply grateful for that journey.

She remains passionate about pursuing a career in data analytics, particularly one that integrates healthcare and technology – especially those in the field of dentistry.

At IMU, the MHIA programme offers students a comprehensive understanding of the rapidly evolving fields of health informatics and data analytics.

Students will gain the skills to design, conduct and optimise analyses using appropriate methodologies and technologies to address real-world medical and clinical challenges.

The programme benefits from the multidisciplinary expertise of IMU's faculty, which includes areas of computer science, informatics, biomedical sciences, clinical practice and public health.

In addition, collaborations with industry partners enrich the learning experience with practical insights and real-world applications.

Covering key areas such as health informatics, epidemiology, clinical systems and bioinformatics, the MHIA curriculum is designed to equip students from diverse backgrounds with both the technical and analytical skills needed to thrive in diverse healthcare environments.

The next commencement of this programme is in September. If you are interested in joining it, make an online application today.

■ For more information, go to *www.imu.edu.my*, email start@imu.edu.my or call IMU at 03-2731 7272.

While exploring fields that merge dentistry with data analytics, Darrshini discovered the MHIA programme at IMU.

NUMed encourages peer learning and fosters a collaborative environment where students support one another and grow together.

The value of community in medical education

THE Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme at Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) is designed to prepare future doctors through a balanced mix of theoretical learning, hands-on practice and early exposure to clinical settings.

Central to the student experience is a strong sense of community that fosters collaboration, support and personal growth.

"The campus may be smaller, but this makes it easier to socialise, as well as getting to know our seniors, lecturers and peers, which is fantastic," shared Solomon Khit, a Year 5 MBBS student at NUMed.

From day one, students become part of a close-knit cohort where support is always within reach.

"We have academic mentors who guide and advise us on what to focus on.

"There are also study skills support teams that assist us in developing effective study methods tailored to our individual learning styles. I found this to be really helpful," said Solomon.

Peer learning and mentorship are integral aspects of the student experience, with senior students offering guidance and advice to new cohorts.

This camaraderie is further enhanced by various student-led clubs, societies, and events that encourage interaction outside of the classroom.

Make the most of your medical school journey by joining a vibrant and supportive community. Registration is now open for the September intake.

■ To find out more about NUMed, visit *www.newcastle.edu.my*, email admissions@newcastle.edu.my, call 07-555 3800 or WhatsApp 011-1231 5411 or 012-784 9456.

Shaping the future with STEAM education

Students participating in a creative paper tower challenge as part of UTAR's STEAM Outreach workshop, which has engaged over 29,000 participants through more than 100 hands-on activities since 2023.

IN a world rapidly shaped by technology, innovation and global interconnectivity, the future belongs to those who can think critically, collaborate across disciplines and develop creative solutions to complex problems.

An education rooted in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics – collectively known as STEAM – is more essential than ever in preparing the next generation to meet both challenges and opportunities ahead.

STEAM education offers a dynamic and integrated approach that connects logic with creativity, theory with hands-on practice and innovation with empathy.

It equips learners with technical skills, critical thinking, problem-solving abilities and an entrepreneurial mindset – all vital for success in today's fast-changing and technology-driven world.

Leading this transformation is Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) through its impactful STEAM Outreach programme.

Since 2023, the initiative has expanded traditional STEM learning by incorporating the arts for a more creative, balanced and engaging educational experience.

Rather than just memorising facts, students are encouraged to explore, experiment and apply their knowledge in meaningful, real-world contexts.

UTAR's STEAM Outreach is built on a mission to make STEAM education accessible, engaging and transformative for all.

To date, the programme has reached over 29,000 participants through more than 100 hands-on activities including workshops, science carnivals, design competitions and interactive talks.

It actively engages primary and secondary students, teachers and members of the wider community by offering opportunities to design, build and innovate.

STEAM Outreach head Dr Ong Kiah Ju shared, "This initiative does more than deliver knowledge; it inspires curiosity, fosters creativity and nurtures a sense of purpose. By involving academia, industry experts, and community members, UTAR's STEAM Outreach encourages learners to tackle real-world challenges, apply interdisciplinary thinking, and co-create sustainable solutions. Through these activities conducted, students are empowered to become changemakers of tomorrow."

The programme's alignment with Malaysia's national education priorities and its support from funding agencies, such as the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, further strengthen its impact. With a community-focused and inclusive approach, UTAR ensures learners from all backgrounds have equal access to quality STEAM education, demonstrating a commitment to equity and national development.

UTAR offers over 140 programmes from foundation studies to bachelor's, master's and PhD degrees in Accounting, Business, Finance and Economics, Actuarial Science, Mathematics and Process Management, Agriculture and Food Science, Arts, Social Sciences and Education, Chinese Studies, Creative Industries, Digital Animation, Multimedia and Design, Engineering and Built Environment, Information and Communication Technology, Life and Physical Sciences, and Medicine and Health Sciences.

■ Visit UTAR's Open Day on Sept 6 and 7 (9am to 4.30pm) at the Kampar and Sungai Long campuses. For details, go to *www.utar.edu.my* or call 05-468 8888 (Kampar campus) or 03-9086 0288 (Sungai Long campus).

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Bright prospects in accounting

MSU College's Diploma in Accounting programme equips students with a strong foundation in theory and techniques to better understand financial and accounting practices.

CAREERS in accounting and finance are in high demand across all industries and sectors.

Professionals in these fields handle budgeting and financial advising, as well as preparing annual financial statements and efficiently auditing company accounts.

Recognising the importance of knowledgeable and competent accounting personnel, Management and Science University (MSU) College offers the Diploma in Accounting through its School of Hospitality, Education and Business Studies (SHB) to those who enjoy working with numbers and calculations.

The programme provides students with a solid foundation for mastering theory and techniques to understand financial and accounting activities. Topics of study include economics, information technology (IT) and accounting law.

Accounting principles and auditing will be taught to students alongside the most recent developments in economics, management, marketing, finance and insurance.

The curriculum ensures that students are not only capable of performing accounting transactions but also making tough business decisions.

Students with three credits in Mathematics, Science and any other subject in their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia, or recognised certificates, can expect a conducive learning environment and high-calibre academics with years of practice and experience in the field.

Various character-building programmes, including those linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals initiatives, community engagements and entrepreneurial-embedded ecosystems, will be integrated into the students' learning experience to help them become more competitive and well-rounded graduates.

Credit transfer enables MSU College graduates to pursue a second-year bachelor's degree at MSU through its Faculty of Business Management and Professional Studies.

Students are also encouraged to pursue additional accounting certifications, such as ACCA and CAT, to increase their earning power.

Other programmes offered by SHB include Early Childhood Education, Management and English Language Teaching.

MSU College is also an MSU APEL Centre for potential candidates to take the APEL Aptitude Test as a non-conventional pre-qualification for entry into higher studies, in which MSU currently offers APEL A and APEL C at T-3 (certificate), T-4 (diploma), T-6 (bachelor's degree) and T-7 (master's degree) levels.

■ For more information on the programmes offered, visit *www.msucollege.edu.my*, email enquiry@msucollege.my or call 06-764 8686.

Sharpening writing skills through group projects

WRITING may look simple on the surface, but it's actually a surprisingly complex skill. In school, we spend years churning out essays on history, science and literature.

Yet despite all that practice, studies, teachers and employers in the US, UK and even Malaysia still say the same thing – many young adults entering college or the workforce struggle to write well.

So, how do you build the habit of writing well? One effective approach is through collaborative writing projects.

Research shows that when young people team up to work on a piece of writing, they naturally sharpen their skills – learning from each other, exchanging ideas and improving together in the process.

University students have said that collaborative writing offers four key benefits:

1) Reducing workload by dividing tasks
2) Enhancing understanding through a combined effort
3) Leveraging each other's expertise to produce the best outcome
4) Developing new skills for both the current and future group projects

In practice, university students often face significant stress from project grading, particularly when team members have varying skill levels. To alleviate this pressure, high school students might benefit from group assignments that are assessed for learning purposes but do not impact their final grades. This could foster collaboration without the added stress of grading.

Term time is already filled with assignments and assessments but the days at the end of the term, when the curriculum is complete, could be the perfect opportunity for a group-writing project.

Some topics to consider are writing a romance or ghost story, creating a scene for a superhero film, or crafting dialogue for a cartoon where the characters are all animals.

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THE ONE ACADEMY | MASTERS TRAIN MASTERS

Young designers make their mark

THE 15th edition of the prestigious Designer of the Year (DOTY) Awards introduced an exciting new category this year: the Future Design Star Award (FDSA).

Created to spotlight rising design talents from Malaysia's top institutions, the FDSA challenges student finalists to present industry-worthy projects before a panel of award-winning judges, simulating a real-world client pitch experience.

In its first year, the FDSA saw a strong showing from The One Academy (TOA), with three outstanding students – Aw Zhen Yang, Wong Jie Ming and Goh Ming Wee – advancing to the regional-level finals. There, they competed against finalists from other top institutions, each showcasing the best three student projects curated at an institution level.

Aw's conceptual project "A-Way Hotel" stood out for its depth and originality, ultimately clinching the Gold Award, while Wong earned the Merit Award for his work "Forge Gen-Ration". Both were honoured at the DOTY Awards Gala Dinner, marking a proud milestone not just for themselves but for TOA as a whole.

"I was not expecting the award, but I'm very grateful for the recognition," shared Aw.

"The experience was more about sharing and receiving valuable feedback from esteemed industry professionals. Also, competitions like this give us a platform to grow, learn, present better and be inspired by the work of others."

Aw (second from left) receiving the Gold Award, flanked by ACG Media Sdn Bhd founder and chief executive officer Alvin Chang (left), and Muhammad Afiat Suardi and Kimmie Tan (right) from TOA's School of Interior Architecture and Design.

His project explores how capitalism and rising contactless technologies are eroding the cultural identity of Brickfields. To restore its heritage, he drew inspiration from the area's history, named for the use of bricks to protect against floods.

The design is a speculative response to post-traumatic growth, a concept by psychologist Richard Tedeschi, suggesting that past challenges can shape meaningful solutions. In this case, water reimagined as a resource to revive cultural practices, from dyeing sarees to creating purifying cascades.

The FDSA's structure is uniquely focused, working only with select institutions and requiring them to submit a limited number of top student works. This refined approach ensures quality over quantity and a strong mentorship link between institutions and their award candidates.

Once selected, finalists compete at a regional level – a crucial step before the top student works are awarded on the same stage as professional design firms at the annual DOTY event.

TOA's School of Interior Architecture and Design manager Kimmie Tan believes in the power of such platforms to broaden student horizons.

"It's a great opportunity for our students to showcase their ideas and be part of a bigger conversation. Beyond just competing, they get to mingle with real industry players at the DOTY Awards – a chance to grow, learn and be seen," she said.

"I hope our students always remember why they chose this path. Being a designer is about more than just selling ideas or making profit – it's about the positive impact they can create for society and the environment."

As one of the country's leading creative education institutions, TOA's emphasis on deep design thinking, industry relevance and narrative strength continues to shape innovative young designers.

The success of these young visionaries signals a promising shift, one where thoughtful, future-focused design takes centre stage in shaping better environments, communities and cities.

TOA is committed to providing the best art education programmes and continues to nurture its students passionately through its "Masters Train Masters" coaching philosophy, which has been practised for over 33 years, by providing diploma and degree courses in Visual Communication Design, Digital Animation, Digital Media Design, Film Visual Effects, Interior Architecture and Design, Illustration, Fine Arts and Paris Fashion Design and Pattern Making.

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