A transformative academic journey

Richard (right) receiving his academic award at the 35th MSU convocation ceremony.

AT its 35th convocation ceremony, Management and Science University (MSU) proudly celebrated the achievements of its graduates, including international student Xue Dongsheng, also known as Richard.

Hailing from China, Richard reached a significant milestone by completing his Doctor of Philosophy in Management at the Graduate School of Management. His journey in Malaysia was more than just academic; it became a meaningful and memorable chapter of personal growth, cultural discovery and lasting connections.

After completing his master's degree in Thailand, Richard decided to take the next step by pursuing a PhD.

Malaysia stood out to him. The cultural familiarity and a significant Chinese community made adapting easier and more comfortable. However, it was MSU itself that ultimately won him over.

"When I visited the campus, I was drawn to the atmosphere, the professionalism of the staff, and the support offered by the faculty and my future supervisor. That convinced me to join MSU for my PhD journey."

Upon his arrival, he shared how he was struck by the uniqueness of Malaysian culture. Once he began his studies, he received tremendous support and guidance from the university's staff, which helped him adjust and grow personally and academically.

His time as an MSU student was filled with meaningful moments. One highlight was overcoming the challenges of publishing academic papers.

"With the guidance of my supervisor, I took on new subjects like Advanced Research Methodology and Quantitative Methods for Business Research," Richard says, adding that these topics were completely new to him. "I started from scratch and learned step by step, but completing my WCS and Viva were major milestones that made me feel all the hard work had paid off."

His research focused on the career commitment of educators, examining the factors that influence it, such as teaching advocacy and family support. Emotional and rational commitment served as mediators in this context.

"I wanted to understand what drives people to stay committed to their careers, whether studying or working," he says. "This research has been deeply meaningful to me, and the support from MSU, especially from the Postgraduate Centre and my supervisor, has been invaluable."

Richard praised MSU's extensive library collection, noting it as one of the most helpful resources during his time as a student.

"The facilities at MSU supported my academic journey and made my learning experience more effective," he said. "The librarian was incredibly kind and guided me on how to use the virtual library, how to find academic papers, and how to refer to past theses. These resources, including external databases like Elsevier, were crucial to my research."

For Richard, receiving the academic award at the 35th MSU convocation ceremony was a defining moment.

"It wasn't just about the award," Richard says. "It represented all the hard work, the support from lecturers, tutors, and supervisors, and the personal growth I experienced."

His advice to students is to never limit themselves and to step out of their comfort zones.

"Your journey at MSU isn't just about reaching a destination; it's about discovering your purpose and creating meaningful experiences. Every moment here is valuable."

He added that if one door closes, another will always open. Learning as a student at MSU becomes part of a lifelong journey. "We only live once, so make the most of it."

MSU proudly offers Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) and master's degree programmes designed to foster innovative research, scientific advancement, and practical industrial applications on both national and international stages. Postgraduate studies at MSU are delivered through the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and the Graduate School of Management (GSM), offering advanced degrees at the MSc and PhD levels. These programmes span a wide range of disciplines, including Management, Accounting, Education, and the Social Sciences, Educational Management and Leadership, TESL, International Business, Fashion Business, Hospitality and Tourism Management, Early Childhood Education, Counselling and Guidance, International Event Management, Computer Science, Information and Communication Technology, Food Service Technology, Biomedicine, Engineering, Applied Science, Health Sciences, Biomedical Sciences, Information Technology, Clinical Pharmacy, Pharmacy, Design, Medical Physiology, Public Health as well as Anatomy.

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Balancing teaching and learning roles

PROGRESS in education always involves acquiring advanced knowledge, skills and expertise. Most postgraduate programmes typically focus on research, coursework, and practical applications. In addition to these, postgraduate students at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) can also integrate teaching responsibilities as part of their curriculum. This added experience helps them further develop their capabilities and gain valuable hands-on skills.

This is especially true for Ng Yu Zhen, a master's student in Investment Management. "I've always been passionate about helping my classmates in high school whenever they had trouble understanding something in class. It always feels good when I can help them learn and grasp difficult concepts. As such, I was more than happy to take on the role of a lecturer when I started my master's degree at TAR UMT," she shares.

Ng (foreground, third from left) poses for a fun group photo with her students during their final class of the semester.

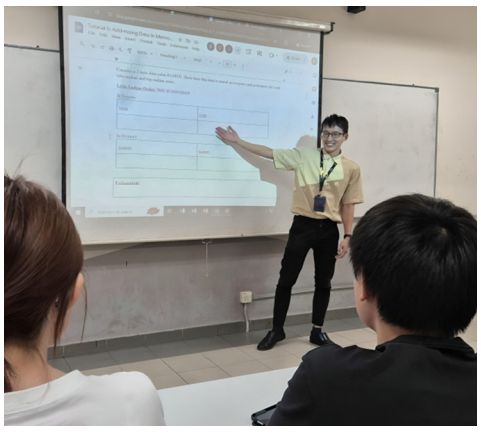
As for Chua Chi Log, who is pursuing his master's degree in Computer Science, teaching while studying serves as another form of learning and gaining valuable experience. "Teaching allows me to apply what I'm learning in my master's programme. It is also an effective way to revise, which strengthens my understanding of what I am studying," he says.

While both students recognise the benefits of teaching and studying, they also face the challenge of balancing both roles. "The biggest obstacle I face as both a lecturer and a student is managing my time. As a student, I still have deadlines, exams, and classes to attend, while as a lecturer, I need to plan lessons, grade papers, and ensure my students understand the topics. I stay on schedule by organising my time and prioritising tasks to ensure everything gets completed. Although challenging, I have learnt the importance of discipline in life," Ng shares.

Despite these challenges, the rewards of teaching often outweigh the difficulties. "The first and last classes of the semester are the most memorable. On my first day, I was terrified and anxious, my hands were shaking as I wrote on the whiteboard. However, on the last day of the semester, my students gave me a gift and provided constructive feedback for my improvement. I am glad to have had the experience of being a lecturer because one of the greatest benefits for me is that it has strengthened my self-esteem. On top of this, the university also offers many programmes and training sessions to further improve my skills. I have had opportunities to attend a series of workshops on preparing effective lesson plans, delivering content effectively, managing students' expectations and questions, and other teaching-related topics," Chua shares.

Various financial aid options and merit scholarships are available for qualified students.

■ For more information about TAR UMT's postgraduate programmes, call 011-1058 5971 or visit *www.tarc.edu.my.*



Chua (standing) interacting with students during an engaging tutorial session activity.

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