

Bouncing back from a setback



Thinaah (left) showing the thumbs-up with Pearly and Ramash at KLIA.



Thinaah posing for a photo with her parents, Pearly and Ramash at KLIA after returning from the triumph at the French Open.

HAVING obstacles isn't a problem. The problem is letting your obstacles hold you back and using them as the reason you can't get what you want. A better way would be to figure out a solution.

The experiences of Thinaah Muralitharan, national badminton champion and Bachelor of Education (TESL) student at Open University Malaysia (OUM), bear witness to this.

According to her mother, Dr Parimala Devi, Thinaah, 24, started off playing badminton for fun with her family but began to take it seriously at the age of eight when she won a championship at school. She then began collecting wins at the state and country level.

However, when she joined the Bukit Jalil Sports School in her secondary years, she hit a snag.

Most of her teammates were

Chinese and spoke Mandarin, which Thinaah couldn't understand or speak.

"She told my husband that she had problems communicating with her teammates," Dr Parimala recalled.

"He told her to learn one sentence a day from that day onwards. Whether it was one sentence or one character, if she learned a little every day, then after a year, it would add up and she would be able to understand more."

Thinaah took his advice and mastered Mandarin, resolving the language barrier. However, there came another problem.

"She started out in the women's singles. When she struggled there, she told us she might not be able to go further if she continued to play in the women's singles category," Dr Parimala said.

To resolve the issue, Thinaah teamed up with Pearly Tan for women's doubles. She was able to build rapport with Pearly through Mandarin, which the latter is most fluent in.

"On court, I speak Mandarin more," Thinaah shared, "But during breaks, when we discuss the game, I mix the three languages – English, Malay and Mandarin."

The pair triumphed at the Swiss Open last year, followed by the Commonwealth Games and French Open this year.

Thinaah applied the same problem-solving approach to her education. Realising that she needed flexible studies so that she could focus on badminton, she turned to OUM.

In May 2020, she registered at the Shah Alam Learning Centre.

"The online learning provided through myINSPIRE is the best

choice for me," she said.

"Thinaah has a can-do spirit which we can all learn from," said Ramash Ananth, the Shah Alam Learning Centre director.

"We are honoured to support her in her studies and hope to see her continue bringing glory to the country".

With the motto "University for All", OUM offers a learner-friendly, flexible and accessible approach to higher education for everyone, especially working adults.

Its programmes are delivered through online learning so that anyone can study from anywhere and at any time, not just in Malaysia but from any location around the globe.

Enrolment is possible through two routes – conventional and APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning).

APEL enables individuals to enrol in the programme of their choice if they possess relevant knowledge and working experience.

There are a total of 55 undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the fields of education, business and management, technology and applied sciences, and social sciences and humanities. Support services are provided by 35 learning centres nationwide.

At international level, OUM also offers its programmes to learners in other countries such as Sri Lanka, Vietnam, the Maldives, Bahrain and Yemen.

■ For more information on OUM programmes, call the speedline at 03-7801 2000, email enquiries@oum.edu.my or log on to www.oum.edu.my

How to be the best in your field

WHEN you choose a career path, do you look to becoming the best in your field? If so, here are some ideas to help you on your journey.

First, read a book by an expert on what it takes to be super successful. There are tonnes of self help and biographies about so if you want to become a pilot, lawyer or photographer, pick up a book by a professional that discusses how she did it.

She may not live in the same environment but you can learn to avoid common errors and to see what really matters by looking at how others reach the top.

Second, be prepared to do an awful lot of work. If it were simple to be fantastic at something, everyone would be a genius.

As the American inventor Edison pointed out, "Genius is one percent inspiration, ninety nine percent perspiration."

This means that your education should come first. Plan to study between lectures, and don't expect a constant stream of holidays and long weekends. Those come when you've hit the top.

Third, when you're learning, you might focus just on the goal but with most complex



tasks, it's a process. If you learn to analyse the process, and recognise the separate parts, then you can find ways to improve speed and quality. This will make learning more efficient – and less of a strain.

For example, if you know your note-taking isn't great, then get some good tips on how to

improve, and fix up this skill. It will save you time over the years. If your course involves regular use of a statistics programme like SPSS, don't wait until it's time to use it for your assignment. Instead, plan to spend a whole day, or a weekend, just on getting to grips with the software.

Prioritising your studies and putting in a lot of effort in everything you do will steer you on the right path to success.

Tips to improve your memory

GOT a mind like a sieve? Here are some ideas to help you plug those holes.

Stop multi-tasking

It's been a popular idea that we can do several things at once, but studies show we can't. So rule No.1 is to focus. When you're listening to a lecture, switch off your phone. Don't try and read a book. Just open your ears and listen.

Get some sleep

When you're tired, your body doesn't work well and that includes your brain. This means getting in at least seven hours of sleep a night. Exercise at the end of the day, have a warm shower and make sure you have a comfortable bed.

Write, don't type or save an image

When you read notes, you're working just a small part of your brain. When you write them down, you're using your body – something that helps stimulate your mind and your memory. So instead of passive reading, start writing your own notes.



The award-winning Whiteknights campus in Reading UK. Reading is a mere 30-minute train ride from London.



Students benefit from spacious state-of-the-art learning facilities and small class teaching that promotes interactive learning.



Students enjoy an immerse learning environment where they can develop their soft skills and enhance their English communication.

Ideal UK university option for UEC holders

THE University of Reading (UK) is an ideal choice for students who are about to receive their Unified Examination Certificate (UEC) results. The university is renowned for its high-quality teaching, research and graduate employability, and is consistently ranked in the Top 100 in the world for International Outlook by the Times Higher Education (2023).

International branch campus in Malaysia

Fortunately, students do not have to travel all the way to the UK nor incur the huge financial expense of an overseas education to study with the university. University of Reading Malaysia (UoRM) – the university's wholly owned branch campus in Malaysia – was established in 2013 and first opened the doors to its iconic, state-of-the-art campus complex located in EduCity, Iskandar Puteri, in 2015.

The campus provides students with excellent learning facilities including IT-enabled classrooms, lecture theatre, learning resource centre and student social areas all conveniently under one roof.

Students enjoy excellent recreational facilities at EduCity that include an Olympic swimming pool, running track, indoor stadium, fitness centre, music studio and a 24-hour Student Hub.

Prestigious UK education

Students studying at UoRM enjoy the best of both worlds – the same prestigious University of Reading degree, delivered to the same high-quality academic standards, but at a significantly more affordable cost. Five of the university's world-leading schools and institutions are represented at the Malaysia campus, including:

- > Henley Business School
- > School of Law
- > School of the Built Environment
- > School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences
- > Foundation Studies and Language Institute

The campus offers a selection of the university's "signature" degree courses in professional disciplines which provide students with excellent career opportunities:

- > Accounting and finance
- > Finance and business management
- > Management and business
- > Law
- > Psychology (with or without a one year professional placement)
- > Quantity surveying
- > Real estate



University of Reading Malaysia's iconic, state-of-the-art campus in EduCity Iskandar Johor.

Further programme details can be found at reading.edu.my/programmes

All of the degrees carry relevant industry and professional recognition, enhancing the employability of graduates.

English and Communication Skills

Students are immersed in a learning environment where they are able to develop their English and communication skills. Students follow the same curriculum, pedagogy and assessment standards as on the UK campus, so they have plenty of opportunity to be involved in team activities, presentations, writing articles and other learning activities that will develop their confidence in English communication.

Students also benefit from small class sizes of around 30 students, meaning they receive more personalised learning and interaction.

The university also offers a separate, 10-week University English programme that is designed to provide students with additional preparation and support for their university studies. This may be beneficial to UEC students that feel they require additional support before starting their undergraduate studies.

Flexible options to study in Malaysia and the UK

Students at UoRM can also take advantage of the flexible options to spend one or even two years studying at the award-winning Reading UK campus. The main Whiteknights

campus in Reading UK is set on 130ha of beautiful parkland and has won the Green Flag award 11 times in a row, making it one of the UK's best green spaces. A virtual tour of the UK campus is available at the link below: <https://www.reading.ac.uk/virtual-experience/>

Furthermore, Reading town is conveniently a mere 30-minute train ride from London, making it an ideal location for students to explore the UK.

Apply for entry in April 2023

UEC result holders can apply now for direct entry to the undergraduate degree courses to start their studies this April 2023.

For admission, a maximum of 14 points from any five academic subjects is required, with B3 in UEC English or equivalent. Students may be eligible for the High Achievers Scholarship worth up to RM33,840 based on their academic results. Students and parents are advised to contact them for further advice or to organise a campus visit.

■ For more information, log on to www.reading.edu.my

Alternatively, follow them on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/uniofreadingmalaysia>) and Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/uniofreadingmalaysia/>). Call or WhatsApp Joyce +6016-7215 400 or Sam +6016-7235 300, email my.enquiry@reading.edu.my or visit Educity, 79200 Iskandar Puteri, Johor, Malaysia.



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Students with other experiences and qualifications can also apply through the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL). Part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are available for working adults.

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Nurturing the dreams of new fashion talents



In conjunction with the latest edition of the European Film Festival, Sunway College – Stylo Fashion Technology Hub is working with the Embassy of Sweden in Malaysia and Miss Amazing Malaysia, an NGO aimed at empowering girls and women with disabilities, to celebrate both sustainability and inclusivity. First on the left is Augustine Wong, Director of Programme – Fashion Design Technology Studies and first on the right is Dr Joachim Bergström, Ambassador of Sweden to Malaysia.

AS Malaysia moves towards developing a high-tech nation by 2030 due to The Fourth Industrial Revolution (IR4.0), Sunway College has recognised the technology-driven changes to multiple industries and need to develop digital and technical skills.

Therefore, Sunway College now introduces the cutting-edge Diploma in Fashion Design Technology, in collaboration with Stylo International, the leading lifestyle and fashion event organiser in Malaysia.

Prof Elizabeth Lee, Sunway Education Group chief executive officer, said, “The role of education and academia is to create opportunities, nurture and develop talents, while fostering transdisciplinary outcomes. In lieu of this, we are pleased to add the Diploma in Fashion Design Technology to our current array of programme offerings.

“There is much potential in the creative sector, hence we are excited to equip students with 21st century skills while helping them unleash their creativity. At Sunway College, as we continue to offer programmes tailored to suit different individual learning needs and academic pathways, we look now to nurture future influential fashion trend setters.”

The two-year industry-focused curriculum comprises future-forward digital subjects inspired by IR4.0 such as Augmented Reality, Creative Design Software, 3D Digital Fashion Software, Smart Retail/E-Commerce Platforms and Immersive Practical Learning.

These advanced skills acquired will be essential for students to be future-ready.

Linkages with successful industry players will provide valuable experience for students and opportunities to participate in workshops, study trips, collaborate with fashion designers, participate in fashion shows and undergo internship with fashion houses.

These will ensure students are equipped with industry knowledge and transition smoothly into their career upon completing the programme.

They can also top-up to a degree at various local and international universities.

Students can expect to venture into multiple career pathways upon graduating, such as fashion designer, digital fashion designer, fashion stylist, fashion adviser, 3D graphic

“We are excited to equip students with 21st century skills while helping them unleash their creativity.”

Prof Elizabeth Lee

designer, virtual asset designer and many more.

The hub’s modern and complete facilities provide the best delivery of world-class education to the students.

Students can enjoy conducive learning environment in the digital fashion lab, drafting and pattern making studio, materials and resource studio, fashion design sewing studio and co-working space.

Datuk Nancy Yeoh, Stylo International president, said, “From the first show Stylo had put on in 2007, it was built upon talents. We would not be where we are today without the fashion designers.

“This collaboration with Sunway College marks our investment into the future talents of our fashion industry. We are taking the brave steps of marrying the art of fashion with the science of technology to build a better and more inclusive world for our children.”

Zang Toi, globally known Malaysian fashion designer, shared his words, “I have always believed that you must dream big, and work hard. I am proud to see Stylo working hand in hand with Sunway College to nurture the dreams of new fashion talents and paving their future into this incredibly competitive industry with the right skills and knowledge.”

The January 2023 intake is open for registration.

■ For more information, contact Augustine Wong at augustinew@sunway.edu.my



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Grooming leaders for the future

MANAGEMENT and Science University (MSU) students from MSU's Kelab Kembara went on a Global Leadership Programme (GLP) to Indonesia recently.

Visiting the State University of Yogyakarta (Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, UNY), the party of 18 students and two members of staff from the MSU Student and Career Development (SCD) Department were received by UNY Head of International Relations Office (Kantor Layanan Internasional, KLI) Dr Basikin and KLI Secretary Dr Kartika Ratna Pertiwi.

The MSU students were engaged in a teambuilding game of Bottle and Rope before they were taken on a tour of the university and visited the Education Museum.

A highlight of the International Pursuit of Experience Adventure and Knowledge Expedition GLP was the conser-

vation of the Baros Mangrove Forest as a natural protective fortress for the residents of Yogyakarta's south coast.

The group was taken mangrove planting in the Baros Conservation Area by a UNY Biology professor.

Visits to local industries and hiking up Indonesia's Mount Merbabu of Central Java in I.P.E.A.K. Expedition 1.0 rounded up the Kelab Kembara International Pursuit of Experience Adventure and Knowledge Expedition GLP.

MSU is a Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and multi-global ranked institution focused on building holistic human capital.

Envisioning a better, more sustainable future for all, it champions equality by providing a level playing field across extensive efforts in transforming lives, enriching future through



Hiking up Indonesia's Mount Merbabu of Central Java in I.P.E.A.K. Expedition 1.0.



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compelling learning experiences.

The MSU comprehensive global mobility initiatives are to empower students through international exposure activities.

This exposure serves to complete the students' leadership development into competent and employable graduates.

Extensive partnerships and collaborations with more than 250 institutions in over 40 countries worldwide provide comprehensive mobility opportunities for all MSU students, enhancing their graduate employability through global exposures by studies and internships abroad.

The mobility programmes offered include the Global Mobility Programme (GMP), where students can live and study abroad for one semester or two at any one of over 250 partner universities.

Meanwhile the Global Leadership Programme (GLP) is focused on the creation of leaders of tomorrow and developing a global mindset among students.

It provides opportunities for students to enhance their learning experience and develop leadership and global skills. These skills are applied through learning, volunteering and participation in activities conducted at international or local level.

Alternatively, the Global Internship Programme (GIP) allows students to work alongside global professionals via placements with industry partners onboard.

MSU currently ranks in the QS Top 100 among the world's top young universities, QS Top 200 among Asia's best universities, QS Top 30 among South-East Asia's best universities, QS Top

301+ for Graduate Employability Ranking, QS Top 601+ of the world's best universities in the QS World University Rankings (WUR) 2023 and Times Higher Education Top 401+ for University Impact Rankings 2022.

It has also been QS-rated 5-Stars on the metrics of Overall as well as Teaching, Graduate Employability, Academic Development, Internationalisation, Hospitality and Leisure Management, Online Learning, Social Responsibility and Inclusiveness.

The university's award-winning academic programmes meet stringent standards of local and international bodies.

MSU accreditors include the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), the UK's Accreditation Services for International Schools, Colleges and Universities (ASIC), Japan's Alliance on Business Education and Scholarship for Tomorrow (ABEST21), the Netherlands' Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities (ACEEU), the UK's Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) as well as Sri Lanka's University Grant Commission (UGC).

In all, 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, aimed at "Transforming Lives and Enriching Future".

■ For details, look out for the advertisement in this *StarSpecial*.



Mangrove planting in the Baros Conservation Area, initiatives by a UNY professor.

Empowering students to excel

STUDENTS go to university to prepare themselves to do things that matter. Discover a cure for cancer. Invent the next miracle drug. Start their own path-breaking enterprise.

But sometimes, things don't quite work out. Lectures may not be inspiring. The varsity culture may not be a good fit. And as fun as partying may be, too much of it can be detrimental to one's future.

If this happens to be you – or someone you know – understand that you don't have to like it or lump it. You have options and UCSI University is an ideal pick if you want to explore new horizons. Here are some things you should consider:

A great track record

Graduate outcomes, and not highway billboards, are the true measure of a university's success.

So, when UCSI counts three Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia inductees, two Prestige 40 Under 40 inductees, serial entrepreneurs, scientists, doctors, celebrated musicians and media personalities, in its alumni network, that's a track record you can trust.

Increasingly, UCSI alumni are standing out as changemakers who promote sustainable solutions to address pressing concerns.

Andrew Chong's work on µPledge, a climate fintech with a global presence, is a good case in point. Combining gamification and crowdfunding, the entrepreneur co-founded µPledge to connect socially conscious investors with impact startups that are anchored on environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments.

"Most equity and capital market-related setups are fixated on profits and we saw a space for ESG investing," said Chong, a UCSI alumnus who graduated with a degree in accounting and finance.

"Socially conscious investors are not focused solely on returns on investment. Instead, they support companies that champion causes and social impact, from the reduction of plastic waste to the modernisation of local fisheries. These companies need to succeed and with µPledge, we are moving towards crowd ownership where investors become part of the missions they believe in."

µPledge started as a capstone project when Chong read a fintech programme at Oxford University's Saïd Business School in 2021.

Looking back, Chong credits UCSI for giving him the platform to experience a wide range of activities, a process that honed his soft skills.

International standing

UCSI is ranked as Malaysia's top private university in the QS World University Rankings 2023.

Classified in the world's top 0.9%, UCSI is the only university in the world to receive the QS Recognition for Improvement Award – an award given to the varsity that improves the most ranks on average.

The university's ever-improving global profile has spurred UCSI's engagement with renowned universities, particularly in the areas of joint

"I'm glad that my time at UCSI equipped me with the skills and mindset to excel."

Gary Poh Kwor Xiang

research, knowledge creation, as well as student and staff exchange.

Gary Poh Kwor Xiang can certainly relate. Selected to advance science at Imperial College London, he contributed to a pivotal nanorobotics project through his work on silicone nanoparticles and protein crystallisation.

"Working alongside the world's best minds was a great opportunity for me," said Poh, who works as a process engineer at ExxonMobil.

"It really challenged me to raise my aspirations. I'm glad that my time at UCSI equipped me with the skills and mindset to excel. Many UCSI professors motivated me and the university went out of its way to prepare me for my time in London."

UCSI's top students are annually selected for high-impact research programmes at renowned universities like Harvard, Imperial, Tsinghua and Queensland, among others.

They have contributed to scientific projects that involve aldosterone signalling, precision medicine, big data in healthcare, nanoparticles, nanorobotics, protein crystallisation and cenosphere extraction.

Future-proof education

Considering the changes brought by IR4.0, increased automation and the Internet of things, it is crucial for students to learn at a university that has its fingers on the industry's pulse.

To this end, UCSI partners with over 4,800 leading companies to ensure its students and graduates are future-ready. These partnerships facilitate joint research arrangements, technology transfers, internships and job opportunities.

The world's best companies are also regulars at UCSI. Nestle, Airbus, L'Oréal, Siemens and Intel, are some of the many global companies that held industry and career talks on campus.

Who you'll learn from matters as well.

At UCSI, students can look forward to gain insights from 13 Fellows of Academy of Sciences Malaysia, professors who are ranked in Stanford's World's Top 2% Scientists and many award-winning academics.

With this unique setup and more, UCSI is able to provide experiences others can't, formulate solutions others don't and enhance outcomes for students around the world.

■ To enrol or to find out more about credit transfer arrangements, visit ucsiuniversity.edu.my or contact 03-9101 8882/ 011-3591 5021.



Chong, a UCSI alumnus, stands out as an entrepreneur who promotes ESG investing.



Raymond Lim, Airbus' chief representative (Malaysia), recently gave an industry and career talk at UCSI.

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Fashion Design Technology Hub

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JPT/BPP(K)(N/0212/4/0003/PA15777)08/27

Introducing the cutting-edge Diploma in Fashion Design Technology, coming soon in January 2023.

This programme, endorsed by Stylo- Malaysia's leading lifestyle and fashion event organiser* provides an industry-focused curriculum with future-forward digital subjects inspired by IR4.0 to prepare students for their successful career in fashion.

Equipped with leading industry-standard equipment and facilities, students will develop skills combining design innovation with an in-depth knowledge of the technical aspects of fashion design and manufacturing through the programme.

Malaysia's first Fashion Design Technology Hub* provides a perfect platform for students to build commercial business skills as part of the curriculum while inspiring their creativity in design aesthetics.

*Scan here for more details

A Brighter Future

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Honing the skills of Chinese Studies graduates

CHINA has long been a trading partner for many Asian countries. Lately, it has been playing a significant role as one of the key economic players internationally.

Therefore, Mandarin, the country's official language, finds itself a spot as one of the most widely used languages in the world today.

Already home to many existing multinational companies such as the Alibaba Group and Huawei, China is still expanding both its manufacturing and export network, thus many international companies are searching for talents that could speak and write the language. Those familiar with Chinese society and culture will have a significant advantage.

In view of this matter, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS) is currently offering a comprehensive range of subjects in its Bachelor of Art (Honours) Chinese Studies programme.

Students get to study the various aspects of Chinese civilisation and China's influence on its neighbours. Structured towards academic performance and skills in critical thinking, the programme aims to produce graduates that can cater to the needs of various professions inside and outside the country.

The programme covers courses such as History of Chinese Literature, Chinese History, Modern and Contemporary Chinese Literature, The Four Confucian Classics, Modern Chinese Language, Chinese in Malaysia, Malaysian Chinese Literature, History of Chinese



Chinese Studies' graduates sharing the joy with their lecturers.

Thought, Selected Texts from Tang and Song Periods, Selected Poetry of Tang and Song Dynasty, History of Modern China, Introduction to Contemporary China, Introduction to Chinese Printing and Publication, Theory and Practice of Translation and other related subjects.

According to UTAR ICS Dean Assoc Prof Dr Chong Siou Wei, apart from seeking knowledge in lecture halls, students who enrol in the programme also get to participate in various activities that allow them to enhance their soft skills and gain experience, including but not limited to talks, conferences, literature week, postgraduate research presentation, international student exchange programmes, and even community projects.

"Having acknowledged the glo-

balisation and the rapid growth of China in transition, students get to familiarise themselves with the current trends in China's politics, economy, culture and education.

"The Centre for Chinese Studies was set up in UTAR for members interested in researching Chinese literature and history, the localised Chinese culture, and contemporary China as a whole. Besides academic research, the centre assumes the role of promoting Chinese culture and arts, infusing the local and the innovative, and engaging in international exchanges," said Dr Chong.

He added, "To nurture our students into well-rounded and competitive talents in the future, the programme also offers elective subjects in Business and Social Sciences. Among them are "Social



Students discussing assignments at UTAR Institute of Chinese Studies.

Entrepreneurship Project', 'Leadership and Teambuilding', 'Oral Communication', 'Critical Thinking, Creative Thinking and Problem Solving', 'Business Plan Writing and Preparation', 'News Reporting and Writing', 'Organisation and Human Resource, and 'Understanding Politics: State, Nation and Government'.

"This extensive range of subjects can help ease graduates into the workforce, whether they choose to pursue a career either in the government or the private sector."

Other than that, UTAR ICS also offers postgraduate studies programme. Master's students can opt for either an exclusive research-based mode of study or a combination of research and coursework.

As for the doctoral programme, namely the Doctor of Philosophy (Chinese Studies) gives students the opportunity to conduct in-depth research on Chinese language and literature, Chinese society and

culture, Chinese history and Chinese philosophy.

UTAR is a university offering courses in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the areas including Accountancy, Actuarial Science, Applied Mathematics, Arts, Chinese Studies, Malaysia Studies, Business and Economics, Biotechnology, Engineering and Built Environment, Information and Communication Technology, Life and Physical Sciences, Medicine and Health Sciences, Media and Journalism, Education and General Studies, Agriculture and Food Science, and engages in the provision and conduct of research, consultation, management and leadership training and other related educational services at its campuses at Bandar Sungai Long and Kampar in Malaysia.

■ For more information, go to www.utar.edu.my or call 05-468 8888 (Kampar Campus) or 03-9086 0288 (Sungai Long Campus).



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