Affordable studies for every student

AT a time when the cost of higher education continues to weigh heavily on many families, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) remains steadfast in its mission to make quality and affordable education accessible to all.

In its effort to ensure that no deserving student is left behind due to financial constraints, TAR UMT continues to offer a wide range of financial aid options to support students in need.

Among its most impactful initiatives is the TAR UMT Student Loan Fund, a revolving, interest-free loan established in 1979, that has helped more than 17,000 students pursue their tertiary qualifications.

One of the latest beneficiaries of the TAR UMT Student Loan Fund is Vijia Laxmi Rajagopal, a Bachelor of Finance and Investment (Honours) student.

Coming from a small family and having lost her father at the age of 21, Vijia's educational journey has been marked by both determination and resilience. Her mother, a hard-working minimum-wage earner, and her younger brother, who works part-time, have always been supportive of her studies. However, the financial burden remained a constant challenge for her until she received the student loan.

TAR UMT Student Loan Fund recipients, Wong (left) and Vijia posing for a photo.

"I was working part-time before receiving financial support and it was tough, as it affected both my focus and performance.

"Now that I don't have to worry so much about money, life at university feels a lot more balanced and it has brought relief to my family, not having to worry about financing my studies."

Another recipient of the loan fund is Wong Zheng Yi, a master's degree in English Studies student, who received the financial aid when he was pursuing his Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English with Education.

"Had it not been for the loan fund, I don't think I would have completed my degree or be pursuing my master's now. There was a point when I seriously considered delaying my studies for a semester due to my unstable financial situation," he shared.

"The loan gave me a sense of security. Before that, I always worried about whether I would be able to pay the next semester's fees or if my efforts would be for nought. I am glad I did not give up, and TAR UMT provided me with the necessary support. Now, I can also look forward to pursuing my PhD in the near future," Wong added.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Haikal Hamiz Shajahan, a Bachelor of Sports and Exercise Science (Honours) student, shared how the TAR UMT Student Loan Fund became a turning point in his academic journey.

"I came to TAR UMT to study for a Diploma in Sports and Exercise Science. The PTPTN loan was not enough to support me.

"I still remember my mum cooking and selling nasi w even till late at night while my dad worked late shifts at the train station in Johor. It wasn't easy, but it taught me the value of hard work and perseverance," he shared.

With the student loan fund, which helped ease his financial burden, Muhammad Haikal not only completed his diploma, but he also excelled, which qualified him to receive TAR UMT's merit scholarship and pursue his degree in sports science.

Besides the TAR UMT Student Loan Fund, TAR UMT also offers up to 100% merit scholarships to outstanding students with exceptional academic achievements, as well as a variety of scholarships, bursaries and grants, ranging from need-based assistance to industry-sponsored awards.

■ To find out more about TAR UMT's financial aid options, visit them during their upcoming Open Day on Jan 10 and 11, from 10am to 5pm, at all TAR UMT campuses nationwide. Interested students may also contact 011-1087 5854 or visit *www.tarc.edu.my* to learn more.

msu
management and science university

Management and Science University (MSU) is a globally recognised institution, ranked by both Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and Times Higher Education (THE). Committed to developing well-rounded human capital, MSU envisions a more sustainable and inclusive future. Through transformative learning experiences, the university promotes equality and strives to create a level playing field for all, enriching lives and shaping tomorrow's leaders.

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MSUmalaysia.official
MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCE UNIVERSITY (MSU) DU019(B)
No.4, Persiaran Olahraga, Seksyen 13, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor.
Yayasan msu

MSU president and founder Prof Mohd Shukri (centre) with the recipients of Yayasan MSU Scholarships for 2025-2026.

Prof Mohd Shukri presenting a scholarship mock cheque to SMK Taman Sri Muda principal Ahmad Za'im Faisal Muhammad.

Widening access to education

AMONG the key priorities outlined by the Education Ministry (MOE) in the Strategic Education Plan (PSKPM) 2024-2030 is ensuring access to quality education for all students, regardless of background or location.

This commitment reinforces the education sector as a core pillar of the nation's development.

Guided by the "Pendidikan Manusiawi" agenda, the MOE places strong emphasis on access, equity and the holistic development of students, encompassing both academic achievement and character building.

In line with these priorities, Management and Science University (MSU), through Yayasan MSU (YM) and MSU Engage, supports the ministry's efforts by organising the Yayasan MSU Scholarship Launch Ceremony for the 2025/2026 academic session.

The initiative involves RM50mil in scholarships allocated to 157 educational institutions, comprising 144 secondary schools and 13 higher education institutions.

These include polytechnics, Mara colleges, matriculation colleges, sixth form colleges, vocational colleges and Islamic educational institutions across Selangor, Sarawak, Sabah, Kelantan, Negri Sembilan, Perak, Kuala Lumpur, Kedah, Penang, Johor, Terengganu and Melaka.

The awarding of the Yayasan MSU Scholarships reflects MSU's continued commitment to strengthening strategic collaborations and partnerships with educational institutions at various levels, particularly in supporting students from the B40 category in pursuing their studies at MSU.

The financial assistance provided includes full scholarships, partial scholarships, and other forms of educational aid.

This programme also underscores MSU's ongoing dedication to fostering strong partnerships with the MOE and educational institutions nationwide, with the aim of nurturing a generation of knowledgeable, skilled and aspirational young individuals.

The launch ceremony for the Yayasan MSU Scholarship Programme 2025/2026 was attended by MSU president and founder, Professor Tan Sri Datuk Dr Mohd Shukri Ab Yajid; MSU senior vice-president of Administration and Human Capital, Datuk Sharifah Huda Engku Muda; MSU senior vice-president of Endowment and Communication, Datuk Rosli Yusof; MSU registrar, Miskiah Tijan; as well as representatives from the participating educational institutions.

In his keynote address, Prof Mohd Shukri highlighted that the scholarship programme aims to create a sustainable and long-term impact by empowering future talents and leaders across diverse fields, including Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Yayasan MSU offers several categories of scholarships exclusively for MSU students, including the President Scholarship, MSU Outstanding Rewards Scholarship (MORE), Scholarship Reward for Excellence (SCORE), Scholarship for Mobility and International Experiences (SMILE), scholarships in collaboration with private-sector partners, as well as Fellowship and SLAB scholarship schemes dedicated to academic staff development and the pursuit of higher education.

Students completing their New Village Survey at Kampung Koh during a visit to the village farm.

Learning that leaves a mark

WHAT will your UTAR story be? How will it unfold? Some memories might include missing the bus to your first class, cycling with friends in the rain to reach the hostel, a flood of ideas that stretch into late nights or even an impromptu midnight trip to an eatery.

These memories were not written in the syllabus; they were moments created between classes that can only be experienced when one studies here.

Every season comes a story, and studying at Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) marks a new season of your life's story.

Turning ideas into impact

Imagine, in a distant future, when your employer asks you to describe one of your most impactful moments from your university life.

Perhaps, it was the time when you volunteered in the UTAR New Village Community Project (UNVCP). Under the New Village Survey branch, you documented the unfinished bridge in Pasir Gogok, Johor New Village, turning research into a formal appeal for a community's basic needs.

It could also be the time when you were analysing the untapped economic power of Kampung Mata Air, Kelantan's temple festival, and charting a digital marketing strategy under the New Village E-Commerce Project branch, to bring its culture and premium durians to a national audience.

With UNCVP, one of UTAR's impactful educational programmes, you learn beyond the classroom: you listen to the village community to understand its history, you empathise when they share their stories, and you strengthen advocacy efforts and plans to convert hope into transformational action.

These are the immense values that UTAR's education instils, fostering the hope that the cultural tapestry, local harvest, and community spirit will nurture students into capable, compassionate, and purpose-driven individuals.

What about your personal story? UTAR understands that growth also happens at the intersection of knowledge, research excellence and real-world challenges – where you stand confidently to defend a sustainable business model you built, present a robotic design you engineered or argue a case you researched.

Innovation on the world stage

The university is your arena to showcase these honed talents, skills and researched ideas and solutions on global platforms.

Take, for instance, the historical moment when two students from the Lee Kong Chian Faculty of Engineering and Science (LKC FES) channelled their research into self-sustainable sensor networks to create a device for monitoring waterways.

Their idea took them from testing in the Kuala Selangor River to the global finals in New York, where they presented alongside teams from MIT and Stanford.

They returned with the first-place award, and the profound confidence of having represented UTAR on the world stage. This is definitive proof that at UTAR, your personal story can indeed become one of global impact.

Learning from the best

These innovations on the global stage also reflect UTAR's strong commitment to research excellence. UTAR actively cultivates a research ecosystem, where students are able to turn ideas into award-winning solutions guided by intelligent scholars.

You will be able to learn alongside and be mentored by UTAR's top researchers, as evidenced by the 27 UTAR researchers – with 12 ranked in the Top 1% – listed among Stanford University's World's Top 2% Scientists in 2025.

Quality education, real outcomes

So, are you ready to write your story? Then embark on an enriching university experience at UTAR, recognised for its affordable high-quality education, which makes learning accessible to all.

The university's commitment to excellence is further affirmed by its remarkable ascent in the QS Asia University Rankings 2026 to No.109 in Asia and No.26 in South-East Asia, and distinguished by the elite QS 5 Plus Stars Outstanding Award.

This standard is rigorously upheld by more than 120 external examiners from 19 global economies, who ensure that academic benchmarks meet international standards.

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 Open Day on Jan 10 to 11 (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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*source: www.therookies.co/schools/rankings/2025

CREATIVE SCHOOL

of the Year - Advertising & Graphic Design, Digital Media Design, Illustration, Digital Animation & Visual Effects in the Kancil Awards 2025 by 4As Malaysia

*source: kancilawards.com/student-winners/year/2025

International Recognition of Excellence

For over three decades, students' international achievements and providing world-class education have always been The One Academy's first priority. Receiving international recognition for our efforts, we pledge to continue holding steadfast to our "**Masters Train Masters**" teaching philosophy and together with our exceptional team of educators, provide unmatched creative education to boost Malaysia's creative economy and become Asia's creative hub.

The One Academy International Standard Diploma & Degree Programmes

Digital Animation
KL (R3/213/4/0289)(11/26)(A7675) & PG (R3/0211/4/0057)(8/30)(A11080)

Visual Effects (VFX)
KL (R/213/4/0327)(10/27)(MQA/FA8826)

Illustration
KL (R3/213/4/0317)(11/26)(A7674) & PG (R3/0211/4/0059)(3/30)(A11082)

Interior Architecture & Design
KL (R3/214/4/0185)(10/29)(A7587), (R2/0731/6/0006)(2/29)(MQA/FA11216) & PG (R3/0212/4/0006)(04/30)(A11083)

Fashion Design & Pattern Making
KL (R2/0212/4/0056)(10/29)(MQA/FA1580)

Graphic Design: Advertising & Branding
KL (R2/0211/4/0147)(4/26)(A1826), (R3/0211/6/0035)(11/30)(A9123) & PG (R3/0211/4/0060)(3/30)(A11079)

Digital Media Design
KL (R3/213/4/0290)(11/28)(A7609), (R3/0212/6/0009)(10/30)(A9124) & PG (R3/0211/4/0058)(05/30)(A11081)

Fine Arts KL (R2/0213/4/0008)(3/28)(MQA/FA1738)

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THE ONE ACADEMY | MASTERS TRAIN MASTERS

The One Academy was named Creative School of the Year at the Kancil Awards 2025.

Rising talents shine bright at Kancil Awards

THE Kancil Awards are Malaysia's most prestigious and long-established awards for creative excellence in advertising and communications, celebrating creative works from across the nation.

Organised by the Association of Accredited Advertising Agents Malaysia (4As), the Kancil Awards honour outstanding work across advertising, design, digital, film, craft, strategy and creative innovation.

The awards ceremony was held on Nov 28 last year at EX8, Subang Jaya.

The Student Kancil x sCooler Awards are the student division of the Kancil Awards, offering driven young creatives the opportunity to submit their work to be assessed by industry professionals and compete for highly regarded accolades.

Open to all students studying at local schools, colleges and universities, submissions may include class assignments, personal projects, or work created specifically for the competition.

Entries are judged by luminaries from the Malaysian advertising industry, including group heads, creative directors and executive creative directors, based on the creative skill, talent and artistry demonstrated in bringing ideas to life.

This year, The One Academy swept an impressive 64 awards, emerging as one of the top winners of the night with 11 Golds, 12 Silvers, 24 Bronzes and 17 Merits.

Making the achievement even more remarkable, the institution also took home several of the most coveted Grand Prix-level honours: Idea of the Year, Student of the Year and Creative School of the Year.

The Creative School of the Year award honours the institution whose students collectively achieved the highest level of creative excellence at the Kancil Awards. This marks The One Academy's sixth consecutive year receiving the title, a distinction it has held since 2018.

The Student of the Year award recognises the student whose overall creative achievements stand out above all others, demonstrating exceptional skill, creativity, innovation and execution across multiple award categories.

This year, the honour was awarded to Woo Yen Qin, an Advertising and Graphic Design student from The One Academy.

"It's a huge honour and still feels unreal. I'm very grateful and it showed me that my hard work was worth it. Knowing that my understanding of the world, people and their needs resonated with others means a lot to me," said Woo on the win.

She also credited her lecturers for their encouragement and motivation, pushing her to continuously achieve better results.

The Idea of the Year award was clinched by Karma HP, a group project that Woo was also part of. It addresses the issue of cyberbullying in online games, proposing an innovative solution to curb toxic behaviour. The idea stemmed from a discussion around karma – what if what you do to others comes back to you?

"When a player insults someone, their HP is permanently reduced. In competitive games, HP is crucial. With lower HP, it becomes much harder to win.

"I think the idea stood out because it is simple and effective – it punishes players instantly by taking away what they value the most," Woo explained.

This outstanding achievement reflects The One Academy's enduring commitment to student excellence and uncompromising educational standards, upheld through its core teaching philosophy of "Masters Train Masters," in its mission to produce exceptional creative talent across Malaysia.

The One Academy 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 35 years, by providing diploma and degree courses in Visual Communication Design, Digital Animation, Digital Media Design, Interior Architecture and Design, Illustration, Fine Arts and Paris Fashion Design and Pattern Making.

■ For more information, visit *www.toa.edu.my* or call 03-7875 5510 or e-mail your enquiries to info@toa.edu.my

Growing demand for culinary arts

CULINARY arts is the art of preparing, cooking, presenting and serving food in a professional manner. Those in this field are in charge of preparing delicious food and creating edible artwork.

Management and Science University (MSU) College's School of Hospitality, Education and Business offers a Diploma in Culinary Arts, which enables students to transform their love and passion for cooking into a professional skill, leading them into the rewarding and exciting world of food preparation.

The programme at MSUC will not only expose students to a variety of culinary arts disciplines, but also provide a blend of solid culinary knowledge, practical competency, industry know-how and management skills.

This could include patisserie and local cuisine, visually appealing food art presentations, and flawless cooking and food processing techniques.

In terms of entry requirements, students must obtain a minimum of three credits in any subjects in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) or its equivalent.

Students who complete the diploma can immediately start their career or choose to further their studies at MSU through the School of Hospitality and Creative Arts by transferring credits to second-year bachelor's degrees in the same field or other related programmes.

The Diploma in Culinary Arts at MSU College helps students turn their love for cooking into a professional skill.

In line with MSU College's aim to produce balanced, holistic and well-rounded graduates, various components are also embedded into the student learning experience as part of initiatives to enhance their soft skills and ensure they are competent in the job market.

With the knowledge and entrepreneurial and soft skills acquired, graduates may have the opportunity to work in hotels, build their own restaurant or cafe, or run a catering business.

Apart from the Diploma in Culinary Arts programme, students can choose other programmes such as Tourism Management, Hotel Management and Food Service and Restaurant Management.

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, call 03-5521 6787, email enquiry@msucollege.my or log on to *www.msucollege.edu.my*

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Event	Date	Venue
UTAR Open Day	10-11 January 2026	Kampar Campus / Sungai Long Campus
Education & Further Studies Fair (KL)	10-11 January 2026	Mid Valley Exhibition Centre, Kuala Lumpur
Education & Further Studies Fair (JB)	17-18 January 2026	Mid Valley Exhibition Centre, Johor Bahru
Malaysia Education Fair	17-18 January 2026	Setia SPICE Convention Centre, Penang

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