

Your path to becoming a food scientist

THE world needs more food scientists. In the UK, the food and drinks industry is one of the largest manufacturing sectors, contributing almost £22bil (RM128.44bil) to the economy. Food and beverages, together with agriculture, are also a sizeable economic sector in Malaysia.

The Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences at the University of Reading has a long history of world-class research and is a top destination for anyone interested in Food Science and Nutrition.

In the latest QS World University rankings, the University of Reading is ranked first in the UK and within the top 10 in the world for Agriculture & Forestry, which includes Food Science.

The department offers several postgraduate study options at its main campus in Reading UK, including the MSc Nutrition and Food Science and MSc Sustainable Food Quality for Health.

Students can pursue their interests in flavours or food chemistry and turn them into a rewarding career path, all while immersing themselves in a new culture while studying in the UK.



University of Reading's beautiful award-winning 130ha campus in Reading UK is only 22 minutes by train from London.

hands-on experience, and work in excellent world-class facilities.

The department has its own food processing centre, which is used to develop and analyse food, and is one of the largest facilities of its kind in the UK.

Recent graduates have secured roles in product development at Herbalife (UK), marketing at Bakkavor (Hong Kong), teaching at Henan University of Technology (China), and research at Nestle Research and Development (China) and Fonterra Research and Development Centre (New Zealand).

It's worth noting that 100% of leavers were in graduate level roles 15 months after the end of their course (Graduate Outcomes Survey 2017/18; Postgraduate (Taught) responders from Food and Nutritional Sciences).

Exciting opportunities

Food and nutrition are thriving sciences with significant global impact and reach. They are also closely aligned with the United Nation's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

By studying at Reading, you will enhance your research skills, gain in-depth knowledge of food science and valuable



The university has its own food processing centre, which is used to develop and analyse food, and is one of the largest facilities of its kind in the UK.

UK experience

Studying in the UK is an excellent opportunity to experience a new environment and culture.

The university's main Whiteknights campus in the UK is set on 130ha of beautiful parkland and has won the Green Flag award nine times in a row, making it one of the UK's best green spaces. It has everything a student could need, including sports facilities, eateries, a supermarket and on-campus accommodation.

The university hosts thousands of international students, including many from Malaysia, and like many of the university's schools and departments, there is a diverse student and staff population.

The campus is a short bus ride away from Reading town centre, which has ample shops, restaurants and amenities. Reading town is also conveniently located, being only a 22-minute train ride from London.

A virtual tour of the UK campus is available at www.reading.ac.uk/virtual-experience/

Admissions

In general, applicants are required to have an undergraduate degree in pure or applied sciences. Scholarship information can be found at the following link:



Food and nutrition are thriving sciences with significant global impact and reach.

"The university hosts thousands of international students, including many from Malaysia, and like many of the university's schools and departments, there is a diverse student and staff population."

<https://www.reading.ac.uk/ready-to-study/study/fees-and-funding/masters-scholarships.aspx>

■ For more information about the Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences, call or WhatsApp Nishen at 016-2184 012, email food@reading.ac.uk or visit www.reading.ac.uk/food

Famous female engineers in history

THE engineering field can often be seen as a very male-dominated industry. When you think of the word engineer, a woman usually won't be the first thing that comes to mind. As concluded by a recent Unesco Science Report, towards 2030, women are consistently underrepresented in engineering and related fields. Also, according to the Board of Engineers Malaysia statistics, in 2018 only 26% of the engineering graduates were female.

Women in history have had to work extra hard to be recognised in the engineering industry. However, this did not stop women from leaving a mark on mankind. Some very important inventions throughout history were made by female engineers.

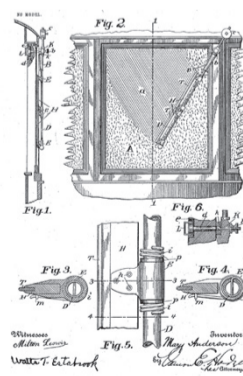
Edith Clarke: Clarke calculator

Edith Clarke was not any ordinary woman, she alone holds a few "first woman" titles. Clarke was the first woman to be professionally employed as a female



It was only after Anderson's patent expired in 1920 that the automotive industry adopted her invention.

electrical engineer, the first full-time female professor of electrical engineering in the United States, the first woman to deliver a research paper at the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, the first female engineer whose professional standing was



recognised by Tau Beta Pi, and the first woman named as a Fellow of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers.

Clarke was the first female to graduate with a master's in electrical engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology

(MIT). After she graduated, she created the Clarke calculator in 1921 and patented it in 1925. The Clarke calculator is a graphical device that simplifies equations used to understand power lines. The Clarke calculator helps solve electric power transmission line issues. It allowed analysts to solve questions 10 times faster.

Mary Anderson: windshield wiper

If it was not for this amazing woman, everyone driving in the rain or snow would have crashed their car. The next time you're driving and turn on your windshield wipers remember this woman, Mary Anderson. Before Anderson became an inventor, she operated a vineyard and a cattle ranch. On a frosty day in a trolley car, Anderson noticed the driver was having trouble seeing through the snow. She invented a device that consisted of a lever inside the car that

VC COLUMN

By
ASSOC PROF
DR JASON
PANDYA-
WOOD



THIS month, I celebrate my first anniversary as Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at University of Nottingham Malaysia (UNM). I am sure people reading this column will be familiar with the blend of enthusiasm, excitement and anxiety that comes with taking up a new job or challenge.

For me, that usual mix was magnified tenfold. I joined UNM during the first wave of Covid-19 as the world began to shut its borders in efforts to contain the virus. I spent my first two months leading colleagues, supporting students, and trying to hit the ground running from 6,500 miles away, across intermittent Internet connections and with a good day's time difference between us.

I had been to Malaysia many times before taking up the post and could almost navigate KLIA arrivals on autopilot. Not so when we arrived to live here: it was an experience that I will never forget as we navigated an international myriad of Covid restrictions and entered our mandatory quarantine. There is nothing quite like the feeling of being free after being cooped up in one room for two weeks.

My own challenges however fall into insignificance when compared to the very real human costs of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic. Across the world, people are facing dire economic, social and health challenges, all of which are made worse by the fear of uncertainty. We ask ourselves, when will this end?

People who know me will tell you that I too often fall for premature optimism. On many occasions over the past year, I have been too quick to say that we are coming to

Embracing the uncertainty



UNM students are geared towards creativity and innovation.

the end and life will soon begin to return to normal. Each time, I have been wrong of course. Even in March this year, I looked ahead to a summer of normality, proven completely inaccurate by the continued climb in case numbers and the arrival of Full Movement Control Order (FMCO).

I think that part of my problem seems to be the inability to give in fully to uncertainty. I like to be able to control things, set strategies, make plans, and see them through. I am learning that it is near impossible to do this in the face of things that do not go as planned.

Yet, it is often uncertainty that enables the most exciting creativity, innovation, and ideas to flourish.

Working in a university reminds you of this all the time.

This year, for instance, I am extremely proud that the university will be sponsoring a nationwide Malaysian Poetry Writing Competition through which we will undoubtedly read stirring interpretations of life in these challenging times. Academics at UNM have been engaged in important research that seeks to understand the psychological well-being of families during Covid-19, so that we can provide better support. Students and staff from our Business School and our Faculty of Science and Engineering are working on a weekly basis with a range of organisations

from across Malaysia and beyond, helping them to innovate and evolve in these uncertain times.

What do I take from this? In times of great challenge, throughout history, uncertainty has been a resounding feature. I may not be able to predict when or how things will change for the better. But I do know that poets, artists, engineers, and scientists will be using this time to help us flourish in the future. And that is an uncertainty worth embracing.

■ Assoc Prof Dr Jason Pandya-Wood is dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Nottingham Malaysia.



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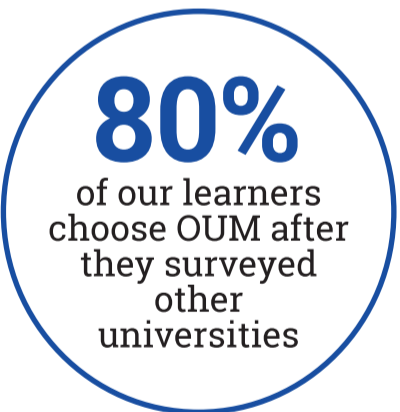
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Increasing its postgraduate options

WITH the world becoming progressively advanced and tech-savvy, a university degree is just the starting point in one's quest for lifelong learning. Whether you have just completed undergraduate studies or have been employed for some time, a postgraduate qualification will give you the edge in advancing your career or increasing your potential in the job market.

New graduates and professionals who want to stay ahead with postgraduate qualifications can consider the

range of postgraduate programmes at Curtin University Malaysia (Curtin Malaysia), Curtin University's largest international campus and global hub in Asia located right here in Malaysia. They include both coursework and research degrees, as well as graduate certificate and diploma courses leading to master's degrees.

Curtin Malaysia has widened its range of postgraduate offerings in collaboration with its parent campus in Australia to give potential postgraduate students more options. Here is the full range of programmes:

Postgraduate candidates have a wide range of coursework and research degrees to choose from.



Graduate certificates and graduate diplomas

Curtin's graduate certificate courses are career-oriented and designed to develop skills in a specialised area that may or may not be directly related to that of your undergraduate degree.

The graduate diplomas, meanwhile, are specialised, vocationally oriented awards meant to introduce graduates from disciplines outside of their chosen higher degree to postgraduate studies. Entry is normally based on completion of a bachelor's degree, although this can be in an unrelated field if you have work experience in the field of study.

Current graduate certificate and graduate diploma programmes comprise:

- Graduate Certificate in Public Health
- Graduate Diploma in Public Health
- Graduate Certificate in Project Management
- Graduate Diploma in Project Management

Masters by coursework degrees

A faculty at Curtin Malaysia may accept you into a master's degree provided that you hold appropriate qualifications. Curtin Malaysia has faculties of humanities, business, and engineering and science. Mature-age students who do not have formal entry qualifications may also qualify for admission,

and Credit for Recognised Learning (CRL) is often awarded as a result of other relevant studies. Some of the degrees also have a work experience component.

The Master's degrees by coursework include:

- Master of Policy Sciences
- Master of Science in Project Management
- Master of International Business
- Master of Public Health

Postgraduate research degrees

- Master of Science in Sustainable Aquaculture
- Master of Philosophy Degrees (MPhil)
- Doctoral Degrees (PhD)

A candidate may enrol in a degree or masters programme either full-time or part-time. The masters fields of study in the various faculties are Media, Culture & Creative Arts; Accounting, Economics and Finance, Management, Marketing, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering and Geology.

A candidate may also enrol in a doctoral degree either full-time or part-time. Enrolment in the degree is usually for a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years of equivalent full-time study. Doctoral fields of study at Curtin Malaysia comprise (but are not

limited to) Engineering & Science, Environmental Science, Business and Humanities.

Postgraduate studies at Curtin Malaysia are jointly coordinated by its faculties and the Curtin Malaysia Graduate School, which was established in 2015 to advance and promote postgraduate education through both taught and research programmes. To fulfil its mission, the Graduate School works in close collaboration with the faculties and the Curtin Malaysia Research Institute (Curtin Malaysia's research arm), as well as its postgraduate students.

The Curtin Malaysia Graduate School and Curtin Malaysia's Office of Research and Development provide attractive PhD research scholarships for qualified candidates under the Curtin Malaysia Postgraduate Research Scheme (CMPRS), including tuition fee waivers and monthly stipends, in addition to other benefits such as subsidies for consumables and attending conferences.

Information on postgraduate studies can be found at courses.curtin.edu.my/courses-and-study/postgrad/

■ For more information on Curtin Malaysia, visit www.curtin.edu.my or look for Curtin Malaysia on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or LinkedIn. More information on the Curtin Malaysia Graduate School and Curtin Malaysia Postgraduate Research Scholarships (CMPRS) can be found at gradschool.curtin.edu.my/higher-degree-by-research/future-students/

Influential women

> FROM PAGE 1

would control a rubber blade out on the windshield. This device would swipe away anything that was on the windshield and create a clear view for the driver. She patented her invention in 1903 but the automotive industry did not accept her invention. Sadly, only after her patent had expired did her invention get adopted by the automotive industry. Now, every car comes with a windshield wiper, which is an essential device.

Hedy Lamarr: WiFi

Not only was Hedy Lamarr (below) an amazing actress, but it is also because of this wonderful woman we all have WiFi.

During World War II, Lamarr would sit in her husband's meetings with scientists and absorb knowledge about military technology. She and her friend George Antheil discovered an issue within the military defence where the enemy could hijack the nation's torpedoes and disable their security.

Lamarr wanted to create a

frequency-hopping signal that could not be tracked and jammed. Hence, Lamarr and Antheil invented a way to prevent anyone from controlling their command signal. She developed a method of encrypting signals which is the fundamental method of how we use WiFi today. Unfortunately, her invention was only implemented after the patent had expired.

Katharine Burr Blodgett: non-reflective lenses

Blodgett earned her bachelor's degree at Bryn Mawr College, a master's degree at the University of Chicago, and became the first woman to receive a PhD in physics from Cambridge University. She invented non-reflective lenses which were applied to eyeglasses and improved the lenses that were used for cinematography. She did this by applying several films of barium to the glass, this reduced the amount of light that would reflect from the glass.

During World War 2, Blodgett helped create a more effective smokescreen which helped aid the soldiers during their advance or retreat. She did this using her research in monomolecular coating. Her invention has had a massive impact on modern technology today such as non-scratch camera lenses and glasses, better telescope lenses, non-reflective store windows, and weather balloon technology.

These inventions have affected our lives one way or the other. The next time you are driving or using your phone, thank these amazing engineers.



Journey in becoming a counsellor

MY name is Dr Nicole Chen, a registered counsellor and programme director of the Master of Counselling programme at International Medical University (IMU). This year I have reached a milestone as my 20th year as a counsellor.

Recalling my beginnings, I was given options to work as a social worker in a non-profit organisation or as a corporate officer in a listed company. Without any hesitation, I took the offer to work as a social worker because part of the responsibility was to provide counselling support to clients.

Since then, there has been no turning back, as I continued to advance my career in the mental health field; from a social worker to student counsellor to today, a private practitioner and counsellor educator.

It has been meaningful to serve as a counsellor because it has given me countless beautiful experiences. There are no words to describe the inner happiness I feel when witnessing clients who came into the therapy room ready to give up and then seeing them leave full of hope, feeling that you are on cloud nine when parents express their gratitude to you because they finally understand their teenage son's struggles, or journeying with struggling couples who have not talked in years, and in the end, seeing them holding onto each other's hand tightly filled with love. There are so many more beautiful encounters that just cannot be listed here.

It is an adventure because my career as a counsellor is not just about reaching out to help others



Chen believes that pursuing a career as a counsellor was not just about skills training to become a professional counsellor but also about a gift of the journey to become a better version of oneself.

but also requires a lot of courage to discover myself and having the willingness to grow to become a better person.

I came across many incidents that made me reflect upon myself; my actions, thoughts, and feelings. In a nutshell, pursuing a career as a counsellor was not just about skills training to become a professional counsellor but also about a gift of the journey to become a better version of oneself.

It is an honour to be part of the IMU faculty team in designing our Master of Counselling programme. The programme is tailored to provide students with a meaningful journey in becoming a counsellor. Here, our students share their learning journey at IMU.

The expedition in becoming a counsellor requires a lot of courage to venture into unexplored aspects of themselves. Nevertheless, it is a journey full of excitement and adventure, with students

continually supported by a dedicated group of committed counsellor educators.

IMU offers postgraduate programmes including Master in Science programmes in Public Health, Analytical and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Molecular Medicine, Acupuncture and Pharmacy Practice; Master of Counselling; Postgraduate Diplomas in Diabetes Management and Education, Implant Dentistry, Endodontics and Prosthodontics; postgraduate programmes in Health Professions Education, Health Informatics and Analytics and Business Administration in Healthcare Management as well as MSc and PhD in Medical and Health Sciences.

■ For more information about these or IMU's other postgraduate programmes, call 03-2731 7272, email postgraduate@imu.edu.my or visit www.imu.edu.my



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Empower women, empower the nation

IN a speech given on International Women's Day on March 8, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yasin said women are one of the most important pillars of national development.

In economic terms, he cited a study that found a 30% increase in women's labour force participation could boost Malaysia gross domestic product between 7% and 12% annually.

Given the crucial roles women play both for their families and society at large, we at Open University Malaysia (OUM) support the notion that women should be provided with the opportunities to succeed in all their endeavours. This includes protecting their rights to education, freedom of speech, and equality that they rightfully deserve.

OUM's idea of empowering women is opening doors for females from all backgrounds to succeed through higher education. This is why we have always strived to find ways to help women reach their full potential.

From the earliest days of our establishment as Malaysia's first open and distance learning institution, we have sought collaborative opportunities that can give women the chance to uplift themselves academically.

Among our initiatives that have had the most worthwhile impact on women involve in-service teachers and nurses. Through our collaboration with the Teacher Training Division (under the Ministry of Education) and the Malaysia Nursing Board, thousands of those in these professions, the majority being women, have been given the

By PROF
DATUK DR
MANSOR
FADZIL



"OUM's idea of empowering women is opening doors for females from all backgrounds to succeed through higher education."

opportunity to study at OUM.

The move has enabled them to upgrade their professional skills and knowledge besides opening up employment opportunities both locally and abroad.

In early May, we took our commitment towards women empowerment a step further by inking a memorandum of understanding with Wanita Berdaya Selangor (WBS).

This agreement paves the way for OUM



Given the crucial roles women play both for their families and society at large, OUM support the notion that women should be provided with the opportunities to succeed in all their endeavours.

and WBS to work together in supporting women development in all economic, social, educational and cultural sectors and provide them the means they need to contribute even more to society.

For a start, the Selangor state government has agreed to sponsor 10 women to pursue higher education at OUM under the WBS Lifelong Learning Programme. This is indicative of the state government's confidence in providing equal opportunity for women to pursue higher education and contribute to their families and community.

In future, we hope more women from WBS and beyond will also have a chance to become OUM learners. Ultimately, we want to play a part in providing women with the competitive edge to succeed, at home and at

work, both personally and professionally.

The initiative is in line with the prime minister's call for women to be given the opportunity to "pursue their wildest dreams and prove their ability to succeed in this very challenging and competitive world. Successful women [can] contribute immensely to the betterment of our country, our community and our families".

All of us at OUM wholeheartedly agree.

For more information on OUM programmes, call 03-7801 2000 or WhatsApp 012-303 9935 / 019-357 9074, email enquiries@oum.edu.my or visit www.oum.edu.my

■ Prof Datuk Dr Mansor Fadzil is president and vice-chancellor of OUM.

WHAT if I told you that a jack-of-all-trades can be a master of everything? Management and Science University (MSU)'s alumna Dr Dehiwalage Anne Sharmini Perera is one. She is the founder and director of Medical Tourism Lanka Pvt Ltd; head of Faculty of Business Studies at Sri Lanka Technological Campus; lead of the Office of Mentoring and Coaching at Sri Lanka Technological Campus; and a certified coach and mentor by the International Authority for Professional Coaching and Mentors.

Amongst all these pivotal responsibilities, one that Dr Sharmini focuses on more intricately is her tourism business, Medical Tourism Lanka, which focuses on medical tourism.

Since the civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009, tourism in all sectors in Sri Lanka saw a positive upsurge.

Wanting to contribute to the budding tourism industry in her homeland, she came to Management and Science University (MSU) to strengthen her knowledge.

Dr Sharmini did PhD in Business Management with a much-narrowed research specifically on tourism management. She brought home not just her qualification but a life-changing pedagogy on tourism management, which she applied in her business.

"My business focuses on bringing patients from Seychelles and Maldives for their western and ayurvedic treatments in Sri Lanka. We facilitate from the point of them leaving their homes, coming to Sri Lanka for their medical treatment, observing their progress and providing advice or consultancy," she says.

"The Sigiriya rock fortress is identified as the iconic tourism attraction in Sri Lanka and my research was a case study regarding this historical icon which is a Unesco heritage site. From there, my research areas were in tourism development, human resource management and organisational behaviour," she explains.

Dr Sharmini's take on the versatility and adaptability of tourism in Sri Lanka is quite visible. This goes to show how her expertise, passion and love for her job have broadened

Window of opportunity



Dr Sharmini believes that self-confidence is a top tool for success, thanking her parents for raising her to be confident.

the trajectory of her career.

"Travellers are always seeking quality medical assistance at an affordable price. Treatments are economical. We have the expertise in Sri Lanka. However, it is important to identify the opportunity.

"Covid-19 has taught us that it is all about wellness and medical tourism has been identified as one of the most important concepts of that spectrum.

"It was a little tough on us during the pandemic as the business focuses on mobilising patients from international outbounds. During the pandemic, we had restrictions in bringing the patients. But, the time of quietude helped us to look at how we can redesign the business with specialist assistance.

"We assisted the specialists to consult with patients virtually via video conferencing. Later, once the borders were re-opened, we brought the patients down to Sri Lanka again but with strict SOPs in place," she says.

Dr Sharmini says picking the university of her choice for her doctoral study was effortless.

"I searched for a higher institution that could support me to gain a broader knowledge in tourism and hospitality. That was when I gathered information regarding Management and Science University (MSU), Malaysia.

"What attracted me the most to this university was the support extended by the professors and the culture that was instilled to encourage the candidates and their students to keep up to date with knowledge and develop the right skills and attitudes that are expected by the community. Apart from that, MSU is QS-ranked and a globally well-recognised university," she says.

Her future endeavour is less of self-profit and more of social entrepreneurship.

"I am more focused on management coaching, mainly helping young girls and women to develop themselves and make a huge impact on the economy and industry.

"I think confidence is key to success. Thanks to my parents for raising me to be confident, it has now helped me face any challenge confidently. Self-confidence is my top tool for success," she says.

Among the accolades and awards Dr Sharmini has received so far are:

- Women Leaders Award by the World Women Leaders Congress in 2019,
- Award for Top Achiever – Credit Management in 2005 at Dialog Axiata,
- Rewarded by Telekom Malaysia for Excellent Performance & Contribution towards the Credit Management Division in 2007 at Dialog Axiata,
- Certificate of "Warnana" for Excellent Management Skills at Dialog Axiata, and
- Certificate of "Warnana" for Decision Making for conducting training and facilitating training for billing operations at Dialog Axiata.

Management and Science University (MSU) houses the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, the Faculty of Business Management and Professional Studies, the Faculty of Information Sciences and Engineering, the International Medical School, the School of Pharmacy, the School of Education and Social Sciences, the School of Hospitality and Creative Arts, the School of Graduate Studies, the Graduate School of Management, and the Centre for Fundamental Studies.

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, where it aims at transforming lives and enriching the future.

■ For more information on postgraduate programmes at MSU, call 03-5521 6868, email gsm@msu.edu.my or visit www.msu.edu.my

WITH global economies intertwining more than ever before, it is obvious to the masses that knowledge on where and how money should be utilised is crucial. It is also common for parents to suggest to their children to take up an undergraduate degree in business, as it is often considered among the “safest” or most popular courses for students who do not have passion for the three “holy grails” (medicine, law, engineering), and to enter the workforce with a recognised qualification.

However, competition between businesses is at an all-time high, and only knowledge will determine the success of any business venture. Therefore, why not learn more about these unique business models in a postgraduate business course and be inspired to take your future business venture or company to a whole new level?

Middleman model (The Warby Parker Model)

Through Warby Parker’s initial venture into the designer eyewear industry, it realised that a lot of designer eyewear products were overpriced because many companies had sold their rights to bigger companies, who were monopolising the industry.

Hence, they decided to create a new “middleman model”, in which start-ups deal with the production line directly, cutting costs significantly and growing the business rapidly, and increasing their customers by offering designer products at a cheaper price point.

Marketplace model

The basic summary of a marketplace model is to bring supply and demand together in one place. Companies such as Airbnb, Uber, Amazon and Foodpanda bring together both producers and consumers on to the same stage. Buyers and sellers can carry out their business at their own convenience, while still being connected to the marketplace.

This model takes little to no physical space and capital, making it almost risk free and

Knowledge is the key to business

easy for start-ups to set up camp.

Customisation model

Everyone loves having something made just for them. However, these items take time to make, and not everyone has the luxury or skill to create something truly special. But, if you are a person who possesses such skills, why not turn it into a business?

From big companies such as Nike offering services for customers to customise their own shoe designs, to a small start-up business selling customisable handmade keychains, there is a large potential market out there, as people will always love feeling special by receiving something made just for them.

Reverse auction model

What would it be like to live in a world where buyers set the price instead of the sellers? The reverse auction model does just that, where buyers bid their chosen price to the sellers, while sellers accept the most reasonable and profitable price for them to be paid. After that confirmation, the buyer has to agree to all the terms and conditions from the seller to carry out a successful transaction.

This is a win-win situation for both sides, as buyers feel like they have won by getting something for a cheaper price, while sellers win by selling leftover goods that they might not have sold otherwise on a traditional platform.

Although this model has not set foot in

Malaysia, it has proven successful in the United States, through companies such as Priceline, FedBid and Squeezify.

Virtual goods model

Have you ever played an online game where you have to pay cash for virtual currency to customise your characters or power them up to get through a very difficult level? Have you ever sent a virtual gift card to someone as a gift? Welcome to the world of the virtual goods model, where both goods and transactions stay in the online world, but hold a big part of the

economy’s spending power.

Apple, Amazon and many other large companies utilise this model, as it has been proven that customers like to take convenience to another level, and are willing to pay for virtual goods to get instant gratification.

With the ever-evolving sphere of business tactics and models, it is always crucial to be one step ahead of your competitors to ensure a successful business venture. Consumers love and crave the idea of unique experiences; therefore, businesses will constantly have to tweak old business models, or create a new one altogether, to flourish.



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Strengthened under new leadership

THE OUM Graduate Centre (OUMGC) is positioning itself as the preferred choice for postgraduate studies for both local and international learners under the leadership of its new director.

Assoc Prof Dr Shishi Kumar Piaralal, whose appointment as director came into effect on Feb 16, says his priority is to strengthen the centre as the hub for postgraduate studies across Malaysia, particularly the Klang Valley since it is the only learning centre that offers master's and PhD programmes.

Dr Shishi says, "I hope OUMGC will be the preferred choice for postgraduate programmes both locally and internationally. Now, we have also opened enrolment for international learners. Even if things go back to normal after the pandemic, our programmes will continue to be offered through online mode to all of our learners abroad."

With his new portfolio, Dr Shishi plans to work closely with all stakeholders such as marketing, support services, academic staff, programme directors, and learners towards achieving the centre's objectives.

"We hope to close all necessary gaps to ensure that we can continue to provide a delightful learning experience to our learners. Frequent virtual meetings will be organised with the stakeholders to improve our existing services," Dr Shishi adds.

Having extensive experience in both academia and industry, Dr Shishi joined Open University Malaysia (OUM) as a senior lecturer with the Cluster of Business and Management before being appointed as director of the Tanjung Malim Learning Centre.

Prior to being an academician, he spent 16 years in the telecommunications industry in various settings that involved in-service marketing, customer service delivery and service recovery.

Among his initiatives for OUMGC was



Having extensive experience in both academia and industry, Dr Shishi is working towards positioning the OUMGC as the preferred postgraduate centre for both local and international learners.

conducting free workshops on important topics such as using the SPSS software, contemporary issues in applied economics, and a series of research-related workshops in collaboration with experts from OUM and other universities.

Dr Shishi shares, "We want to provide more value-added programmes – may they be academic-related or skills and knowledge courses. These programmes can be

academic or industry-based, or learner lecture series that can be conducted via the Google Meet platform."

He also plans to collaborate with local and international professional bodies relevant to OUM programmes where learners can join as members at discounted rates. The move will not only be useful for networking purposes, it will also enable the university to work with the industry to facilitate

"We want to provide more value-added programmes – may they be academic-related or skills and knowledge courses."

Assoc Prof Dr Shishi Kumar Piaralal

internship placements for learners in certain programmes.

OUMGC also plans to work with other postgraduate centres, both local and foreign institutions, to enrich its existing postgraduate programmes. There are currently 30 postgraduate programmes offered at master's and doctoral levels that are accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency.

Learners, prospective learners or members of the community who wish to be informed of the latest news and activities of the centre can follow the OUM Graduate Centre Facebook account or join the OUMGC Postgraduate group chat on Telegram, Dr Shishi adds.

"Importantly, I want people to know that from the moment postgraduate learners register at OUM, OUMGC will be their first contact point for support and guidance throughout their studies," Dr Shishi concludes.

■ For more information on programmes, call 03-7801 2000, WhatsApp 012-303 9935 / 019-357 9074, email enquiries@oum.edu.my or visit www.oum.edu.my



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