Flexible, attainable industrial doctorate

Malaysia requires a large pool of PhDs to provide the impetus for sustainable growth in its economy. There is a huge opportunity for researchers to resolve work-related issues and find solutions to problems. Recognising the importance and the potential impact that will accrue from this strategy, the Malaysian government has formulated policies with financial incentives to encourage Malaysian employees from both public and private sectors to pursue an industrial doctorate.

An industrial doctorate is more application oriented, and is an alternative to the traditional PhD, which is more inclined to knowledge advancement. The expected outcome of this programme is that the research should add tangible and intangible benefits to an organisation and improve and enhance an organisation’s overall efficiency, effectiveness, performance and profitability. This will lead to an enhancement of competitiveness of the nation in the long run.

The programme is an initiative of the government to encourage knowledge sharing among industry practitioners and academics in order to produce highly knowledgeable professional people who can transform the country into an innovation-oriented economy. The programme was developed by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia under the MyBrain15 initiative.

Asia E University (AEU) plays a significant role in supporting the government’s initiatives by offering this programme, thus improving accessibility to higher education and helping to raise the professional qualifications of working Malaysians.

The AEU’s Industrial Doctorate (IndD) provides opportunities for students and researchers to bridge the gap between industry and university, empowers Profesor Dr Siew Heng Loke, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, the objective of the programme is to establish cooperation among the university, the industry and students and researchers on specific research projects that are of high value to the industry and the participating parties. The IndD candidate is employed by the industry and at the same time enrolled at AEU.

"One of the main advantages of this programme is that candidates’ research will be conducted in the workplace so that they will not be required to give up their existing jobs," says Professor Siew.

As well as the benefits to the programme participants, there are also advantages for the organisation they work for. They will locate and access the valuable knowledge acquired by the candidate during their studies. The candidate will usually spend all their working time on their research project, and can divide their working time between the organisation and the university, where appropriate, the candidate may carry out some aspects of the research at the university.

Candidates will have an Industrial Supervisor who will provide local day-to-day guidance and an Academic Supervisor to provide the long-term strategic direction towards outcomes that will be suitable for an award. The Profesor Siew. They will be required to submit a dissertation by portfolio on their research and its outcome at the end of the programme.

To gain the award of IndD, the dissertation must satisfy the university’s quality standards as judged by the examiners and the candidate must successfully defend the dissertation and research work in a viva voice conducted by the examiners.

Candidates are primarily industry practitioners and their doctoral research will focus on industry-related issues, says Professor Siew. The programme is unique in that it does not allow candidates to combine their strengths in academic research and industrial knowledge to come up with innovative solutions that are applicable for the industry. On successful completion of all studies, just as with a traditional programme, they will receive the Industrial Doctorate degree.

For more information www.aeu.edu.my