



Professor Dr Siow Heng Loke, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies.

Flexible, attainable industrial doctorate

MALAYSIA requires a large pool of PhDs to provide the impetus for sustainable growth in our economy. There is a huge opportunity for researchers to resolve work related issues and find solution to problems. Recognising the importance and the positive 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 sector organisations 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 enhancement of competitiveness of the nation in the long run.

The programme is an incentive of the government to encourage knowledge sharing among industry practitioners and academics in

order to produce highly knowledgeable professionals and to transform the country into an innovation-led economy. The programme was developed by the Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia under MyBrain1.5 initiatives.

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 Industrial Doctorate (IndD) provides opportunities for students and researchers to bridge the gap between industry and university, explains Professor Dr Siow 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.

PhD degrees in terms of the mode of research, but preserves the mark of original or innovative research expected of a doctoral study. It is better suited to the needs of the industry, and provides a more vocationally oriented doctorate with industrial relevance.

A four-year part-time post-graduate programme, it is highly flexible and able to accommodate candidates from all levels of management.

Participants in the programme will focus their research on industrial issues or problems and will be jointly supervised by experts from the university and industry.

"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 Siow.

As well as the benefits to the programme participants, there are also advantages for the organisation they work for. They will be able to access the valuable knowledge acquired by the candidate during their studies. The candidate will usually spend all their working time on the research project, and they will 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 long term strategic direction towards outcomes that will be suitable for an award, explains Professor Siow. 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 quality standards as judged by the examiners and the candidate must successfully defend the dissertation and research work in a viva voce conducted by the examiners.

Candidates are primarily industry practitioners and their doctoral research will focus on industry-related issues, says Professor Siow. The programme is unique as it allows 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 their studies, just as with a traditional programme, they will receive the Industrial Doctorate degree.

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"The Industrial Doctorate programme will create growth in the business community through the promotion of co-operation on research and innovation between the university and the partnering industry," he continues. "The programme will educate researchers to the doctoral level with specific knowledge about industrially focused research and innovations. It will facilitate knowledge transfer and networking between partnering industry and researchers within the university and wider afield as they engage with our extensive networks."

INDUSTRY-DRIVEN

This programme is distinctly different from the conventional

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