

# Vital student support

THE School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), strives to provide its postgraduate students with the necessary support and training to help them become better researchers under the Putra Sarjana Programme.

To this end, UPM has teamed up with the Higher Education Development Centre of the University of Otago, New Zealand.

Under a memorandum of understanding between these two universities, experts from the University of Otago who carry out research on aspects of doctoral support are regularly invited to share knowledge and experience with UPM staff and students.

To expose students to a wide range of research experience, selected UPM staff and Malaysian experts are also invited to be active contributors to the programme.

Initiated in 2005, the Putra Sarjana Programme offers centralised workshops for postgraduate students. The programme helps students develop a range of necessary skills that they can apply in their research activities and subsequently in their careers, academic or otherwise.

Over the past 10 years, more than 8,000 students have attended the workshops. The workshop topics include academic writing, managing the research journey, expectations of doctoral examiners, publishing during



A Putra Sarjana session by Emeritus Prof Datuk Dr Sheikh Omar of UPM.

candidature, networking and presenting research at conferences.

Apart from these topics, the programme also includes training to develop skills in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and social domains.

Internationally recognised certificate courses such as the Academic Career Preparatory Course and the Professional Skills Certificate Course are also offered.

Upon completion of all courses under any of the certificate packages, students will be awarded

certificates of achievement.

One of the reasons for the programme's success is that it supports UPM's initiatives to produce graduates who are critical thinkers who have excellent communication and leadership skills.

The highlight of the Putra Sarjana Programme was when UPM played host to the International Doctoral Education Research Network (IDERN)'s invitational meet in 2007.

More than 70 international

scholars who shape international doctoral education attended the meet. These scholars also conducted a three-day workshop for postgraduate supervisors and students in UPM.

The presence of IDERN at UPM raised the profile of the Putra Sarjana Programme at the international level, with leading international scholars on doctoral education coming to UPM to work with staff and students.

These scholars include Dr Margaret Kiley (Australia),

Prof Gina Wisker (the United Kingdom), Prof Anthony Pare (Canada), and Dr Gill Robinson and Prof Ann Austin (the United States).

Over the past 10 years, the Putra Sarjana Programme has grown from one-off workshops and seminars into more structured programmes that include academic development, professional development, ethics, moral and community engagement.

Research on the Putra Sarjana Programme has been presented at international conferences and published in international journals. As a result, UPM has established an influential presence in the IDERN.

Additionally, under the graduate mobility programme, staff and students of UPM get the opportunity to spend up to three months at the University of Otago under an expertise exchange programme.

The UPM Putra Sarjana Programme hopes to continue to provide the space and opportunity for UPM students to develop their knowledge and skills in their journey to becoming confident and mature graduates.

■ For more information, visit [www.upm.edu.my](http://www.upm.edu.my)