

LANDSCAPE DESIGN WITH NATURE IN MIND

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ALTHOUGH it is a lesser-known profession, landscape architecture is an integral part of the construction process and a much sought-after profession due to the scarcity of trained professionals.

Producing around 200 to 250 graduates per year, the job requires practitioners to be adept at balancing the principle of design and the ecosystem.

For the second instalment of the Careers in Real Estate series, Institute of Landscape Architect Malaysia (ILAM) president Dr Osman Mohd Tahir shares his experience as a practitioner of landscape architect for 35 years.

Dr Osman was a student of Agricultural Science at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) when he was first exposed to the

field of landscape architecture.

He said landscape architecture was only introduced as a tertiary education course in 1996 when the government established the National Landscape Department. It was then that universities started to offer the course as part of their undergraduate degrees.

“Five public universities – UPM, University Technology Mara (UiTM), University Technology Malaysia (UTM), Islamic Institute University Malaysia (IIUM), and University Science Malaysia (USM) – offer landscape architecture as undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

“The course is a professional four-year degree recognised by ILAM, with the syllabus encompassing subjects such as History and Philosophy of Landscape Architecture,



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Dr Osman: Landscape architect focuses on the environment.



Environmental Study, Plant and Ecosystem, Site Design and Construction,” he said.

Landscape architect versus architect

Dr Osman is also the Dean of the Faculty of Design and Architecture in UPM. He said that landscape architecture is different from architecture in that the latter tackles the topic of buildings, design and other physical structures whereas landscape architecture focuses more on the environment surrounding the building.

He also shared that a landscape architect is responsible for building a conducive living environment for the public by infusing their knowledge in art and science.

“We need to understand the principle behind the design and grasp the basic ecological system knowledge. It is important for us to plan the landscape, taking into account the engineering, landscape ecology, so-

cial facet as well as the economic aspect of the whole project,” he added.

Dr Osman said a landscape architect is in charge of planning and designing the landscape of the development. To come out with the best layout that blends seamlessly with nature, landscape architects have to visit the site to run tests and surveys. Then, they have to analyse the information collected and carry out further research on the subject.

“With all the information, the landscape architect needs to provide the best solution to propose to the clients or developers besides presenting the idea with the right tools,” said Dr Osman.

To obtain the LAr title, a landscape graduate student would be required to register with ILAM after graduation and before starting work in the field.

After two years of practice, they are qualified to sit for a professional exam by ILAM before being able to hold the designation.

“They could continue their practice, or they can opt to open their own landscape architecture company,” said Dr Osman, who added that it would usually take about four to five years after graduation for a person to get the title.

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