

Supporting PhD candidates and supervisors

It is generally recognised that undertaking the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is one of the most challenging university experiences.

This is not surprising given that candidates are learning to become independent creators of original research.

In light of this challenge, the School of Graduate Studies of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) has developed support and development programmes for its research candidates and staff.

The overall aim of these programmes is to ensure that candidates have the necessary knowledge, skills and support required to successfully complete their PhD programme and that supervisors are able to effectively assist them.

Providing assistance to students

The candidate programme, known as Putra Sarjana, is provided to students across the university.

Its numerous seminars and workshops are categorised as academic, research and digital literacies; global citizenship; and critical and personal self-awareness.

For example, the Manuscript Writing and Publication workshop aims to assist candidates in developing the all-important skills of publishing their research.



Deputy dean Prof Dr Zulkarnain Zainal speaking to UPM academicians.

Associated with writing is the Avoiding Plagiarism workshop, which aims to ensure that candidates understand what constitutes plagiarism and how they can avoid it.

Highly relevant for the 21st century is the workshop titled Research in the Digital Age along with numerous other workshops on the use of technology in research.

For candidates aiming for an academic career, programmes such as The Mind of an Academic

and Introduction to Teaching are invaluable.

Given the importance of the PhD examination process, workshops on preparing for examination and the viva are also popular.

Workshops are generally available to enrolled candidates free of charge. They are offered by skilled and experienced UPM staff assisted by a number of invited presenters from Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

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Staff training

UPM also provides programmes for staff engaged in supervising candidates. More recently, the university has made it a requirement for less experienced staff members to engage in a number of activities to prepare them for their roles.

For example, academic staff members wishing to supervise PhD candidates are asked to undertake two workshops, which are Introduction to Research Supervision and Preparing Your Candidate for Examination.

For staff members who wish to become examiners of PhD theses within UPM and other universities, they can attend the half-day workshop Being an Examiner.

The being a Viva Chair workshop is provided for those wishing to be the chair of a PhD oral exam.

In addition to these few

required workshops, UPM offers a wide range of workshops on topics such as Cross-cultural Supervision, Setting and Monitoring Milestones, and Providing Quality Feedback.

As with the programme for PhD candidates, the staff workshops are conducted by highly skilled and experienced UPM staff and overseas guest speakers.

With this support, UPM is aiming to ensure that its PhD candidates have a rewarding and successful research learning experience.

■ For more information, e-mail dean.sgs@upm.edu.my or visit www.sgs.upm.edu.my



School of Graduate Studies dean Prof Dr Bujang Kim Huat speaking to UPM academicians.

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