

Excellent platform for a quality PhD at Asia e University

ASIA e University (AeU) celebrated its 5th Convocation Ceremony at the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur on 20th September 2015.

About 3,000 graduates collected their scrolls at the convocation, out of which 536 were International graduates from 15 foreign countries; Bahrain, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Iran, Kenya, Maldives, New Zealand, Pakistan, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, UK, Vietnam and Zimbabwe which signifies AeU's increasing acceptance in the international arena.

A total of 521 graduates were teachers from the Program Pensiswazahan Guru (PPG). This was the second batch of graduates from PPG under the Ministry of Education. Without giving up their careers, these teachers embarked on their lifelong learning with AeU and have successfully completed their Bachelor of Education (TESL) and Bachelor of Education (Teaching Malay Language in Primary School) programmes.

The first batch of 83 PPG graduates received their scrolls at AeU's 4th Convocation in September 2014. This reflects the confidence of the Ministry of Education in the quality of AeU's programmes and in its commitment to enhance the capabilities of teachers in the country.

Assoc Prof Lt. Col. Dr Azuddin Bahari (Rtd) is a PhD (Business Administration) recipient at AeU's 5th Convocation.

He is an Associate Professor in the School in the School of Business Innovation and Technopreneur, University Malaysia Perlis (UniMap).

His thesis title is "An Assessment of the Relationship between the Voluntary Organisations Service Delivery and the Flood Affected Community Satisfaction in Kelantan.

This article is about his experience in completing his PhD degree with AeU.

On September 29th, 2003, after 31 long-years serving in the Malaysian Army, finally the day of my retirement came, and also it was the day when I set my mind on a new territory, the academia. With a master's degree in MBA from Leicester University, I started my new journey in academia as a lecturer at School of Business Innovation and Technopreneurship, Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP).

Backed with 31 years of field experience, I was appointed as UniMAP's Director of Occupational Safety and Health Unit since January 2004 until present days.

Armed with a master's degree in MBA I thought I already have what it takes to excel in academia, until I figure out that I was on no man's land without a PhD degree.

From then on, I sat my mind on one final challenging hurdle in my life, which is to get a PhD degree.

I was no more a young chap, as I was 59 years old when I began the greatest journey in my academic life. The words from Prof Dato' Dr Zul Azhar Zahid Jamal, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic and Internationalizations (UniMAP) still buzzing in my mind until this day.

That is: "To be an excellent academician the prerequisite is a PhD degree. A PhD is like a professional licence to be a lecturer".

With those words ringing in my ears, I started to survey the best alma mater that suit my need as a part-time PhD student.

In my mind, I want to study in an internationally recognized institution. I need to study in a convenience and conducive environment. I need a renowned supervisor to guide me.

Also, the institution that I choose should be able to provide a wide range of support services that is available on request and flexible at the same time.

After scouting around, I found that AeU stands out among the rest in term of the aforementioned requirements.

I let my intention of pursuing PhD known to my beloved wife Normah and my colleagues.

I received unanimous support from them, especially from a colleague of mine, Dr Hanum Hassan.

She was willing to assist and guide me in finding direction for my thesis. Also, I communicate my intention to the Vice Chancellor, UniMAP Brig Jen Prof Datuk Dr Kamarudin Hussin. With the blessing and support from all quarters, I began my PhD journey at AeU on September 20th, 2010.

A welcoming speech by Prof Siow Heng Loke, Dean of School of Graduate Studies in November 2010, has a lasting impression on my inquisitive mind. "PhD is about proving a theory

and your PhD is not to solve world's problems" were the words said by the Dean. These words are embedded in my mind until today.

My research area was in service quality vis-a-vis disaster management.

AeU with its wide internationally recognized network, has obtained the service of Prof Dato' Dr Shattri Mansor from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) to be my supervisor.

Prof Dato' Dr Shattri Mansor, is an expert in image processing, remote sensing and GIS, UAV-based remote imaging, disaster management and early warning system.

Hence, AeU has provided an excellent supervisor to supervise my study.

With Prof Dato' Dr Shattri Mansor as supervisor and Dr Hanum Hassan as advisor, my journey towards pursuing my PhD was smooth sailing.

In my head, I embedded the nothing-is-impossible attitude and I work relentlessly towards the accomplishment of my mission.

The word impossible is only excuses of non-committal towards mission accomplishment.

Prophet Muhammad said, "Your deeds hinge on your intentions and a person can only get fit his intentions".

The manifestations of intentions to achieve your deeds will activate (1) action plan or objectives and goals to strive for both worldly and heavenly accomplishment, (2) focus on achieving an objective (3) stimulate enthusiasm and passion to do the job well towards mission accomplishment (4) encourage cautious attitude and prioritizing a job to be done.

With constant prayers from my wife, excellent guidance from my supervisor, supportive Dean and exceptional service support provided by Swa Lee Lee and the administrative staff at the School of Graduate Studies, and guidance from my colleague Dr Hanum, enabled me to complete my PhD within the stipulated time frame.

In this article, I would like to recall the beautiful moments of going through the process of viva voce. On January 19th, 2015, I received a wakeup and frightening call indicating my Viva Voce Examination has been scheduled on February 4th 2015.

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'AeU has expedite my quest for academic and learning'

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In 31 years of my military service, I have encountered many challenging situations but it was nothing compared to the nervousness to face a viva-voce session.

I stood in front the Viva Voce Examination Committee to present my case which I felt like standing in front of the firing squad waiting for the shooters to pull the triggers. The atmosphere was very cordial but then I feel very tense and nervous. Before the Viva Voce began, so many "if" questions starts playing in my head.

What if the Viva Voce Examination Committee stops me from presenting my studies on the pretext that my research is not in-depth and the theories used in my research is not workable, what shall I do? I started to feel worried.

I was a bit release when the Chairman of the Viva Voce Examination Committee instructed me to present my research. The Viva Voce Examination committee were very professional. I salute them on their professionalism.

I was given twenty

minutes to present my study and followed by two hours of deliberation. After the completion of the 'Questions and Answers' session, I was asked to leave the room for the Viva Voce Examination Committee to deliberate on my fate. After half an hour of deliberation, I was called in to face the verdict. The Chairman read the verdict. The verdict was announced, and the Viva Voce Examination Committee were satisfied with my research.

I did not realise that tears rolls down from my cheek. That way the happiest day in my entire life! No words could describe the feeling. I was over the moon.

In a nutshell, AeU had provided me with the opportunity to obtain my PhD, which is an important ingredient of knowledge economy.

AeU also made me discover new knowledge, developing new skills and see things in a critical way. A

PhD degree from AeU allows me to improve my academic qualifications and sharpen my research skills.

As a PhD graduate, I am seen as having absolute authority on my subject matter and I am less likely to be questioned.

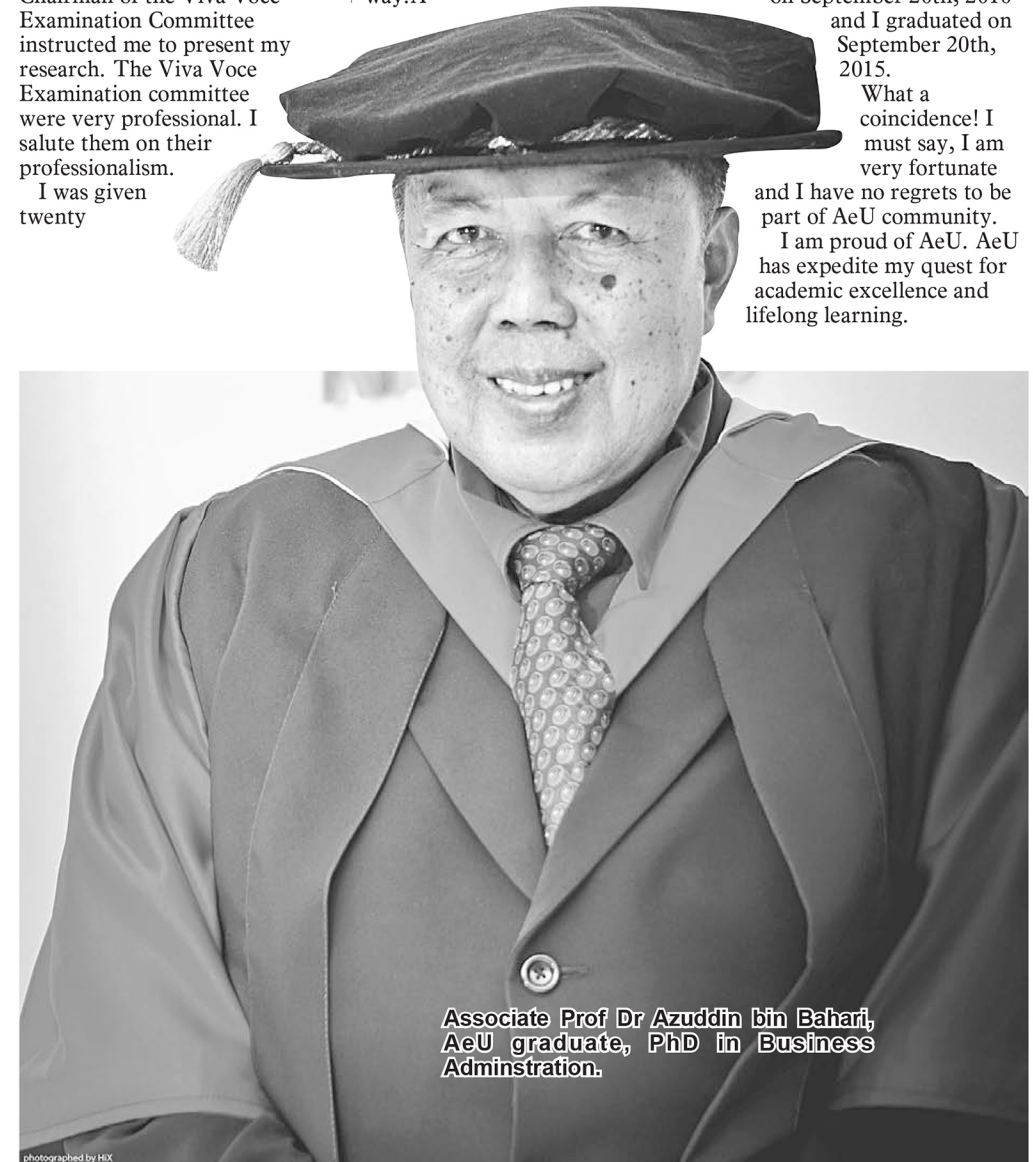
Subsequently, the excellent e-learning platform provided by AeU has enabled learning to take place with ease and beyond any boundaries.

For those aspiring to pursue your PhD degree, my advice is for you to be prepared mentally and physically. You need to set your goals and manage your time excellently. With good time management, there is no necessity for you to restrict yourself from doing or undertaking your favourite daily activities. All is needed is consistent work, a timetable and a clear strategy to accomplish your objectives. I was offered a place for the PhD programme

on September 20th, 2010 and I graduated on September 20th, 2015.

What a coincidence! I must say, I am very fortunate and I have no regrets to be part of AeU community.

I am proud of AeU. AeU has expedite my quest for academic excellence and lifelong learning.



Associate Prof Dr Azuddin bin Bahari, AeU graduate, PhD in Business Administration.