

IT was a dream come true for Assoc Prof Dr Asif Mahbub Karim when he decided to embark on a PhD journey with Asia e-University (AeU) after having settled with marriage and three sons.

A former lecturer with a reputable Dhaka university a decade ago, he is presently the head of research and innovations and lead consultant at Wisdom Organization for Research & Leadership Development (WORLD), Bangladesh.

After he graduated with a PhD degree from AeU last year, his career has progressed and now he works as the head of the accounting research group in a Malaysian university.

"In Bangladesh, fully online PhD degrees are not recognised by the government or universities. Hence, I had always dreamt of having my PhD from abroad. I found AeU from my research as the most ideal university offering PhD in a part-time mode, providing flexibility for working adults with family commitments.

"Seeing is believing, so in October 2012, I visited AeU's main campus in Kuala Lumpur to check out the PhD programme. I was impressed with AeU's facilities. After a long discussion with Prof Dr Siow Heng Loke, dean of the School of Graduate Studies, I was convinced and much encouraged," says Assoc Prof Asif.

On the same day, Assoc Prof Asif also met his academic facilitator Dr Oo Yu Hock. "His charisma and fatherly approach motivated me further as he gave me the courage to believe in myself and that I can do it. I promptly registered for the programme," he adds.

"My supervisor was Assoc Prof Dr Junaid M. Shaikh of Curtin University, Sarawak. I was guided and advised by Prof Dr Siow and Dr Oo. Every semester, I visited Malaysia and had travelled 10 times from October 2012 till October last year, mostly to attend AeU's research colloquia, research workshops and research methodology classes.

"I successfully defended my dissertation at AeU's viva voce when I was grilled by the

A dream come true

external examiners. With good advice and sound guidelines from my mentors, I graduated in just four years," says Assoc Prof Asif.

Throughout his past 15 years of career, Assoc Prof Asif has published 14 papers in international journals and six in local journals, presented 17 papers in international conferences and published three books. Many of his research articles are now in the review process and expected to be published this year. During his PhD journey, he also published around 15 research papers from Australia, Bangladesh, India and New Zealand.

"My paper co-authored by my PhD supervisor and advisor, Dr Oo, titled *Solution of Adapting Creative Accounting Practices: An In-depth Perception Gap Analysis among Accountants and Auditors of Listed Companies*, which received the best paper award from Australia Academy of Business Leadership (AABL) in Sydney, Australia. This paper was presented at Dhaka International Business and Social Sciences Research Conference (DIBSRC 2016).

"This paper was extracted from my PhD thesis submitted to AeU titled *Perception of Creative Accounting: Gap Analysis – Solution Among Auditors and Accountants in Bangladesh*," says Assoc Prof Asif.

"My PhD journey was tough yet interesting. I sacrificed time with my family and friends.

"I spent a lot of time glued to pieces of research, books, periodicals, journals and academic writing. I remember Dr Oo once said 'You must smell the books in the library.' This phrase acted like a catalyst to me in constantly reading and doing research from AeU's physical and digital library," he adds.

Assoc Prof Asif claims that he is really fortunate to have been a part of AeU's community which included having a wonderful administrative team that

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Assoc Prof Dr Asif Mahbub Karim

assisted him.

"My PhD dream is a reality now. The AeU's PhD programme has given me broader perspectives and greater insight into the business' best practices. Mingling with fellow students and distinguished academics from different parts of the globe has enabled me to gain from their experiences and the cross fertilisation of ideas.

"The networking through my journey at AeU has increased my confidence and aptitude to a different altitude. I would not hesitate to recommend anyone who is interested in lifelong learning to pursue their degree with AeU," Assoc Prof Asif testifies.

Ten years and growing

AeU offers nearly 40 academic programmes from diploma to doctorate levels. All academic programmes offered are in compliance with international standards, approved by the Education Ministry and accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA).

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Singapore, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Bangladesh and Maldives as well as non-members of ACD such as Denmark, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Namibia, Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen, Mauritius and the United Kingdom.

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