

POSTGRADUATE OPTIONS

AeU brand lures retiree to pursue PhD

FOR Stefanie Ng, studying for a PhD (Doctor of Philosophy) has always been on her mind since she returned from the United Kingdom after graduating with a Masters in Marketing in 1979.

"A PhD/doctoral degree is deemed as the most prestigious achievement of a lifetime as it represents the highest level of academic attainment.

"In today's highly-competitive and demanding job market, having a PhD is a necessity, especially for those who want to advance their academic careers in higher-learning institutions."

Despite knowing that getting a doctorate can have a huge impact on her career and personal life, Ng did not continue pursuing her PhD studies in 1979 as she was intimidated by the negative stories about the high dropout rate.

However, her desire to get a PhD did not diminish and in 2012, she finally decided to study for one. After putting a lot of careful thought into her choice of university, Ng narrowed down a long list and chose Asia e University (AeU).

"The higher education market is getting crowded and competitive. There are pros and cons for potential students. The marketing campaigns are aggressive and appealing.

"Attractive offers, such as scholarships, fee discounts, low admission fees and flexible payment schemes are placed in advertisements, news articles, magazines, brochures, flyers, posters, banners, billboards and websites.

"One can be overwhelmed by the tremendous amount of information provided by advertisements, event organisers, media owners and promoters of higher education.

"In my search for information on universities in Malaysia offering PhD programmes, I came across an article published alongside an advertisement in a newspaper, featuring a relatively-new university known as Asia e University.

"This AeU brand caught my attention; I was attracted to its logo and tagline of '1 University 31 Countries'.

"Interesting, isn't it? It is said that the first impression is a lasting one and it can affect decision-making.

"Judging from the institutional structure supported by a large group of Asian countries and several awards in e-education that AeU has garnered, my vote for the AeU brand was confirmed."

"Between 2010 and 2012, the awards that AeU had received for integrating technology and innovation into its teaching methods were the 'Best Brand in Education — e-Edu-

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Learning is a lifelong process for retiree **Stefanie Ng**, who is studying for a PhD in Business Administration at **Asia e University**.

cation', 'Asia-Pacific Entrepreneurship', 'Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) status' and 'Best Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Project'."

Ng was impressed by the uniqueness of AeU's value-added features that make lifelong learning accessible and affordable.

The features are low admission fees, steep discounts, flexibility in learning and fee payments, a conducive research environment in terms of thesis supervision, skills training, library facilities and resources, and free meals during research workshops and colloquia.

"It was in May 2012 that I took the first step to pursue my research-based PhD studies in AeU. I chose to do the PhD in Business Administration because of my experience in marketing.

"Currently, AeU offers four PhD programmes by research, namely the PhD in Arts, PhD in Business Administration, PhD in Education and PhD in Information & Communication Technology.

"Two doctorate programmes that can be pursued part-time are the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) and Industrial Doctorate."

As a retiree, Ng enjoys a 50 per cent discount on her tuition fees. She has a coursemate who is also thrilled by a 75 per cent discount for disabled students. In addition, there are further discounts

of 10 per cent for early payment of fees and another 10 per cent off for student loyalty.

"My return to the academic world is a bit like going back to a familiar turf, except that the setting is substantially different from previous experiences in a bachelor and masters programme.

"But it is hard for some of my friends, former colleagues and family members to understand why, after working for so many years, one would still want to embark on this epic journey.

"Their frequently-asked questions are, 'why bother to pursue a PhD?' and 'why chose AeU?' My standard answers to those are 'learning is lifelong' and 'the AeU brand appeals to my senses'."

Ng is now in her second year of study. Having attended a series of research workshops, colloquia and clinics, she is more confident in navigating through the trials and tribulations of her PhD studies.

"I have gone through a challenging defence of my proposal two months ago and now, I am in the data collection stage. The two years of AeU experience has empowered me to redefine learning with the right combination of tools, materials, people and other resources."

The most popular attractions of studying for a PhD at AeU are the skills-based research workshops, colloquia

and clinics, which are conducted throughout the three semesters of an academic year. There are 16 research workshops as well as two research colloquia and clinics in each semester to enhance the students' competency in using quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Using an innovative dual-mode system of delivering lessons and resources, AeU has reached out to a diversity of international students seeking higher education under a reliable, conducive and flexible e-learning environment.

Working adults are facilitated by the university's system that strikes a balance between working and studying.

Flexibility, affordability and quality education from a degree to PhD/doctoral level are the unique key selling propositions of the AeU brand.

"In my two years of studying at AeU, I have gained a wealth of new knowledge and skills in conducting research, data collection, analysis and thesis writing. It is a journey of self-discovery and personal transformation. Thank you AeU for giving me the opportunity and experience in studying for a PhD," said Ng.

For information on AeU's PhD programmes, call 1300-300-238 or apply online at www.aeu.edu.my