

Flexibility at AeU to learn while you earn

> Among only 70 universities in Asia with Open University concept

As economies the world over become more knowledge-based, working professionals find themselves faced with the reality of having to continuously upgrade themselves to keep up. However, modern lifestyle commitments may mean people find it hard to make time to go back to university. What to do?

If you turned to Prof Datuk Dr Ansary Ahmed, he would, of course, advise you to play smart, and opt for the Open Learning concept. The president and CEO of Asia e University (AeU) puts it this way: "Do you want to go back to university or have the university come to you?"

AeU is well-positioned to make a statement like that with his university being an internationally recognised brand in the business that caters to adult learners.

AeU was selected by the Higher Education Ministry, under the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), as "the gateway university" for international education for distance and online learning—a decision that, Ansary says, reflects how AeU is considered "the most appropriately positioned

Malaysian university".

Through the "AeU gateway", collaborating institutions have access to an integrated e-learning platform. Partner institutions use the online gateway to deliver their programmes, provide expertise and conduct assessment and quality assurance. AeU, through the gateway, is in a position to provide the necessary administrative support, on behalf of its partner institutions.

The university is among only 70 universities in Asia that cater to the workforce using the Open University concept.

The university believes in removing barriers for an individual to choose what he or she wants to study. "It gives you a second chance to do what you like to do because as you mature and gain life and work experience, interests change. And that is where we come in," says Ansary.

Open learning does not put any pre-requisite to enrolling in a programme. For example, you can decide to do an engineering programme without having a credit in mathematics as opposed to close learning where you must have a pass or a distinction for the university to consider your application.

Ansary explains "Open learning is a philosophy that says anybody, at any age can enter a university.

Nobody says you must have qualifications to study a particular course. Distance learning is different. It is a methodology where there is a space between the student and the lecturer. People tend to think it is the same.

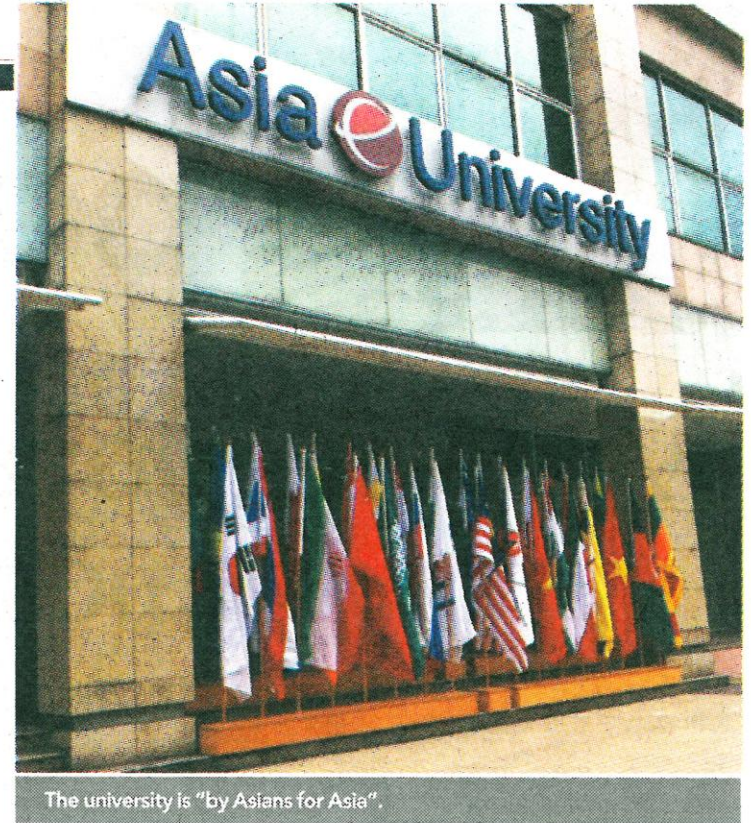
"E-learning, on the other hand, is different. It is a form of learning where digital resources are used to learn."

AeU practises the fifth generation of distance learning which uses the internet and smart mobile devices like tablet computers. The first generation used postal to correspond, followed by the use of radio and television, a concept initiated by the first open university founded in the UK.

"The sixth generation, Web 2.0 is coming and it will promote collaborative learning using social networking," says Ansary.

AeU offers programmes at various levels in business, management, education & cognitive science, information & communication technology, arts, humanities & social sciences as well as professional and executive education.

One distinguishing feature of AeU is the way its programmes are delivered. Crafted to suit the demanding schedules of working professionals and adult learners, independent learning is the focal



The university is "by Asians for Asia".

component of the courses.

Students also benefit from the valuable real world experiences of their peers through numerous interactive opportunities.

All programmes are taught by highly qualified lecturers and academic facilitators.

In addition to normal entry, relevant work experience is very much considered as part of AeU's Open Entry admission. It allows prospective students a second chance at higher education as prior learning experience is acknowledged as valuable learning and used to compensate for paper qualifications.

Ansary says, "The university is

determined to reach out to an ever wider diversity of adult learners in Malaysia, by working with government and private organisations to promote the cause of lifelong learning and upgrading.

"Since our inception six years ago, AeU has steadfastly held on to this mission by investing resources and creating multiple pathways to make it possible for those who formerly have no avenue to earn a degree to enter university."

AeU Preview Day will be held on Sept 7, 9am to 12noon. For details, log on to aeu.edu.my