Preparing students for the real world

PHARMACEUTICAL sciences has and always will play a vital role in the advancement and development of medicine. When it comes to the pharmaceutical industry, research is critical in making a positive and often life-changing impact on people all over the world with studies on the safety and efficacy of drugs.

As it is a growing industry in Malaysia, UCSI University has acknowledged the importance of research within the industry and has made it a key focus of its postgraduate programme in its Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

Launched earlier this year, UCSI University’s Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Technology are the first private postgraduate pharmacy programmes to be offered in a mixed-mode format.

The programmes, which may be completed in as little as one year, offer students a unique combination of both course and research work, as well as compulsory elective business courses which allow students to develop applications on business management and entrepreneurship skills to further enhance their competitiveness in the work force.

The programme aims to train not just pharmacists, but scientists from all relevant programmes for research skills, in line with Malaysia’s goal to train more postgraduate students.

“Through research, students enhance their research skills with work relevant to the pharmaceutical and science industry,” said Dr Chin Jin Han, a senior lecturer with the faculty.

“Students enhance their skills in organising and monitoring research projects, preparing research proposals by learning ways of obtaining and understanding scientific information, extracting relevant information in their respective areas of research interest and to communicate this knowledge effectively to others in both written and oral presentations."

Under both the Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Chemistry and Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Technology programmes, students are not only exposed to modern research skills but also get the opportunity to work under the guidance of the professional academic team to conduct a research project throughout the year, culminating with a year-end thesis.

“We hope to inculcate a strong sense among our postgraduate students of applying research to practice, with opportunities for industry collaboration work,” said faculty dean Associate Professor Dr Yeong Siew Wei.

When studying for the Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Technology, students focus on the formulation, tabletting and advancement of the drug delivery system, as well as study pharmacokinetics, and the bioavailability and concentration of test substances in the blood.

In the Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Chemistry programme, students concentrate on the quality aspects of medicines and aim to assure that they are fit to be medicinal products.

Students study a range of subjects from advanced pharmaceutical analysis to analysis of natural products, pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics.

In both programmes, students focus not only on conducting research for research sake, but also on conducting research with practical applications and potential for commercialisation as part of UCSI University’s commitment to entrepreneurship, value innovation and nation building.

Furthermore, students are instilled with the values of continuous life-long learning, to ensure they stay industry-relevant throughout their careers to continue successful pharmaceutical practices.

Graduates from both master programmes could contribute to various pharmaceutical industry departments in quality control, research and development or sales and marketing.

On top of that, graduates from Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Chemistry may also work in manufacturing; in the government services at drug regulatory agencies, hospitals or clinical chemistry laboratories; or as pharmaceutical education lecturers or researchers.

To qualify for the programme, applicants should hold a Bachelor of Science degree in pharmacy or other related science field with a 60% average or minimum grade point average of 3.0.

* For more information on the programmes, contact 03-9101 8800 or log on to www.ucsi.edu.my or e-mail askmm@ucsi.edu.my