

RECENTLY, international exposure has been increasingly recognised to be beneficial for medical students. This comes in the form of an overseas clinical elective posting or a research attachment with a foreign university.

UCSI University is ramping up its internationalisation efforts to provide its medical students with linkages to some of the world's best universities and hospitals. This is led by UCSI's vice-chancellor and president Senior Prof Datuk Dr Khalid Yusoff – a clinician scientist and respected cardiologist who is active in the international research scene. All of UCSI's fourth year medical students have the option of pursuing their clinical elective posting overseas, provided that they are accepted by the hospital they apply for. Recently, students Shalini Nair and Hanisha Kaur returned from their four week-long elective posting in the land Down Under. They chose Box Hill Hospital, in Melbourne, Australia.

Established in 1956, Box Hill Hospital is the largest of Eastern Health's network of acute hospitals, admitting more than 48,000 patients each year. The duo spent their postings attached to the plastic surgery department with the team of consultants and registrars. They had first-hand experience seeing how medical education differs in Australia.

According to Shalini, elective students are expected to attend clinic sessions, ward rounds and observe procedures in the operation theatres from 9am to 5pm daily. Fifth-year medical students in Australia have minimal classes in the univer-

# International advantage



(From left) Shalini Nair, Dr Paul di Giovine and Hanisha Kaur in the operating theatre.

sity and are instead expected to attend the wards each morning.

During the ward sessions, the students would visit the patients assigned to them, write follow-up notes and obtain investigation results from the previous day.

"We found being responsible for our own patients very rewarding and captivating as the students are truly involved in the care that their patients received," said Shalini.

Hanisha concurred that the emphasis was on the education of the medical students and junior doctors and those ward sessions taught them a great deal.

According to Shalini, the highlight of the placement was being allowed to "scrub in" or enter the operation theatre.

Both girls were allowed to shadow hospital registrar Dr Paul di Giovine in the surgery room.

"The registrars were kind enough to explain the steps involved while they were operating," Shalini said. "This allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of plastic surgery."

They were grateful that the experienced nurses, residents, registrars and consultants did not treat them any differently from the

experienced medical professionals.

"As doctors, we will treat patients from all over the world and the experience of this elective posting fulfilled our expectations and gave us insights into how we should prepare ourselves for a medical career," said Hanisha.

A similar international posting is experienced by their juniors, second year medical students Tan Jia Wei and Ting Pei Yee.

For Tan and Ting, their international posting focused on research and both are currently in world-renowned Harvard Medical School.

This high-impact partnership sees UCSI sending its medical students to Harvard for year-long research attachments. While in Boston, the US, the students came under the tutelage of clinician scientist Prof Gordon Williams, who leads the Hormonal Mechanisms of Cardiometabolic Injury Programme at Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital.

Tan and Ting relished the lectures and lab sessions, which many regard as the world's best.

"It is good that UCSI is going the extra mile to make such arrangements with the world's top universities," said Ting.

Tan agreed: "It adds to the student experience and it's something not many other universities can do."

The duo's research stint at Harvard is sponsored by UCSI's scholarship arm – the UCSI University Trust.

More international collaborations are in the pipeline and whether it is clinical postings or research attachments, it is clear that "a global impact" is the operative phrase when it comes to UCSI's medical programmes.

■ To know more about the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, contact 03-9101 8882 or [www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry](http://www.ucsiuniversity.edu.my/onlineenquiry).