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45

## THE GLOBAL ADVANTAGE

TCX45 interviews YBhg Prof Dato' Dr Mansor Fadzil, President and Vice-Chancellor of Open University Malaysia (OUM), on honing graduates with knowledge, skills, and attributes that are not only relevant locally but also marketable globally.

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## ABOUT TCX

TCX (Tutor Connexions) is a non-profit OUM e-newsletter that provides a dedicated link between the University and its tutors. It serves as a channel for news and updates on tutor-related events and as a platform for the sharing of views, experiences and tips on best practices in university teaching and learning.

TCX is published electronically once every semester.

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## EDITORIAL NOTE

The consensus among experts in neuroscience is that the human brain did not evolve as if it were a piece of sedimentary rock, with cognitive layers accruing over time. It evolves rather like companies do: it reorganises as it expands. By the same token, thriving organisations and institutions do not evolve by layering new practices over older ones; instead, like the brain, they reorganise as they expand. Open University Malaysia (OUM) is doing precisely that – reorganising as it grows and adapts to changing times. This issue of TCX is the first in a series covering the reorganisation that OUM is currently undertaking, underlining always the ways in which OUM learners stand to reap the fruits of the university's endeavours.

On behalf of OUM, we wish you a productive semester ahead.

Best

Dr David CL Lim  
Chief Editor

## TUTOR INFO

IMPORTANT DATES	TUTORIAL	UNDERGRADUATE		POSTGRADUATE
		SENIOR	NEW	
	TUTORIAL 1 / SEMINAR 1	20 - 22 JAN 2017	10 - 12 FEB 2017	20 - 22 JAN 2017
	TUTORIAL 2 / SEMINAR 2	10 - 12 FEB 2017	24 - 26 FEB 2017	10 - 12 FEB 2017
	TUTORIAL 3 / SEMINAR 3	24 - 26 FEB 2017	10 - 12 MAR 2017	24 - 26 FEB 2017
	TUTORIAL 4 / SEMINAR 4	10 - 12 MAR 2017	24 - 26 MAR 2017	10 - 12 MAR 2017
	TUTORIAL 5 (SMP) / SEMINAR 5	24 - 26 MAR 2017	-	24 - 26 MAR 2017
	ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES	EXISTING LEARNERS		
		ONLINE: 6 - 19 MAR 2017 OFFLINE: 10 - 12 MAR 2017		
		NEW LEARNERS		
		ONLINE: 27 MAR - 2 APRIL 2017		
	FINAL EXAMINATIONS	8 - 23 APRIL 2017		

## TEACHING PERMIT

All OUM tutors are mandated by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to obtain a Teaching Permit.

If you have not applied for a Teaching Permit, or if you have obtained a Teaching Permit but have not submitted a copy of it to OUM, please apply and/or submit it to us as soon as possible.

The forms required to apply for a Teaching Permit are:

- (a) 'Borang A - Permohonan Bagi Permit Mengajar'
- (b) Medical Examination for Teaching Permit

The forms can be found at:

OUM Home Portal > Online Community > Community List > F2F Tutors or ETutors > Announcement > Teaching Permit.

To apply, complete the forms and submit them with the necessary supporting documents to the Institute for Teaching and Learning Advancement (ITLA).

### FOR F2F TUTORS

#### REMINDERS

1. Always come prepared for all your tutorials.
2. Be punctual and refrain from ending your tutorials early.
3. Be honest when signing in and out on the attendance register.
4. Do not reschedule or cancel the tutorial timeslots allocated to you.
5. Avoid reading directly from the module.
6. Strive to initiate higher-order thinking during discussions.
7. Maximise the tutorial hours by focusing solely on academic matters.

### FOR E-TUTORS

1. Download the myINSPIRE app (available on the Google Play Store and Apple AppStore) and make full use of its features.
2. Be visible in your respective forums.
3. Check on your forum often (at least 4 times a week).
4. Respond to learners' postings promptly.
5. Never ignore learners' requests for help.
6. Post and redirect questions to learners to encourage and stimulate discussions.
7. Post additional resources (web links, videos, articles, etc.) related to the course content to stimulate interest and spark discussion.
8. Inform ITLA of any prolonged absence and inability to facilitate forum discussions.
9. All e-tutors are required to use their assigned OUM email accounts as official OUM communication will be sent there.
10. When learners post in the forum, email notifications will be sent to your OUM mailbox. You can directly reply to the post via email as your response will appear in the forum.

### E-TUTOR FACEBOOK GROUP

If you have a Facebook account, please request to join the e-tutor group on Facebook (search for “OUM e-tutors”). Contact any ITLA staff for further information.

### MOBILE SUPPORT FOR E-TUTORS (MOST)

Mobile Support for Tutors (MoST), which is accessible on WhatsApp, is now in service. We will be using this channel to post announcements, reminders, and tips from time to time.

Please join us on WhatsApp by adding our mobile phone number to your contact list. The number is **019-3204899**.

### ON ASSIGNMENTS

For courses with assignments:

1. Assignments and Assignment Rubrics have been uploaded to myINSPIRE.
2. With regards to online submission of assignments, please note that there are different deadlines for existing learners and new learners.
3. Encourage learners to refer to and use the Guide to Writing Assignment. This guide can be found on the OUM portal.
4. F2F tutors and e-tutors can only provide guidance on completing the assignments based on the rubrics given. Please do not give any confirmation of marks for the assignments as the assignments will be graded by the e-graders.

## TUTOR INFO

### ON THE F2F TUTOR ONLINE COMMUNITY AREA & E-TUTOR ONLINE COMMUNITY AREA

Tutors are encouraged to log in to the F2F tutor online community and e-tutor online community forums for continued support and development. The forums also give tutors and e-tutors the opportunity to exchange and share experiences with other tutors/e-tutors.

#### CONTACT INFO

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# THE GLOBAL ADVANTAGE

## INTERVIEW WITH YBHG PROF DATO' DR MANSOR FADZIL, PRESIDENT/VICE-CHANCELLOR, OUM

By Dr David CL Lim (david@oum.edu.my)

In this issue, TCX interviews YBhg Prof Dato' Dr Mansor Fadzil, President and Vice-Chancellor of Open University Malaysia (OUM), on honing graduates with knowledge, skills, and attributes that are not only relevant locally but also marketable globally.

**Dr David Lim (DL):** From the outset OUM has operated nimbly, constantly evolving and improving to keep up with changing times and demands. With Dato' at the helm, the University is currently entering a new phase of change. New internal structures of work division and reporting are being put in place to further empower our academics and enhance the services we provide. TCX will be covering this aspect of OUM's transformation in a subsequent issue.

For now, Dato', please could you share with us your vision of how these changes were conceived to benefit our learners?

**YBhg Prof Dato' Dr Mansor Fadzil (DM):** Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share with our tutors and academics aspects of the impending change. To start off, it bears reiterating that OUM is unlike conventional universities insofar as it operates in online and distance mode. There is also the unique profile of our learners as adult learners to take into account – adults who come to us with a wealth of life and work experience.

As adult learners, the expectation is for them to be self-directed and to shoulder much of the responsibility for their own learning progress, which is to say that the rewards they reap are largely dependent on the effort and time they invest in their studies. That, however, is just half the equation. The other half is contingent on what the University offers them in terms of services and support.

Given their unique profile, how do we pave the way for their learning, bearing in mind that learning is a challenging task in itself? How do we structure their learning experience by way of curriculum design? How do we differentiate our graduates from the multitudes, not just in terms of knowledge and skills, but also such attributes as grit and resilience, adaptability, global outlook, appreciation of diversity, and ethical bearing?



YBhg Prof Dato' Dr Mansor Fadzil

**DL:** How would you describe the current standing of OUM learners and graduates, and could you share with us what measures are presently being considered by the University by way of helping our learners gain that extra edge by the time they graduate?

**DM:** To address the first question, allow me to share with you two positive encounters I had with an OUM graduate and an OUM learner recently.

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In the first case, I met a learner who had just completed his postgraduate studies with OUM. We chatted for a while on his experience with us and what his future plans were. He was delighted to share that he had been offered a job as a lecturer at a university in Canada, and that he will soon be relocating there with his family.

The second case concerns a learner who is currently pursuing a Masters programme with us. In our conversation, he revealed that he decided to go with OUM after perusing the programme curriculum because he believed it would help him prepare simultaneously for the Malaysian Information Technology Professional Examination – MITPE, in short. MITPE is an examination that assesses the level of competency of IT professionals in Malaysia. It is recognised and set to the same standard as the IT examination conducted by the Japan Information Technology Engineers Certification (JITEC-IPA) from the Ministry of Trade and Industry (METI), Japan. After completing several courses with us, the learner sat for the MITPE. From the batch that sat for the exam with him, only one candidate passed the MITPE. That candidate is our learner.

These are but two of many similar narratives that I have been fortunate to be privy to. To me, they speak volumes about the standing of our learners and graduates. It says that our learners and graduates not only meet global standards, they also possess global appeal and a global outlook. This brings me to the second question you posed earlier – how do we work towards ensuring that more OUM graduates reach the sought-after level of globality so that they may be further differentiated from graduates of other institutions?

Among the first areas we are relooking are programme curricula, including core university courses. Although existing core university courses have served us well, we are studying if it would be more beneficial to our learners if we replaced some of the existing courses with new ones which are language oriented, as well as those that are technical or vocational in nature.

**“How do we differentiate our graduates from the multitudes, not just in terms of knowledge and skills, but also such attributes as grit and resilience, adaptability, global outlook, appreciation of diversity, and ethical bearing?”**

**“[O]ur learners and graduates not only meet global standards, they also possess global appeal and a global outlook.”**

**DL:** Why language and technical-vocational courses?

**DM:** If you look closely at the phenomenon of globalisation, you will find that one of its hallmarks is language communication. Cutting across all boundaries, languages are, put simply, the very lifeline of globalisation, notwithstanding its uneven spread. Languages enable people located in different parts of the world to be plugged in to the global networks and flows. Here we are looking at not only English as a global language but also such major languages as Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Korean, French and German.

Providing our learners with opportunities to acquire a new language, or to brush up on the rudimentary they might have learned previously, could only improve their overall prospects. Even if one does not intend or wish to seek employment overseas – in fast-rising China, for example – being able to communicate in a language such as Mandarin Chinese would already be enormously useful locally, be it at work or outside of work.

At OUM, we are currently looking into offering Mandarin Chinese and other key languages as elective courses. This is all, of course, above and beyond strengthening our learners’ command of the English language.

Whichever new language is offered first, we want to ensure that learners who follow it acquire practical communicative skills. Our aim is to enable them to use the language in real terms, rather than merely acquiring theoretical knowledge of the language without the concomitant ability to use it.

This practical thrust is also what drives our intention to replace some existing compulsory or elective courses with new ones which are technical and vocational in nature. Of course, we fully recognise that knowledge and skills that are academic in nature are essential at the tertiary level. At the same time, however, to differentiate our graduates from others, we also want to provide our learners, essentially our future graduates, with a taste of the industries. Among the courses we are

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considering include applied finance, interior design, and art for wellbeing.

**DL:** As far as I know, no local university offers technical and vocational options such as the ones being planned at OUM. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

**DM:** At this initial stage, we are looking into offering a sprinkling of technical and vocational course options that will give our learners a taste of the professions, with opportunities for apprenticeship. Aside from enabling our learners to acquire secondary knowledge and skills, such courses may serve also as launchpad towards entrepreneurship.

**DL:** Thank you, Dato', for sharing with us what is to come in the near future. TCX will no doubt be covering more of the impending changes at OUM in the subsequent issues.

**DM:** I look forward to that. Thank you. **TCX**

