

A passion for neuroscience

ANDREW Octavian Sasmita graduated with an IMU Medical Biotechnology degree in November 2017. He decided to work in the Clinical Hematology Department of Hospital Ampang, Malaysia where he had the opportunity to work in a clinical setting and participate in a project.

Andrew was tasked to formulate new algorithms to be implemented in blood analysers by utilising existing patient samples. The work not only trained him in various research skills but also garnered him the respect required for the craft. Upon the end of his contract, he decided it was time to move on.

Andrew explains, "I am currently pursuing my integrated MSc/PhD degree in Neuroscience in Gottingen, Germany under the banner of the International Max Planck Research School Scholarship.

"The scholarship selection opens every year with a rigorous selection process as it considers applicants from all over the globe.

"The programme consists of two separate phases whereby in the first, students will learn technical courses about neuroscience and its many research aspects. In the second, students will complete a doctoral thesis in any chosen field of neuroscience.

"Having a biotechnology background, one might say that neuroscience is not really related to the field I was trained in, but I beg to differ. The field of scientific research is forever evolving and it has gotten more collaborative not only with respect to the researchers involved, but also the different interdisciplinary researches.

"When trained properly, researchers with different research backgrounds might even bring new ideas and techniques to the table, which would only push the scientific boundaries further.

"Coming to study in Germany was also not as daunting as I myself am an Indonesian national who had previously studied in Malaysia; but it was rather exciting knowing you would be a part of a research community, which is collaborative, international and above all, innovative.

"I recall times during my studies in IMU where I realised learning was not just done in class. Learning was also done during the workshops and field trips that were meticulously arranged by the faculty members.

"Given how robust the entire Medical Biotechnology programme is, I am hard-pressed to find things the programme lacks. The programme offers different outlooks on what the students can and/or want to be upon graduation – in many sense, the



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programme is both academically-driven but also flexible when it comes to career options and support for prospective students.

"The curriculum is solid and intensive, especially coming into the second year where more of the modules are becoming core biotechnology modules, which are essential within our field of studies.

"We study topics ranging from microbiology, pathology, immunology, cancer biotechnology and even bioprocess engineering to strengthen our foundations especially for the coming years where we are going to be employed."

At IMU, the curriculum of its medical biotechnology degree is developed to meet international standards and accepted by its renowned international partner university, University of Newcastle, Australia, for credit transfer into relevant programmes.

Students can also complete the entire degree at IMU. Graduates can undertake postgraduate degrees in any related discipline.

Commencement of this programme is in July and September. If you have pre-university qualifications and an interest in Medical Biotechnology, apply online now and join the university in your pursuit of a promising and rewarding career.

If you have just completed your SPM and do not have pre-university qualification, consider the one-year IMU Foundation in Science (FIS) – the preferred foundation and direct route for entry into any of the university's degree programmes.

■ For more details, refer to www.imu.edu.my or email start@imu.edu.my or call IMU at 03-2731 7272.