

# 3rd Annual National Higher Education Conference 2010

*Transforming Malaysia into a High Income Nation  
through the Development of Human Capitals*

*27-28 July 2010, Concorde Hotel Kuala Lumpur*



## Introduction

It is without doubt that education plays an important and fundamental role in developing a nation. As nations progress and the number of graduates produced are at an increasing rate, the stakes have changed. Competitiveness amongst graduates in the employment scene has now, more than ever become more immense given the abundance of candidates available. If local higher education providers want to have a competitive edge over its international counterparts, it must shift its focus from merely generating graduates to producing graduates of quality.

The Malaysian government understands that the stakes are high and to survive and compete in these trying times, the nation needs to elevate its effort to build a knowledgeable pool of human capital. Recognizing education as a driver for economic advancement and social mobility, many transformation plans have been implemented to upgrade the national higher education system. Malaysia comprehends that if she wants to see her aspirations of a developed country status achieved by year 2020, 'a workforce that has the linguistic, scientific and technical literacies to generate and apply knowledge effectively' (Datuk Seri Najib Bin Tun Razak, 16th June 2009) must be nurtured. This 2-day highly focused conference addresses the education system of the nation; the current state and the areas for improvement. This conference also provides an excellent platform for discussion on the path of building a national education system which has a competitive edge and competent enough to foster economic and social-cultural development in the nation.

## Objectives of Conference:

- Provide updates on trends in the global higher education sector and learn how these trends may act as a driver for improvement in the local higher education scene.
- Identify gaps present in the country's education system at present and learn how best to mitigate these gaps.
- Bridging the gap between industries expectations of graduates and the quality of university graduates produced locally.
- Discover the current effort/s to stimulate the education sector as a catalyst for economic and socio-cultural development in the country.
- Impart information on international best practices used in educational methods and how best it can be integrated into the local education industry.
- Facilitate discussion and networking opportunities between key stakeholders in the education industry.

## Who Should Attend?

Join us in this intensive 2-day conference if you play the following role in Higher Education:

- Researchers and educationalist
- Government agencies or departments in accreditation, certification and enforcement of higher education policies and best practices
- Higher education funding council member
- Human resource consultants and practitioners
- Senior Management representing : Private and private institutions of higher learning  
Companies and organisations who are partners of universities and colleges  
Education and scholarship foundations

Developed & organized by:



For further information  
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or log on to  
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**Day One**

8.00am	Registration
9.00am	<b>Opening Remarks :</b> <b>YBhg Datuk Ir (Dr) Mohd Annas bin Mohd Nor</b> Chairman, Organising Committee
9.10am	<b>Session 1</b> <b>Leading the Way towards 2020: How Malaysian Universities are Coping with the Transformation Agenda?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the gaps identified by the government in the present higher education system?</li> <li>• Is the lag in the higher education system the cause of the national secondary education system? What are the current and future steps of the relevant parties to improve the higher education system?</li> <li>• What do these gaps mean? How does it affect the local higher education scene?</li> <li>• What are the steps taken to mitigate these gaps?</li> <li>• What can be expected from the higher education system in the next 5 years?</li> </ul>
10.30am	Refreshment
11.00am	<b>Session 2</b> <b>Recent Trends in Higher Education : Beyond Efforts to Remain Relevant</b> Keeping abreast with the education trends present globally serves as a platform for the local education system to measure against. In the midst of competitiveness, where universities abroad are constantly on the move to lure international students, measuring works beyond enabling gaps which may be stalling a successful higher education system to be identified; it administers efforts of improvement in the current system as well as serve as a platform for higher education institutions to review the effectiveness and relevancy of its curriculum. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the recent trends in higher education in the country?</li> <li>• What are trends of countries which are more developed in their higher education system?</li> <li>• What does this trend imply? What steps must higher education providers take to achieve desirable results in line with keeping abreast with these trends?</li> </ul>
12.30pm	Lunch
2.00pm	<b>Session 3</b> <b>Bridging the Education to Industry Skills Gap : Increasing Employability and Productivity: Industry's Perspective</b> Lagging far behind many developed nations in terms of productivity, Malaysia understands the need to produce highly competent labour forces to meet its vision to be a fully developed nation by year 2020. In this context, various efforts have been carried out. The most current apprenticeship program, Centre of Domain Expertise Acceleration (CODE8) marks one of the nation's efforts to promote productivity and to increase employability of graduates. The most recent mandate for 'all students to undergo internship' (Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, theSun) and the request for government-linked companies (GLCs) to provide internships to university students pose a question of whether programs alike are sufficient and necessary to create competent graduates? Can industry's expectations and the quality of graduates produced be aligned through these programs? This session looks at the expectations of employers and assesses the steps needed to transform graduates into an efficient and effective workforce. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are employers looking for in graduates? How can they improve productivity in the real world?</li> <li>• How can they be prepared before entering the working world?</li> <li>• How can industry and higher education providers collaborate to align their expectations of graduates?</li> <li>• Are internship programs effective enough to prepare graduates? What needs to be incorporated in these programs to ensure effectiveness?</li> </ul>
3.30pm	<b>Session 4</b> <b>Emphasising the Student Experience : Towards achieving the Nation's Aspirations to be the Regional Higher Education Hub</b>

The experience of students during their pursuit of higher education locally receives insufficient considerations by the local higher education providers because of the lack of perceived importance. When compared to countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom which have successfully lured internationally students to their shores, this perhaps provides us with one of their recipe to success; to look beyond educational and curriculum concerns and emphasise on an attractive, comprehensive and supportive student package. In her effort to promote herself as a preferred higher education hub in the region, what does Malaysia need to do if it intends to attract large numbers of international students?

- What are current orientation programs like in higher education institutions? Should there be a standard program across the country?
- What is the current support available for international and local students? Is it sufficient to facilitate student's learning in the higher education settings?
- What makes universities really good today? How can Malaysian universities transform to elevate its overall student and learning experience?

5.00pm End of Day One

**Day Two**

9.00am	Registration & Coffee
9.15am	<b>Session 5</b> <b>A Special Presentation on the Role of the Malaysian Regulatory Body, Malaysian Quality Assurance (MQA) and its Effort to Maintain Quality Assurance amidst all Challenges</b> The new National Economic Model (NEM) reiterated an alarming fact that the quality of students produced in the country continues to be inadequate (NEM, p.55). Though the increase in supply of public universities to cope with the increase in demand is laudable, the quality of the universities and graduates must be taken into serious consideration. Malaysia is not producing the right talent for future growth (NEM, p.56) and the shift of focus from quantity to quality is critical to ensure employability of graduates and also to ensure the nation catches up on the productivity level it lags behind some of its neighbouring countries. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of the current academic standards present. What are MQA's efforts to promote and maintain quality amongst higher education providers?</li> <li>• What is the basis of MQA's audit on higher education providers/institutes?</li> <li>• How successful is the MQA in convincing the global community that the Malaysian higher education system adheres and at par with international standards and quality?</li> <li>• How does MQA ensure the quality of its teachers or lecturers? Is academic proof of these academic personnel sufficient?</li> </ul>
10.30am	Refreshment
11.00am	<b>Session 6</b> In times of economic dire where finances are tightened, many seem uncertain about the direction of the higher education sector. Though there are patterns of increased enrolment in higher education institutions albeit the economic downturn, there must be a strategic plan to maintain if not improve present enrolment rates as well as to enable sustainable higher education in the nation. Higher Education in Challenging Economic Times <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impacts of the crisis on higher education institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student demand, Institutional Responses, Action Plan</li> <li>• Challenges and opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>Impacts of the crisis at governmental level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply and Demand, Spending Cuts, Action Plan</li> <li>• Challenges and opportunities</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
12.30pm	Lunch
2.00pm	<b>Session 7</b> <b>Strengthening Educational Methods: Adopting International Best Practices</b> Datuk Seri Najib Razak outlined four ingredients for Malaysia to be a regional education hub (19 March 2010, The Sun).

One of the components highlighted was the need to strengthen the country's educational methods through adopting international best practices. In December 2009, the Ministry of Higher Education launched the Master Trainer programme to improve teaching and learning at universities. This programme which is run by the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) seeks to train lecturers against 'international standards employed by Britain, Australia, New Zealand and the United States' (theStar Online, 9 November 2009).

- What are the benchmark criterions?
- What are they doing differently and how can we learn from their success?
- What are the gaps present between the higher education in these countries and Malaysia?
- Can these countries best practices be applied to the local education system? What must be done in order to successfully apply these international best practices to the local education system?

#### 3.15pm Session 8

##### **Building a Competitive Edge in Higher Education in Malaysia: potentials, Complexities and Barriers**

Malaysia has long set itself to become a hub of academic excellence in the region of South East Asia. However, to date, the quality of higher education in the country is still being over shadowed by its nearest neighbour, Singapore with them attracting more international students and most importantly producing graduates who are deemed more productive. Realising that other countries in the region are competing to lure international students to their shores, there is a need for Malaysia to set herself apart. This session discusses the niche areas present in the local higher education arena as well as explores the potential areas to tap into and the various barriers it sees.

- What are the current niche areas in the local higher education arena?
- Which niche areas are seen as potentials? What are the current MoHE initiatives to tap into these potential areas?
- University degrees from the UK or Australia are deemed far more superior to local degrees. What does the Malaysia higher education sector need to do to have locally produced university degrees at par with these degrees?
- What does the higher education sector need to do to be at par or at a competitive edge over its regional counterparts?

#### 4.30pm Session 9

##### **Moving Towards a Knowledge Intensive and Innovation Led Society: Research aspects of the Higher Education System**

The current education system in the primary and secondary level is very much text bookbased and very often public exams are based on memory which leaves little room for creative thinking. If the nation wants to move towards a knowledge based society, it needs to move beyond text books and nurture creative thinking in students from the very beginning to prepare them before they enter the learning system at tertiary level. As our education Minister states 'It's high time that our higher education institutions seriously invest their resources in research and development, if Malaysia is to secure any success in the new economy' (Datuk Mohamed Khalid Nordin, 28th February 2010). This session reviews the importance of research based learning, challenges of research to facilitate creative thinking as well as current and future efforts to create graduates of international standard.

- The transition from secondary school leavers to higher education: Understanding that tertiary learning involves research, what are the current efforts to prepare secondary school students for this tertiary learning?
- In identifying that one of the main challenges in research based learning is funding, what is the present funding available for research activities in public universities?
- Comparing the research levels in the local higher education syllabus with those of more developed nations. What are the implications?
- What is the future of research in the local higher education arena? How can local universities tap into the information resources available in the region?
- Opportunities for Collaboration: Is research collaboration between countries in the region feasible?

6.00pm End of Conference

#### Invited Role Players (subject to confirmation)

- YBhg Tan Sri Dr Zulkurnain Bin Haji Awang, Secretary General, Ministry of Education
- YBhg Tan Sri Dr Nordin Kardi, Vice Chancellor, Universiti Utara Malaysia
- YBhg Prof Dato' Dr Hassan Said, Vice Chancellor and President, Taylor's University College
- YBhg Dato' Peter T S Ng, Group President & Vice Chancellor, USCI Group
- YBhg Dato' Dr Ramli Bin Hasan, Deputy Secretary General (Development), Ministry of Higher Education
- YBhg Prof. Dato' Ir. Dr. Radin Umar bin Radin Sohadi, Director General, Higher Education Department, Ministry of Higher Education
- YBhg Dato' Dr Asariah Bt. Mior Shaharuddin, Deputy Director General of Education, Teacher Professional Development Sector, Ministry of Education
- YBhg Datuk Abdul Wahab Abdullah, CEO and President, MIMOS
- YBhg Prof Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali, President/ Vice Chancellor, Open University Malaysia, Executive Committee member of Asian Association University (AAOU)
- YBhg Prof Dato Dr Abdul Hakim Juri, President/CEO, University Kuala Lumpur
- Dr Theva Nithy, Senior Lecturer, School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia
- Prof Madya Dr Noraini Azman, Associate Research Fellow, National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN)
- Mr Marco M Polo, Director for University Development, De La Salle University, Dasmarias, Philippines
- Prof Zheng Yongnian, Director, East Asian Institute, Singapore
- Mr Mark J Disney, Chief Operating Officer Asia, LCCI
- Tn. Hj. Shamsuddin Bardan, Executive Director, Malaysian Employers Federation
- Abdul Wahab bin Abu Bakar, Human Resource Director, Nestle Products Sdn Bhd
- Prof Ramli Bahroom, General Manager, Corporate Planning Unit, Open University Malaysia
- Dr R M Fernandez-Chung, Standards Division, Malaysian Qualification Agency, Ministry of Higher Education
- Prof Dr John Evans, Pro Vice Chancellor/Chief Executive, Curtin University of Technology, Sarawak Malaysia
- Dr Liew Yoke Ying, Director of Strategic Planning, Sunway University College
- Dr Haji Zahri bin Aziz, Director, Teacher Training Division, Ministry of Education
- Dr Seah Soo Aun, Deputy Vice Chancellor/Vice President, Operations, Wawasan Open University
- Hj Ali bin Abd Ghani, Director, Curriculum Development Division, Ministry of Education
- Prof Dr Ishwar Parhar, Director of Brain Research Institute, School of Medicine & Health Sciences, Monash University, Sunway Campus
- Prof Asma Ismail, Deputy Vice Chancellor ( Research & Innovation), Universiti Sains Malaysia
- Prof Morshidi Sirat, Director, National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN)

Notes: -

- The organiser reserves the right to change the programme and speakers in the best interest of the conference

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## Participant's Information

(1) Name (Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms) : \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Facsimile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(2) Name (Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms) : \_\_\_\_\_

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Facsimile: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Payment

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## Registration Fee

### Standard Rate

RM 1,980.00 per delegate

Group discount of 10% will be extended to organization sending 3 or more delegates.

Fee is inclusive of lunch, refreshments and documentations.

## Venue

### Date

27th-28th July 2010

### Venue

Concorde Hotel Kuala Lumpur

## Registration Information

### Payment

All payment must be made in advance of the conference. Bank drafts or cheques should be crossed and made payable to Asia Executive Programs Sdn Bhd together with the completed registration form.

### Cancellation

A prompt refund minus a service charge of 15% will be levied for cancellations received in writing 10 days before the date of the conference. Alternatively, you may nominate a substitute. We would appreciate advance notice.

### Registration Procedure

Please complete and fax the registration form to book a seat/seats to the address listed below :

#### a) Asia Executive Programs Sdn Bhd

(623109-U)

Suite C-3A-2, Plaza Mont' Kiara,

No. 2 Jalan Kiara, Mont' Kiara,

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Tel : 603-6203 2009

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Website : <http://www.aep.com.my>

#### b) Payment can be deposited directly to :

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