

# Molecular medicine in pandemic times

THE Covid-19 pandemic has definitely sent shivers down the spines of many people and caught the world by surprise. It has caused a colossal disaster in both public health and the global economy, resulting in governments around the world uniting and throwing every resource they have to fight and mitigate ill effects towards the economy and healthcare system.

As learnt during the battle with this pandemic, a lack of the ability to produce strategic items such as diagnosis kits will impair Malaysia's ability to carry out mass testing – making us more vulnerable as we are unable to quickly identify virus carriers. We must not be satisfied in merely buying or manufacturing these items. Instead, we should invest in nurturing scientists, funding research and securing the biotechnology industry.

In order to transform Malaysia into a country capable of advanced healthcare research and innovation, we will need to have experts with knowledge in both research and clinical/medical fields. Frontline medical doctors, nurses and laboratory personnel do not possess the knowledge in conducting advanced biomedical/biotechnological research. On the other hand, biotechnologists and scientists do not prioritise the needs of frontline medical personnel and thus, they do not fully understand what innovation/products are needed.

The Master of Science in Molecular

Medicine (MMM) programme is designed and introduced by International Medical University (IMU) to fill in this gap. Since 2012, it has attracted medical doctors, pharmacists, laboratory technicians, biomedical scientists and biotechnologists from various countries to join the programme. MMM prepares graduates to develop, improve and apply their skills for diagnosis, prognosis and treatments. Many MMM graduates had progressed into pursuing their PhDs or been assigned important roles in their respective organisations locally or overseas.

Although many health professionals wish and are more than willing to improve their knowledge in molecular medicine, fitting a master's degree study into their busy schedules is challenging given the hectic life of a medical professional. Hence, the programme has been offered with two learning modes: Conventional mode (face-to-face/synchronous online learning activities during weekends), and open and distance learning mode (fully online, mostly asynchronous learning activities).

For those who wish to push their limits and take on a challenge, MMM has collaborated with Queen Mary University of London to offer a double degree in molecular medicine and genomic medicine. It equips graduates from this programme with advanced knowledge and skills in molecular biology and genomic medicine. The graduates will be able to use big data analysis to discover new findings from the data they have generated or sourced from public databases.

IMU is offering a discount to international students who enrol into MMM this year, where each student will receive a RM12,000 bursary upon enrolment. Besides that, IMU alumni can expect to receive a 25% discount from the total tuition fees if they sign up for the MMM programme now.

■ For more information about this or IMU's other postgraduate programmes, visit [www.imu.edu.my](http://www.imu.edu.my), email [postgraduate@imu.edu.my](mailto:postgraduate@imu.edu.my) or call 03-2731 7272.

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