

An enriching experience

MAGDALENE Teoh Sook Han was always interested in biology and chemistry, resulting in her wanting to explore and study a degree programme with both subjects together. She also wanted a course that could provide a wide job scope. This led her to consider pursuing her undergraduate studies in Pharmaceutical Chemistry.

In addition, the modules in the Pharmaceutical Chemistry programme intrigued her and the potential of her discovering and formulating new drugs sealed the deal.

"As part of the IMU Pharmaceutical Chemistry programme, I had the opportunity to undergo my industrial attachment under the Chemistry Department at the Sorbonne University - Ecole Normale Supérieure, Biomolécules Lab in Paris, France for eight weeks from Jan 6 to March 7.

"I worked as a research assistant under the supervision of Dr Nicolas Delsuc and Koudeja Coulibaly; a final year PhD student. I worked on Koudeja's research project, which was aimed to synthesise a catalase mimic in the form of a peptide-metal complex," she shared. "I must say that the studies in the Pharmaceutical Chemistry course made it easier to adapt to this internship programme as it is mainly research-based.

"The programme provided a strong foundation in technical skills, knowledge and exposure, which facilitated better understanding with regards to most of the research I was conducting."



Teoh had the opportunity to undergo industrial attachment under the Chemistry Department at the Sorbonne University - Ecole Normale Supérieure, Biomolécules Lab in Paris, France.

During this internship, Teoh feels that she has learnt a lot, mainly in using various scientific instruments. One of it was the Clark electrode, which measures electrical signals emitted during a reaction. This instrument was used to detect oxygen released during the breakdown of hydrogen peroxide.

Teoh admitted that the main challenge was her inexperience with handling the instruments used during laboratory work. However, after noting down all that was briefed about the instrument and seeking help, she was able to address the problems faced using them.

Another challenge was the

accent of the people around her, although they were able to speak English.

She realised that she sometimes had to pause and take a while to understand what they were trying to convey. However, this was just a minor issue, which she overcame by constantly asking questions and seeking proper clarification.

"It is a great opportunity to be able to work in state-of-the-art labs with advance equipment and I was able to experience different working cultures," Teoh commented.

The Pharmaceutical Chemistry degree from IMU is accredited by the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), UK. The course is undertaken

entirely at IMU and completed in three years (six semesters).

Upon completion of the degree, graduates can enter the workforce and begin their career as chemists in pharmaceutical and other chemical industries. The programme also offers credit transfer options to a bachelor's degree in the University of Dundee.

After obtaining the IMU BSc (Hons) Pharmaceutical Chemistry degree, those who meet the academic criteria can also continue to pursue the Master of Pharmacy programme at the University of Sydney or Curtin University in Australia.

They are given credit exemptions in the Master of Pharmacy programmes. The graduates of the Master of Pharmacy degrees from these universities can register as practising pharmacists in Australia and Singapore, but not in Malaysia currently.

The commencement of this programme is in February, July and September each year.

If you are interested, make an online application at IMU's website.

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

■ For more details or to make an online application, log on to www.imu.edu.my or email start@imu.edu.my or call IMU at 03-2731 7272.