

A virtual experience in a pandemic

IMU had recently switched to a hybrid learning method, whereby students attend to cases, physically, on alternate days and conduct virtual case discussions on alternate days.

However, in mid-October, the spike in the number of daily Covid-19 cases led to a change in the training, taking into account the safety of all students.

The clinical placements were then converted to virtual mode and this included the clinical phase, the food service phase as well as the community dietetics phase.

“Despite the abrupt change in plans, the virtual curriculum for our clinical placement was meticulously planned,” said Syarifah Hasanah Adeila from BSc (Hons) Dietetics with Nutrition (DN 1/17).

The university’s clinical phase was substituted with case scenarios and dynamic case discussions.

In addition, workshops were scheduled to highlight and emphasise on key skills: enteral nutrition prescription, Assessment, Diagnosis, Intervention, and Monitoring/ Evaluation (ADIME) writing.

“Although we weren’t able to be physically present to manage the cases, the virtual clinical phase experience still instilled essential skills that we needed as well as allowed us the opportunity to truly identify our gaps and further discuss these with our teammates in the presence of our clinical educators,” said Syarifah.

She added the community phase was by far one of the most interesting experiences she have experienced as an undergraduate.

“We were tasked to conduct a webinar for the public on selected topics – public dietitian, a high in demand skill for dietitians in the 21st century,” she said.

It took weeks of preparation and planning to deliver a successful hour-long webinar. The behind the scenes preparation for the webinar provided students the opportunity to experience translating heavy, theoretical Medical Nutrition Therapy (MNT) knowledge into bite-size versions for the public.

It also enhanced presentation and communication skills to further engage with the audience.

“I had my doubts on how the food service phase could be conducted virtually but with the help of our local preceptors and university supervisors, it was an insightful phase,” said Syarifah.

Students polished their skills on menu planning and learnt more on quality improvement in a food service setting.



The food service virtual placement gave them the chance to understand the role of a food service dietitian through discussions with our local preceptors and assignments to understand the depth.

“In a nutshell, my final year had not been what I had imagined, but it was a memorable, experiential learning.

I gained vast insight on the role of a dietitian, despite the virtual learning mode.

With the world moving towards further technological modernisation, I would conclude that there was no significant difference between the physical mode and virtual mode in terms of knowledge gained,” said Syarifah.

IMU offers the BSc (Hons) in Dietetics with Nutrition degree which is a four-year programme integrated with dietetics practicum in food service management, community dietetics and clinical dietetics as well as an

opportunity to embark on a mobility experience abroad or locally.

The programme also offers credit transfer options to bachelor’s degree in the University of Newcastle.

Graduates from the IMU programme can enter the workforce and begin their career as dietitians across a variety of clinical as well as non-clinical settings.

The next commencement dates for this programme are in July and September.

If you have pre-university qualifications and have an interest in Dietetics with Nutrition, 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 enrolling in the one-year IMU Foundation in Science, the preferred foundation and direct route for entry into any of the University’s local degree programmes.