

# Shaping 21st century health professions educators

THERE is great variability in how higher education institutions plan and carry out the educational experiences required of health professional students. The reasons for this variability include the regional and institutional education policy, accreditation, healthcare needs, internationalisation, global migration, commodification and commercialisation.

Twenty-first century health professions educators are faced with the challenges of educating learners. The trends in educating health professionals are evolving to keep track of the global changes in healthcare needs and demand. The continuous effects of the Covid-19 pandemic are creating uncertainties in various facets of the higher education system and changing the culture of learning from face-to-face to online learning.

The repercussion of the pandemic has greatly impacted healthcare, healthcare professions, and its educational landscape; specifically curriculum development and assessments. As a result, educators in health professions face an increasingly challenging environment as they are required to ensure that the training will meet the needs of future health professionals, society and healthcare services. This realisation led them to seek further professional qualifications that will equip them with the appropriate knowledge

and skills.

Traditionally, there had been a naive expectation that content experts would automatically also be good educators. Around the mid-1970s, most institutions began to develop and implement formal programmes to improve the teaching abilities of their academic staff. This ensured educators have and can continue to develop the capabilities required to plan, facilitate and assess the learning of health professional students.

At IMU, the Postgraduate Programmes in Health Professions Education addresses the roles and needs of 21st century health professions educators based on emerging expectations from the challenges in health professions. This programme is aimed at graduating health professional educators with an in-depth knowledge of educational principles, demonstrating values related to contemporary learning environments and practising internationally benchmarked assessment processes to produce leaders and scholars in health professions education.

The educational objectives of this

Besides in-depth knowledge of educational principles, IMU's Postgraduate Programmes in Health Professions Education provide the opportunity for students to engage with international experts in health professions education.

programme are to ensure graduates will have the opportunities to design and solve educational challenges at their institution and achieve recognition of their initiatives at the national and regional levels. This programme is not only for healthcare professionals and educators but can also be of value to educational managers or administrators who are involved in various facets of providing better educational programmes at their institution.

This programme is offered both in part-time and full-time mode with three exit points: Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma and Master's. A carefully designed learning structure during weekends enable full-time working adults to plan and balance their studies around their work, family and other commitments. To further enhance the feasibility of delivering the programme, the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode was introduced in 2021 for the Postgraduate Certificate level.

Recent graduates of the IMU Postgraduates Programmes in Health Professions Education stated that by joining this programme, they are now empowered and have better perspectives and understanding in delivering educational programmes. Consequently, this will ensure the current practice of educational processes in their programme will conform to the best evidence-informed practices.

One postgraduate diploma graduate says, "The programme helped me to be a better teacher. I am able to comprehend the theories behind teaching and learning that can be translated into a better understanding of the aspects of education. In addition, it has

also given me confidence in conducting educational related research which is different from pure science studies."

The strength of IMU is the international linkages and partnership which provides the opportunity for students to engage with international experts in health professions education. This offers a great platform for international engagement and exchanges of ideas and experience.

"I find the discussions very thought-provoking, and I am able to learn from the lecturer's expertise as well as from the other students. The programme provided insight into instructional and curriculum design and helped me improve my teaching. I feel I am able to contribute more to my department and to the university. I am glad for having taken up this programme and look forward to applying what I have learnt," says a master's graduate.

The Postgraduate in Health Professions Education programmes are accredited Level 7 by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency. Being a six-star university under the Setara rating in Malaysia for outstanding achievements, the programmes are periodically reviewed and restructured, keeping in line with global standards.

The commencement of this programme is in March and September (for ODL only) every year. If you are interested to join this programme, make an online application today.

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

