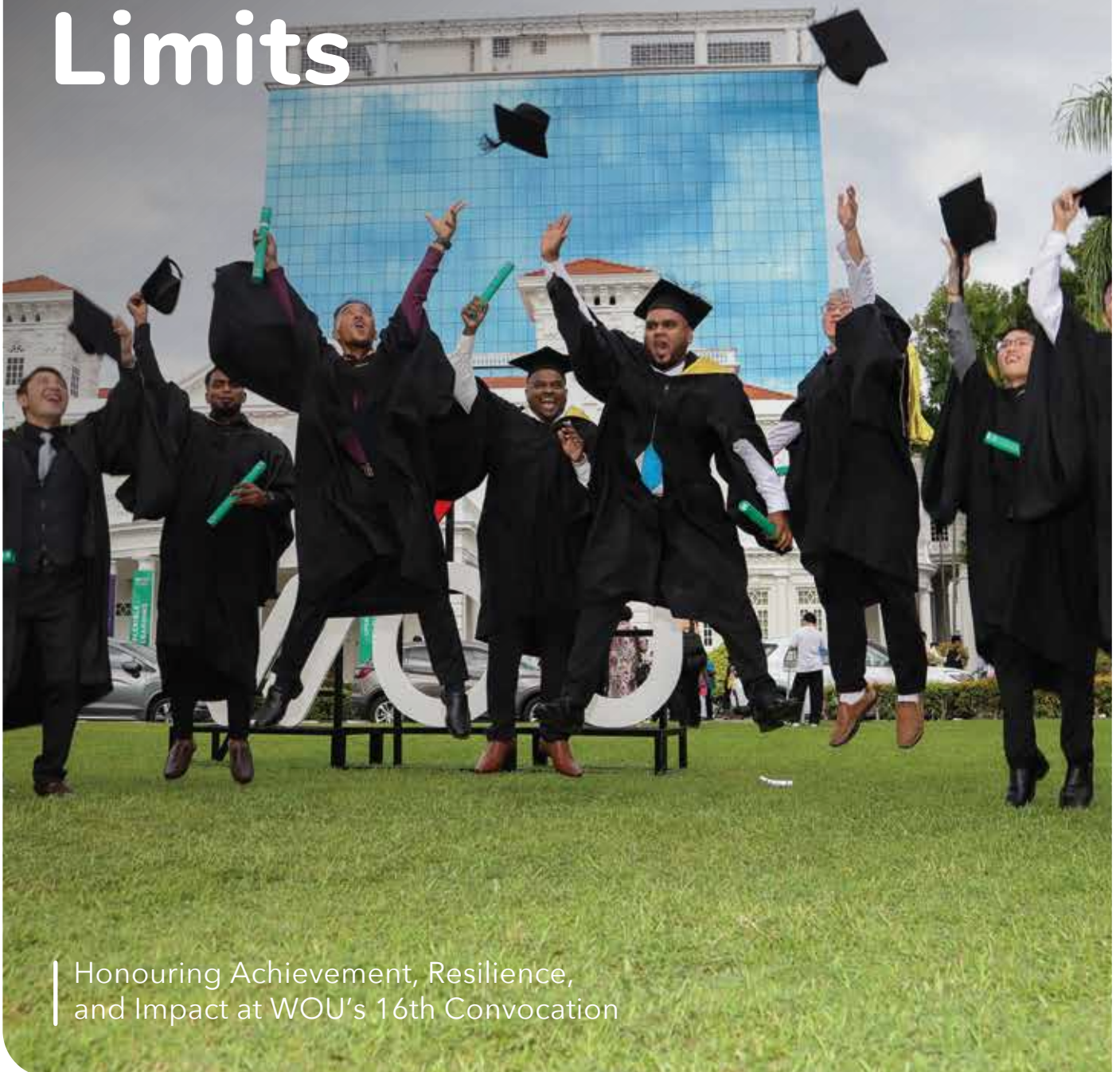


Learning Without Limits



Honouring Achievement, Resilience,
and Impact at WOU's 16th Convocation

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The year 2025 has been defined not only by academic success and institutional milestones, but also by purposeful learning that makes a tangible difference in workplaces, families, and communities. I am heartened by the collective progress, resilience, and commitment demonstrated by our learners, alumni, staff, academics, and partners.

The stories featured in this issue reflect what WOU stands for. Our graduates come from diverse pathways and backgrounds—they are working professionals, parents, industry practitioners, first-time learners, and lifelong learners—each balancing multiple responsibilities while investing in their growth. Whether entering the workforce, advancing into leadership, or preparing for the C-suite, they exemplify how education, when designed with flexibility and real-world relevance, can be transformative.

They are the reason our work matters. Through their perseverance, ambition, and impactful contributions, they are making a difference in their workplaces and industries.

Our accomplishments and activities this year were made possible by the teamwork and dedication of our academic teams, operations staff, industry partners, and supporters. From developing new programmes and refining existing courses to providing guidance and industry insights, their contributions have been central to our successes.

Throughout 2025, we strengthened our academic offerings, deepened industry engagement, and enhanced the learner experience through practice-oriented curricula, industry-driven initiatives, and digital learning innovation. These efforts are guided by a simple but enduring belief: Education must remain accessible, adaptable, and anchored in real-world application. Above all, we aim to provide an enriching educational experience that nurtures future-ready talent and drives meaningful impact in the communities and industries we serve.

We are grateful for everyone's contributions in making 2025 a year of change, growth, and new milestones. Looking ahead to 2026, we invite everyone to join us as we explore new horizons and embark on exciting ventures to strengthen our influence and reach.

As the future of work and learning continues to evolve, WOU remains committed to preparing the modern workforce not just to keep pace, but to lead with confidence and capability. Together, we look forward to building on this progress and finding new ways to make an impact.

On behalf of WOU, we wish all our readers a Happy New Year filled with growth, opportunities, and continued success in 2026.

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STRENGTHENING PENANG'S TALENT PIPELINE, ONE STRATEGIC COLLABORATION AT A TIME



▲ Marking a new chapter of collaboration.

Wawasan Open University (WOU) continues to build momentum in strengthening Penang's talent pipeline through a growing network of purposeful industry collaborations. Each partnership reflects a deliberate effort to address evolving skills needs across the state's high-tech sectors, translating industry demand into accredited academic and professional pathways that support workforce development at every level.

On 1 October 2025, an official signing ceremony was held at the WOU main campus. WOU's Chief Executive and Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Lily Chan, signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with an education partner, Fourier TVET Centre, and two key industry players: MI Equipment Sdn Bhd and 3REN Berhad.

"Recognising Penang as the Silicon Valley of the East, we see it as essential for education institutions like WOU to play a central role in shaping the region's talent landscape. By extending our reach into fast-growing sectors, these partnerships will ensure industries gain the advanced skills required to innovate and compete globally, while reinforcing Malaysia's broader digital economy agenda in line with the National Semiconductor Strategy and AI Nation 2030 aspiration," said Prof Chan.

All bespoke corporate upskilling and talent development programmes arising from these collaborations will be managed through WOU Academy, the University's dedicated arm for corporate training.

WOU-TAM SYMPOSIUM DRIVES AI AND ESG STRATEGIES FOR SMART CITIES



▲ Ts Dr Syabiha Shith from STE presents her research project.

Malaysia's agenda for smarter, greener cities received a significant boost as Wawasan Open University (WOU) and the Technological Association of Malaysia (TAM) co-hosted the 2nd National Symposium on Technologies for Sustainable Urban Development (TechSUD 2025) at Cyberjaya on 8 November 2025.

Under the theme, "A Future with Technologies is the Future for Sustainability," the event focused on the critical intersection of Artificial Intelligence (AI), Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles, and urban resilience.

In his opening speech, WOU Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Prof Ts Dr Yap Eng Hwa, underscored the urgency of strategic urban planning, noting that today's measures define tomorrow's quality of life.

"As we confront the realities of climate change, rapid urbanisation, and digital transformation, true progress comes from balancing innovation with sustainability. At WOU, we remain committed to using education and research to drive real solutions, turning good ideas into meaningful action for a better future." said Prof Yap.

TechSUD 2025 served as a vital platform for presenting high-impact research, with a total of 25 technical papers showcased. Five faculty members from WOU's School of Technology and Engineering Science (STE) also presented their research, highlighting WOU's expertise in applying AI and big data to urban innovation.

Moving forward, WOU and TAM will strengthen their collaboration to ensure the insights from TechSUD 2025 continue to inform educational frameworks and contribute to Malaysia's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The symposium remains a critical forum for addressing real-world industry challenges and driving sustainable national progress.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING AS A CATALYST FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT

750 Working Professionals Graduate at 16th Convocation



▲ Jubilant graduates celebrate their success.

Flexible learning continues to unlock opportunities for working adults seeking to advance their careers. The University's 16th Convocation, held from 21 to 23 November 2025, celebrated the achievements of more than 750 graduates, underscoring the growing demand for education that fits around real-world commitments.

Of these, 182 were postgraduates and 573 undergraduates, with 80% under the age of 40. Graduates represented the Schools of Business & Administration; Technology & Engineering Science; Digital Technology; and Education, Humanities & Social Sciences. The convocation also saw the pioneer batch of Bachelor of Digital Business students from the School of Digital Technology cross the stage, marking a milestone for WOU's innovative work-study model.

WOU Chancellor Tunku Tan Sri Imran Tuanku Ja'afar reminded graduates that the world is evolving at extraordinary speed, driven by artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and data-driven innovation. "The challenge is not to compete against the machine but to learn to work with it. In a world dominated by algorithms, your uniquely human qualities – empathy, critical thinking, integrity, and imagination – will set you apart," he said.

Newly installed Pro-Chancellor Tan Sri Dato' Chang Ko Youn highlighted the importance of adaptability and cultural intelligence alongside technical skills. "Knowledge alone is not enough. What sets you apart is the ability to evolve, to work across cultures, and to connect with different perspectives. Today's economy values adaptability and cultural intelligence as much as technical skills. This combination will allow Malaysia to keep progressing," he said.



▲ A proud moment for our graduates.

WOU's Chief Executive and Vice Chancellor, Prof Dr Lily Chan, reflected on the evolving role of higher education for working adults.

"Access alone is no longer enough. The question is not only how many can enter, but how many can advance, adapt, and create real impact. Today's graduates prove that with flexible, relevant, and supportive pathways, working adults can grow both professionally and personally," she said.

Held across six sessions at WOU's main campus, the convocation celebrated academic achievement while reaffirming the University's commitment to flexible, digitally enhanced learning that equips working adults to thrive in careers, broaden skills, and contribute meaningfully to society.

NEW PRO-CHANCELLOR CHAMPIONS WOU'S MISSION IN TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION



▲ Tan Sri Dato' Chang receives the Instrument of Proclamation from Chancellor Tunku Tan Sri Imran.

In conjunction with its 16th Convocation, Wawasan Open University (WOU) officially inaugurated its third Pro-Chancellor, Tan Sri Dato' Chang Ko Youn, during a ceremony presided over by Chancellor Tunku Tan Sri Imran Tuanku Ja'afar on 21 November 2025. The proclamation address was formally delivered by Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Chairman of WOU's Board of Governors.

A distinguished practising lawyer and former Executive Councillor of Perak, Tan Sri Dato' Chang succeeds Dato' Dr Lim Thuang Seng, who served from 2019 to 2024.

With an extensive career in law and public service, he has held prominent roles in government and political leadership while dedicating himself to community service and the advancement of education. His deep understanding of governance, professional excellence, and societal development positions him as a guiding presence for WOU in the years ahead.

In his acceptance speech, Tan Sri Dato' Chang reflected on WOU's founding vision as a university without walls, created to provide working adults – the unsung backbone of Malaysia's economy – with opportunities to pursue higher education without compromising their careers or families.

Emphasising education as a transformative force, he said:

"I believe that education, being an instrument of social and economic engineering, is the most powerful force for good – a bridge between aspiration and achievement, between potential and progress. WOU is that bridge, transforming potential into reality for thousands of Malaysians."

As Pro-Chancellor, Tan Sri Dato' Chang brings a vision fully aligned with WOU's mission: empowering working adults through accessible, flexible, and industry-relevant higher education. His leadership reinforces the University's commitment to nurturing graduates who are not only highly skilled but also equipped to thrive in a world defined by technology, innovation, and global interconnectivity.



▲ From left to right: Tan Sri Dr Koh, Prof Chan, Tunku Tan Sri Imran, Tan Sri Dato' Chang.

"I believe that education, being an instrument of social and economic engineering, is the most powerful force for good – a bridge between aspiration and achievement, between potential and progress. WOU is that bridge, transforming potential into reality for thousands of

SEASONED PROFESSIONALS, TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEYS

Three Doctor of Business Administration graduates challenged themselves, refined their practice, and gained recognition that strengthened their voice in the industry.



▲ DBA graduates Leong (left), Henry, and Chelvam (far right) with Dr Kan Wen Huey, Senior Lecturer from the School of Business & Administration

STRATEGIC THINKING SHAPED BY PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

With more than three decades in the rail industry behind him, **Chelvam Rengasamy**, Group Senior Director (International Business) at SMH Rail Sdn Bhd described his academic journey as demanding, humbling, and deeply affirming. Balancing international travel, professional commitments, and doctoral research was never easy. What sustained him, he said, was discipline, time consciousness, and the support of supervisors and peers who understood the realities of working professionals.

For Chelvam, 62, the DBA became a platform to legitimise years of insight, strengthen his voice in industry discussions, and mentor younger professionals more effectively.

“Having knowledge is one thing. Sharing it is another. If we don’t pass it on, it doesn’t grow. This journey reminded me why learning should never stop.”

SHARPENING PRACTICE THROUGH REAL-WORLD LEARNING

At 39, running his own construction business in Kuala Lumpur, **Leong Choon Hang** saw DBA as a natural continuation of his MBA rather than just a milestone to chase. One course on consultation left a lasting impression, offering hands-on exposure that mirrored actual consultancy work and gave him practical insights he could immediately apply.

Beyond technical knowledge, the DBA strengthened his communication skills—presentations that were once daunting became opportunities to engage confidently in higher-level discussions.

Reflecting on the journey, he described it as “fun, exciting, and absolutely worth it,” noting how it sharpened his thinking, boosted his professional confidence, and prepared him for the challenges of running a growing business.

CONFIDENCE, PURPOSE, AND A NEW HORIZON

After nearly two decades in the competitive manufacturing industry, **Henry Chan** pursued the DBA to sharpen his skills and gain professional recognition. Balancing work, family, and study was no easy feat—he navigated long hours, international travel, and even an earthquake during his proposal defense in Mexico. Yet, the DBA journey boosted his confidence and honed his critical thinking.

“From a doctorate, you don’t just learn to think critically – you learn how to create knowledge. That changes how you see problems and solutions.”

Beyond career advancement, Henry’s growing passion for teaching inspired him to mentor degree and diploma students, with plans to transition from industry to academia. Henry’s DBA pursuit has been a defining journey, shaping not only his professional expertise but also his purpose, confidence, and ambition to inspire the next generation.

THREE JOURNEYS, ONE COMMITMENT: HOW WOU GRADUATES REDEFINED ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Three outstanding graduates share how WOU's flexible learning model enabled them to successfully balance demanding careers, educational excellence, and the pursuit of meaningful personal aspirations.

MASTERING MINDS, INSPIRING STUDENTS



▲ Krystian Avik Lee with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Lily Chan (right) and Dean of School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof Dr Anna Christina Abdullah (left).

Krystian Avik Lee, 28, a homeschool educator from Penang, received the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Gold Prize and was Valedictorian in the Postgraduate category for his Master of Arts in Psychology.

Returning to postgraduate studies in the midst of a hectic teaching career, Avik said, "The master's programme reignited my passion for learning. Studying different educational models from around the world renewed my interest in improving my teaching methods and reflecting on what works best for my students."

Avik shared how applying psychological insights in the classroom allowed him to support students with focus and attention challenges.

"My classes improved, my students became more engaged, and there was a noticeable improvement in their academic performance. Studying psychology helps me understand not just what my students do, but why, and how to support them effectively."

PURSuing KNOWLEDGE FOR A BETTER FUTURE



▲ Wong (left) speaking to Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) Prof Ts Yap Eng Hwa (centre) and Executive Dean of School of Business & Administration Assoc Prof Dr Gary Tan.

For **Wong Hau Hang**, 37, the pursuit of knowledge was a mission to break an educational barrier. The Kuala Lumpur-based real estate consultant enrolled in WOU in 2021, encouraged by a friend who was also studying in WOU. He had been initially deterred by financial constraints

and the belief that a degree was "just a piece of paper."

"I wanted to change the pattern in my family – no one had completed a university education before. I hoped to set a better example for my younger brother and the next generation," he shared.

He graduated with a Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Finance and was honoured with the prestigious Chancellor's Gold Medal and Valedictorian in the Undergraduate category.

"What kept me going was the belief that knowledge can change a person's future. That understanding pushed me to stay consistent, even when it was difficult."

SCALING NEW HEIGHTS IN LOGISTICS



▲ Tan Tian Muh receives the LogM-WOU Best Student Award from Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Lily Chan.

Driven by a commitment to advance his career and set an example for his younger siblings, materials management specialist **Tan Tian Muh** pursued the Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Logistics and Supply Chain Management programme.

His qualification propelled him to a promotion, expanding his responsibilities to oversee event logistics projects across Singapore, Vietnam, and other parts of Asia. Tan, 32, was also honoured with the Society of Logisticians Malaysia (LogM)-WOU Best Student award.

Reflecting on the challenges of balancing work, study, and personal life, he said: "It really came down to discipline and time management. Surrounding myself with friends who were also pursuing their studies helped me stay focused and juggle my commitments effectively."

Describing his journey as transformative, Tan shared: "This experience has not only lifted my career but also strengthened how I manage relationships – with family, colleagues, and friends. It truly enabled me to scale new heights in my profession."

FROM DREAMS TO DISTINCTION: CELEBRATING THE TRIUMPHS OF LEARNING

Driven by dedication, resilience, and a love of learning, these graduates turned their study dreams into remarkable achievements.

ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY



▲ Edward (left) with School of Education, Humanities & Social Sciences Senior Lecturer Irmadura Ramli (centre) and his boss Madam Puah.

Recognition at the top of his class capped a journey of dedication and curiosity for 28-year-old **Edward Yeoh Chern Shi**. Graduating with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology, he was awarded the Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize for his outstanding academic performance.

Enrolling as a full-time on-campus student in 2022, Edward shared that he was fortunate to have several individuals who believed in and supported his decision to pursue psychology. One core course in particular, Understanding Personality Types, stood out for him, giving him deeper insight into the wide range of personality differences among individuals.

“The subject strengthened my ability to empathise with others. I am now better equipped to work with people of different personality types by focusing on their strengths rather than their limitations. Instead of dwelling on differences or challenges, I have learned to prioritise collaboration, adaptability, and solution-focused thinking,” said Edward, who currently works in the education sector.

ACADEMIC DREAM COME TRUE FOR LIFELONG LEARNER



▲ Francisca Rosalind (second from right) with fellow graduates (left to right) Carolyn Anak Kaloni, Pirathp Silvarajoo, and Krystian Avik Lee.

At 75, **Francisca Rosalind Selvarani Simon Rajah** achieved a lifelong dream—earning her Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in English Studies. For Francisca, the decision to study later in life was driven by a desire to fulfil a personal ambition, and WOU’s flexible learning model made it possible.

She credits the supportive tutors and adaptable curriculum for helping her navigate her studies smoothly: “WOU helped me achieve my lifelong ambition of getting a degree in English with the flexibility of studying from home and at my own pace.”

Embodying the spirit of lifelong learning, she said, “Age should not be a barrier towards achieving one’s goals because we are as young as we think we are. Studying at a later age in life has done wonders for my personal growth and computer skills!”

Francisca’s dedication and perseverance were recognised when she received the Outstanding Student Award at the undergraduate level.

STRONG SUPPORT SYSTEM KEY TO WORK-STUDY-FAMILY BALANCE



▲ Stella proudly holds her Outstanding Student Award.

Learning never stops, and **Stella Hui Sook Peng**, 36 is living proof. A mother of three and holistic financial planner from Kuala Lumpur, she has not only earned her Bachelor of Management (Honours) with Psychology but was also recognised with the Outstanding Student Award. Drawn to the programme’s unique combination of management and psychology, Stella wanted to understand why people make certain choices and behave the way they do.

She also emphasised that having a strong support system was key to managing her commitments. “My husband, especially, took on many family responsibilities when I had tutorials. Whenever I missed a class, I could revisit the recorded tutorials after the kids went to sleep and study at my own pace.”

“Apart from my family, I found a group of good friends in the programme, and we all graduated together. There were times when we felt like giving up, but we would remind each other of the time and effort we had invested. That support really kept us going.”

TOGETHER, EVERY STEP OF THE WAY

A SHARED JOURNEY: BEST FRIENDS WHO INSPIRED EACH OTHER TO SUCCEED



▲ Through every step of their journey, Maha Esuary (left) and Jahnsieey (right) had each other's support.

Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Psychology graduates **Jahnsieey Ravindran** and **Maha Esuary Mahalingam**, both 25, share a rare coincidence – they were born on the same day, month, and year. Close friends since their secondary school days, their paths crossed once more when they discovered they had signed up for the same programme during the same semester!

"I only found out she was in the same course after seeing the name list. After that, we started doing our assignments together, exchanging ideas, and reminding each other about classes," said Jahnsieey.

Echoing the sentiment, Maha Esuary shared, "We were both very happy to begin our academic journey together, knowing we would graduate side by side. Since then, we've supported one another through discussions and assessments. ODL (open distance learning) can be challenging, as you rarely meet coursemates face to face, so I'm grateful we had each other to stay motivated every step of the way."

Jahnsieey, who joined the police force three years ago, chose psychology for its direct relevance to her work: "My psychology training has helped me stay calm, manage my emotions, and respond to tense lock-up situations in a professional and appropriate manner." She looks forward to leveraging her qualification to advance her career as a law enforcer.

Currently helping with her family's printing business while working as an insurance advisor, Maha Esuary hopes to pursue roles where she can apply her knowledge in psychology. She added that the programme has helped strengthen her emotional management, decision-making, and leadership skills, both professionally and personally.

Despite their different career paths, both friends valued WOU's flexible and personalised learning model. They described the FlexLearn digital learning platform as accessible and convenient, and expressed appreciation for the supportive lecturers and helpful staff who made their learning journey a positive and rewarding experience.

FROM KENYA TO PENANG: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH



▲ A dream come true for Erick.

Erick Omondi Okomo, 32, who has called Penang home for over seven years, was all smiles as he graduated with a Bachelor of Business (Honours) in Management. Currently handling administrative and ICT-related tasks, he credits Wawasan Open University (WOU) for giving him the chance to expand his horizons.

The third of five siblings, Erick was inspired by his family's strong belief in education as the key to success.

"I wanted to gain the skills and knowledge that would open doors to career opportunities and help transform my family's future."

"I've always dreamed of furthering my studies. Besides my Kenyan and Sabahan families, I'm especially grateful to my employer, Dato' Seri Anwar Fazal, who encouraged me to enrol at WOU and financially supported my journey."

Erick found WOU's flexible learning mode perfectly suited to his work schedule.

"With easy access to learning resources on FlexLearn, I could study independently without relying on physical lectures. WOU didn't just teach me management—it taught me how to manage life itself, preparing me for new opportunities and greater responsibilities.

"Management is not merely a skill required for business or institutional development; rather, it is a well-rounded life skill that determines and influences the outcomes of human actions," he said.

INDUSTRY-READY SKILLS DRIVE CAREER TRANSFORMATION

Alumni from the School of Technology and Engineering Science (STE) share their success stories on how WOU's highly applied, industry-focused curriculum—covering in-demand specialisations in mechatronics, electronics, and construction management—provided the exact qualifications and practical knowledge needed to secure promotions and significantly elevate their careers.

ADVANCING FROM TECHNICIAN TO ENGINEER



When **Cheah Kin Ho**, 25, enrolled in the Bachelor of Technology (Honours) in Mechatronics, his goal was clear: to complete his degree efficiently while continuing full-time work as a mechanical technician. Over four years of disciplined effort paid off when he was promoted to assistant service engineer shortly after completing his studies.

▲ Cheah Kin Ho gained a promotion after completing his degree.

"I was willing to change departments and take on new responsibilities, which helped my career progression," Cheah shared. He added that the programme's strong industry alignment allowed him to apply classroom learning directly at work, strengthening both his technical capabilities and time management skills. His final-year project, based on his company's products, further deepened his understanding of real-world applications.

A STRATEGIC MOVE TO UPGRADE PROFESSIONALLY



▲ Raymond (centre) with fellow graduates from the School of Technology and Engineering Science.

For electronics technician **Raymond Joseph**, returning to study was a deliberate step towards long-term career growth. The 33-year-old from Kulim carefully planned his schedule around shift work and off days, occasionally taking leave to keep pace with his studies.

Through the Bachelor of Technology (Honours) in Electronics, Raymond strengthened his technical foundation, particularly in understanding electronic systems and interpreting machine diagrams—skills he now applies on the job. As the first university graduate in his family, he views the qualification as a meaningful milestone.

"My next goal is to upgrade myself to an engineer," he said, adding that he is hopeful for a promotion in the coming year.

CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS BUILD COMPETENCE AND LEADERSHIP



▲ Andrew Ang (centre) pictured with fellow coursemates.

Andrew Ang, 34, and **Muhamad Fitri Azroy Bin Nor Efenday**, 28, both leveraged the Bachelor of Technology (Honours) in Construction Management to strengthen their professional expertise and advance their careers.

Andrew, with over 10 years of experience as a technician at Sarawak Energy, chose to pursue the industry-recognised degree to meet a key requirement for promotion. He shared how the programme equipped him with practical skills in contract valuation, project take-offs, and Building Information Modelling (BIM), positioning him for career advancement within the organisation.

Meanwhile, Muhamad Fitri, currently supporting the semiconductor industrial sector at Kulim Hi-Tech Park, applied the same programme to move beyond site supervision into leadership roles. Over the course of his studies, he progressed from Junior Site Supervisor to Site Engineer and BIM Engineer, now leading his own team.

"Professionally, my academic journey has strengthened my management, coordination, and project-handling skills. It has also taught me to be more responsible and manage my time better," he said.



▲ Fitri Azroy with wife Zur Ain Binti Zaini (left) holding son Elman Thaqif, mother Normah Binti Ahmad (second from right), younger sister Puteri Nor Balqis Binti Nor Efenday (far right)

GRADUATING WITH AN EDGE: HOW DIGIT LEARNERS ENTER THE WORKFORCE READY

Pioneer graduates of the School of Digital Technology’s (DiGiT) Bachelor of Digital Business (BDBS) programme represent a new generation of learners shaped by an innovative Work + Study model that prioritises hands-on learning, industry exposure, and real-world readiness. The programme allows students to focus on full-time study in their first year before entering the workforce from the second year onwards, continuing their studies while gaining industry experience.



▲ Pirathp (left) and Shasmitha (right) all smiles after receiving their scrolls.

Shasmitha Seb Sebastian, 26, credits the programme for giving her an edge that translated directly into career progression. With a background in Computer Graphics, she deliberately chose a degree that would keep her connected to the digital space. What stood out was not just the qualification, but how immediately applicable the learning was.

“Digital business taught me how to break things down – not just systems, but people. Subjects on understanding customer behaviour were particularly helpful, as we need to know who our customers are, the problems they face, and

how to solve them – something I apply directly in my work,” she explained.

“Apart from handling customer enquiries, we also work technically – fixing bugs, understanding systems, and managing websites. The technical skills I learned, such as coding concepts and website design, helped me support clients more effectively and explain solutions clearly.”

These capabilities soon set her apart, leading to a promotion as a supervisor managing a team of 16.

Fellow graduate **Pirathp Silvarajoo**, 28, was drawn to the flexibility of DiGiT’s work-and-study model – a year of full-time study followed by part-time modules.

“This approach allowed me to return to learning while preparing to re-enter the workforce. After my first year of full-time study, I secured a job. WOU’s block module system, focusing on one subject per month, helped me manage my time and concentrate better.”

The Penangite now applies his knowledge in backend website management, social media, and search engine optimisation (SEO) in his role as a Senior Sales Executive at a higher education institution.

PROMOTED TO FINANCE MANAGER BEFORE GRADUATION



▲ Asheena Binti Othumansah.

A fierce determination to progress further in her career became the motivation for **Asheena Binti Othumansah**, 34, to pursue the Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting programme.

“I wanted to move up, so continuing my degree was an opportunity for me to grow both professionally and academically,” she stated.

Her commitment and the practical application of her studies quickly paid off–Asheena was promoted to Finance Manager even before officially completing her degree.

She views education as a key to future career mobility and advises others aiming to progress: “Don’t focus only on now–focus on where you want to be in five years.”

“I wanted to move up, so continuing my degree was an opportunity for me to grow both professionally and academically”

FROM EXPERIENCE TO EXECUTIVE IMPACT: HOW WOU MBAS ARE SHAPING STRATEGIC LEADERS

Across industries, WOU's MBA graduates are translating experience into stronger leadership through structured learning, strategic thinking, and applied management skills. From project-driven environments to executive decision-making, their journeys reflect how flexible, practice-oriented MBAs strengthen business acumen at the highest levels.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE IN COMPLEX PROJECTS



With more than 15 years in the Oil & Gas sector, **Andy Ong Tgne Seong**, 45, is well-versed in managing large-scale, high-stakes projects. Based in Johor, the Project Manager shared how the MBA in Construction Management aligned closely with his professional responsibilities, equipping him with up-to-date knowledge and practical skills applicable to his day-to-day work.

"The programme enhanced my confidence and equipped me with updated project management strategies and industry insights. It also strengthened my ability to streamline workflows, analyse data, and make informed decisions," he said.

STRENGTHENING STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL JUDGEMENT



For **Thong Chee Koh**, 45, pursuing the MBA in Manufacturing and Production Management (MBAMPM) marked a deliberate step towards strengthening his leadership and management capabilities.

As an Affairs Director in a technical engineering services firm, he recognised the need for deeper insight into manufacturing strategy, production efficiency, and structured decision-making at an organisational level.

Sharing that the programme has significantly enhanced his management knowledge, Thong said, "The growth in my analytical maturity and professional judgement has enhanced my personal development and positioned me to contribute more effectively to my organisation's long-term performance and success."

FROM TECHNICAL EXPERTISE TO STRATEGIC READINESS



Elroy Bansi Gersit, 39, a Multiskills Technician at an oil and gas company in Sarawak, said that the MBAMPM course enhanced his understanding of the business context behind operational decisions.

"While my job focuses on the operational how, the modules on business needs, market dynamics, and corporate strategy are

essential for understanding the why behind company decisions and industry shifts. This enables me to make more holistic and strategic choices that align my technical recommendations with my organisation's overarching objectives," he added.

PREPARING FOR THE C-SUITE WHILE BALANCING IT ALL



Deputy General Manager **Annaliza Pathirajah** oversees Malaysian operations for an Australian-listed finance firm, leading multidisciplinary teams spanning customer service to software development. With nearly 20 years of experience in the finance industry, the mother of eight-year-old twins credits the flexibility of the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration programme for enabling her to balance senior management responsibilities with family commitments, while applying her learning directly at work.

Annaliza, 38, is confident the qualification has strengthened her leadership, people management, and data-driven decision-making capabilities, positioning her firmly for future C-suite roles.

LEADERSHIP BUILT ON EXPERIENCE, STRENGTHENED THROUGH LEARNING

How two Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA) graduates transformed professional experience into confidence, credibility, and a lifelong academic journey through WOU's APEL pathway.



▲ Learning never stops, says Ander.

Ander Lim, 44, first began his academic journey with Wawasan Open University (WOU) through the Graduate Certificate in Business Management, which gave him the confidence and foundation to progress further. WOU's APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) pathway and flexible learning options eventually enabled him to enrol in and graduate with the CEMBA, allowing the Senior Sales and Marketing Advisor and single father to inspire his daughters while proving to himself that achievement has no age limit.

"If I can do this at my age, they can do anything they want. Learning never stops," he said.

The flexible online format allowed him to balance work, family, and study. His project on user experience in online shopping platforms directly enhanced his professional skills, giving him a competitive edge in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry.

"I learned many new skills, especially in digitalisation. For someone my age, digitalisation wasn't always easy, but with online lectures, tutorials, and the digital learning platform,

everything became more manageable," he added.

Encouraged by lecturers, Ander has now embarked on his DBA journey at WOU, embracing lifelong learning as both a personal and professional pursuit.

For 59-year-old **Simson Pasan**, earning a postgraduate degree was a goal he once thought impossible. Thanks to the APEL pathway, his years of professional experience became the foundation for academic success.

Based in Kuching and actively serving in the NGO sector, Simson, 59, had spent decades helping communities secure grants and develop projects. He realised that further education would sharpen his communication, proposal writing, and leadership skills.

"Coming back to study after 30 years was challenging, especially with my limited English and maths skills," he admitted. "But WOU recognised my expertise in HR and previous work experience in the corporate sector which helped me progress faster in my studies. It meant I didn't have to start from scratch.

The flexible learning format enabled him to balance family commitments, NGO responsibilities, and study, with recorded lectures ensuring he never fell behind—even during recovery from eye surgery.

Reflecting on his journey, Simson emphasised, "Pursuing the CEMBA has boosted my confidence and taught me that lifelong learning is essential. You should never stop learning, no matter your age."



▲ Simson sharing a happy moment with his wife and two sons.

WHEN LEARNING BECOMES A FAMILY JOURNEY

Shared support, shared aspirations, and shared success – these graduates show how family makes each milestone sweeter and every achievement more meaningful.

UNITED BY NUMBERS—AND DETERMINATION



▲ Ivona (left) and Gilliana (right) with Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Lily Chan.

What began with **Gilliana Nathan** taking the first step into the Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Accounting soon turned into a motivating force that inspired her younger sister **Ivona Nathan** to take up the challenge as well. Studying together strengthened not only their accounting skills, but also their sisterly bond as they supported each other through tutorials, assignments, and examinations.

Now working as accounting executives in the same organisation in Ipoh, graduating from the same programme is a proud moment for both sisters and their family. Reflecting on their experience, Gilliana shared, "It has taught us the value of encouragement and teamwork, and we're really happy to have fulfilled our study goal together. The programme has helped us build our business knowledge and accounting skills, and we feel much more confident and ready to take on greater job responsibilities in our careers."

LIKE MOTHER LIKE DAUGHTER



▲ From left to right Nurlisa, her father Nurazaman, Koraiza, and son Norman Mukrish.

For **Koraiza Binti Safuan**, the journey to graduation was already remarkable—but sharing it with her daughter, **Nurlisa Nurin Sorfina Binti Nurazaman**, made it truly unforgettable. Koraiza earned her Bachelor of Management (Honours) with Psychology, while Nurlisa completed her Diploma in Early

Childhood Education, turning a personal milestone into a family celebration.

"It's one of my proudest moments, sharing this achievement with my beloved daughter. Accomplishing this together made all our effort worthwhile," said a visibly over-the-moon Koraiza.

Equally proud of her mother, Nurlisa added, "She has always been my role model. Watching her chase her dreams with such determination while managing her responsibilities inspired me more than words can express."

Cheered on by their family, the dynamic mother-daughter duo balanced their busy schedules through discipline, determination, and smart time management. Their secret to success? "Don't procrastinate. Plan your schedule carefully and learn to prioritise between work and study!"

SISTERS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE



▲ Laiw Chooi Teng (left) and Laiw Chooi Chin (right).

Studying side by side made their journey even more meaningful for **Laiw Chooi Chin** and her sister, **Chooi Teng**, who both graduated with the Bachelor of Business (Hons) in Management.

Chooi Chin admitted that balancing work and studies wasn't always easy, but their teamwork and determination kept them motivated. "Since we were taking the same courses, we take turns consulting the tutors with our questions each semester. This collaboration not only helped us complete our studies efficiently but also boosted our confidence along the way."

"Our shared goal was to enhance our professional skills through continuous learning, achieve career advancement, and provide a more stable life for our family," said younger sister Chooi Teng.

Both sisters agreed that their family's support played a key role in their success: "Whenever we were busy, they encouraged us and helped out with household chores and routine tasks."

SHAPING EDUCATORS FOR TOMORROW'S YOUNG MINDS

Education graduates, from diploma to master, share how their qualifications enhance their competencies in the classroom.

APPLYING KNOWLEDGE TO NURTURE CHILDREN



With over 15 years in education and multiple tuition and kindergarten centres, **Chin Sau Mei**, 40, pursued the Diploma in Early Childhood Education to deepen her expertise in the field. The mother of four explained that the programme strengthened her leadership and management skills while also equipping her with evidence-based parenting methods she could apply both at home and in school.

"I really valued the research component. Through case studies, I learned how to evaluate different approaches and choose the best solution, combining theory, psychology, and practical experience. Learning never ends – after this degree, I plan to pursue a master's to further develop my management skills," she said.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS



Leynicca Lisa Anak Francis Peter, 27, pursued the Diploma in Early Childhood Education to better understand how children learn and to strengthen her professional practice.

She now trains Cambodian pre-school teachers, sharing her insights and confidently guiding them with her expertise. "The programme has significantly improved my lesson planning and classroom management, and even my principal recognises the growth and difference in my performance."

ENHANCING TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY AND AI



International school teacher **Muhammad Khairul Bin Darus**, 23, is already setting a high bar for innovation after graduating with the Post Graduate Diploma in Education. Khairul took the initiative to seamlessly integrate contemporary technology and AI tools into his classroom practices.

He highlighted one course that has proven invaluable in his daily teaching routine: "The most impactful one was the technology-related course. Through that course, I learned how to use AI and technology to enhance my teaching and make learning more engaging for students. Instead of students getting bored with traditional teaching, they became more motivated and interested in learning."

LEADING WITH KNOWLEDGE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



As an assistant lecturer at the School of Education, Humanities, and Social Sciences (SEHS) at Wawasan Open University, **Thoolasi Kanesin**, 35, completed her Master of Education to stay current with industry developments.

"The course content equipped me with the latest knowledge and practices in early childhood education. It has allowed me to update my curriculum and share new approaches with the students I teach," she explained. "I now feel more confident giving talks, engaging with preschool teachers, and advising preschool providers on the benefits of university-level knowledge and training."

SOARING BEYOND LIMITS: A CAREER REINVENTION WITH CEMBA

Inspired by her mother, a former flight attendant forged a new professional path with her postgraduate qualification.



▲ Kimberly receives her scroll from Chancellor Tunku Tan Sri Imran.

When **Kimberly Ann Ngieng** crossed the stage at Wawasan Open University to receive her graduation scroll, it marked far more than the completion of a degree. For the 32-year-old Sarawakian, it symbolised a deliberate reinvention – from a life spent navigating airports and time zones to one grounded in strategy, leadership, and long-term purpose.

A former flight attendant with a leading international airline, Kimberly graduated with the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA), inspired by someone close to home: her mother. Five years earlier, her mother, Vetty Ng, then an HR administrator in the banking sector, completed a Master of Education at WOU.

"Watching her pursue a master's degree while working full-time showed me that learning doesn't have an expiry date," Kimberly shared. "If she could do it, I knew I could too."

That inspiration led Kimberly to WOU's APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) pathway, which enabled her to progress into the CEMBA programme despite coming from a diploma background. "APEL was the door-opener," she said. "Without it, I wouldn't have had this opportunity."

Balancing irregular flight schedules with postgraduate studies was no small feat. WOU's flexible Open and Distance Learning (ODL) model allowed her to study wherever work took her – from hotel rooms to cafés across Europe. "I learned to make use of pockets of time," she recalled. "Once, I completed assignments on a train ride between Milan and Florence so I wouldn't miss time with my family."

Returning to formal study after a long break was initially daunting, but structured modules, supportive tutors, and a learning environment designed for working adults helped her regain confidence. Her thesis became her proudest achievement, equipping her with analytical and research skills that proved immediately relevant beyond academia.

Shortly after completing her MBA, Kimberly made a decisive transition into the corporate world. Today, she works as a Digital Marketing and Social Media Manager, leading campaigns and shaping brand strategy.

"The CEMBA set me apart. It strengthened my leadership, decision-making, and communication skills – qualities I apply and rely on every single day in my career."

For those hesitant about returning to study, her advice is simple: "Just start. It's never too late, and it's never too impossible."

Kimberly's journey is a reminder that reinvention begins with a single step – and the courage to take it.

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