



Benchmarking Visit to UTM and UTEM for Open & Distance Learning (ODL) Program Development

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A distinguished delegation from Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) recently completed a successful benchmarking visit to Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) and Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) from May 11 to May 14, 2024. The visit was led by Dr. Zulhibri Bin Ismail @ Mustofa, Deputy Dean (Research & Postgraduate Studies), and included key academic leaders from UMPSA: Ts. Dr. Azlyna Binti Senawi, Head of Program (Postgraduates), Dr. Norhafizah Binti Md Sarif, Head of Program (Service Mathematics), Dr. Amirul Aizad Bin Ahmad Fuad, and Dr. Mohd Khairul Bazli Bin Mohd Aziz.

The primary objective of this visit was to gather insights and best practices on Open & Distance Learning (ODL) to inform the development of UMPSA's own ODL program. The delegation engaged in comprehensive discussions and exchanges with their counterparts at UTM and UTeM, focusing on the implementation strategies, technological infrastructure, curriculum design, and student engagement methodologies that underpin successful ODL programs.

Dr. Zulhibri expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to learn from two of Malaysia's leading institutions in ODL. "This visit has provided us with valuable perspectives on how to effectively integrate technology with pedagogy to create an enriching and flexible learning environment. The insights gained here will be instrumental in shaping UMPSA's ODL program, ensuring it meets the highest standards of quality and accessibility," he said.

During their time at UTM and UTeM, the UMPSA delegation explored the university's innovative use of digital platforms and tools that facilitate interactive and collaborative learning experiences. They were particularly impressed by both UTM and UTeM's commitment to continuous improvement through regular feedback mechanisms and analytics to monitor student progress and engagement.

Then, the focus was on the integration of industry-relevant skills within the ODL curriculum. The delegation noted UTM and UTeM's strategic partnerships with industry players that enhance the practical components of their programs, ensuring graduates are well-prepared for the workforce.

Ts. Dr. Azlyna Binti Senawi highlighted the significance of these partnerships, stating, "Collaboration with industry is crucial in designing a curriculum that is both current and future-proof. Their approach provides a model for how we can incorporate similar elements into our programs at UMPSA."

Dr. Norhafizah Binti Md Sarif and Dr. Amirul Aizad Bin Ahmad Fuad echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the importance of adaptability and continuous learning in the evolving educational landscape. Dr. Mohd Khairul Bazli Bin Mohd Aziz added that the visit underscored the necessity of robust support systems for both students and faculty to thrive in an online learning environment.

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to ongoing collaboration and knowledge exchange between the institutions. The UMPSA delegation returned with a wealth of information and actionable strategies that will inform the design and implementation of UMPSA's forthcoming ODL program, positioning it to offer flexible, high-quality education to a broader student demographic.







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