

BY GGI MAY SIM  
sim@thestar.com.my

# UKM, bank sign pact

Candidates will be selected based on their achievements, leadership capability and a commitment to development.

TWO lucky students at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) will get the opportunity to rub shoulders with some of the world's agents of change when they intern with World Bank Knowledge Hub of Malaysia.

The UKM-World Bank Research Intern Pilot Programme will offer vocational training in international development and opportunities to contribute to an initiative or research project at the World Bank Group Global Knowledge and Research Hub in Malaysia (WBG).

The programme was launched with the signing of the Letter of Exchange between World Bank Knowledge Hub of Malaysia and UKM at the university in Bangi, Selangor.

Applications for the internship are now open and will close on Feb 20. UKM postgraduate students who are pursuing a Master's degree or PhD and possess an undergraduate degree with a minimum CGPA of 3.0 are eligible to apply.

There is no age restriction, however, the company is looking for candidates who are conducting research in modern and integrated financial services; growth and poverty reduction; public sector performance and economic planning; and productivity, trade, social protection and labour. Both the interns will be paid RM3,440 monthly.

A joint UKM-World Bank panel will select the candidates based on their academic and professional achievements, leadership capability and a commitment to development. They will join the WBG in April for three months, with the possibility of a three-month extension.

WBG country manager Faris Hadad-Zervos said the two companies hope to develop new knowledge together.

"The internship will reinforce the work of the World Bank Group



Prof Noor Azlan (right) exchanging documents with Hadad-Zervos (left) at the signing ceremony while Tunku Zain looks on.

in Malaysia, which has been a hub for new regional and international research since last year.

"This collaboration also reflects our new partnership with local institutions (to work towards) global development solutions," Hadad-Zervos said.

UKM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Seri Dr Noor Azlan Ghazali said the university is the first in Malaysia to partner with WBG and that the programme will be jointly managed by its Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) and WBG.

The idea for the internship was

first mooted by Second Finance Minister Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani. The pilot programme is part of WBG's efforts to partner local institutions to advance its goals of sharing the country's development experience and carrying out innovative development on policy research.

During the signing ceremony, UKM also appointed the Institute of Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) founding president Tunku Zain Al-'Abidin Tuanku Muhriz as its Royal Fellow at IKMAS.

Tunku Zain will, during his

three-year tenure, share his experience in programmes associated with Asean integration, especially in the social cultural dimension. He will also deliver two public seminars, be involved in UKM staff and student engagements, and enhance the university's inter-regional networking capacity.

Tunku Zain is not a stranger to UKM and has been taking part in the university's programmes such as being the keynote speaker at the inaugural Asean Economic Integration Forum held at St Anthony's College, University of

Oxford, United Kingdom in 2015, said Prof Noor Azlan.

Emphasising the importance of research, IDEAS and UKM signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly run the Southeast Asia Network (SEANET), a regional research and advocacy centre that promotes policy ideas to make Asean's growth more inclusive and sustainable.

SEANET aims to catalyse the creation of an Asean Economic Community, an important pillar in the growth of the region.

IDEAS chief executive Wan Saiful Wan Jan said SEANET was launched on Nov 23, 2014 to champion inclusive development, property rights and free movement of people and goods in Asean.

"Ultimately, our aim is to catalyse Asean economic integration, which is a crucial part in the building of a sustainable Asean Economic Community. IKMAS and UKM bring a whole network of researchers and a host of other resources to support the future work of SEANET. We hope this partnership will help catalyse and accelerate public dialogue on the importance of open trade for Asean," Wan Saiful added.

Tunku Zain said that these are crucial partnerships in a challenging time for public universities, which are facing cuts in funding.

"If public universities are to be formidable in this climate, they need innovation. This requires autonomy and freedom so that university leadership can make the necessary improvements.

"Perhaps, in the long run, this will help our universities become more independent," he added.