



PSYCHWATT NEWSLETTER

2nd Edition

ALUMNI & INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Read a first-hand account of the student experience at Heriot-Watt University from our alumni and learn about the internship opportunities open to our students.

STUDENT EVENTS & MORE!

Hear about our students' experiences and explore the events that have happened (and are about to happen) in this field!

FEATURE ARTICLES & RESEARCH

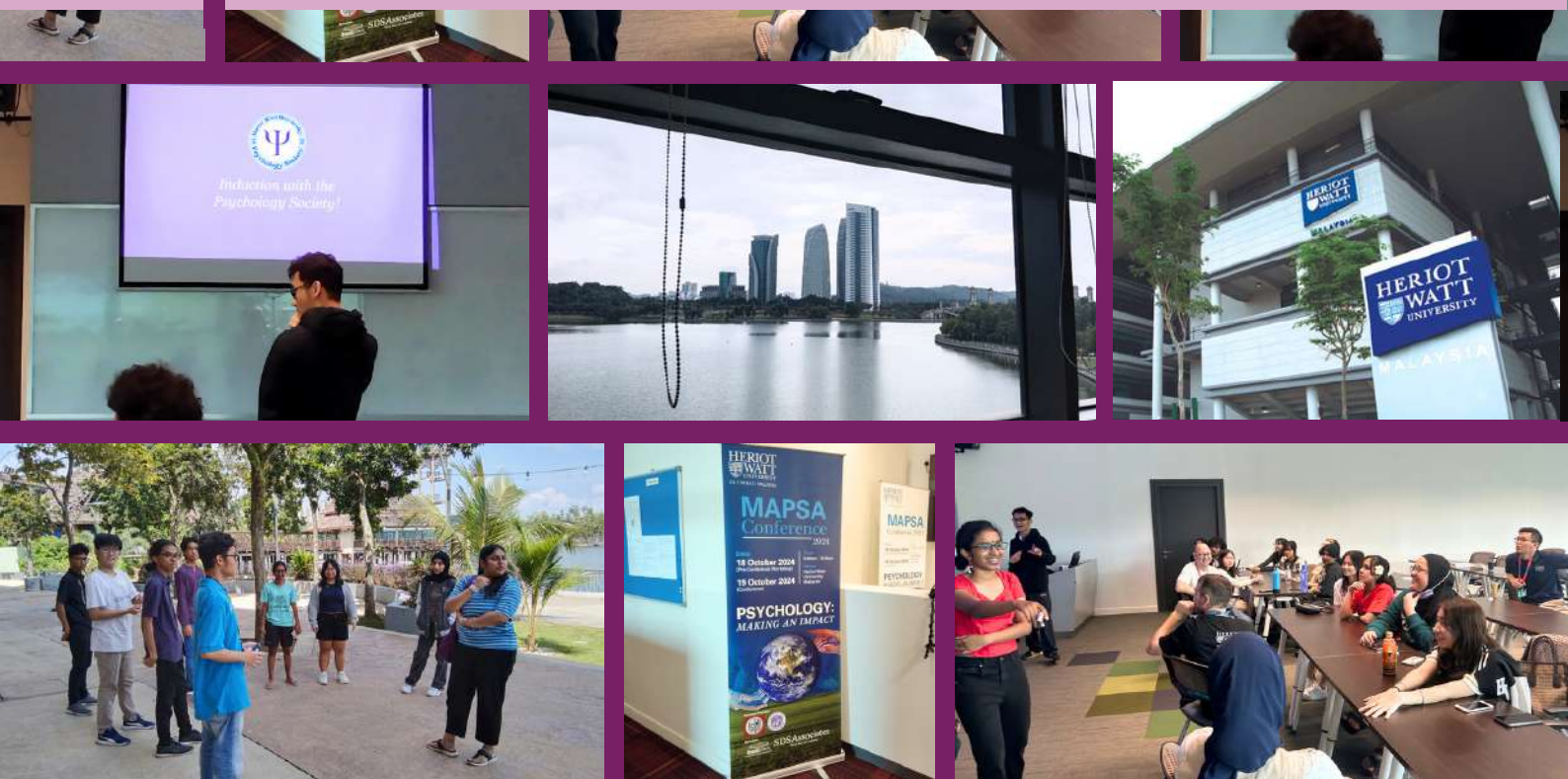
Interested in the research being conducted by our very own Psychology faculty? Head inside and gain some exciting newfound knowledge

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

Enjoy our exclusive interviews with our PhD students and alumni here at the psychology department

CONTENTS

01	EDITORIAL
03	MEET THE TEAM
07	RESEARCH
10	STUDENT STORIES
13	COMMUNITY PARTNERS
18	ALUMNI INSIGHTS
22	FEATURE ARTICLE
23	ACHIEVEMENTS
25	EVENTS
33	UPCOMING EVENTS



Professor Glenn Hitchman

Head of Psychology Department



Welcome to the second edition of the PsychWatt Newsletter! As we dive into the 2024-5 academic year, it's inspiring to see our Department's continued development, with an ever-growing number of enriching stories from students, faculty members, and our wider psychology community.

One of the highlights of the academic calendar so far has been the Malaysian Student Psychology Assembly and Conference 2024. Hosted at our lakeside campus, the event brought together psychology faculty and students from universities across the country to explore the theme, "Psychology: Making an Impact." It was an unforgettable event, marked by engaging keynote talks, thought-provoking discussions, and dynamic student presentations. It's clear that psychology's ability to shape both individual lives and society remains a powerful force, and we are thrilled to be playing a central role in this transformation.

On the research and enterprise front, our faculty members continue to push boundaries. Dr. Ke Guek Nee shares her impactful findings in relation to cyber wellness and resilience in post-pandemic Malaysia, as well as her efforts in developing a landmark partnership with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council. Meanwhile, Professor Glenn Hitchman updates us on his ongoing exploration into the controversial field of parapsychology through innovative research with floatation tanks. These projects showcase how our department remains at the forefront of psychological inquiry, blending academic rigor with practical relevance.

We are equally proud of our students' accomplishments, as well as those of our graduates. In this edition, we hear from students who have not only excelled academically but have also had incredible industrial experiences, from contributing to high-profile exhibitions at Petronas to embracing corporate culture during an internship at AirAsia. We also hear from graduates who have secured employment with leading firms such as Ernst and Young. Their stories remind us of the diverse pathways psychology experts can take, the invaluable skills our students are developing, and the ways in which our graduates are applying their knowledge within world-renowned companies.

We also take a moment to celebrate the power of community. Whether through faculty and students coming together for a memorable Iftar picnic or the success of our beach cleanup initiative in Port Dickson, it is clear that fostering connections—both personal and professional—is at the heart of our department.

We hope this edition gives you a snapshot of the incredible work and events happening at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia's Psychology Department. Whether you are a student, alum, or prospective member of our community, we encourage you to stay engaged, continue learning, and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.

Enjoy reading, and we look forward to connecting with you in future editions!

MEET THE TEAM



ONE OF MY FAVOURITE MOVIES IS THE KARATE KID.

Prof Glenn Hitchman
Professor and Head of Department

It was a significant achievement to assume the role of Head of Psychology at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia as a Professor. Since joining in March 2023, my focus has been twofold: nurturing a sense of community among staff, students, and our external partners, and injecting more fun, enjoyment and engagement into our psychology provisions. To this end, I've enjoyed working closely with the Psychology Society committee to plan a vibrant calendar of activities and events for each academic year. These initiatives offer a plethora of opportunities for our community to come together, explore psychological concepts, acquire new skills, and embrace new experiences.

Compared to my first day in this role, witnessing more smiles both inside and outside of the classroom, and the growing sounds of laughter, have been just as gratifying as the academic milestones achieved by our dedicated staff and students. Meanwhile, I have continued to pursue research in the controversial field of parapsychology, my specialist area of expertise, exploring the intersection between science and the unexplained.



I SHARE THE SAME NAME AS THE PREVIOUS PSYCHOLOGY TECHNICIAN WHO I REPLACED.

Ms Aisyah Hazrin
Psychology Technician

I am the newest member of the team, joining in November 2024. I graduated from Monash University, where I was honoured with the High Achievers award and became a certified Mental Health First Aider in August 2022. I have previous experience in public sector consulting but ultimately realised that my true passions will always be in psychology. When I can, I volunteer with the Mental Illness Awareness and Support Association (MIASA) to support their goal of reducing mental health stigma in the Malaysian community. My long-term goal is to make mental healthcare accessible and meaningful for all.

MEET THE TEAM



I WAS THE FIRST IN THE TEAM TO OBTAIN A PHD.

Dr Ron Salden

Associate Professor, Undergraduate Programme Director

Once upon a time when I was a postdoctoral researcher, I won the Cognition and Student Learning Prize at the 2008 Cognitive Science conference. During the summer of 2019, I chaperoned several UG students who presented their Final Year Project (FYP) at a Psychology conference in Penang. Throughout my time at HWUM I have frequently offered extracurricular workshops to engage students in relevant research skills that benefit their FYP and employability.

Also, I have contributed significantly to the preparation and visit of our successful BPS accreditation in February 2023. Furthermore, my impact statement has been put into practice with field trips to Diveheart Malaysia. Additionally, on 1 March 2023 we hosted the signing of an impactful Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen our collaboration with Diveheart. I aim to have staff and students become volunteers to join me in making positive contributions for the disabled community in Malaysia.



I BUILT AN IGLOO AND LIVED IN IT!

Dr Kenneth Leow

Assistant Professor, PhD Programme Director

I joined Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (HWUM) in January 2023. Since joining the Psychology Department, I have submitted 7 academic papers to peer-reviewed journals, of which 4 papers to date have been successfully accepted for publication. I'm delighted to have the opportunity to collaborate with fellow HWUM colleagues and undergraduate students in some of my research projects. Publications aside, I have also engaged with China Press for an interview on the topic of suicide and mental health in Malaysia.

Furthermore, I have contributed 2 public engagement articles related to higher education in Malaysia for the New Straits Times. In April, I was invited by the Future Cities Research Institute to present my research on rejuvenating spaces and eudaimonic well-being. More recently, I have successfully presented a research paper on technostress in higher education at the Improving University Training conference which was held at HWUM in July.

Dr Poh Wei Lin

Assistant Professor, Associate Director of Learning and Teaching

I was awarded a Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (FHEA) by Advance Higher Education in 2022. Fellowship reflects both a personal and institutional commitment to professionalism in learning and teaching in higher education. While completing the FHEA programme, I was involved in a number of projects supporting learning and teaching that were funded by the UK Quality Assurance Agency's Enhancement-Themes programme and presented my work at the Improving University Teaching (IUT) Conference in 2022.



I LIKE NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY.

MEET THE TEAM



MY FAVOURITE SPORT IS
PINGPONG.

Dr Ke Guek Nee

Associate Professor, Associate Director of Research

I obtained the first and second external grants for HWUM in 2015-2016, amounting to RM400,000. Over my 10 years of service, I have secured 9 research grants from internal, national and international funders. Five of these projects were as Principal Investigator (PI), with close to a one-million-ringgit contribution to the university. Among these projects, I secured two grants from the 'Global Challenges Research Fund-The Scottish Council' as PI in collaboration with NGOs and international research centres.

The first study aimed to investigate the socio-economic and psychological well-being of coastal communities, while the second project aimed to study the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on the socio-economic and psychological well-being and resilience in the Malaysian population. As a result, in 2022, a total of 4 articles were published in Tier 1 journals, indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. In my efforts to promote 'Cyber wellness', I focus on 'Preventive Psychological Programmes' for young people to mitigate internet addiction. I am thankful to the funding support from the Malaysian Communication and Multimedia Commission (MCMC). In 2022, I published a book entitled 'Cyber Wellness: Internet addiction and prevention. A guide for practitioners.' This book reports the collective empirical outcomes and evidence of the validation of these intervention programmes.



I ENJOY WATCHING
COMEDY MOVIES.

Dr Mandy S.C. Wong

Assistant Professor, Postgraduate Programme Director

"I am a river to nourish and nurture life. My purpose is to inspire and encourage others to lead a meaningful life. I strive to influence others to achieve wellbeing and live a purposeful life through activities that lead them to acquire life experiences." I am coordinating and delivering undergraduate and postgraduate psychology courses with colleagues in the UK, Dubai and Malaysia. I am also the global course leader of one of the undergraduate Research Methods courses. In addition, I am Postgraduate Psychology Programme Director.

In this role, I ensure students successfully complete their studies and oversee the smooth delivery of the courses. I was a committee member of the Responsive Blended Learning action group during the pandemic, working closely and actively with the marketing and academic quality teams in student admissions and student recruitment. Furthermore, I supported the achievement of the successful accreditation of our undergraduate programmes from both the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and the British Psychological Society. I am also an external examiner for a private education institution.

MEET THE TEAM



I WAS QUITE AN
EXCELLENT SWIMMER AS A
TEENAGER.

Dr David Barron

Associate Professor, Director of Research and Enterprise

The end of 2022 marked the completion of a major collaborative research project I was involved in. While this can be very challenging there are a number of things that make this so worthwhile. First and foremost, working with an international team allows me to tap into a wealth of diverse perspectives and expertise, which enriches the quality and depth of our research. It's incredible to see how different cultures and academic backgrounds can contribute unique insights and methodologies, making our findings more robust and insightful. Beyond the academic benefits, these collaborations create a wonderful sense of camaraderie and shared purpose.

Connecting with like-minded researchers who share a passion for advancing our understanding of psychology creates a lively and intellectually stimulating environment. I cherish the opportunity to engage in fruitful discussions, exchange ideas, and contribute to the collective knowledge of the human condition. One of the most rewarding aspects is the global impact our research can have. By collaborating with researchers from various countries, we can reach a broader audience and foster interdisciplinary dialogue. It's always amazing to think that our work has the potential to influence policies and practices in psychology on a worldwide scale. Indeed, publishing psychology research through large-scale collaborations is all about embracing diverse perspectives, building a supportive community, and making a positive impact globally.



I CAN PLAY MANY OF
YIRUMA'S MOST FAMOUS
PIANO PIECES BY EAR.

Dr Joel Yap

Assistant Professor, School Studies Committee Member

I contributed as a team member to secure undergraduate programme accreditation from the British Psychological Society (BPS). On 20th March 2023, I was one of the three distinguished speakers at the Happiness Forum, which took place alongside the International Day of Happiness with the theme "Happiness in Education: The Role of Educators in Student Holistic Education. Over 250 educators from Chong Hwa Independent High School and other Chinese Independent High Schools in the Klang Valley participated in the forum.

This summer, I also participated in a roundtable discussion and presented a poster at the Improving University Teaching (IUT) Conference. I was also invited to speak about my ideas of using humour as a pedagogical tool at the EduTech Asia Show & Tell event in Singapore in November 2023.

HWUM RESEARCH



Professor Glenn Hitchman

Professor and Head of Department

In collaboration with his PhD student and research colleagues in the UK, Professor Glenn has had a paper accepted for presentation at the 47th Annual International Conference of the Society for Psychical Research. The paper will provide an update on a programme of parapsychological research involving the use of floatation tanks as a means to induce altered states of consciousness.

Participants in the current study are enclosed in a tank in which they lie on a body of Epsom salt solution, so dense that it is buoyant enough to support them physically without any effort or technique. They are thus suspended in a dark, quiet, 'weightless' condition. The solution is also warmed to body temperature, encouraging the floatee to relax deeply. Participants experience a loss of environmental sensory influence, bodily orientation, and in some cases, their sense of Self.

It is hypothesised that floatation can eliminate external influences, allowing the floatee to become more aware of their inner experiences, intuitive feelings and extra-sensory or 'psychic' materials. Participants are given the goal of having imagery that will help them to identify a precognitive target video.

The research programme is funded by the Bial Foundation in Portugal and the Perrott-Warrick Fund administered by Trinity College, Cambridge and is due to be completed by the end of 2025.



HWUM RESEARCH

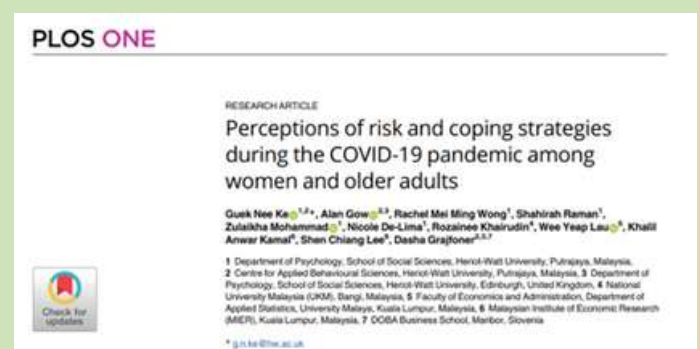


Dr Ke Guek Nee
Associate Professor

In collaboration with her psychology colleagues, Dr. Ke has published two notable papers: “Perceptions of Risk and Coping Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Women and Older Adults” and “Resisting Organisational Change? Psychological Resilience and Perceived Organisational Support as Mediators in Promoting Psychological Well-Being and Organisational Citizenship Behaviours.”

The first paper presents findings from interviews with a purposive sample of 30 women and 30 older adults conducted during Malaysia's Movement Control Order (MCO). It highlights the unique challenges faced by these groups during the pandemic, offering insights that can inform psychological interventions to enhance well-being in the recovery phase. The second paper explores employee resistance to organisational change in the energy sector, examining critical factors such as psychological well-being, organisational citizenship behaviour, organisational support, and psychological resilience.

Additionally, Dr. Ke, in collaboration with colleagues in the Edinburgh Business School, secured a Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS) allocation as a Co-Investigator. The study builds on her previously established model to identify the outcomes of brand deprivation for consumers, addressing gaps in existing literature regarding mitigations for consumers and organisations affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, natural disasters, the closure of High Street stores, and conflict situations.



HWUM RESEARCH



Dr Ron Salden

Associate Professor

The 33rd International Congress of Psychology took place on July 21-26 2024, in Prague, Czech Republic. This massive conference was attended by more than 3000 psychologists from all over the world who presented their research to an eager audience over the course of 7 days. Being able to hear about the impactful psychological studies being conducted across the globe was highly beneficial. Furthermore, I presented two research studies that focus on the empowerment of marginalised communities in Malaysia.

More specifically, my first presentation covered a study on the positive effects that metal music has on its Malaysian fans. My second presentation addressed a study on the beneficial effects of Diveheart Malaysia's scuba diving therapy on both rehabilitation specialists and people with disabilities. Both talks were well-received and their purpose-driven nature made a noticeable impression on the audience. While these topics might seem rather different, both show a long-term connection that leads to a variety of beneficial effects including better mental health, strong community building and ultimately improved quality of life.



STUDENT STORIES

Life-changing experiences of Psychology students at HWUM



Nisha LeAnn Chelvan (BSc Psychology 2024)

Being a Psychology student at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia is both fun and challenging! Surrounded by a class of outgoing and inspiring peers as well as dedicated and talented lecturers, my experience has been nothing short of enriching and transformative. As students, we are constantly challenged to do more than what is expected, to think independently and critically, and contribute back to the community. Being here at Heriot-Watt, my role extends beyond being just a mere Psychology student. I have had the opportunity to take on other roles such as being a member of the Heriot-Watt University Malaysia Student Association (HWUMSA). Today I am honoured to share that I have been elected as Vice President of Wellbeing for HWUMSA 2024/25.

My journey with HWUMSA began as Vice Treasurer, a role that fostered not just financial skills, but valuable teamwork and communication abilities too. This experience sparked a desire to make a bigger contribution to our community, which led me to nominate myself for Treasurer. I'm honoured to share that the student body has placed their trust in me by electing me as the Treasurer of HWUMSA 2024/25. I'm excited to use this opportunity to make a positive impact in our student community. My group and I recently had the rewarding experience of presenting our qualitative research on 'the student experience transitioning into the endemic phase of the COVID-19 pandemic' at the HWUM Psychology Conference. We were thrilled to place third for best group presentation, an achievement that highlighted the importance of our research. The conference provided invaluable opportunities to connect with industry professionals and exchange knowledge, making it a truly enriching experience.

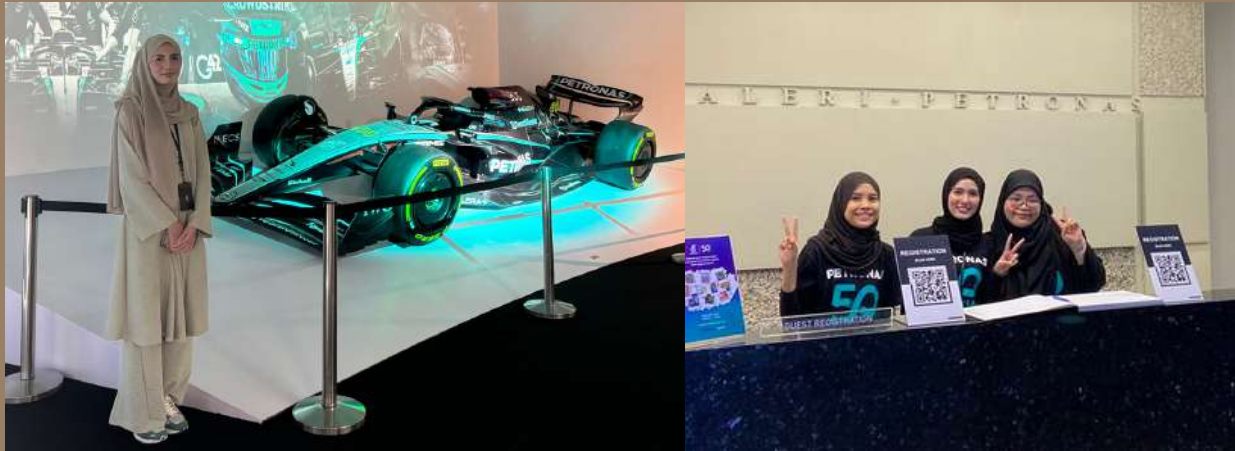


Natalie Franklin BSc Psychology 2024

STUDENT STORIES

Nasuha Muhammad Ali Jr (BSc Psychology 2024)

From Classroom to Career: Student Intern Experiences - PETRONAS



As I reflect on my internship at Galeri PETRONAS, I want to share key insights from this enriching experience. From day one, I was welcomed into a vibrant environment that fostered personal and professional growth. The challenges I faced were met with support from mentors and peers, strengthening our bonds and enhancing my learning process.

One of the most fascinating aspects was observing the intersection of art and psychology. I was amazed at how these fields intertwine, influencing our emotions and perceptions. Understanding how psychological principles can enhance art curation and engagement opened my eyes to the meaningful synergy between them.

Contributing to the P50 exhibition was particularly rewarding. With my supervisor's guidance, I developed my skills in writing art descriptions. Creating the description for "Benua," a commissioned artwork by Latiff Mohidin, was a highlight of my internship and deepened my appreciation for the emotional power of art.

I am incredibly grateful for this learning experience. My supportive team helped me navigate the art world, while also instilling essential soft skills for a harmonious workplace. Their encouragement of my interest in the convergence of psychology and art allowed me to explore how art influences emotional engagement, enriching my understanding of creative expression and human experience.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to my mentors at PACM—En. Fairuz Karim, Ms. Amira, En. Latiff, and Ms. Nurkhairiah Sabrina—for their invaluable support. As I move forward in my career, I carry the skills and memories from this remarkable experience. I encourage everyone to visit the ongoing P50 exhibition at Galeri PETRONAS—it is free and a wonderful opportunity to engage with art!

Here's to new beginnings and the hope of bridging psychology and art!

STUDENT STORIES

Sofea Malim Arsyad (BSc Psychology 2024)

From Classroom to Career: Student Intern Experiences - AirAsia



During my internship at AirAsia, I embraced a range of responsibilities that significantly contributed to my professional growth. My daily tasks included organising meetings, planning team engagement events, and creating content for LinkedIn and TikTok. One standout project involved featuring fellow interns on LinkedIn, which really enhanced my communication skills and creativity. This project required collaboration across various departments, allowing me to develop essential networking skills.

Drawing from my previous leadership roles in university clubs—like organising events and managing social media for a sports team—I felt well-prepared to take on these challenges at AirAsia. These experiences helped me effectively plan events and create engaging content.

The vibrant company culture at AirAsia played a crucial role in making me feel welcome and included. My colleagues were incredibly supportive, and my mentor, Michelle, provided guidance and encouragement throughout my internship. She always checked in on me, making sure I felt like part of the team.

Additionally, the diverse environment taught me valuable lessons in open-mindedness. I learned not to judge others based on appearances, which I know will make me a more attractive candidate to future employers.

Overall, my internship was a rewarding blend of professional development and personal enjoyment. The unique view of airplanes from my desk and the welcoming atmosphere made each day fulfilling and memorable.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Supporting the research and operations of the Nicol David Organisation by Vignesh Alagappa, BSc Psychology with Management 2024



The Nicol David Organisation (NDO), located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur, is making a significant impact on the lives of children through a unique blend of sport and education. Founded by renowned squash player Datuk Nicol David and visionary Mariana de Reyes, NDO is dedicated to empowering young girls and boys, particularly those from mid- to low-income families, through its flagship programme, "Little Legends."

The "Little Legends" programme, based at the Bukit Jalil KL Golf & Country Resort, offers a comprehensive after-school experience. It includes high-quality squash training, essential English tutoring, life skills workshops, and a nutrition plan—all subsidised for families from B40 and M40 income groups. The programme caters to 110 children aged 9 to 10 from local primary schools like SJKT Ladang Bukit Jalil, SK Bukit Jalil, SK Seri Petaling 1, and SK Seri Petaling 2. This initiative is creating a new generation of resilient, confident, and capable young individuals.

NDO's approach to child development is multi-faceted. The English classes in "Little Legends" go beyond basic language instruction. They are designed to improve communication and cognitive skills through interactive and practice-based methods. For children struggling with reading comprehension, the Reading Club offers tailored one-on-one sessions that adjust text difficulty to match each child's level, enhancing literacy and self-confidence.

A noteworthy addition is the positive psychology module focused on teaching life skills including gratitude, happiness, and character strengths. By incorporating concepts like learned optimism into engaging activities, the programme equips children with psychological tools to face challenges and build resilience, aligning with developmental psychology principles.

Squash training is a cornerstone of NDO's programme, offering more than just physical exercise. It fosters discipline, teamwork, and perseverance. Children are grouped by skill level for personalised coaching and are regularly assessed through proficiency scores and inter-school tournaments. This structured approach helps them refine their skills, set goals, and experience the link between effort and achievement.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



NDO employs rigorous methods to track progress. English classes feature standardised exams and weekly spelling bees, while squash uses proficiency scores and frequent tournaments to keep students motivated. The organisation also conducts surveys and assessments to monitor psychological growth, including self-confidence and self-efficacy.

The Ibu Legends programme extends NDO's impact to the children's families, focusing on the mothers. It offers workshops on healthy living, nutrition, and mental wellness, empowering mothers to make positive changes that benefit their entire household. This holistic approach ensures that the positive effects of NDO's programmes resonate throughout the community.

NDO has been a valuable partner for students from Heriot-Watt University, offering opportunities for research, teaching, and coaching internships as well as full time graduate employment opportunities. Heriot-Watt students have engaged in research on child psychology at NDO, benefiting from the organisation's focus on positive and developmental psychology. This collaboration provides a rich environment for academic exploration and professional development.

Datuk Nicol David was recently installed as the Heriot-Watt Pro-Chancellor Malaysia. Furthermore, her exceptional achievements were recognised by the university in 2022 when she was presented with an Honorary Degree for her contribution to sport and her support of empowering lives through education.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

From the left: Datuk Nicol David, Vignesh Alagappa and Mariana de Reyes



My journey as a research intern and psychology student at NDO has been transformative. Professionally, I have explored topics such as self-efficacy and positive psychology, contributing to initiatives like the Ibu Legends programme and the positive psychology module. These experiences have sharpened my research skills and demonstrated the real world impact of psychology-based interventions.

On a personal level, NDO's supportive and positive work culture, coupled with the inspiration from leaders like Datuk Nicol and Mariana, has been motivating. Witnessing the growth and achievements of the children has been the most rewarding aspect of my experience at NDO.

For psychology students, NDO offers a unique platform to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings. The organisation's integration of psychological principles into its programmes provides invaluable experience that can shape future careers in educational psychology, child development, and community outreach. NDO is not just a workplace; it's a launchpad for meaningful careers dedicated to making a difference.

NDO's innovative programmes and commitment to holistic child development are creating a positive ripple effect in Kuala Lumpur. By combining sports, education, and psychological principles, NDO is empowering a new generation of young individuals and extending its impact throughout the community.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Oasis Place contributes to MAPSA 2024



Oasis Place Sdn Bhd is a leading provider of mental health and wellness services in Malaysia, dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for individuals facing psychological challenges. With a multidisciplinary team of professionals, Oasis Place specialises in delivering personalised care through innovative therapeutic approaches. Their commitment to fostering mental well-being extends to various demographics, including children, adolescents, and adults.

In addition to their services, they also offer valuable internships and volunteering opportunities, allowing individuals to gain hands-on experience and contribute to mental health initiatives. By integrating evidence-based practices and a compassionate approach, Oasis Place aims to empower individuals to achieve their full potential and thrive in their personal and professional lives.

We were thrilled to have Ms. Wichitra Phon as one of our esteemed plenary speakers at the Malaysian Psychology Student Assembly 2024. Her presentation, titled “Assistive Technology for Neurodivergent Individuals,” was both enlightening and impactful.

Ms. Wichitra Phon is a Clinical Psychologist who is currently working towards memberships of the Malaysian Society of Clinical Psychology (MSCP) and the Malaysian Allied Health Professional Council (MAHPC). She has four years of experience with neurodiverse children and has conducted assessments and therapy with adults during her training in government hospitals. Passionate about mental health, Wichitra specialises in fostering well-being and raising awareness in the community, utilising Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) as her main therapeutic modalities.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The HWUM Psychology Society

Psychology Society Organisational Chart



A warm welcome to new and returning students, as well as to lecturers. Our contributions to the newsletter will include a variety of information, especially on upcoming Psychology Society events.

Many activities are more effectively done with a companion compared to alone. It is imperative to reach out to other people when obstacles hinder certain goals or activities that one wants to achieve.

These companions may include family, personal tutors, lecturers, and many more.

On the topic of having a warm welcome, the recent weather has been more than warm and not very welcoming, with temperatures in Malaysia reaching up to 35 degrees Celsius (MetMalaysia, 2024). It is important to maintain constant hydration and attempt to cool oneself as much as possible to prevent adverse physical or mental effects (ReliefWeb, 2024). It may be common knowledge that living in places with hot temperatures may cause a higher chance of heat strokes; however, there is also evidence that heat may cause one to be more aggressive and even exacerbate existing mental conditions (Anderson, 2024; ReliefWeb, 2024). With that in mind, do not forget to drink water and keep yourself cool!

Throughout the academic year, many events have been planned by the Psychology Society that may help improve one's well-being and give you an enjoyable time while also providing you with an insight into psychology and its application in real-world scenarios. We hope you take the time out of your busy day or schedule to attend these events for a well-deserved break or even a break from the boredom that one may feel.

Speaking of boredom, did you know that changing bad habits is harder when you try to stop performing the habitual behaviour rather than doing something altogether new to build new habits? Therefore, if you would like to change a bad habit, it is better to think of ways to replace the habit with something positive rather than reflecting on how to avoid repeating bad habit.

ALUMNI INSIGHTS



(From the left) Rachel, Nasuha, Cathia, Hani, Nur Ain, Emilia, Siti Hamimah, and Surain

Good afternoon! Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview with us. We are Cathia and Nasuha, and we are the interviewers for today. Would you mind briefly introducing yourselves for our dear readers?

 Cathia & Nasuha

 Rachel

So my name is Rachel and I took a Masters in Business Psychology at Heriot-Watt in 2015. I graduated in 2016.

 Surain

So I'm Surain, I'm a psychology graduate from the year 2022, and that's pretty much it for now. So after graduation, I joined Ernst and Young Consulting, going to the field of people and consulting - everything under the people in HR school basically.

 Emilia

Hi, I'm Emilia. I graduated last year from the Psychology with Management course. Currently I am a talent acquisition analyst at Gentari.

ALUMNI INSIGHTS

So why did you choose to pursue your studies at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia?

 Cathia & Nasuha

 Rachel

I chose to take my Masters here because at that time Heriot-Watt was the pioneer in Masters in Business Psychology and knowing Heriot-Watt's reputation and the connections that I could make, that's what motivated me to choose Heriot-Watt.

 Surain

I actually had a Foundation of Engineering right across the lake at Multimedia University. But then I kind of found people more interesting than machines to some extent. And then that made me want to actually switch over to psychology. I was looking at what countries had stronger fields and I think Scotland is very strong in psychology. I couldn't go there because of the pandemic. So I came across the lake to here and I haven't looked back ever since then.

Does the quality of the programme meet your expectations and why?

 Cathia & Nasuha

 Rachel

I think that the quality that I was expecting at HWU, actually exceeded my expectations, because I learned a lot of things here, a lot of practical skills, a lot of theoretical skills as needed in my current line of work. And I would say that throughout this, throughout the time I was here, I really, really managed to brush up my skills and make a lot of connections at the same time.

 Emilia

I think initially I went in with no expectations because as a student, just freshly graduated from high school, you don't really know what to expect. But I believe HWU has went above and beyond in a sense where I was sufficiently exposed to psychology elements and also business elements. And I believe what I've learned here definitely helped me in my future prospects.

ALUMNI INSIGHTS

How would you describe the quality of teaching staff and the extent to which they supported you throughout your studies?

 Cathia & Nasuha

 Surain

The staff here are generally very student oriented. They don't just want to teach you, they want to understand why are you here and what they can do for you. So there's always this student needing support and then lecturers are going to give support. But how do we bridge that gap? I think the lecturers here have figured out a way to make that work. I think it's nice that the lectures here add a very personal touch to it until you're coming back.

 Emilia

My lecturers were definitely very helpful, I actually learned a lot. They're all very supportive in the sense where they tried to make the class very engaging. And from then on if I had questions, they would support me and if I had any problems even outside of class problems, they were very supportive.

Do you think that this undergraduate/postgraduate degree increases your chances of contributing to the work force?

 Cathia & Nasuha

 Rachel


I think that it definitely does because I will say that I learned skills that not many other degrees would teach. So for instance, I learned about diversity in the workforce and that's very important these days because you know, globalisation, a lot of international companies are opening up here with cross cultural implications, all those kinds of things. I would say that it really helped improve my employability.

 Emilia

I definitely agree on that because I believe during this degree at HWU, they didn't just teach me subjects. It wasn't just psychology or business. I learned professional ethics and how to act in the workplace. I also learned how to create PowerPoint presentations and present effectively and that really helped me a lot, especially now that I'm working. I realised I was really, really thankful that I went to HWU.

ALUMNI INSIGHTS

What advice would you give a student that is considering coming to Malaysia and studying at Heriot-Watt?

 Cathia & Nasuha

 Rachel

I will say it's very important to have fun whilst you're studying at the same time because there's plenty of time for work later. But by coming to Malaysia, I will say that you would have a lot of opportunities to explore different cultures, experience different foods and all those kinds of things. So I would say have fun at the same time.

 Surain

So it's a beautiful campus and being from Kuala Lumpur, it's already a benefit especially coming from the outside. You're not just coming here to study. You're coming here to see what the culture is like. And we're generally very reserved people. But as you get to know us, you get to know the people around here, you get to explore more of the country. So that is one thing I would say to foreign students who are coming. I have met so many foreign students as well in my time here and they have decided to stick around for the most part. So it's been good.

 Emilia

Malaysia in and of itself is very multicultural. There's a lot of cultures, a lot of experiences that you get to have. So just embrace the experience as it is, the good, the bad and the joy.

FEATURE ARTICLE

HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY'S COACHING LAB PARTNERS WITH EMCC GLOBAL TO ELEVATE COACHING STANDARDS WORLDWIDE



Heriot-Watt University (HWU) has become the first UK university to partner the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC Global), a leading professional body in coaching, mentoring and supervision. On 29 May 2024, HWU's Coaching Lab, which supports staff and students at campuses in Scotland, Dubai and Malaysia, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the international professional coaching body, EMCC Global, and its geographical affiliates. The signing took place at HWU's Edinburgh Business School.

The partnership aims to develop joint research projects, and establish continuing professional development that combines research and practice. Students will benefit from networking events with industry leaders, training sessions, workshops, and pathways to becoming registered coaches and fully accredited members of EMCC Global.

Professor Angus Laing, Executive Dean of the Edinburgh School and the School of Social Sciences, signed the MoU alongside representatives from EMCC Global and its affiliates. Professor Laing said: "Our partnership with the EMCC marks a significant milestone in the field of coaching. By bridging academia with industry expertise, this collaboration not only amplifies opportunities for students but also enhances the landscape of professional development. Together, we're shaping the future of coaching, equipping individuals to reach their potential and driving career advancement."

Dr Ke Guek-Nee, Director of the Heriot-Watt University Coaching Lab and a driving force behind this MoU, highlighted how coaching and mentoring have become increasingly popular with organisations and individuals to facilitate personal and professional growth. She said: "This Memorandum of Understanding marks a pivotal stride in propelling the Coaching Lab's goals. Our approach, blending academic rigor with practical expertise, is designed to empower and elevate the impact of both students and staff coaches on personal and organisational development. This strategic collaboration harmonises seamlessly with the university's vision of being a pioneer in education, collectively working towards fostering a globally connected university."

The MoU promises to create new opportunities for collaboration between all parties, leveraging the global reach of Heriot-Watt's Coaching Lab, which is a central point for coaching psychology and coaching research across the university. A heartfelt appreciation for the dedication of the founding members, Dr Dasha Grajfoner, Dr Ke Guek Nee and Dr Lucy Bolton.

For more details about the university's Coaching Lab, visit <https://coaching.site.hw.ac.uk/>

ACHIEVEMENTS

Best Impact Coach Award 2024



Dr Joel Yap (second from the left), from the Department of Psychology, with the other award recipients.

Celebrating Excellence in Coaching: The Best Impact Coach Award



The Best Impact Coach Award at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (HWUM) recognises outstanding contributions to student development, embodying the university's commitment to nurturing holistic education and personal growth. This prestigious accolade is awarded to a coach whose dedication, mentorship, and innovative approach have significantly impacted the lives of students, fostering their academic, professional, and personal success.

This year's Best Impact Coach Award recipient, Dr. Joel Yap, has demonstrated remarkable excellence through his outstanding contributions. Dr. Joel has consistently shown strong leadership, inspiring students to pursue excellence and guiding them with empathy and wisdom during challenging times. He has implemented innovative coaching techniques that have greatly improved student engagement and learning outcomes. His coaching style is both dynamic and evidence-based, providing students with the highest quality support. Dr. Yap's unwavering commitment to student success is evident in his personalised coaching approach, where he takes the time to understand each student's unique needs and aspirations. By fostering a growth mindset, Dr. Yap has empowered students to face challenges, learn from failures, and persevere. His encouragement has helped students build resilience and maintain a positive outlook on lifelong learning. Furthermore, Dr. Yap has been a dedicated advocate for inclusivity and diversity, ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, feel supported and included in the HWUM community.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Senior Fellow status (SFHEA)

HWUM Assistant Professor achieves Senior Fellow status (SFHEA)



A distinguished faculty member from the Psychology Department at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia's (HWUM) School of Social Sciences has recently attained Senior Fellow (SFHEA) status from the Higher Education Academy (HEA). Dr. Joel Yap was honoured with a certificate and recognition for his accomplishments last November.

Dr Joel's expertise and leadership in teaching have been acknowledged according to the UK Professional Standards Framework for Teaching and Learning support in Higher Education. His contributions have met the Advance HE criteria, which emphasise implementing influential and effective practices of high-quality learning in Higher Education and beyond. "This achievement is a testament to a shared commitment to excellence. I am deeply thankful for the invaluable lessons learned, the inspiring colleagues I met, and the transformative experiences that have shaped my educational journey. This achievement is not just a personal triumph but also a collective celebration of the boundless possibilities that unfold when passion aligns with purpose," expressed Dr. Joel. The SFHEA is awarded by the HEA, a member-led, sector-owned charity that collaborates with institutions and Higher Education bodies worldwide to enhance education for staff, students, and society.

EVENTS

HWUM Psychology Conference 2024



Navigating the 'Pathways to Happiness': Insights from the Heriot Watt University Malaysia Psychology Conference 2024

On the 16th of April 2024, the Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (HWUM) Psychology Department hosted the inaugural Heriot-Watt University Malaysia Psychology Conference 2024 (HWUMPC). The event featured invited speakers and current students who came together to share various psychological perspectives on the theme of 'Pathways to Happiness' and present findings from their research projects. They were joined by industry professionals, alumni, friends of the department and family members who congregated as a united and supportive community. With a robust itinerary packed with enlightening sessions, engaging discussions, and vibrant networking opportunities, attendees were afforded a transformative experience. The day commenced with a warm welcome as participants gathered for registration, accompanied by a light breakfast. Conversations buzzed with anticipation as professionals, students, and alumni alike prepared for the upcoming excitement of events. The highlight of the morning was the Happiness Forum. Final year undergraduate Psychology student Sandhya Sathesh moderated an interactive panel discussion that fostered a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of human well-being. Esteemed panel members included Datuk Nicol David, Ms. Mariana De Reyes, Prof Ir Eurlng Ts Dr Vinesh Thiruchelvam and Dr. Joel Yap, who exchanged perspectives, strategies, and experiences related to cultivating happiness in diverse contexts. The afternoon session showcased the talent and innovation of emerging scholars through a series of parallel sessions featuring student presentations. Talking about their research topics, their findings and their implications, students captivated the audience with their passion for psychology and purpose-driven approach to research.

EVENTS

International Islamic School Workshop



Heriot-Watt University Malaysia Hosts Engaging Psychology Workshop at International Islamic School Malaysia

Heriot-Watt University Malaysia recently conducted an enlightening psychology workshop at the International Islamic School Malaysia (IISM). The session was led by Dr. David Barron and Ms. Aisyah Zulkipli, with assistance from Ahmad Aqeel bin Ahmad Fuad, aiming to introduce students to psychological concepts through interactive activities.

The session began with Dr. Barron explaining the field of psychology, its contributions to the world, and debating whether it is a science. Following this introduction, students were divided into two groups to participate in interactive psychological tests.



Dr. Barron conducted the Wisconsin Card Sorting Task (WCST) with the first group, assessing their cognitive flexibility and problem-solving skills. Simultaneously, Ms. Aisyah guided the second group through the Picture Completion Test, evaluating their visual perception and cognitive functioning. After completing these activities, the groups switched, allowing all students to experience both tests.

The workshop concluded with a Q&A session, where students posed questions to Dr. Barron and Ms. Aisyah, deepening their understanding of the subject. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with students appreciating the interactive and informative nature of the session.

Dr. Barron and Ms. Aisyah thanked IISM for hosting the event and praised the students for their enthusiastic participation.

This workshop by Heriot-Watt University Malaysia underscores the importance of interactive learning and academic outreach, sparking a keen interest in psychology among the students.

EVENTS

Moments of Gratitude: Iftar with Classmates

Psychology Students Host Memorable Iftar Picnic at Dataran Putrajaya



The potluck featured an array of delicious dishes brought by the students and staff. The spread included aromatic Nasi Briyani, a variety of pasta dishes, delectable cakes, assorted snacks, and refreshing sodas. The diversity of the food mirrored the rich and vibrant community of psychology students, each contributing their unique flavours to the feast.

The event was graced by the presence of several esteemed faculty members, including Ms. Aisyah Zulkipli, Dr. Poh Wei Lin, and Prof. Glenn Hitchman. Their attendance added a special touch to the evening, allowing students to interact with them in a relaxed, informal setting. Conversations flowed easily, with students and faculty alike enjoying the chance to get to know each other better outside the classroom.

The weather was perfect, adding to the pleasant ambiance of the picnic. The clear skies and gentle breeze created an ideal backdrop for the event, as everyone gathered on the green lawns of Dataran Putrajaya. Laughter and cheerful chatter filled the air as students shared stories, experiences, and plans for the future. This Iftar picnic was more than just a gathering; it was a celebration of community and camaraderie. It provided a wonderful opportunity for students and faculty to bond, fostering a sense of unity and belonging within the Psychology Department. The success of the event is a testament to the spirit of cooperation and friendship that defines the Heriot-Watt University Malaysia community.

As the evening came to a close, the smiles and happy faces were a clear indication of the event's success. It was a lovely time for all who attended, filled with delicious food, meaningful conversations, and lasting memories.

EVENTS

Beach Cleaning in Port Dickson



On May 15, the Psychology Department arranged a day trip with Professor Glenn Hitchman, Dr. Ron Salden and 11 psychology students. This activity was carried out in Port Dickson, located on the Western coast of Peninsular Malaysia. During this trip, we had the privilege of exploring several remarkable destinations that left a lasting impact on us.

One of the highlights of the trip was visiting the renowned Blue Lagoon Beach. This serene stretch of coastline, with its crystal-clear waters and pristine white sand, provided a tranquil escape from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. While there, we had the chance to partake in a meaningful beach cleanup initiative, where we joined local volunteers in removing litter and debris from the shoreline. This not only allowed us to contribute to the preservation of the natural environment but also gave us a deeper appreciation for the importance of sustainable tourism practices.

Another fascinating highlight of the Port Dickson excursion was our visit to the turtle hatchery located in the Glory Beach Resort. We observed rescued sea turtles being cared for and also gained insight into the process of their egg-laying, along with the precautions and techniques employed in handling the eggs. The turtle hatchery visit allowed us to witness firsthand the efforts being made to protect these endangered creatures and their habitats.

The trip to Port Dickson was truly a memorable and enriching experience. The opportunity to engage in meaningful activities such as the beach cleanup and visiting the turtle hatchery not only allowed students to connect with the natural beauty of the area but also deepened their understanding of the importance of environmental conservation and wildlife protection.

EVENTS

MAPSA 2024



On 19th October 2024, the Malaysian Psychology Students Assembly Conference (MAPSA) 2024 was successfully convened at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, welcoming 433 participants from 16 universities across Malaysia under the inspiring theme, “Psychology: Making an Impact.” The event brought together Malaysia’s vibrant psychology community and served as an exciting platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing, highlighting how psychology can transform lives and society. This year’s conference was made possible by the steadfast support of the management team: Professor Mushtak Al-Atabi, Professor Dr. Yin Ling Lai, Ms. Hiew Kwee Sen, and Dr. Jimmy Tam. Reflecting on the event’s success, the conference chair, Dr. Ke Guek Nee, shared: “Leading MAPSA 2024 was inspired by my passion for fostering collaboration among psychology students.”

This conference serves as a vital platform for exchanging perspectives and research ideas. My hope is that attendees have taken full advantage of this opportunity to build connections and gain valuable insights. MAPSA 2024 continues the tradition of uniting universities across the nation, creating a collaborative environment for psychology programmes. This conference has nurtured the next generation of psychologists, empowering them to fulfill their roles with pride and social responsibility, ultimately contributing positively to society, the nation, and the world.”

EVENTS

MAPSA 2024



The Head of the Psychology Department, Professor Glenn Hitchman, added, “It has been inspiring to see so many talented students and professionals come together, sharing ideas that can shape the future of our field. Events like this serve as a reminder that psychology is not just an academic pursuit but a tool to help us mobilise our purpose into a positive impact on the world. I am very proud of the participants and organisers who made this event a success, and I look forward to seeing how the insights gained here will be applied to improve lives and communities across Malaysia and beyond.”



This year’s conference was symbolised by a unique unicorn mascot. As Scotland's national symbol, the unicorn represents ‘Purity and Strength,’ qualities that embody the spirit of innovation and unity.

The conference began with an engaging pre-conference workshop on 18th October 2024, delivered by psychology experts in their respective fields. Topics included “Building Effective Communication and Interpersonal Skills in Psychology,” “Strengthening Awareness: Recognising Sexual Harassment and Bystander Intervention Strategies,” “Decolonising Clinical Training: Enhancing Culturally Competent Psychological Practice through Inclusivity and Social Justice,” “Advancing Market Research with Eye Tracking: A Data-Driven Approach to Consumer Insights,” and many more. These sessions set the stage for an inspiring day of knowledge sharing.



EVENTS

MAPSA 2024

Our dynamic student MCs, Syifaa Syahirah and Nasuha Muhammad Ali Jr, guided participants through the packed agenda with enthusiasm. Syifaa was among the first batch of Psychology alumni at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia. She completed her Foundation, Bachelor's degree in Psychology with Management, and Master's in Business Psychology at Heriot-Watt, and she is currently pursuing her PhD under the James Watt Scholarship at the same university. Nasuha, currently in her final year, was the President of the Psychology Society for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Exciting keynote speakers lined up for MAPSA 2024. Our first keynote speaker was Professor Glenn Hitchman, who gave a fascinating talk *Introducing Malaysia to Parapsychology: The Controversial Science*.

Our second keynote speaker was Dr. David Barron, the Director of Research and Enterprise at HWUM. Dr. Barron gave a talk on *The Impact of an Aging Body Image on Mind and Mood*. We were then honored to hear from our final keynote speaker, Dr. Ke Guek Nee, who is also the Director of the Coaching Lab and Associate Director of Research, as she spoke about her groundbreaking work at the intersection of coaching and psychology, related to this year's theme, *Psychology: Making an Impact*.



EVENTS

MAPSA 2024



MAPSA 2024 was a resounding success, showcasing the incredible potential of psychology to shape the future. We look forward to continuing this journey of discovery and impact in future assemblies.

A special thanks goes to Dr. Ke Guek Nee, Chairperson of MAPSA 2024, for her leadership, and Professor Glenn Hitchman, Head of the Department of Psychology at Heriot-Watt University, for his invaluable support.

Heartfelt gratitude goes to the organising committee, the Department of Psychology, the Psychology Society, and our dedicated intern, Nur Zahirah, for their hard work in making the conference a success. We would also like to extend our gratitude to our sponsors, SDS Associates and OASIS Place, for their support.

The event concluded with the announcement of the Best Oral and Poster Presentations. Congratulations to Vivienne Kok from Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, who won the Best Oral Presentation for her research on The Impact of School Cultures and Parental Influence on Job Performance Among Adult Graduates from Malaysian Secondary Schools, and to Jia Yee Choo from Monash University, the winner of the Best Poster Presentation for her research on A Quantitative Study of AIDS Causal Attributions and Stigma Among Yi and Han Chinese in Southwest China.

UPCOMING EVENTS



EDITED BY



AHMAD AQEEL BIN
AHMAD FUAD

PSYCHOLOGY INTERN



NUR ZAHIRAH BINTI
ABDUL HANIF

PSYCHOLOGY INTERN

For more information please contact: 

Professor Glenn Hitchman (Head of Department): g.hitchman@hw.ac.uk

Dr Ron Salden (Undergraduate Programme Director): r.salden@hw.ac.uk

Dr Mandy Wong (Postgraduate Programme Director): s.c.wong@hw.ac.uk

Follow us

Facebook: [/hwumalaysia](https://www.facebook.com/hwumalaysia)

X: [@hwumalaysia](https://twitter.com/hwumalaysia)

Youtube: [/@HeriotWattUniversityMalaysia](https://www.youtube.com/@HeriotWattUniversityMalaysia)

Instagram: [heriotwattmalaysia](https://www.instagram.com/heriotwattmalaysia)

www.hw.edu.my

Open for consultation:

Monday to Friday (9AM - 5PM) and Weekends (10AM - 4PM) except Public Holidays

Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (DULN007(WP))

No 1 Jalan Venna P5/2, Precinct 5, 62200 Putrajaya, Malaysia

Phone: +60 3 8894 3888

Fax: +60 3 8894 3999

WhatsApp: +60 12-651 2599

Email: hwum@hw.ac.uk