

# Two British Council grants for Sunway

SUNWAY University College is the first private institution in the country to receive two British Council grants in one year.

The first is to assist with the introduction of three masters' degrees while the other is to support the development of a joint research project in the area of mobile phone technology and large public screens.

Vice-chancellor Prof Jarlath Ronayne is proud of the award, which totals RM542,000, and sees further collaboration with Lancaster University in UK.

"This is an example of collaboration with a foreign university that goes way beyond the validation of degree courses and financial benefit for the foreign partner," he said.

"It is a true partnership where the development of the younger institution is a vital part of the affiliation."

The three masters' degrees which are targeted to start in 2009 are in law and management; money, banking and finance; and management.

The grant is administered by British Council and, at the initiative of Prof John Mackness of Lancaster University Management School, the joint application was made for the funds.

"Documentation has been sent through QA procedures in UK and they are concentrating their efforts in designing the courses with e-learning content," said Ronayne.

"Studies will be in part-time mode for 18 months. We will start off with 70 per cent Lancaster staff, which will boost the response to the government's request for homegrown university degrees."

Currently, the Sunway-Lancaster partnership hosts a number of undergraduate programmes. Among them are studies in accounting and finance; business management; business; information systems; information technology; multimedia systems; hospitality management; tourism management and psychology.

The degree programme offered by Sunway University College's subsidiary, Sunway TES, offers students a fast-track route to professional qualifications.

The three-month internship programme during the second year of the course will be counted towards the three years required for ACCA membership.

"Students pursuing the programme will also have the chance to enrol in the Ernst & Young programme.

"Lancaster imposes high standards on Sunway and they are serious about getting their stamp on the development of Sunway and their programmes."

Students under the Lancaster programme in Sunway are able to transfer to Lancaster in UK, based on their merits.

The second grant, developed by Sunway's School of Computer Technology (SCT) and led by Prof Rodger Lea, who is visiting from Lancaster, will be used to explore the growing area of mobile computing and in particular, how mobile phones can be used to interact with large screen displays.

This area, although new to SCT, is an established area of research at Lancaster's department of computing where it forms part of their eCampus initiative, itself part of the exciting new research area referred to as "Ubiquitous Computing (UbiComp)".

Under the Sunway-Lancaster partnership, SCT deals with the Department of Computing and Department of Communication at Lancaster.

Both these departments are housed in an European Centre of Excellence, called InfoLab 21, that runs ICT research and development.

"This incubator," said Ronayne, "allows people with great ideas to develop them for commercial purpose.

"With this available to us, we plan to take off our research in UbiComp to higher levels."

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