

Get the best of both worlds

THE School of Education and Cognitive Science at Asia e University (AeU) offers a Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Education (GDipECE), a unique qualification designed solely for practising preschool teachers.

The programme is fully accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) and is pegged at Level 6 – bachelor degree according to the Malaysian Qualifications Framework.

The normal entry requirement is a diploma or STPM, but with accreditation of prior and experiential learning (Apel), applicants with at least two years' experience in early childhood settings and SPM, O-Levels or UEC may apply.

Applicants are required to sit for an aptitude test and submit a portfolio of their experience, which will be evaluated accordingly.

According to AeU's School of Education and Cognitive Science dean, Prof Dr John Arul Phillips, the GDipECE curriculum adheres closely to programme standards for Early Childhood Education (2014) by MQA.

The programme is designed to equip teachers with knowledge, skills, competencies and values for developing a holistic child under their care.

Students pursuing the programme will relate their practice to theories underlying child growth and development, as well as techniques for teaching science, mathematics, social studies and language to young children.

They will also acquire skills in observing and assessing young learners, guiding the behaviour of children, integrating technology to enhance learning, and leading and managing early childhood centres.

The GDipECE takes about two years to



GDipECE graduate Punithavathy found AeU an ideal place to study due to its affordable fees, flexible study mode and online accessibility.

complete and at the end of it, students will engage in a teaching practicum for 14 weeks in a nursery and kindergarten.

Their teaching skills will then be evaluated by academics and practitioners

from the university.

During the practicum, practitioner students will maintain a record of their teaching, keep a reflective journal, introduce a teaching innovation and have their lessons recorded and uploaded to an online platform to be evaluated by a panel of experts.

Convenient learning

The programme is delivered using a blended pedagogical approach that enables teachers to continue working while studying – an “earn while you learn” method.

All learning materials are provided online, including a self-instructional module (which forms the “must know” content), several short video and audio clips explaining key concepts, theories and application to real-world situations, and quizzes to test comprehension and understanding.

To support their learning, students have 10 hours of face-to-face interaction for each course, which is conducted once a month during weekends.

During these classes, well-qualified tutors discuss compulsory content, demonstrate application of concepts in class, and explain assignments and examination preparations.

Evaluation is based on examinations (40%)

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and assignments (60%).

The assignments are work-based and involve surveys, observations, critique of articles, preparing teaching aids and manipulatives, designing lesson plans and implementing them in their respective classrooms.

Examinations are conducted at the end of each semester, consisting of objective and essay questions. They are held on weekends in close proximity to the student's place of residence.

According to Prof Phillips, GDipECE graduates can also transfer all 68 credits to a Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood Education or ECE) offered by the university. Students need a top-up of about two years to complete the degree.

In short, the GDipECE is a personalised, flexible programme that caters to the needs of practising preschool teachers who want to pursue a diploma without having to give up their work.

Punithavathy Kupasamy, the owner and principal of Taska Day Care Centre in Genting Highlands, graduated with a GDipECE in 2015 at AeU.

She said she enjoyed studying for the GDipECE as the knowledge was relevant and applicable to her job.

A wife and a mother of three grown children, the 44-year-old Punithavathy returned to AeU in 2016 to pursue a Master of Education specialising in ECE.

Her experience with AeU has taught her better multitasking and time management skills.

She would do her assignments after 10pm and spend two hours studying daily.

Punithavathy says she was able to complete her assignments, thanks to the useful time management tips from AeU's academic facilitators.

She adds that AeU is an ideal place to study due to its affordable fees, flexible study mode and online accessibility.

■ Register for the May 2018 intake at <http://www.aeu.edu.my>

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