

Building Capacity for Excellence in International Education

Meet the Leadership Team



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohd Ariffin bin Abu Hassan is an Associate Professor at the Department of Chemical Engineering, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). He obtained his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from UMIST, the United Kingdom, in 2004. Presently, he serves as the Director of UTM International, where he plays a crucial role in advancing UTM's global presence. Through this appointment, he has been selected for other significant posts. Dr. Mohd Ariffin is the first Erasmus+ National Focal Point (ENFP) for Malaysia. He is also the Executive Director and Chair of the Steering Committee of the Asia Technological University Network (ATU-Net), Operational Board Member for the World Technology Universities Network (WTUN), and an Advisory Council Member for the Asia-Pacific Association for International Education (APAIE). His leadership has been instrumental in positioning UTM as a key player in international education and fostering strategic global partnerships. Additionally, his efforts have strengthened UTM's role in global academic networks, enhancing its reputation in both research and international collaboration.



Professor Dr. Erik Lithander, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland and APAIE Advisory Council Member, leads the university's Strategic Engagement portfolio, overseeing internationalisation, alumni relations, marketing, government relations, student recruitment, and sustainability. With prior leadership roles at the University of Bristol and Australian National University, he brings a wealth of experience to his position. Holding a BSc from the London School of Economics and an MPhil and PhD from the University of Cambridge, alongside executive education from the Wharton School and the LH Martin Institute, Professor Lithander has been pivotal in advancing global partnerships, enhancing the university's international reputation. His vision has positioned Auckland as a leader in research and education, while his commitment to sustainability drives efforts to align academic excellence with long-term societal and environmental impact. A passionate advocate for global collaboration, he also chairs the Advisory Board of the New Zealand Centre at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi, furthering academic and cultural ties. His leadership continues to shape the university's forward-thinking approach to addressing global challenges in higher education. Under his direction, the University of Auckland has strengthened its influence across Asia-Pacific, solidifying its role as a hub for international student engagement and academic innovation. His dedication to fostering a globally-minded academic community ensures that the university remains at the forefront of transformative education



Martin Hookham-Simms leads the International Office at the University of Auckland, overseeing international student recruitment, global partnerships, and mobility programs. Previously, at the University of Sussex, he expanded the international team and opened offices in key markets like China, India, and Malaysia, driving significant growth in global engagement. He also launched initiatives like One World Week and collaborated with *The Guardian* on the pioneering Global Student feature. Martin has held leadership roles at the University of Roehampton and is known for his award-winning efforts, including the Tencent Award for Outstanding Support for Chinese Students. His forward-thinking strategies have earned multiple accolades, reflecting his commitment to enhancing the international student experience. With an MBA in Higher Education Management from UCL, Martin's expertise has made him a key figure in shaping global education trends. Beyond his roles, he is passionate about fostering intercultural understanding and building lasting global connections.



Guy Perring is the Regional Director for Asia at Etio, a leading consultancy and benchmarking firm that provides comparative insights to the education sector, with a focus on internationalisation, enhancing the student experience, and helping institutions ensure their students succeed in both employment and citizenship. With over 25 years of experience in education, Guy has worn many hats—ranging from teacher and administrator to market researcher and consultant. His career includes 12 years at the British Council, where he led a Southeast Asian Regional Transnational Education Project, fostering sustainable partnerships between UK and local institutions. A sought-after speaker, Guy has presented at prominent international conferences such as APAIE, Going Global, QS-APPLE, and the Commonwealth of Education Ministers. An alumnus of Manchester and Durham Universities, he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to his role in shaping the future of international education.



Fiona Morris is the Counsellor (Education and Research) at the Australian High Commission in Malaysia, representing Australia's Department of Education. In this pivotal role, she oversees Australia's education, training, and research partnerships with both Malaysia and Singapore, strengthening ties that advance academic and scientific collaboration across borders. With a dynamic career spanning government and education sectors, Fiona has been at the forefront of shaping higher education, research, and science policy. Her global experience includes serving as Counsellor (Education and Research) at the Australian Embassy in Mexico City and Consul (Education and Science) at the Australian Consulate-General in Los Angeles, where she was instrumental in fostering international cooperation. From 2009 to 2017, she played a key leadership role as General Manager of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Sydney, one of Australia's leading research-intensive universities. Fiona's rich background and global perspective make her a driving force in promoting educational excellence and international research collaboration.



Peter Mayr is Director of the International Office of the University of Salzburg, Austria. In this capacity, he mainly works on internationalization and external relations management and heads a small team of wonderful colleagues that implement international university partnerships and student and staff mobility exchange programmes for Salzburg.

Peter represents his university at the Eurasia Pacific UniNet (EPU) - the University of Salzburg currently holds the presidency of the Eurasia Pacific UniNet - Africa-UniNet and the ASEAN UniNet. He is a member of the CIVIS European University working groups for global engagement and student and staff mobility. He also assists the national higher education funding body OeAD as member of the national monitoring group for the implementation of Erasmus+ in Austria, as well as acts as independent expert to the Advisory Board of the first [hashtag#FRONTIERS](#) project funded by the European Research Council. Before his appointment in Salzburg in 2016, he worked as policy advisor for the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development. In 2008 to 2011 Peter held the position of policy officer in the

European Commission - DG Research and Innovation - in Brussels, Belgium.



Assistant Professor Dr. Michelle Soo Oi Yoon is currently serving as the Deputy Dean and Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Applied Sciences at UCSI University, Kuala Lumpur. With a passion for aquatic sciences, she has been teaching in this field since 2017 and is dedicated to providing a comprehensive and hands-on educational experience to her diverse cohort of students. Dr. Michelle's expertise lies in aquatic science, with a particular focus on taxonomy but she is also actively engaged in research related to marine oil spill remediation, a critical area in marine environmental protection. She has successfully led several initiatives at the faculty to enhance the international exposure of students and strengthen academic partnerships with universities abroad. In addition to her role in teaching, Dr. Michelle has contributed to the internationalisation of her faculty where she has led efforts to bring international students to UCSI University for attachments and promotes adjunct lecturing opportunities at partner institutions globally. One of her most recent projects involved organising a field trip for a group of students from an international university, where they participated in research and hands-on learning. Dr. Michelle places a strong emphasis on field-based learning and believes that real-world experiences are essential in developing a deep understanding of aquatic science, which is why field trips and practical research activities are integral components of her teaching methodology.



Professor Dr Vanita Shastri is a distinguished educationist and leader, known for her role as the founding Dean of Global Education & Strategic Partnerships at Ashoka University, where she led international partnerships, student exchanges, and global mobility initiatives. She developed the highly successful Visiting Students' Programme and launched Ashoka's Young Scholars Program, introducing high school students to liberal arts education. As the Founding Dean of Undergraduate Programs, she played a pivotal role in shaping Ashoka's academic excellence, incorporating global best practices into the curriculum. A Cornell Ph.D. and former policy consultant at Harvard, she has taught at leading U.S. institutions, authored influential policy papers, and founded two non-profits, reflecting her dedication to education, social impact, and global collaboration. Shastri's contributions extend beyond academia, as she has been instrumental in developing innovative training programs for students pursuing advanced degrees. Her passion for nurturing future leaders is evident through her mentorship of students and alumni at Ashoka, guiding them in their postgraduate pursuits.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Suresh Ramakrishnan is the Associate Director for Global Strategy & Engagement at UTM International and an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Management at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). In his role, he leads initiatives to strengthen UTM's position in the global academic landscape, overseeing strategic collaborations with universities worldwide. He has played a significant role in establishing UTM as a recognized partner in international education, promoting cross-border knowledge sharing and enhancing UTM's presence in global networks. In addition to his administrative work, Dr. Suresh's research spans corporate finance, quantitative analysis, and financial risk management. He has contributed to over 100 peer-reviewed publications in high-impact journals, addressing topics such as capital structure, corporate social responsibility, and volatility modeling. His research is widely cited and has influenced practices in finance and risk analysis, underscoring his expertise in these domains.



Professor Hon Wei Min is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) - Academic for UOW Malaysia, a position she has held since 2013. As the DVC, Prof. Hon oversee the overall leadership, strategic development, management, operation and financial planning of the academic and research matters of all the institutions of UOW Malaysia. She is also leading the transnational education initiatives of UOW Malaysia with UOW Australia as well as other UOW global network.

Prior to joining UOW Malaysia KDU UC, Prof. Hon helmed senior management and academic leadership positions at a leading private university at Malaysia. Before joining the education industry, Prof. Hon served as the Vice President for a fast-growing regional bio-technology company in Singapore where she spearheaded the Life Science business.

Prof. Hon began her career as a research scientist at a young age immediately after obtaining her Ph.D from National University of Singapore in 1997 and has accumulated many years of research experience. She had also published many peered reviewed journals on the topics of biotechnology and molecular biology.