



Gender Equality

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

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Duduk Sama Rendah, Berdiri Sama Tinggi

SDG 5, which promotes gender equality and empowerment for all, is aptly reflected in the classical Malay peribahasa “*Duduk sama rendah, berdiri sama tinggi*” — signifying that all stand and sit as equals, regardless of gender. At UM, this spirit is realised through women’s access schemes that provide scholarships, mentoring, and supportive provisions to help women pursue their academic and professional goals. These initiatives ensure that women are equipped with the opportunities and resources needed to succeed in their chosen fields.

UM also encourages applications by women in underrepresented disciplines through active outreach and collaboration with schools, universities, and community groups. Women’s mentoring schemes further strengthen these efforts by offering guidance, leadership development, and peer support. Together, these initiatives build confidence, foster role models, and promote inclusion, reinforcing UM’s commitment to advancing gender equality and empowering women to thrive in all areas of academia and beyond.

Women's Access Schemes at Universiti Malaya

Universiti Malaya (UM) actively promotes women's empowerment and equal opportunities through comprehensive access schemes that encompass provision, mentoring, and scholarships in alignment with SDG 5: Gender Equality. These initiatives ensure that women across academic and professional levels receive holistic support — from addressing basic welfare needs to developing leadership capacities and securing financial aid for education. Through these schemes, UM fosters an inclusive environment where women's participation, well-being, and achievements are recognised and advanced.

Under provision-based initiatives, UM introduced the Sanitary Pad Restocking Initiative, ensuring continuous access to menstrual hygiene products for female students, thereby removing barriers that can affect attendance and academic participation. Complementing this, mentoring programmes such as the Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL) Mentoring Program, the “Our Time is Now” Empowerment Talk, and the International Women's Day celebrations cultivate leadership, resilience, and professional growth among women. Additionally, scholarship support such as the Yayasan Perkasa Siswa Fund exemplifies UM's commitment to financial inclusion, enabling deserving women from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue higher education. Collectively, these schemes demonstrate UM's sustained efforts to institutionalise gender equality through tangible welfare support, mentorship, and financial empowerment that benefit present and future generations of female leaders.



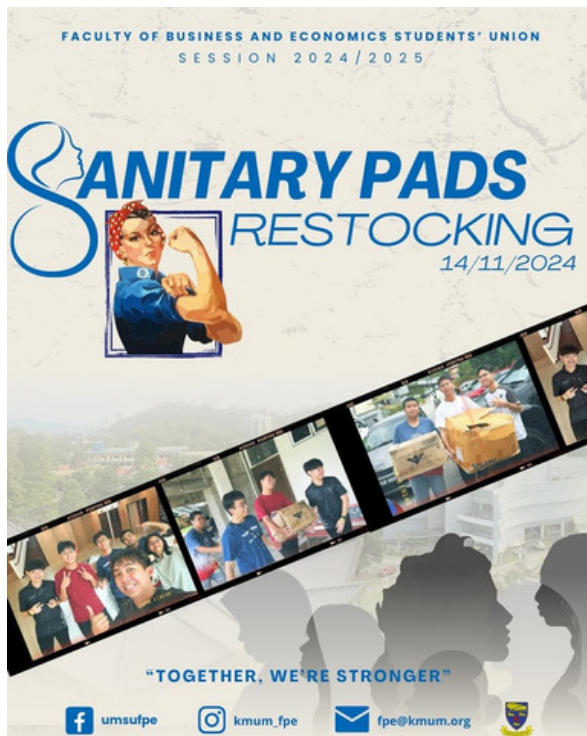
Women's Access Schemes (Provision): Sanitary Pad Restocking Initiative

As part of Universiti Malaya's commitment to SDG 5: Gender Equality, the Universiti Malaya Students' Union (UMSU) Faculty of Business and Economics (FPE) introduced the Sanitary Pad Restocking Initiative in November 2024. The programme aims to break down barriers to education caused by inadequate access to menstrual hygiene products and to promote a more supportive and inclusive campus environment for female students.

Under this initiative, sanitary pad racks have been installed in multiple female restrooms across FPE buildings. Pads are restocked weekly on a consistent basis, with a clear plan to expand coverage to all female toilets within the faculty. This effort is led by student representatives, demonstrating strong student leadership and ownership in promoting gender-sensitive welfare measures.

While initially launched at FPE, the programme is intended to serve as a model for wider adoption across other faculties and residential colleges, benefitting an even larger population of female students. Beyond ensuring access, the initiative also raises awareness about menstrual health and helps normalize conversations around menstrual equity aligning with global best practices on gender-responsive campus policies.

By addressing this essential need, Universiti Malaya demonstrates its commitment to advancing gender equality and empowering female students through tangible welfare support, directly contributing to SDG 5 targets on equal opportunities and inclusive access schemes.



Above: Publicity posters on sanitary pad restocking and their locations in female restrooms, an initiative under the Universiti Malaya Students' Union (UMSU) Faculty of Business and Economics (FPE)

Women's Access Schemes (Mentoring): International Women's Day Celebration

On 8 March 2024, Universiti Malaya hosted its International Women's Day celebration at the Za'ba Memorial Library, officiated by Her Royal Highness Raja Permaisuri of Perak, Tuanku Zara Salim. This event formed part of UM's strategic commitment as a member of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) to champion gender equality and recognise women's contributions across diverse sectors, locally and globally.

The programme featured an art exhibition themed around women, with guided explanations by artist Ms. Zahirah Noor, offering a platform to showcase women's creativity and perspectives.

The event also provided opportunities for dialogue, networking, and appreciation of women's achievements, supporting UM's efforts to create an inclusive academic and cultural environment.

With the collaboration of multiple UM units including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & International) Office, Corporate Communications Centre, Estates Department (JHB), International Relations Centre (IRC), Security Office, and others, the celebration drew 120 participants and received highly positive feedback. This initiative exemplifies UM's proactive approach to empowering women, fostering recognition of their achievements, and creating access schemes through cultural and academic platforms, directly advancing SDG 5: Gender Equality.

5

Right: A screenshot highlighting International Women's Day 2024 at UM. The full video can be viewed on [UM's YouTube page](#)



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024 UM | HIGHLIGHT

Below: Photos from the launch of International Women's Day 2024 at UM



Women's Access Schemes (Mentoring): "Our Time is Now" Empowerment Talk

On 26 April 2024, Watsons Malaysia, in collaboration with UMCares, hosted an empowering International Women's Day event at Universiti Malaya titled "Our Time is Now". The programme featured prominent female role models from diverse fields who shared practical strategies for personal and professional growth, applicable to women and men alike.

Key themes included:

- Work-life balance and holistic well-being (Caryn Loh, MD Watsons) – encouraging self-care, career excellence, and community engagement.
- Self-investment and resilience (Sonya Donita Charles, Vitiligo Association Malaysia) – promoting compassion and confidence.
- Stress management and pursuing dreams (Goh Liu Ying, Olympic medallist; Nor 'Phoenix' Diana, pro-wrestler) – inspiring participants to step outside comfort zones.
- Perseverance and support networks (Dr. Welyne J. Jehom and Dr. Acga Cheng, UM lecturers) – highlighting the role of traditional values, science, and strong support systems.

The event provided a platform for mentoring, knowledge-sharing, and inspiration, fostering an inclusive environment where women's voices and achievements are celebrated. It reflects UM's ongoing efforts to expand access schemes for women, empower future leaders, and advance SDG 5: Gender Equality.

Left: Event poster for Watsons' "Our Time is Now" International Women's Day talk at UM

Below: Photo with six inspiring Malaysian women who shared their stories, experiences, challenges, and achievements



Women's Access Schemes (Mentoring): Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL)

Universiti Malaya continues to advance SDG 5: Gender Equality through its leadership role in the Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL) Mentoring Program, a flagship initiative of the Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU). Co-led by UM and the University of California, Davis, APWiL addresses gender imbalance in academia by providing structured mentoring, leadership development, and intercultural exchange for aspiring female leaders across APRU member universities.

Starting in September 2024 – October 2025, UM is actively involved in the 5th APWiL cohort, with Professor Dr. Yvonne Lim Ai Lian serving as Co-Chair and UM representatives Professor Dr. Yong Zulina Binti Zubairi and Dr. Suat Yan Lai contributing to the Core Group. The programme matches female academic staff (mentees) with senior leaders (mentors) across the Asia Pacific, fostering international exposure, professional growth, and access to leadership pathways.

Through APWiL, participants gain:

- Cross-border mentoring that builds leadership skills and expands professional networks.
- Intercultural exchange addressing unique gender equity challenges across diverse social and academic contexts.
- Role-modelling and advocacy opportunities to inspire systemic change within higher education.

UM's leadership and participation in APWiL demonstrate its commitment to empowering women, strengthening leadership pipelines, and institutionalising access schemes that help close the gender gap in academia and beyond.

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Above: (From left to right) Professor Dr. Yvonne Ai-Lian Lim – Co-Chair of the Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL) Program; Professor Dr. Yong Zulina Binti Zubairi and Dr. Lai Suat Yan – Members

Women's Access Schemes (Mentoring): APWiL International Women's Day Webinar & Mentorship

On 8 March 2024, Universiti Malaya participated in the Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL) International Women's Day webinar themed "Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges." The event highlighted women's diverse roles in society and emphasised the importance of gender equity and equal opportunities across academia and beyond.

The webinar was designed to inspire APWiL mentors, mentees, and other participants by featuring accomplished female leaders as role models who shared personal journeys, leadership strategies, and the value of cross-cultural collaboration. It provided a platform for networking, knowledge-sharing, and mentorship, helping participants overcome structural and cultural barriers while building confidence and leadership skills.

Through UM's membership in APWiL, female academic staff and students gain access to structured mentoring programmes, leadership development opportunities, and regional networking initiatives.

In 2024, UM's APWiL participation has enabled mentees to connect with senior leaders across the Asia Pacific region, fostering a stronger pipeline of female leaders in higher education and research.

This initiative directly contributes to SDG 5: Gender Equality by advancing women's access schemes through:

- Mentorship and role-modelling opportunities for emerging female leaders.
- Capacity-building and leadership skills development for female academics and students.
- Regional collaboration that expands career visibility and professional networks.

By actively engaging in APWiL activities like this webinar, UM demonstrates its commitment to empowering women and building a more inclusive, equitable academic community.



Above: Event poster for the Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL) International Women's Day webinar

Women's Access Schemes (Mentoring): Forum on Empowering Voices – ASEAN Centrality and Women, Peace & Security

In 2024, Universiti Malaya's Asia-Europe Institute (AEI) organised the Forum on Empowering Voices: ASEAN Centrality and Women, Peace and Security (WPS), advancing SDG 5: Gender Equality and the global WPS agenda. The forum aligned with the UN 2030 Agenda's pledge to "leave no one behind" and built upon frameworks such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325, CEDAW, and the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on EVAW.

The programme brought together diplomats, scholars, and practitioners, including female leaders who have broken gender barriers, to discuss ASEAN's role in mainstreaming women's advocacy within peacebuilding and regional security.

Key themes included:

- Women's participation in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, and diplomacy within ASEAN's institutional frameworks.
- Addressing systemic barriers such as domestic violence, trafficking, and limited career mobility in patriarchal societies.
- Promoting ASEAN Community Vision 2045 goals to empower women and girls as agents of peace and stability.

By providing a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and networking, AEI's forum serves as a women's access scheme that equips participants with insights and strategies to influence policy, foster inclusive security approaches, and advance leadership opportunities for women in the region.



Forum on Empowering Voices: ASEAN Centrality and Women, Peace and Security

Above: A screenshot from the forum recording. The full video can be viewed on the [Asia-Europe Institute, Universiti Malaya YouTube channel](#)

Below: Event poster for the Asia Pacific Women in Leadership (APWiL) International Women's Day webinar



Women's Access Schemes (Scholarships): Scholarships for Access and Empowerment

On 23 September 2024, Universiti Malaya (UM) extended financial support to Nur Fatihah Mohammad, a young woman from Batu Gajah, Perak, enabling her to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Geography. Coming from a financially challenged background and having lost both parents, she initially had to decline UM's offer due to financial constraints.

Through the intervention of UM's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) and the Yayasan Perkasa Siswa fund, UM fully sponsored her tuition fees and accommodation for the first year, with provisions for continued assistance or scholarships until graduation. This direct financial aid, coupled with mentoring and support, ensures that women from disadvantaged communities are not excluded from higher education opportunities.

Right: The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) presented financial assistance to a female student to enable her to continue her studies in Geography at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, UM

By providing scholarships and structured support, UM strengthens its women's mentoring schemes, empowering students like Nur Fatihah to achieve their academic aspirations. Such initiatives ensure that women from underrepresented or vulnerable backgrounds can participate in higher education, in line with SDG 5 on Gender Equality.



Women's Mentoring Schemes – Recognition and Reward in Research

On 8 March 2024, Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr. Norma Mansor, Director of the Social Wellbeing Research Centre (SWRC), Universiti Malaya, was honoured with the Tokoh Wanita Kebangsaan CUEPACS 2024 Award. This national recognition celebrates her outstanding contributions to social policy, leadership, and academic excellence.

Prof. Norma's achievement reflects not only her personal distinction but also her longstanding role as a mentor to female students, researchers, and young professionals in the field of social sciences. Her recognition at the national level underscores the visibility of female leaders from UM and serves as a motivating example for the next generation of female scholars.

Right: Photo taken during the award ceremony

By honouring female leaders and showcasing their impact, UM strengthens its mentoring schemes through recognition and reward, inspiring greater female participation in leadership, research, and governance.



Women's Mentoring Schemes – Recognition and Reward in Academia

In conjunction with International Women's Day 2024, two distinguished female academics from Universiti Malaya, Associate Professor Dr. Reena Rajasuriar (Faculty of Medicine) and Professor Dr. Siti Nursheena Mohd Zain (Faculty of Science) were awarded the prestigious Fulbright Malaysia Visiting Scholar Award 2024–2025, sponsored by the U.S. Government.

Both were recognised for their academic excellence and leadership potential, with Dr. Reena collaborating with Columbia University on HIV clinical outcome research and Dr. Siti Nursheena contributing to global efforts in combating neglected tropical diseases at the U.S. National Institutes of Health.

Right: Photo of two UM women academics receiving the Fulbright Malaysia Visiting Scholar Award 2024–2025

Their national and international recognition not only rewards excellence but also strengthens UM's mentoring ecosystem by providing role models for female students and early-career researchers. By showcasing female leaders in science and medicine, UM advances SDG 5 by promoting recognition, reward, and greater female participation in research and global collaboration.

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Women's Mentoring Schemes – Recognition and Reward in Leadership

In 2024, Professor Dr. Hasniza Zaman Huri, Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy, Universiti Malaya, was honoured with the Malaysian Pharmacist Society (MPS) Outstanding Leadership Award 2024. This prestigious recognition highlights her exemplary leadership, outstanding achievements, and contributions to advancing pharmacy practice in Malaysia.

Under her stewardship, the Faculty of Pharmacy achieved the top KPI ranking at UM, was recognised as Malaysia's number one pharmacy school, and secured 72nd place globally in QS rankings for Pharmacy & Pharmacology. Her award not only rewards individual excellence but also serves as an inspiring model for female students and young pharmacists. By celebrating and recognising female leaders in academia and professional practice, UM strengthens its mentoring schemes through role-modelling and rewards, encouraging more women to pursue leadership pathways.



Above: Congratulatory poster for a UM female academic receiving the Malaysian Pharmacist Society (MPS) Outstanding Leadership Award 2024

Women's Mentoring Schemes: Recognition in Technology

In April 2025, Universiti Malaya (UM) was honoured with the Women in Technology Award at the Huawei ICT Asia Pacific Competition 2024–2025, recognising the innovation and excellence of three female talents from UM, namely, Cheu Zi Yuan, Kek Yi Ci, and Chew Ying.

The regional finals, held in Kuala Lumpur, gathered over 110 participants from 12 countries, with UM standing out as a leading institution in nurturing women in ICT. Competing across key areas such as networking, cloud, computing, and innovation, UM's female representatives not only advanced to the Asia Pacific stage but also served as role models for peers across the region.

Right: Female students from UM receiving the Women in Technology Award

This recognition reinforces UM's women's mentoring schemes by rewarding female students who excel in underrepresented fields such as ICT, while motivating wider participation from women in STEM. By celebrating their achievements, UM advances SDG 5 by strengthening pathways for women to gain visibility, recognition, and leadership in the global technology landscape.



Women's Mentoring Schemes: Financial Rewards for Sporting Excellence

On 8 May 2024, Universiti Malaya honoured its outstanding athletes at the Majlis Anugerah Sukan Universiti Malaya (ASUM 2024), celebrating both student and staff contributions to sports development. Among the highlights, national track cyclist Nurul Izzah Mohd Asri, a student of Universiti Malaya, was named Olahragawati UM (UM Female Athlete) after breaking the Asian record in the women's 1 km time trial event at the Asian Track Cycling Championship (ATC) 2025, where she also secured two gold medals.

The award, presented by the Ministry of Higher Education, provided not only recognition but also financial reward, serving as vital encouragement for female athletes to continue excelling at the highest levels. Such incentives strengthen UM's mentoring ecosystem by motivating female students to pursue sports alongside academics, while fostering resilience, leadership, and national pride.

Through structured recognition and financial rewards, UM's sports mentoring schemes ensure that female athletes are supported and celebrated, directly contributing to SDG 5 by empowering women to thrive in both academic and non-academic fields.



Above: A female student-athlete receiving recognition during the Majlis Anugerah Sukan Universiti Malaya

Women's Mentoring Schemes: Recognition and Reward in Sports

In 2024, Universiti Malaya (UM) played a leading role in the Majlis Sukan Universiti Malaysia (MASUM), hosting the Phase 1 Sports Carnival (6–12 May 2024) and the MASUM–UM Alumni Open Chess Championship (14 December 2024). These events not only promoted sports excellence but also highlighted UM's commitment to recognising and rewarding female athletes.

UM presented financial incentives to female medallists, including RM300 to gold medal winners, and significantly, RM3,000 for Olympic-bound athletes. National track cyclist Nurul Izzah Mohd Asri, who broke the Asian record in the 1 km time trial, received a special incentive award of RM10,000 in recognition of her historic achievement.

Such recognition and rewards serve as powerful mentoring mechanisms, encouraging female students and athletes to strive for excellence in sports while reinforcing their value as role models for peers. By embedding structured recognition in sports, UM strengthens women's mentoring schemes and empowers female talents to excel nationally and globally.

Right: Female medallists receiving recognition and rewards



Women's Mentoring Schemes: Recognition and Reward in the Arts of KARVITER

At the Karnival Teater Universiti Malaya (KARVITER'24) held from 22–30 April 2024, Universiti Malaya presented the Anugerah Khas KARVITER to Seniwati Datuk Fauziah Nawawi, recognising her excellence and leadership in theatre and the arts. As a respected figure in Malaysia's performing arts scene, her recognition provided students, particularly female participants in theatre, with a visible role model and mentor figure.

The annual carnival, involving nine residential colleges, showcases student-directed productions and honours achievements across multiple categories, including Pelakon Wanita Terbaik and Pelakon Wanita Harapan. By awarding female icons and celebrating women's contributions, UM creates pathways for mentoring, inspiration, and recognition that encourage greater female participation in the creative industries.

Through recognition and reward mechanisms such as KARVITER, UM strengthens its women's mentoring schemes, ensuring female students engage in structured guidance, peer support, and talent development within the arts and cultural sphere while advancing SDG 5 on Gender Equality.



Above: Female icons receiving recognition during Malam Anugerah KARVITER 2024

Encouraging Women's Applications in Underrepresented Subjects

Universiti Malaya (UM) is committed to promoting gender equality in higher education by encouraging women's participation in disciplines where they are traditionally underrepresented. Through proactive outreach and strategic collaborations with schools, community groups, and student associations, UM nurtures awareness, motivation, and confidence among young women to pursue diverse academic fields. These efforts align with SDG 5: Gender Equality, ensuring equitable access and representation across all areas of study.

UM's outreach programmes, such as educational visits and motivational sessions with secondary and pre-university students, offer first-hand exposure to campus life, academic pathways, and career possibilities. Collaborations with schools like SMK Sri Perak and SMK Seri Keledang, supported by UM's faculties and the Student Affairs Division, connect young women with inspiring lecturers and student mentors. By building aspirations and demystifying university entry, these initiatives strengthen the pipeline for women in underrepresented subjects—empowering future scholars and leaders while advancing national and institutional goals for inclusive education.

Women's Applications in Underrepresented Subjects: Outreach & Motivation

In line with SDG 5, the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FSSS), Universiti Malaya, organised an educational visit with students from SMK Sri Perak, Parit Buntar, Perak. The programme provided secondary school students, many of them girls, with first-hand exposure to university life and academic pathways, aiming to inspire confidence to pursue tertiary studies, including disciplines where women remain underrepresented.

The initiative featured interactive sharing sessions with UM lecturers and students, such as *"Meniti Masa Depan yang Gemilang"* by Dr. Syed Abdul Razak, focusing on self-belief and overcoming perceived limitations. Activities allowed students to explore their potential, engage with academic role models, and gain practical insights into admission processes and university experiences.

By partnering with local schools and fostering social ties with the community, UM helps build motivation and awareness among young women about the possibilities of higher education. Such outreach programmes encourage students to aspire towards diverse fields of study, directly supporting national efforts and UM's vision to expand women's participation in all academic disciplines.

Below: An educational visit with students from SMK Sri Perak, Parit Buntar, Perak



Women's Applications in Underrepresented Subjects: Outreach & Motivation

In December 2024, Universiti Malaya (UM) welcomed 41 Form 6 students and 10 teachers from SMK Seri Keledang, Menglembu, Perak, for an educational campus visit. Hosted by the Student Affairs Division (HEP) with support from the Perak Student Association (PEMARAK), the programme aimed to expose pre-university students, particularly girls, to opportunities for further study at UM, including fields where women are traditionally underrepresented.

The visit included motivational remarks by UM's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (HEP), Prof. Dr. Zamri Radzi, briefings on admission requirements, and tours of key academic units such as the Faculty of Law and Faculty of Medicine. Interactive Q&A sessions with HEP officers and student ambassadors inspired participants to explore diverse academic pathways with confidence.

By engaging directly with young women and their teachers and providing visible female student role models, this outreach helps raise awareness of higher-education options and fosters aspirations to join UM. Such initiatives support SDG 5 by encouraging women's participation across all disciplines through collaboration with schools and student associations.



Above and below: Students and teachers from SMK Seri Keledang, Menglembu, Perak, during an educational campus visit to Universiti Malaya



Women's Mentoring Schemes at Universiti Malaya

Universiti Malaya (UM) continues to strengthen mentoring initiatives that support women's learning and leadership development across disciplines. Programmes such as the Training of Trainers (TOT) Buddies Programme under the Counselling and Disability Empowerment Centre (CCDE) and CareerKit: Makeup Till You Make It! organised by the Graduate Employability & Career Centre (GECC) provide structured peer support and confidence-building opportunities for female students. These initiatives align with SDG 5 by fostering a campus environment that values inclusivity and empowerment.

UM also integrates mentoring elements through community engagement and creative platforms. Activities such as the Women's Day Forum and Mini Carnival by the Faculty of Built Environment, the theatre production "*Wanita dan Senjatanya*" by the Faculty of Creative Arts, and the '*Seminar Pemikiran Pengarang Wanita Serantau 2024*' by the Academy of Malay Studies offer spaces where students can interact with academic staff, professionals, and writers. Through these programmes, UM enhances access to guidance, peer learning, and cross-generational exchange, helping women gain the confidence and networks to navigate academic and professional pathways.

Women's Mentoring Schemes: Outreach & Supportive Campus Culture

From 8 to 10 November 2024, Universiti Malaya organised the Training of Trainers (TOT) Buddies Programme at Seri Menanti Resort, Negeri Sembilan. The initiative prepared UM Buddies peer mentors under the Counselling and Disability Empowerment Centre (CCDE) to act as mental health ambassadors for students across the university.

Through workshops on communication, peer-support techniques, and inclusive mental health awareness, the programme helps create a supportive and safe learning environment for all students, particularly young women. By equipping Buddies with skills to provide guidance and encouragement, this outreach strengthens female students' confidence and wellbeing, enabling them to pursue diverse academic paths, including fields where women are underrepresented.

Such initiatives complement UM's broader efforts to encourage women's participation in all disciplines by ensuring they have access not only to academic opportunities but also to the social and emotional support needed to thrive.



Above: UM Buddies peer mentors under the Counselling and Disability Empowerment Centre (CCDE)

Women's Mentoring Schemes: Career Readiness & Confidence Building

On 30 October 2024, the Graduate Employability & Career Centre (GECC) of Universiti Malaya organised CareerKit: Makeup Till You Make It! — an exclusive workshop designed to enhance female students' professional image and confidence as they transition into the workforce.

Held at Dewan Perdanasiswa 1, the session combined practical grooming techniques with communication skills training, providing mentorship on how to present oneself effectively in interviews and professional settings. Female participants gained hands-on guidance from industry-aligned trainers, empowering them to project confidence and credibility in their career journeys.

This initiative contributes to UM's women's mentoring schemes by equipping female students with soft skills and professional support networks that complement academic learning.



Above: Event poster for CareerKit: Makeup Till You Make It!

Women's Mentoring Schemes: Empowerment Through Creative Arts

From 5–7 February 2024, the Department of Drama, Faculty of Creative Arts, Universiti Malaya, staged “*Wanita dan Senjatanya*” (Fefu and Her Friends by María Irene Fornés, adapted and directed by Dr. Marlenny Deenerwan). The production, performed at UM's Experimental Theatre, brought together female students and creative mentors in a powerful exploration of women's experiences, resilience, and trauma.

The theatre project not only served as artistic expression but also functioned as a mentoring platform where female students collaborated closely with academic staff and industry practitioners. Through this engagement, students gained guidance in performance, stage management, and critical storytelling, skills that build confidence and leadership capacities transferable beyond the arts.



Above: Theatre poster for a production by female students and creative mentors

Women's Mentoring Schemes: Inspiring Female Leadership

On 22 March 2024, the Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Malaya, held the Ramadhan Celebration: Women's Day Event featuring a mini carnival and inspirational forum. The programme highlighted female leaders, including Dr. Siti Norwahida Shukeri (CEO of The Prayer Mat Malaysia, Assistant Professor at UBD, Brunei) and Dr. Noor Aniah Azmi (Ophthalmologist, Ikonik Eye Specialist Centre), who shared their journeys in leadership, entrepreneurship, and healthcare.

Through open dialogue with female role models, the event offered mentoring opportunities and showcased diverse career pathways. The involvement of student associations and community entrepreneurs fostered idea-sharing and support networks. Supporting SDG 5, the initiative embeds women's mentoring schemes into campus activities, encouraging mentorship, confidence-building, and leadership among women in the UM community.



Above: Ramadhan Celebration: Women's Day event poster

Women's Mentoring Schemes: Empowering Women Writers Across Borders

On 7 November 2024, the Academy of Malay Studies, Universiti Malaya, with PENA, GAPENA, and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP), hosted the *Seminar Pemikiran Pengarang Wanita Serantau 2024* at Dewan Semarak. The event brought together 178 participants, including 16 female presenters from Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, and Thailand, to discuss women writers' roles in addressing humanitarian issues.

The seminar offered mentoring opportunities for female students and emerging writers to engage with established authors such as Sasterawan Negara Datuk Zurinah Hassan. Discussions examined women's evolving voices in literature, from traditional narratives to modern debates on humanism, liberalism, and Islam. By fostering mentorship and dialogue, the initiative strengthened women's participation and cross-generational engagement in regional literary discourse.



Above: Photo taken during the Seminar Pemikiran Pengarang Wanita Serantau 2024 event

To Girls for Girls

The “To Girls for Girls” (TGFG) project, conducted under SULAM (Service Learning Malaysia – University for Society), was initiated by law students from Universiti Malaya to address workplace discrimination faced by women, including challenges related to maternity leave and career progression. In alignment with SDG 5 (Gender Equality), the project adopted a multi-phase approach to raise awareness and educate the public on women’s employment rights. It began with a social media campaign on Instagram, followed by physical and online surveys to gauge students’ awareness and understanding of these issues.

The initiative advanced with public exhibitions featuring NGOs that shared information and resources on workplace equality and women’s rights. It culminated in a public forum that brought together speakers and stakeholders to discuss gender-based challenges and legal protections in employment. Through awareness-building, collaboration, and community engagement, the project empowered young people to advocate for fairness and inclusivity in the workplace, reflecting UM’s ongoing commitment to gender equality and social responsibility.

Below: Photos taken during the “To Girls for Girls” (TGFG) project

