

**MSc in Information Management at Manchester Metropolitan University
Year 2008/2009**

Muhamad Faizal Abd Aziz

Abstract

The author had the opportunity to further his studies under the University of Malaya's Study Leave Training Award at Manchester Metropolitan University, United Kingdom. Here, he provides insights about the programme and his experiences during his time in Manchester.

Keywords: Manchester Metropolitan University; MSc (Information Management)

Introduction

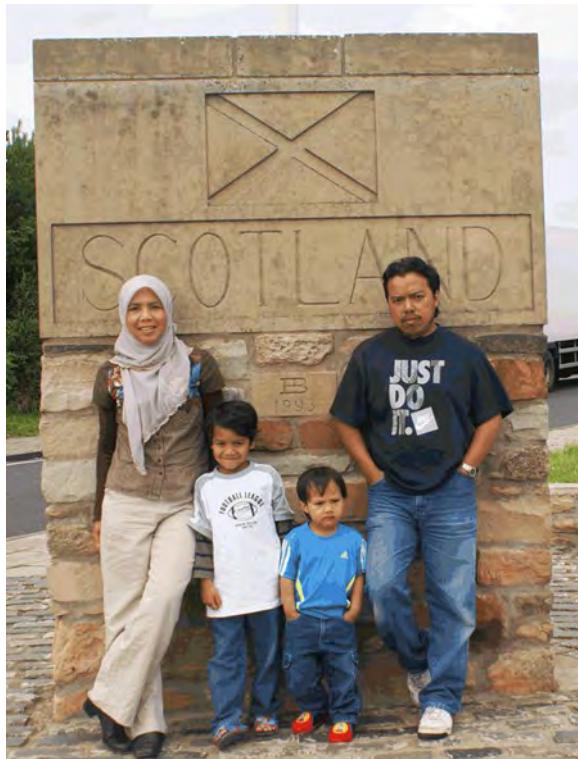
Manchester is a metropolitan city in Greater Manchester, England with an estimated population of 503,000 in 2011. It is the third largest city in the United Kingdom (UK) where the total population in the Greater Manchester area is more than 2.2 million and its original inhabitants are known as Mancunians.

The city is located in the south-central part of North West England, fringed by the Cheshire Plain to the south and the Pennines to the north and east. The recorded history of Manchester began with a civil settlement associated with the Roman fort Mancunians, established c.79 AD on a sandstone mining area where rivers Medlock and Irwell meet. Throughout the Middle Ages, Manchester remained a municipality with land owned by the nobility but it began to expand rapidly in the 19th century. Manchester's unplanned urbanization changed after the emergence of the textile manufacturing industry during the Industrial Revolution and turned it into the world's first industrial city.

The city of Manchester is renowned for its architecture, culture, music, media, science and engineering, and sports with the famous football clubs of Manchester United and Manchester City. It is also the site of one of the world's first railway station. Manchester is also the third most visited city by foreign visitors in the UK, after London and Edinburgh, and the most visited in England outside London.



The author with MMU's landmark



With the family

Manchester Metropolitan University

Manchester Metropolitan University or MMU was awarded university status in 1992 and is one of the largest university offering undergraduate courses in the UK with a total student population of more than 37,000. The ultimate goal of MMU is to become a world class university for professionals with an emphasis on vocational education and employability.

The University was initially developed for Technology and Art & Design from Manchester Mechanics' Institution (1824) and Manchester School of Design (1838). The Schools of Commerce (founded in 1889), Education (founded in 1878) and State of Science (founded in 1880) was added along with the colleges in Didsbury, Crewe, Alsager and the former State Colleges and Trade (founded in 1911), which was later known as the Hollings College.

Location

MMU consists of the main campus, the All Saints Campus, located near the city center of Manchester. There are four branch campuses; three are located in the south of the city and the fourth campus in Cheshire, 36 miles (58 km) from Manchester.

MMU has eight faculties, each providing specialist hubs for teaching, learning, and research of undergraduates, postgraduates and professionals. The faculties are:

1. Faculty of Business and Law
2. Faculty of Education
3. Faculty of Health, Psychology and Social Care
4. Faculty of Humanities, Languages and Social Science
5. Faculty of Science and Engineering
6. Hollings Faculty
7. Manchester School of Art
8. MMU Cheshire

Master Of Science In Information Management

In the MMU, the author enrolled for the Master of Science degree in Information Management at the Department of Information, Technology and Communications which is part of the Faculty of Humanities, Languages & Social Science. In order to gain entry into the programme, candidates must possess a bachelor's degree in any field.

The course focuses on the use of information in organizational management, and understanding that information is an asset that develops specialized expertise in records management, performance and quality management. It prepares the students for careers as professional information managers using theoretical techniques of information management in various sectors. This course is approved by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and with a combination of core units, fieldwork and dissertation, students can develop professional and research skills, which are crucial to becoming information professionals in the modern information environment.

Objectives

The objectives of the course are inline with the subjects and they are :

- Research and Practice - focuses on the development of students' awareness and understanding of key professional and practice issues and the development of their professional skills in response to these issues. It develops students' skills in the definition, planning and execution of small, often work-based, research projects in a topical professional area.
- Management - takes a strategic and operational approach to explore emergent issues in contemporary organizations in today's complex and changing operating environment.
- Search and Retrieval - introduces professional knowledge and techniques in organizing, modeling and representing information for access, searching and retrieval. This includes exploring different metadata schemas and indexing vocabularies ranging from traditional classification schemes to the modern social, semantic and algorithmic approaches.
- Information and Knowledge Management - explores strategies and technologies which enable data/information/ knowledge management to facilitate organizational transformation for sustainability.

- Web and Search Applications - introduces the techniques and technologies employed in enhancing content for searching, exploration and use.
- E-Learning and the Organization - provides an introduction to teaching and learning principles, from which students are taught how they may be applied to online learning.

Structure And Curriculum

In this course, assessment during the three semesters includes course work (inclusive of writing articles), practical exercises, oral presentations and a dissertation. The author took the following modules (Table 1).

Table 1: Curriculum Module

Semester I:	Semester II:	Semester III:
1. Management 2. Research Method 3. Information Access & Retrieval 4. Web Design I	1. Information & Records Management 2. Professional Practice & Research Methods 3. Knowledge Management 4. Web Design II	1. Dissertation

Dissertation

Dissertation is compulsory as one of the requirements for the award of the degree. A supervisor is allocated to each student from the start of the research. Both the supervisor and the student will explore topics. Finally they will have to decide on a topic agreeable to both parties.

Conclusion

The opportunity to pursue a master's degree abroad is a wonderful opportunity and provides meaningful experiences. Studying abroad requires commitment and high mental resistance since one have to mingle with international students and face a different environment in terms of climate, language and food. However, the author was able to overcome these challenges and turn it into very valuable experiences.

Learning facilities provided by the University is good in terms of ease of access to reference materials in the library, computer laboratories and consultation with the lecturer tops it all. For international students, their welfare is always of concern and a lot of facilities are provided by the International Students Association, especially in solving problems related to learning, such as additional classes that cover language classes, academic writing and others. In addition to studying, whatever free time available is used by the author to explore the United Kingdom to order to gain experiences and enjoy the local community's culture.

The University of Malaya should continue the practice of sending their staff to study abroad, especially to the developed countries that have world class universities because they can learn new things especially in terms of knowledge and experiences that can be apply to their own country on their return.