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The Foundation Gazette

2026

Contents

01 Message from

- Head of Global College Malaysia

02 Highlights

- Teaching and Learning
 - National AI Competition 2026
 - My Year in Foundation
 - From the Lecturer's Desk
 - Cross-Cultural Online Biz
 - You Still Have to Think: Redesigning Assessment to Outsmart AI
 - Watt a Race
 - When the Numbers Don't Add Up: A Reality Check on Personal Finance

03 Announcements

- Foundation Survival Guide from Senior Students
- Student Information

Message from Head of Global College



In this edition of the Foundation Gazette, we invited students from the 2025 cohorts to share their experiences of their Foundation year. As I read through their honest and heartfelt reflections, I felt immensely proud to see stories of growth, resilience, self-discovery, and transformation. Each reflection offers a unique perspective shaped by individual experiences, and together they demonstrate the profound impact of the learning journey undertaken by our students.

Success in a student's academic journey should not be measured solely by grades and achievements. Often, the most meaningful impact is found in the personal growth, character development, and life experiences gained along the way. The reflections featured in this edition provide valuable insights into the thoughts, emotions, challenges, and triumphs of students whose learning experiences have extended far beyond the classroom.

I am proud that our students have experienced such inspiring and transformative journeys during their Foundation studies. I firmly believe that these experiences will equip them with the confidence, resilience, and skills needed to thrive both personally and academically as they transition into their undergraduate programmes at Heriot-Watt University.

Many students also highlighted the support, guidance, and encouragement they received from their lecturers as a significant factor in their positive experiences. I am deeply grateful to our dedicated Foundation lecturers, whose commitment, passion, and unwavering support have made a lasting impact on our students. Their efforts have not only contributed to academic success but have also helped shape confident, capable, and future-ready individuals.

I would also like to take the opportunity to wish the 2025 cohort of students every success as they progress into the next chapter of their academic journey.

Jasmine Low
Associate Professor
Head of Global College
Heriot-Watt University Malaysia

National AI Competition 2026

By: Farihin Hakimi b. Farishan



On 13 June 2026, Team ch4gee, comprising Farihin, Mia, Aimi, and Syafiq, competed in the Grand Finals of the National AI Competition (NAIC) hosted at Sunway University. The team emerged as the Grand Champion for the Innovation Track in Category B, securing RM64,000 worth of bursaries. In addition, Team ch4gee was awarded the Best Booth accolade under the Innovation Track.

Throughout the competition, the team successfully presented their project and received positive feedback from the panel of judges. They also had the opportunity to engage with industry mentors and faculty members from Sunway University who visited their booth. The event provided a valuable platform for the team to showcase their innovation, WarkahBiz, a web application designed to support vendors and hawkers in managing and growing their businesses.

National AI Competition 2026

Overall, the competition was an honourable and rewarding experience for Team ch4gee. The team hopes that WarkahBiz will continue to evolve and eventually create meaningful opportunities and benefits for those who need them most.



My Year in Foundation

By: **Tan Yoong Shin**
Foundation in Business
April 2025



My academic journey truly began the moment I stepped onto the Heriot-Watt University Malaysia campus. The uncertainty before my very first class made me a bit anxious, especially since I had skipped orientation week and couldn't even find my classroom! Despite the slightly chaotic start, the transition ended up being incredibly smooth thanks to the supportive university staff. Whether I had inquiries about accommodation, tuition fees, or my scholarship, they were always prompt and helpful. It's hard to believe how fast time flies; my three semesters of foundation learning have already come to an end.

Outside of classes, I pushed myself to get involved. Being a student helper for events like the graduation sale and Watt A Night allowed me to expand my social circle and relax. Besides that, taking on active roles such as helping to organise events as a member of the Chinese Cultural Society (CCS) really put my organisational and communication skills to the test. These experiences were invaluable because they taught me practical soft skills that go far beyond academics. Deciding to get involved in extracurricular activities turned out to be a great choice.

Academically, the most challenging moments for me were the group assignments. I'm naturally someone who feels more comfortable working independently, so having to rely on a team pushed me out of my comfort zone. However, learning to actively collaborate with my group members and navigate those dynamics became one of my biggest areas of personal growth. This experience gave me a genuine sense of achievement, and I felt a surge of satisfaction as we completed one assignment after another.

Although the year has passed quickly, the memories and lessons will last forever. My foundation year has been an unforgettable period of growth — one that has equipped me not only with academic knowledge but with the confidence, collaboration skills, and self-awareness I will carry into my degree this September.

My Year in Foundation

By: **Alicia Claire Whittington**

Foundation in Business

April 2025



Recollecting my foundation year at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, I deeply reflect on how significantly the year impacted my life, both personally or academically. Despite beginning the year with great uncertainty of what the year might bring, the journey far exceeded my expectations in the most fruitful way.

The skills and experiences I have gained throughout the year were far from minimal, extending well beyond the academic realm. Stepping into an entirely new environment, I was surrounded by unfamiliar faces from all walks of life. What initially felt daunting blossomed into one of the most enriching aspects of my foundation journey, namely the friendships I had the privilege to form. Navigating an unfamiliar environment through group discussions, collaborative projects and moments in everyday life allowed me to form genuine connections with the people I now call my friends.

Beyond standard syllabuses, I gained knowledge that extended beyond the four walls of the classroom. During lessons, lecturers always prompted us to give real-life examples that ranged from common knowledge to recent news, whether it be local or international. The continuous encouragement to stay in touch with the world not only refined my understanding, but further enhanced my drive to seek knowledge about the world we live in.

Majoring in psychology, I was presented with challenges foreign to me as it was a completely unfamiliar territory. Despite this, the persistent support and encouragement I've received from lecturers were beyond helpful. The endless guidance navigated my classmates and I through unprecedented waters, which eased our transition into a new environment and new beginnings.

Furthermore, my overall foundation year taught me something no other education level has: the importance of substantiating a claim. In high school, we are taught how to write, but never how to research evidence to support our statements. This year taught me that a claim without proof is just a claim.

Overall, my foundation year proved to be profoundly fruitful. It laid the groundwork for who I am becoming both personally and academically. I truly appreciate the opportunities that Heriot-Watt University Malaysia has provided me, and will forever remain grateful for every experience, all of which I will carry with me beyond these walls.

My Year in Foundation

By: **Jibran Basith**
Foundation in Science
April 2025



Looking back at my Foundation in Science journey at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, I am truly grateful to have been part of such a meaningful experience. Throughout the year, I not only grew academically but also learnt valuable lessons about confidence, independence, and personal growth.

One of the most memorable experiences happened during the Welcome Week. As an international student, I missed one of the morning sessions to complete my medical screening. When I later asked my new friends what I had missed, they told me it was nothing important. The next day, the lecturers suddenly asked students to present their SMART goals to the class. Since the presentation was explained during the session I had missed, I was completely unprepared. I then explained my situation to the lecturers, and they kindly allowed me to skip my turn. At first, I wanted to avoid it, but I realised missing this opportunity might make me regret it later. After everyone had presented, the lecturers asked me if I just wanted to give it a try. Although nervous, I decided to challenge myself and present anyway. That small moment became a turning point and helped me overcome my fear of presenting in front of new people.

My Year in Foundation

Throughout the semesters, I met many different types of people and made meaningful friendships that helped broaden my perspective. At the same time, foundation taught me the importance of balance and independence. I learnt how to maintain friendships and enjoy social life while staying focused on studies. There were times when I chose to spend my lunch break between lectures studying or having meals alone on campus instead of always following my friends to have lunch outside. This helped me become more comfortable with my own company. This experience taught me self-discipline and helped me understand that it's ok to grow at my own pace.

One unexpected experience that is very memorable to me was an opportunity to visit KUKA. I have been interested in robotics since childhood. During the visit, I had the chance to see robotic arms and automated systems up close. I also had the opportunity to have a talk with the engineers and ask questions about the systems. Although unexpected, it became one of the most memorable experiences of my foundation year. This experience taught me that life will not always go according to plan, and sometimes unexpected opportunities appear that should not be missed.

Academically, the course taught me many useful skills that will help me a lot in the future. In English classes, I learnt how to write reports and use proper referencing and citation, which initially felt difficult and frustrating but later became something I appreciated. I also enjoyed the physics practical sessions, where I learnt how to plan experiments, analyse the results, and write scientific reports independently. These experiences made me realise that learning is not only about achieving the results, but also about enjoying the journey along the way while improving. Sometimes, loving the process is more important than achieving the goals.

Overall, my foundation year was a journey full of growth, new experiences, and valuable lessons that I will never forget. It has prepared me well for my undergraduate studies, and I am excited to see where this journey will take me in the future.

My Year in Foundation

By: **Swee Wen Kai**
Foundation in Business
April 2025

Looking back on my foundation year at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, it was an incredibly unique year—like a multi-theme flying roller coaster: exciting, hellish assignments, and unexpected gossip. Unforgettable.

The Fit-For-Future (FFF) programme was where I met most of my true friends. Although some were from Science and some from Business, it never limited us. We always found time to have lunch together.

Food choices on campus are limited, but my friends and I explored nearby. There's a Malay food court called Umai above the public swimming pool, about 1 km away. We called the walk there our "exercise time." Walking is the wise choice. IOI City Mall and Cyberjaya are other options.



Academically, we only had 4 subjects and free Fridays, but it wasn't easier than high school's 10 subjects. Still, the atmosphere was less stressful. Friends play a huge role here. Time with friends makes you wish pre-u life could last longer.

The lecturers broke my stereotypes. In high school, I was told teachers wouldn't care as much anymore. But all my lecturers were friendly and helpful. Our Economics lecturer paid close attention to our class performance, homework, and assignments. Some classmates didn't appreciate it, but for me, having a lecturer who genuinely kept an eye on our progress was something I was truly grateful for.

My English lecturer was the one I feared most at first, but she proved me wrong. Her class was relaxing, and she always hyped the atmosphere. That fear faded when I realised how much her class prepared me for real work. In semester 2, we had to improve an existing product with a new innovation. My teammate and I struggled, many of our ideas already existed. But consultations with our lecturer were a game changer. She challenged our thinking, helped us spot flaws, and guided us to shape a workable idea. After late nights of hard work, we surprisingly got a good grade. More importantly, I learned to accept feedback, think creatively, and organise my thoughts, skills that benefit me in every subject and will serve me well in the future.

There's still a lot I haven't shared, but that would be a spoiler. Foundation year is short, but not easy or boring. Cherish the time ahead—it may not always be happy, but it will be something you'll recall and be reluctant to let go of.

My Year in Foundation

By: **Koo Kai Yi**
Foundation in Science
April 2025



My foundation year at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia has been one of the most enjoyable and memorable experiences of my study life.

When I first started, I was nervous because it was a completely new journey after SPM and I didn't know anyone. However, during orientation, the SMART Goal workshop helped me think clearly about what I wanted to achieve. I also met a wonderful group of friends who supported me through classes, studying and eating meals together, which made my transition much easier.

I was initially worried about struggling since most of my previous studies were in Malay. But all my lecturers were extremely supportive, explaining concepts clearly and making sure we truly understood. The tutorial questions, quizzes and study materials were very helpful. Even when I didn't understand something at first, I could always catch up by reviewing the materials or asking for help.

Each subject was taught in an engaging way. In Physics, the lecturer used real objects like circuit boards and simple real-life examples. In Mathematics, topics were explained step by step with weekly tutorials for reinforcement. In Computing, the lecturer demonstrated the code and showed us the output. Across all subjects, we were encouraged to solve problems ourselves on the whiteboard. If we made mistakes, the lecturers explained where we went wrong, helping us learn effectively.

My Year in Foundation

Among all subjects, English was the most valuable and memorable. The classes were interactive, enjoyable and supported with useful example videos. Through consultations, I learned to accept feedback, think creatively, organise my thoughts logically, and simplify presentations. What I appreciated most was that these skills were not only useful for completing assignments but are also valuable for future academic and professional situations. English helped me write better, present clearly and work more effectively in all my other subjects.

I also enjoyed many activities in the uni. I joined Women in Sport Day for kayaking and a pickleball event organised by the Engineering Club. I served as a student ambassador for Watt a Night and the Scholarship Award Ceremony, learning teamwork and how to handle unexpected situations. Events like the Mid-Autumn Festival, Cultural Night and Watt a Night were highlights, giving me the chance to meet new people and create wonderful memories.

The campus had excellent spaces for self-study and group discussions, such as the library, 365 Room, SC1 and SC3. I spent most of my time in the library because it was quiet and ideal for studying, especially during exam periods when it stayed open later. For relaxation, SC4 had table tennis, SC5 offered board games and the lake area was perfect for walks or jogs. These facilities helped create a balanced university experience.

Overall, my foundation year has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The lecturers were the highlight of my journey and I have grown to become more confident and independent. I am truly grateful for everything I have learned and for all the meaningful experiences at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia.



My Year in Foundation

By: **Anson Lo**

Foundation in Business (Accounting)

July 2025



“Opportunity” is a phrase that has stuck with me since my welcome week at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia because not only did it come from an amazing quote, but it also reflected my journey so far as a foundation student. It was nerve-wracking to say the least. Living in a completely new environment and state was an opportunity for me to meet a bunch of like-minded people and friends.

There is a sense of closeness in Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, maybe due to our campus being “pocket-sized”; it provided an opportunity for me and my classmates to be a lot closer with our lecturers. It reminded me of my years in secondary school. I am sure the others felt the same as it allowed us to be more comfortable approaching them for both academic and non-academic matters.

For me, my first semester was rather tame as I was still adjusting to a new way of living, but everything went uphill at a 90° angle the moment semesters 2 and 3 started rolling in. I had the opportunity to become a student ambassador for one of our opening weeks and the welcome week for our April intake students. It was truly a reflective moment for me to be able to stand on the other side from where I once was, not knowing what to expect but also full of excitement. It made me appreciate the hard work I have put into not only studying but also stepping out of my comfort zone to talk to people without second-guessing myself.

My Year in Foundation

Furthermore, I was beyond thankful to have joined the clubs available on campus. It was an opportunity like no other to have been able to meet some incredible people who I can now confidently call my friends there. Even though the size of our clubs may be small, we do pack a serious punch! My fondest memories on campus were all club-related. For instance, the Monthly Muse events hosted by the VISTA club and our local committee meetings in AIESEC in Heriot-Watt University Malaysia (AHWUM).

Not to break the fourth wall but as I was writing this, it became an opportunity for me to look back on what I have done throughout my foundation journey at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia. The endless opportunities here have pushed me out of my comfort zone without me even realizing it. I have found myself wanting more, to become even better than who I was before not out of sheer ambition, but to reach the limit of what, how, and who I can become.

The world beyond my comfort zone is no longer my worry. As Ms. Jasmine has told us during our welcome week, "Turn every problem into an opportunity."

Like the schools that have come before it, Heriot-Watt University Malaysia has become my second home. The community, the support system, and the staff here all made my foundation journey a fond memory. I truly cannot wait for what the future has in store for me here.



My Year in Foundation

By: **Nurul Iman binti Mohamad**
Foundation in Science (Computing)
July 2025



Spending a full year in my Foundation in Science journey has shaped both my academic path and personal growth. I am truly grateful to be studying in such a calm and enjoyable environment, surrounded by a beautiful lakeside view and a beautifully designed campus. Transitioning from a national school environment to an international university setting has been a significant change for me; however, the experience here has helped me become more adaptable and resilient.

To start off, my journey would not have been smooth sailing without the support of the amazing teaching staff at this university. I am truly impressed by how consistently they show up every day and deliver engaging and insightful lectures. I still remember my first Physics lecture, where the lecturer demonstrated real-life physics phenomena to help us understand the concepts better. English classes were always interactive and enjoyable, with activities that helped us reconnect with the learning materials. In Mathematics, discussions were focused on solving problems collaboratively, while Computing classes introduced us to the fundamentals of computing. Beyond the lecturers, all university staff have also been very friendly and welcoming. They are always willing to assist students without hesitation, which creates a welcoming and supportive university experience.

My Year in Foundation

Additionally, I love the convenience of the facilities that the university provides. From the spacious lecture halls, comfortable study spaces, to the student common room, and especially the library that faces the lake, make studying much more enjoyable. I always utilize the meeting rooms to discuss assignments and group tasks with my friends, and make the quiet room my ultimate go-to study space during exam season. Academic resources are also always available in the library, making it accessible for students to find additional materials to support their learning. Personally, I often borrow past-year Physics reference books from the library to support my studies and strengthen my understanding of the subject.

Other than that, I have had a very positive experience with the structured academic syllabus provided by this university. The course content has been highly effective in strengthening the essential skills I need, particularly in preparing me for my intended undergraduate degree. Each subject has contributed meaningfully to my development in different ways. English has helped me build strong academic skills, Mathematics has strengthened my calculation and analytical abilities, and Physics has trained me to apply scientific approaches in solving problems. Meanwhile, Computing has been especially valuable in introducing me to foundational concepts in the field, preparing me for a future in Statistical Data Science at the undergraduate level.



My Year in Foundation

By: **Harsh Singh Chall**

Foundation in Science (Engineering)

July 2025



Reflecting on my foundation year at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, these three semesters have been a rollercoaster of emotions for me. During the first day of orientation, I was scared and unsure of what to expect of this university in things such as the classes, the process of meeting new people, the events, and opportunities that this university has to offer. Reaching the end of my third semester, I am blessed to be a part of this university, and this journey has proven to be incredibly enriching.

As a student at Heriot-Watt University, I was not really expecting much of a life outside of the classroom. Well, this university has proven me wrong! I was fortunate enough to be able to attend 2 events that made my experience at Heriot-Watt University much more delightful. First things first, Watt A Night, our university's most happening event. With the DJs playing music and all the students vibing and dancing together, it was an out of this world experience that I am unable to express in words. International Cultural Night, on the other hand gave me the opportunity to understand and learn about many unfamiliar cultures by seeing their traditional dances and merchandise since our university has many students from all around the world. Both these events made my life outside the classroom far more pleasant than I expected.

My Year in Foundation

Additionally, I was given two new opportunities inside of this university. First, I was lucky to be given the role of MFP officer in the Academic Department of HWUMSA. This role came with lots of responsibility as I would be the backbone of all foundation students in helping to get feedback and attending the SSLC meetings with the foundation program directors to find solutions on how to solve issues that the students are facing. I was also given the opportunity to become a student ambassador for the orientation of the new April 2026 foundation students. Both roles were new experiences and helped me to build my sense of responsibility. It was both fun and meaningful, broadening my social network and enhancing my extracurricular profile.

Academically, I will not deny that it has its challenges. With subjects that were not my strengths, it certainly was hard but possible to succeed. The support given by the lecturers played a significant role in my academic journey and I am grateful to every one of them. My friends who helped me along the way not just academically, but mentally as well were also one of the most lovable experiences I got while studying in this university. These friendships helped build my character and motivated me to strive for excellence.

To sum up, my foundation journey at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia was one of a kind. It was a balance between studying and having a life. Despite the challenges, I was able to overcome them with the support from my lecturers and friends. I am grateful and proud to say that I am a student at this university, and I look forward to continuing my academic journey here with confidence and excitement.



My Year in Foundation

By: **Maisa Abdalla**

Foundation in Science (Computing)

July 2025



Entering my foundation year, all I dared to hope for was to keep up with my studies and make a few friends - as I near the end I am realising I have gained so much more than I had ever hoped to get. I am going to walk away from my foundation year having gained lifelong friendships, meaningful leadership experience, as well as many realisations and discoveries about myself and the world around me.

As an international student from Egypt, I've greatly enjoyed learning about the sheer diversity and richness of Malaysian culture through interacting with my friends and professors - and will definitely be going home with many Malaysian phrases integrated into my vocabulary! Attending the International Cultural Night organised by HWUMSA has taught me so much about the variety of experiences and cultures our student body has to offer. Beyond that, I truly have learned so much about global citizenship and awareness from other international students and transfers from the UK campus.

My Year in Foundation

In addition to global exposure, I have had the opportunity to develop real leadership skills by joining AIESEC in Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, a wonderful organisation that has allowed me to travel throughout the country and build meaningful connections. AIESEC has given me a platform to develop myself personally and professionally at once, through hands-on experience leading a project management team and the crises I have been able to resolve and manage throughout the experience. Being a scholarship recipient and a Student Ambassador has also taught me a lot about responsibility and the importance of showing up for others.

Furthermore, the academic structure of my foundation year was extremely well designed. It amazes me how the foundational knowledge built in the earlier semesters suddenly seems to come together in the third, allowing me to make connections across once separate fields.

Moreover, my lecturers have been beyond supportive and encouraging of my academic aspirations and goals, and provide plenty of guidance and constructive criticism to aid me in achieving them. While it has not always been easy keeping up, my friends and classmates have helped build a cooperative environment so everyone can benefit and grow academically together.

Looking back, my foundation year has been rich with experiences that have fostered growth and development. Beyond wonderful student-led student organisations and the brilliantly crafted syllabus, the connections I have made and the challenges I overcame have helped strengthen my resilience and appreciation for those around me. I look forward to carrying the lessons learned into my future endeavours and academic journey.

From the Lecturer's Desk

Sowing the Seeds of Cross-Cultural Collaboration in an Online Business

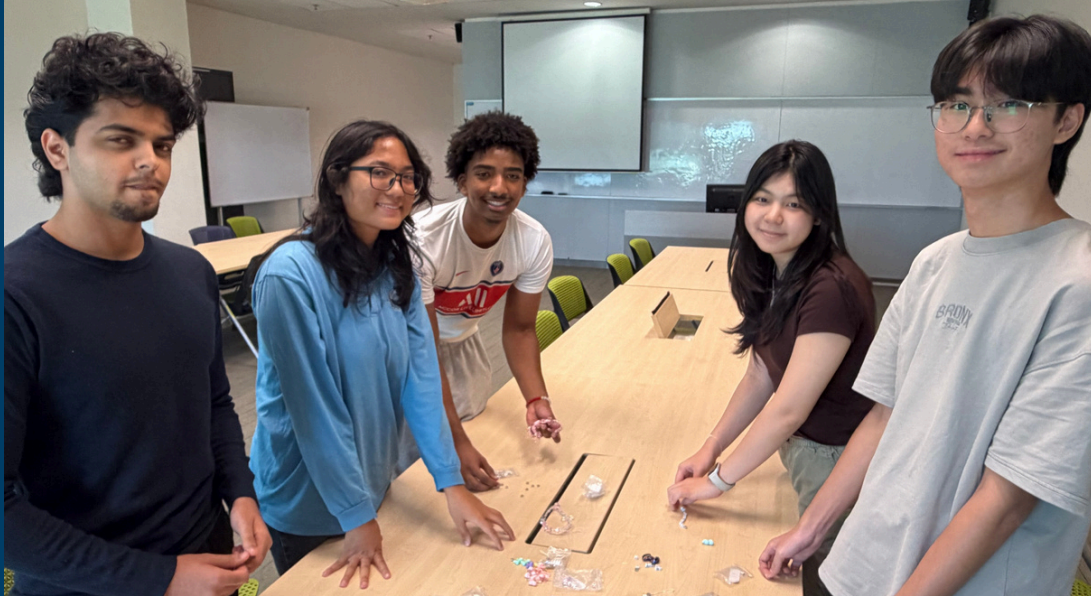
By: **Andrew Lee**

Assistant Professor (Business)

First-semester students undertaking the Business Management course in the Foundation in Business programme had the opportunity to work closely in groups with their peers of different nationalities in a recently concluded online business project. As almost half the class comprised students from Tanzania, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sudan, India, Indonesia and the United Kingdom, each group had at least one member from a different culture.

The seven-week long business project enabled students from different nationalities to set up and manage their choice of business together. Although new to the university environment, with the lecturer's guidance and their collaborative effort, these students managed to brainstormed innovative business ideas, marketed interesting products and made reasonable profits. Importantly, this business project created an avenue for students to forge a better understanding of their peers from different cultures. It not only strengthened the bonds amongst the students but also provided them with insights into a culture different from their own. According to Estebanez and Estebanez (2025), within the context of globalisation such early collaboration plays a vital role in business education. Exposing students to such collaboration is necessary as there's a high possibility they will be working with someone from a different country when they graduate.





These students generally had positive feedback regarding their experience. A student reported, “It's my first time being in a group with people from other countries. I think it's a very good experience. I learnt about our cultural differences and different living habits. This is very special to me as I don't usually meet friends from foreign countries.” Another commented, “I can understand how to work with people from different countries. It's a good opportunity to experience it now.”

This collaborative learning activity aligns with Heriot-Watt University's Learning and Teaching Strategy and gives foundation students a head start in preparing for the working world. It also aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Target 4.7 in preparing students as global citizens with an appreciation of cultural diversity.

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From the Lecturer's Desk

You Still Have to Think: Redesigning Assessment to Outsmart AI

By: **Rachel Goh Sze Ching**
Assistant Professor (English)

Generative AI has presented higher education with a fundamental challenge. How do we design assessment that develops genuine skills when AI can produce passable content in seconds?

In our Academic Skills and Foundation English course, we faced this question head-on. We found ourselves reading technically flawless reports that bore little resemblance to the students we knew. The writing was polished. The grammar was perfect. The structure was impeccable.

And yet, something was missing.

There were no hesitations. No unique perspectives. No personal connections. We could not prove our students had used AI. But we also could not be confident they had genuinely learned anything.

This is not merely an academic skills concern. It affects every discipline. As Dawson and Sutherland-Smith (2019) warn, written-only assessments are increasingly vulnerable to AI. Something had to change.

"We stopped asking 'How do we catch them?' and started asking a better question."

The Question That Changed Everything.

Instead of playing detective, we asked: What if we designed assessment that AI simply cannot do?

Not "AI-proof", because nothing is. But assessment that requires skills AI lacks: thinking on your feet, speaking with conviction, reflecting on your own learning.

Skills that actually matter.

Three Semesters, Three Modes, One Journey.

Semester 1: Live Group Discussion – AI can't join a real conversation.

Semester 2: Oral Presentation – AI can't deliver with your voice.

Semester 3: Report + Process – The thinking journey is visible.

Progression: Collaboration → Communication → Critical Thinking

Each builds on the last, requires something AI cannot replicate and gives us a real window into student thinking.

What Surprised Us

We expected resistance. Instead, students told us: "I finally feel like my work is really mine." The live assessments revealed growth we never saw in written work. Quiet students found their voices. Struggling students were identified early. AI conversations became open and honest, not secretive.

What We Teach Students About AI

We explicitly show students what AI cannot do:

Think critically about YOUR context

Join a live discussion

Deliver with YOUR conviction

Reflect, grow, or connect personally

We tell them: "You're not paying to prompt ChatGPT. You're paying to learn how to think, speak, connect and grow."

Three Things You Can Try

1. Add one live assessment. See what happens.
2. Ask for process, not just product. Drafts. Reflections. Source logs.
3. Talk to students about AI limits. Be honest. They'll respect you for it.

Final Thought

We set out to solve an AI problem. What we built was something better: a journey where we can finally see students think, grow and take ownership of their learning. At the end of the day, students don't come here to learn how to prompt AI. They come to learn how to think, and, that's something no algorithm can replace.

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From the Lecturer's Desk

The Watt a Race Experience

By: **Natasya Saat**

Assistant Professor (Accounting)

At Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, learning recently extended far beyond the classroom as students showcased their teamwork, creativity and problem-solving skills during Watt a Race, an exciting campus-wide challenge that turned the university into a vibrant playground of discovery, collaboration and adventure. Adding to the event, Dr. Mohamed Maliki, Chief Executive Officer of the Humanitarian Development Foundation, was invited to deliver an insightful talk on international cultures, inspiring students to appreciate diversity, embrace respect and develop a stronger sense of global citizenship.

The event saw enthusiastic teams of undergraduate and foundation students racing across ten checkpoints located throughout the campus. At every station, students tackled fun and challenging tasks inspired by different cultures while putting their problem-solving, communication and teamwork skills to the test. Teams had the freedom to choose their own route, making strategy just as important as speed.

Laughter echoed through the hallways as students completed hands-on challenges and encouraged one another to cross each finish line. Every checkpoint presented a new surprise, requiring participants to think on their feet, adapt quickly and work together under pressure. Even when faced with penalties for incomplete challenges, the teams remained determined, resilient and eager to keep going.

More than just a competition, Watt a Race reflected Heriot-Watt University Malaysia's commitment to creating meaningful learning experiences beyond the classroom. Activities like these help students build confidence, develop leadership skills and form lasting friendships during their university life. Such experiential learning complements the University's student-centred approach, where academic excellence is supported by opportunities for personal growth and collaboration.

The excitement continued until the very end when the fastest teams and the most creative checkpoint game designers were recognised during the prize-giving ceremony. Cheers filled the venue as winners proudly received gift vouchers and celebrated their achievements with friends and lecturers. Among the winners, a team of foundation students were first runners-up. While only a handful of teams took home prizes, every participant walked away with something far more valuable: an unforgettable experience, stronger friendships, and greater confidence.

Congratulations to all participants and our winning teams for demonstrating outstanding teamwork, perseverance and enthusiasm throughout the event. Watt a Race was a wonderful reminder that learning can be active, engaging and incredibly fun.

From the Lecturer's Desk

When the Numbers Don't Add Up: A Reality Check on Personal Finance

By: **Muhd. Iqbal Makmur**
Assistant Professor (Economics)

Managing money can seem like a distant concern for many young people, until the numbers tell a different story.

Our Foundation Economics students took part in an engaging personal finance session led by Ms Ang Siew Gaik and Ms Gloria Swee, certified financial planners and leadership coaches with more than 20 years of industry experience. Through real-life examples and an interactive budgeting simulation, students were challenged to think beyond earning a salary and consider what it truly takes to achieve financial security.

The session began with an anonymous case study of a high-income earner who nevertheless faced serious financial difficulties due to poor spending habits. This powerful example reminded students that financial wellbeing depends not only on how much you earn, but also on how wisely you manage your money.

Working in pairs, students were tasked with planning a monthly budget based on the average starting salary of young professionals. While many were initially confident that they could save comfortably, the exercise took an unexpected turn when real living expenses were introduced. As costs for housing, transportation, food, and other essentials were added, many discovered that balancing a realistic budget was far more challenging than expected.

The activity sparked lively discussions as students reflected on their spending priorities and recognised how easily financial commitments can exceed income. Many also realised how heavily young adults often rely on family support during the early stages of their careers, highlighting the importance of careful financial planning from a young age.

The speakers also cautioned students about common financial pitfalls, including excessive reliance on credit cards, "Buy Now, Pay Later" schemes, and minimum payment options, which can lead to long-term debt if not managed responsibly.

Students left the session with three important takeaways: start planning early to avoid unnecessary debt, distinguish between needs and wants when budgeting, and understand that building financial security requires balancing spending, saving, protecting, and growing wealth.

The overwhelmingly positive response reflected the session's impact, with many students expressing interest in future workshops focusing on investing and wealth creation. For many, the experience served as a timely reminder that smart financial decisions begin long before they receive their first paycheck.



The Ultimate Foundation Survival Guide

By: Samiyah, Shireen, Sharifah Alia, Suhaila, Safi
Foundation in Business (Management/ Accounting)

UNIVERSITY PREPARATION TIPS BY 5S



1

1 Golden Rule



**KNOW. YOUR. PRIORITIES
and
RESPONSIBILITIES**

2

1 Quote to Reflect On

**"If you cannot survive
education, how will you survive
a RELATIONSHIP?"**

Inspired by a cool lecturer, 2026

**Thus, believe in yourself!!
Just study**

3

3 Common Mistakes to Avoid

1. Procrastinating on assignments leads to poor time management
2. Not balancing your social and academic life properly
3. Being afraid to ask questions

4

5 Pieces of Advice from Us, 5S!

1. It's normal to feel lost or not know everything, but it's important to reach out for help from your friends, lecturers, etc. (You're still learning!)
2. Use AI wisely to break down difficult topics and make notes, not to copy and paste everything. (Don't be overly dependent on it.)
3. Don't spend too much time trying to adapt to a subject. Foundation moves very quickly (midterm exam by Week 4).
4. Do your tutorials and frequently ask lecturers and friends questions. They don't bite.
5. Stay present and be grateful for whatever you have. He has planned everything for you.

ALL THE BEST!!

The Ultimate Foundation Survival Guide

By: Jia, Andrea, Hillary, Kai Bin, Anson Bong
Foundation in Business (Management/ Accounting)

THE ULTIMATE TIME-MANAGEMENT Survival Guide



5 PIECES OF ADVICE

1. Create a list of what you need to do, putting the important/urgent tasks first.
2. Make a timetable
3. Don't procrastinate
4. Break large tasks into multiple steps
5. Limit distractions



GOLDEN RULE

"Plan your time before it controls you"



QUOTE

"Success doesn't come from having more time, but from using your time wisely."

3 COMMON MISTAKES

1. Leaving everything until the last minute leads to rushed work & unnecessary stress
2. Multitasking too much can reduce focus and make tasks longer to complete
3. Not preparing a clear plan can waste time deciding what to do next instead of being productive



The Ultimate Foundation Survival Guide

By: **Zahra Hafizah, Iman Zara Nazmeen, Alya Maysarah**
Foundation in Business (Management/ Accounting)

Pieces of Advice



Have a proper plan before writing

Narrow down the topic to be really specific



Proofread all sections before submitting



Maintain the writing in a formal tone



Report Writing Survival Tips



Master cite and references using Harvard style

Quote



"Research thoroughly, Cite responsibly, and write confidently"



Golden Rule

Start early!



Common Mistakes

Failing to follow the writing guidelines



Not making use of available tools and website to find content ideas



Lack of supporting evidences to justify the points



Student Information

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

KEY TO SUCCESS



Stay Organised
Use a planner or calendar to keep track of deadlines and events.



Manage Your Time
Set a schedule, prioritize tasks, and avoid procrastination.



Ask for Help
Don't hesitate to reach out to teachers, peers, or support services.



Be Respectful
Treat others with kindness and respect. We are all learning together.



Stay Engaged
Participate in discussions, ask questions, and take an active role in your learning.



F2F SEMINARS, TUTORIALS AND LABS

1

- Attend all scheduled learning sessions.
- Arrive on time and stay for the full session.
- Be prepared and ready to participate.



VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (CANVAS)

2

- Read the weekly learning materials.
- Complete the learning activities and tutorials.
- Check announcements regularly.
- Contribute to discussions respectfully.

3

ASSESSMENTS

- Manage time to complete the assignments and projects and submit by the given deadlines.
- Follow the instructions and check the rubric.
- Ensure all work is original and properly referenced.
- Review feedback and improve.



NEED HELP?

Support is here for you!

- Academic Support Services
- Library Resources
- IT Help Desk
- Counselling & Wellbeing

Contact details and hours available on Canvas.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- ☒ Check your student email regularly.
- ☒ Keep your login details secure.
- ☒ Follow academic integrity and honesty.
- ☒ Balance your study, rest, and personal well-being.



Your effort today builds your success tomorrow.

Let's learn, grow, and achieve together!

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