Staying on top of healthcare

Recent EASB postgraduate Joanna Koh wants to contribute better to the nursing sector

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TAKING up further studies in nursing on top of full-time hospital work is no mean feat, but Ms Joanna Koh persevered and earned her postgraduate degree in May this year.

The 36-year-old completed her Master of Science in Nursing (Management), awarded by Queen Margaret University (QMU) of Edinburgh, on a part-time programme at the East Asia Institute of Management (EASB).

Says Ms Koh, an operating theatre nurse clinician at Mount Alvernia Hospital: “I wanted to embark on a life-long learning journey of education, as well as stay abreast of the dynamic and rapidly changing healthcare industry.”

She came across QMU in her search for nursing management schools and was attracted by its pedigree.

“The prestigious QMU originated as a nursing university and has a long history in delivering this programme. It is also one of the top universities in Britain for nursing,” she says.

The programme lived up to her expectations, especially with the qualified and knowledgeable teaching staff. The lecturers provided much support for the students’ self-directed learning. The support included a 24/7 e-mail helpline as well as make-up and bridging classes.

Students also benefited from the digital resources. They could access QMU’s online library services, and there was an online student portal that lets lecturers and students carry out discussions.

Ms Koh says the programme’s business management module was particularly useful as she had limited knowledge of this aspect of work.

Overall, the course was like a “marathon” for her because “it was energy draining having to work in the day and study at night,” she recalls.

But she is thankful that her managers helped to adjust her shifts and annual leave to accommodate her studies.

While assignments and the thesis were challenging, making steady progress was key, she says.

“I worked towards the major goal by achieving the smaller ones step by step, and stayed focused on the goal instead of the obstacles,” she explains.

She is no stranger to continual studies, though. Earlier, she had progressed from a nursing diploma to a degree, and subsequently Mount Alvernia sponsored her for an advanced diploma in perioperative nursing.

With her master’s course completed, she hopes to be able to explore nursing management in the near future and serve her organisation better.

“This will line me up with my goal and aspiration — creating a world-class nursing environment with my peers here in Singapore,” she says.