

National Aspire Career Fair 2023 (ASPIRE'23)
(Pameran Kerjaya Aspire Kebangsaan 2023 (ASPIRE'23))

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ABSTRACT

ASPIRE'23 is a career fair that allows the community to find a job to continue their career in the field they are in or are interested in pursuing a career in. With the theme of "Pathways to Success: Navigating Your Future," it is clear that this program will take participants on a new journey and guide them through the various paths and opportunities that lead to career success. Since it is difficult for someone to go to numerous places to find a job, this program allows participants to check out and have direct interviews with as many companies that are participating and interested in the career fair. Direct interviews are highly effective as they promptly determine whether candidates will advance to the next stage or secure the job, with results announced swiftly. Three thousand one hundred forty-one attendees participated in ASPIRE'23, including recent graduates, job seekers, individuals looking to advance their careers, and final-year students who are looking for industry training opportunities. As a result of the visitors' value, 2,496 interviews were conducted, leading to 215 attendees successfully finding a job, while 1,194 advanced to a second interview. ASPIRE'23 has the potential to improve graduate employability (GE), which is expected to increase from 90.2% in 2022 to 95% in 2023 while reducing the country's unemployment rate.

Keywords: Skill, Opportunities, Planning, Recruiting, Career Development, Networking

ABSTRAK

ASPIRE'23 ialah pameran kerjaya yang membolehkan masyarakat mencari pekerjaan bagi meneruskan kerjaya dalam bidang yang diceburi atau diminati untuk menceburi kerjaya. Dengan tema "Laluan Menuju Kejayaan: Mengemudi Masa Depan Anda," ia adalah jelas bahawa program ini akan membawa peserta ke perjalanan baru dan membimbing mereka melalui pelbagai laluan dan peluang yang membawa kepada kejayaan kerjaya. Memandangkan sukar untuk seseorang pergi ke banyak tempat untuk mencari pekerjaan, program ini membolehkan para peserta menyemak dan mengadakan temu duga terus dengan seberapa banyak syarikat yang mengambil bahagian dan berminat dalam pameran kerjaya. Temu duga langsung sangat berkesan kerana ia menentukan dengan segera sama ada calon akan mara ke peringkat seterusnya atau mendapatkan pekerjaan, dengan keputusan diumumkan dengan pantas. Tiga ribu seratus empat puluh satu peserta menyertai ASPIRE'23, termasuk graduan baru-baru ini, pencari kerja, individu yang ingin memajukan kerjaya mereka, dan pelajar tahun akhir yang mencari peluang latihan industri. Hasil daripada nilai pengunjung, 2,496 temu duga telah dijalankan, membawa kepada 215 peserta berjaya mendapatkan pekerjaan, manakala 1,194 mara ke temu duga kedua. ASPIRE'23 berpotensi meningkatkan kebolehpasaran siswazah (GE), yang dijangka meningkat daripada 90.2% pada 2022 kepada 95% pada 2023 sekaligus mengurangkan kadar pengangguran negara.

Kata kunci: Kemahiran, Peluang, Perancangan, Perekrutan, Pembangunan Kerjaya, Rangkaian

BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAM

The ASPIRE'23 program is being held for the first time with cooperation from the Student Representative Council (MPP), Center of Alumni Management and Graduate Employability (PPAKG), and the Social Security Organization (PERKESO) in collaboration with the Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp) and Center for Enterprise and Technopreneurship Development (CREATE). This program is designed to help graduates secure employment in their respective fields of study. It is open not only to those finishing their academic pursuits but also to other interested community members. Additionally, the program allows graduates to pursue career opportunities in industries such as engineering and technology, which are relevant to the courses offered at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM). It also may help students to find quick and direct placements for industrial training in relevant sectors.

MENTOR AND MENTEE

There are challenges in identifying the difficulties that undergraduate students face during their internships and in assessing their intentions to work in the industry afterwards. Transitioning from student life to a professional stage is not always straightforward.

When they start working, students face a variety of difficulties. They must apply their knowledge of concepts to the new workplace to adapt themselves to the working environment. Students typically apply their abilities and theoretical knowledge in their first jobs. The combination of conceptual knowledge and training provided by academic internship experiences might help students more effectively apply their concepts in the workplace.

The ASPIRE'23 career fair is designed to address the challenges undergraduate students face during industry internships and to assist them in finding suitable jobs that match their skills and knowledge. By organizing this event, we aim to support not only students but also the broader community.

To ensure the success of ASPIRE'23, organizers sought advice and guidance from PPAKG, the Center for Alumni Management and Graduate Employability under UTeM's Student Affairs and Alumni (HEPA), which specializes in graduate employability. PPAKG's extensive experience in organizing and participating in career carnivals made them crucial supporters of this event. Additionally, the current director consulted with the previous director of the career fair, who had served as the Academic and Career Exco of the Student Representative Council (MPP) and was involved in the secretariat of the previous fair. Together, they conducted a post-mortem of the last event to identify and discuss

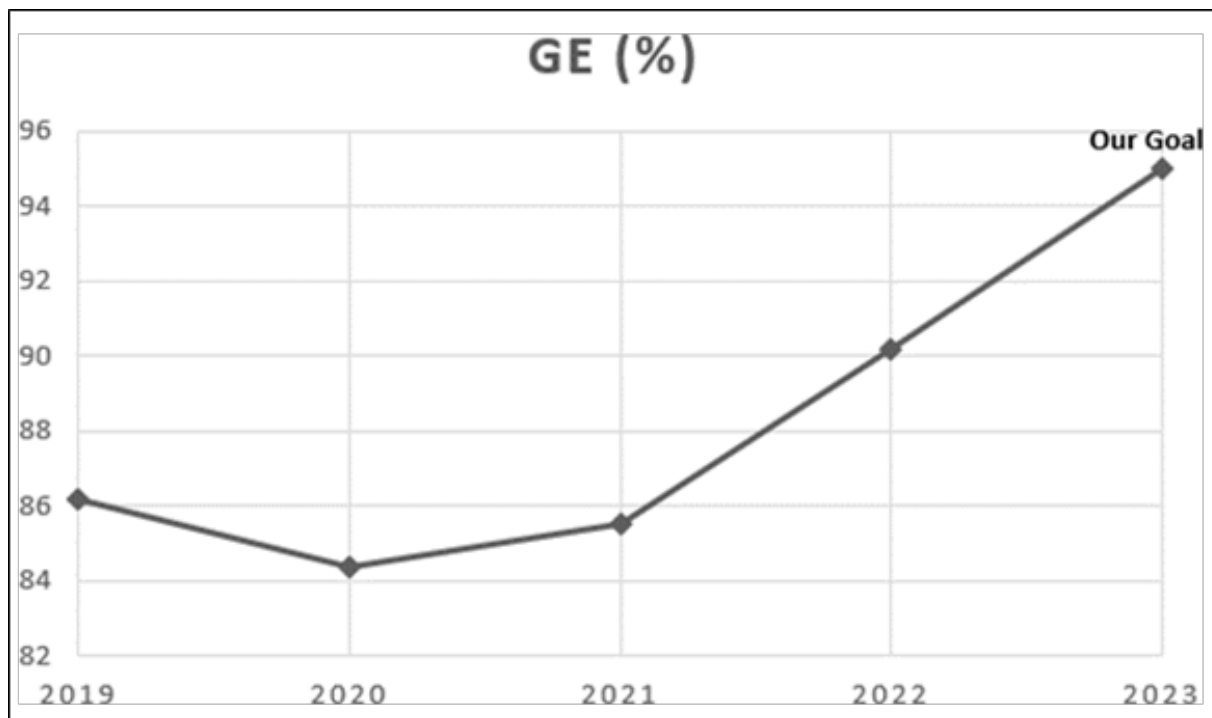


FIGURE 1. Graduate Employability in Malaysia

areas for improvement in ASPIRE'23.

ASPIRE'23 is also a collaboration with PERKESO, a government agency that aims to provide social security and protection to workers in Malaysia. They are experienced in helping the community get jobs through various platforms, such as organizing a career carnival. With their experience, they guide organizers on how to engage companies and manage a large career fair.

During ASPIRE'23, the career talk featured speakers who provided participants with valuable guidance on navigating their career paths, including tips for securing a job. By sharing their own career journeys, the speakers effectively mentored the participants. This was especially beneficial for final-year students, ensuring they were well-equipped to secure jobs that aligned with their skills and aspirations.

LOCATION SELECTION

The National Aspire Career Fair 2023 was held at the UTeM Chancellor's Hall and at the UTeM Lecture Hall Complex on 30 and 31st May 2023. UTeM Chancellor's Hall was selected to run the main event, which is a career fair with exhibition booths from all the companies involved. A side event, which was the career talk, took place at the Lecture Hall Complex. These two locations were selected for their proximity, facilitating easier access for visitors to attend both programs.

MODULE, ACTIVITIES AND PARTICIPANT

ASPIRE'23 is separated into a few parts, which are the opening ceremony of the program, the career fair exhibition, and the career talk. The opening ceremony of the program took place on 30 May, 2023 at the UTeM Chancellor's Hall. The event featured distinguished guests, including the Chief Minister of Malacca as the VVIP, along with VIPs such as the Vice Chancellor of UTeM, the Director of PERKESO, and the Director of HRD Corp. Additionally, Deputy Vice Chancellors of Student Affairs and Alumni (HEPA) from all public universities were in attendance. The ceremony commenced with a welcome speech by the Vice Chancellor of UTeM, followed by an address from the Chief Minister of Melaka, which officially inaugurated the National Aspire Career Fair 2023. The opening was further highlighted by a launch gimmick involving drones controlled by UTeM students, which burst a large balloon suspended in the centre of the hall. The balloon is filled with card names of companies that are involved in ASPIRE'23. Visitors who manage to grab the company card names will get the advantage of going to the company's fast-lane interview. The VVIP visited every booth before leaving the ceremony and presented appreciation souvenirs to all companies in recognition of their involvement.



FIGURE 2. VVIP visited the booth

The career fair exhibition is the main event of ASPIRE'23, taking place over both days of the program. The career fair involved 40 companies related to engineering and technology, which offer more than 1000 job opportunities, including industrial training. All visitors are welcome to visit the exhibition booth for a career survey or a direct interview, but they must

first register as visitors. Registration details will help us determine each visitor's status. Those interested in direct interviews should bring their resumes to facilitate the process. The method for announcing results varies by company and may include direct announcements, phone calls, or emails.



FIGURE 3. Registration Counter



FIGURE 4. Layout inside the UTeM Chancellor's Hall

The career talk, a side event of the program, is scheduled for 31 May 2023, which is the second day of the program, and is held at the UTeM Lecture Hall Complex. This career talk has two sessions conducted by

professional speakers from HRD Corp. This career talk primarily targets final-year students about to enter the job market, but it is also open to all visitors to enhance the event's vibrancy.





Figure 5: Group photo session with the visitor

A program requires regular revisions in strategic planning and scheduling of activities to stay competitive and ensure the learning environment remains conducive to optimal learning. These crucial activities must be strategically timed to strengthen the relationship between students and their surroundings, ultimately benefiting the entire community. Forty employers from selected companies participated in ASPIRE'23, where the companies are closely aligned with the courses offered by our university. Each company's representative utilized the provided booth to showcase their business. The interview with the visitor is also conducted in the booth. All visitors are allowed to join the career talk that is held at the UTeM Lecture Hall Complex.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Opportunities for the community to find employment have effectively been made possible by this program. A total of 79.5% of all visitors have participated in interviews, and 50% of them have been successful. Those who succeed fall into two categories: those who are successful in landing a job and those who are successful in moving on to the next round of interviews.

ASPIRE'23 was attended by 3141 visitors from different types of backgrounds with different purposes. Some visitors came to do some career surveys, but most of them came to find suitable jobs for themselves. The visitor includes graduates, job seekers, individuals

looking to advance their careers, and students who are looking for industry training opportunities. A total of 2,496 interviews were conducted due to the visitors' value, resulting in 215 attendees securing a job and 1,194 advancing to a second interview. ASPIRE'23 also offers disabled individuals the chance to locate and get employment. This can be shown by the fact that there are people with disabilities who were accepted to work with the companies involved. Thus, ASPIRE'23 has a big impact on all levels of society, regardless of the situation.

CONCLUSION

ASPIRE'23 was a successful career fair that helped to connect people with jobs and advance their careers. It was particularly successful in connecting recent college graduates with employers. The direct interview concept was a fantastic invention that improved the effectiveness and efficiency of the event. ASPIRE'23 is sure to have a positive impact on the graduate employability rate and the country's unemployment rate. It also helped to raise awareness of the importance of career planning and development, providing a platform for job seekers to connect with potential employers and learn about job opportunities, allowed job seekers to practice their interview skills and get feedback from recruiters, helped to build a sense of community among job seekers and employers, and promoted the value of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

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