

Getting To Know Our Students

Vimallan Manokara, Master of Arts (Applied Psychology) graduate



Vimallan Manokara is currently working as a Applied Research Fellow/Senior Practitioner (Psychology) with the MINDS Institute of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MIIDD) and is a Master of Arts (Applied Psychology) graduate.

Please share with us your professional life's journey thus far and at which point in your career did you aspire to do a higher degree programme?

I have been a practicing Psychologist with the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) for the past six and a half years. In my third year, I decided to develop myself professionally and improve my skills as a Psychologist, and so, I decided to pursue my master's. It was clear to me that this would be an important step in my career as a Psychologist.

What attracted you to your chosen programme at NIE?

Being a competent Psychologist involves being both a practitioner as well as a scientist. Hence, I was looking for a programme that emphasised coursework, practical training and research. Furthermore, I wanted a programme that provided intensive training in psychological testing. The rigorous and holistic structure of the Master of Arts (Applied Psychology) with a specialisation in Counselling Psychology programme allowed me to achieve both of these objectives.

How would you describe your interactions with NIE faculty members?

NIE's academic staff were all very supportive throughout the programme. They fully understand the challenges of balancing both work and studies and their advice and guidance along the way was invaluable.

Could you share with us some interesting facets of your programme?

I thought my time working on my dissertation was an interesting one that was exciting and stimulating, although tedious at times. Looking back, I am thankful for that experience, as working on it has made me a better applied researcher. I also remember how my course mates and I used to support and encourage one another and this social support was very important in keeping me going during challenging times.

What was the best part of being a student at NIE?

I did the programme full-time while continuing my work on a part-time basis. I think the flexibility NIE gives students to complete their programmes was a big plus point. I would say that the higher degree experience in NIE gave me a platform to not only achieve my academic goals but also to build positive and enriching relationships.

Has the programme been beneficial to you in bringing forth changes in your organisation?

Since the completion of my master's programme, under the newly established MINDS Institute of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MIIDD), I have assumed a new role as Applied Research Fellow/Senior Practitioner (Psychology). This unique dual role requires me to deliver both sector-wide applied research and clinical practice. The programme allowed me to work towards my formal registration as a practising Psychologist and hence improves my professional standing as a clinician. The knowledge, skills and experience gained during my master's training have also groomed me to become a thought and practice leader in both applied research as well as clinical practice. It has enabled me to drive evidence-based practice and applied research in the organisation to improve service delivery and, ultimately, quality of life of our clients.

Would you recommend the programme to someone else? What would you say about it?

Most certainly! If you are looking for a recognised Psychology master's programme that balances rigour, relevance, flexibility and credibility, this programme ticks all boxes.

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