April Chong

As an educator, Ms Emma Hafiz-Abu-Fahad (right) walks the talk by
continuing to upgrade herself.

The assistant head of the teachers’ Language Development Centre at the National Institute of Education (NIE) already has two
postgraduate degrees and will be embarking on a Doctor of Educa-
tion (DEd) at NIE this month.

Ms Hafiz-Abu-Fahad, 56, says: “I have
been working in the education sector for
nearly 25 years and since I have been here,
I have completed two postgraduate degrees — a MA (Master of Arts) and an MBA (Master of Business Administration).

Every 10 years, I feel I need to give my career and my brain a boost by setting myself a challenge of this nature.”

The DEd programme, one of NIE’s latest university-approved programmes, starts in its first run this month.

It targets professionals with significant experience in the education field who want to extend their expertise and develop skills in research and critical reflection in their practice.

Suitable candidates include academic staff in universities and colleges, school teachers, professionals in international organisations as well as senior administrators in schools, universities and government bodies.

Ms Hafiz-Abu-Fahad, a British-born Singaporean permanent resident, says: “As I am now working at a university, having a doctorate level qualification will enhance my standing and prospects — a doctorate combines coursework and research and it will help me keep on track during an extended period of study.”

At a part-time course, the promise of her workplace was a plus point for her.

Candidates can complete the DEd in which combines both coursework and dissertation — within a part-time basis.

Rather than a one-size-fits-all curriculum, the programme provides flexibility and focus by offering both core courses as well as modules in four tracks of concentration.

- Learning and Motivation,
- Curriculum and Teaching,
- Educational Leadership and Change, and
- Technologies and Techno-Logies-Mediated Learning Environments (to be offered from next year).

The programme allows participants to take up further studies.

Ms Hafiz-Abu-Fahad says: “In order to sustain time weighing the pros and cons and identifying the qualification may bring and the commitment required.

If you really want it, then
will come a point at which the right time or the right context, and that is when you make the decision to go ahead.”

She adds: “Having committed to further studies, keep sight of choosing the course of action, even though it can be tough at times.”

But the tool that one should take up continuously learning not just for the career opportunities or be-
come such qualifications are be-
coming prerequisites, but because they open your eyes to new and different ideas and perspectives, and make you think rigorously.”

She adds: “I have also met some great people on the courses, often coming from very different backgrounds, and found the sharing of experience exciting.”

Photo: ChoONG JUN LIANG

NIE rolls out a doctorate programme for those who want to upgrade their knowledge and skills in the education field.