

# 2020 NANOCAT ANNUAL REPORT





# VISION

To be an internationally renowned and recognized CoE in Catalysis and Nanomaterials

# MISSION

To advance technological excellence in multidisciplinary research for address the key challenges of 21st century

**NANOCAT Research Centre**  
**Annual Report 2020**

## **EDITORIAL TEAM**

Prof. Dr. Mohd Rafie Bin Johan (Director)  
Dr. Marlinda Ab Rahman (Head of Editorial Team)  
Lia Zaharani (Designer)  
Mohamad Safuan Kamaruddin (Photographer)

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## DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

Nanotechnology and Catalysis Research Center (NANOCAT) has been established since 2001 at Universiti Malaya as a specialized centre of excellence (COE) in nanotechnology and catalysis. Our vision is to be an internationally renowned and recognised CoE in Catalysis and Nanomaterials. NANOCAT offers students, researchers and academics a wonderful place to study and research. It is highly interdisciplinary in that chemists, biologists, physicists and engineers all work together to create amazing new materials with remarkable properties and to develop devices that change the way we live. They are also encouraged to carry out their individual scientific research resulting in publications in the best journals. NANOCAT also has strong collaboration with the industrial partner such as Petronas, Hartalega, Oleon and others. We have access to the latest analytical equipment including field emission scanning electron microscopes, x-ray diffraction, BET analysis, various spectroscopies, chemical reactors and thermal analysis methods.

A portrait of Prof. Dr. Mohd Rafie Bin Johan, a middle-aged man with dark hair, wearing a black suit jacket over a pink shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a blurred laboratory setting with various pieces of equipment.

**Prof. Dr. Mohd Rafie Bin Johan**

**Director of Nanotechnology & Catalysis Research Centre**



# ABOUT NANOCAT

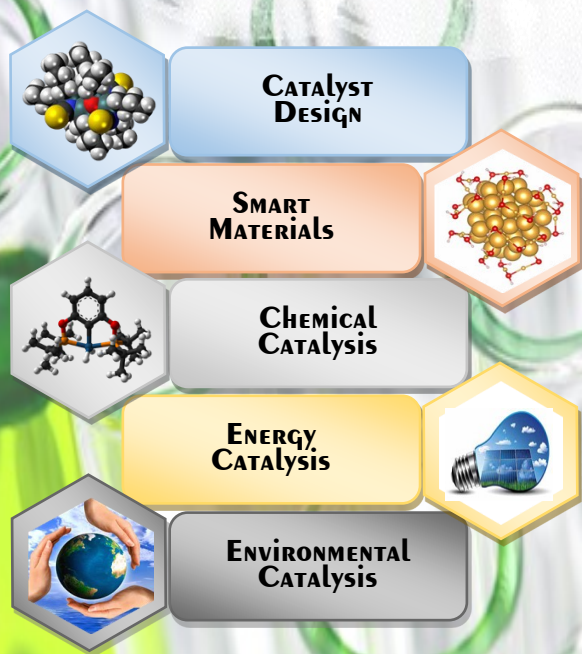
NANOCAT (Nanotechnology and Catalysis Research centre) is a pTJ incorporated by UM in 2012, a UMCoe. Its mission is to be a world leader in “catalysis and nanotechnology” coining sustainability and green technology. NANOCAT research thrust is deploying catalysis to support energy, chemical synthesis, environment pollution and global warming mitigation as well as designing smart materials as catalyst, sensor, nanocoating, and nanocomposite.

NANOCAT was given a status of HICoE Potential in 2013, in catalysis. The Centre has strived to attain a national status for HICoE (MOHE) as well as NanoCentre (NNC, MOSTI) with strong support and commitment from Universiti Malaya. In the last 4 years, 2016 to 2020, it witnessed a pronounced explosion in its productivity in all aspects.



## SCOPE OF RESEARCH

## RESEARCH PROJECT



As a national research center focusing on nanotechnology and catalysis, NANOCAT has come out with a strategic planning in research grant application. With that in mind, the emphasis has been given to five niche areas of NANOCAT which are catalyst design, energy, chemical synthesis, and environmental mitigation as well as smart materials.



## STAFF MANAGEMENT



**Prof. Dr. Mohd Rafie Bin Johan**

**Director of Nanotechnology & Catalysis  
Research Centre**

Mohd Rafie Johan was a Professor of Materials Engineering in Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Malaya. Currently, he is Director of Nanotechnology and Catalysis Research Center (NANOCAT), University of Malaya. He gained his PhD in 2005 from Department of Physics, University of Malaya. He is the author in 272 peer-reviewed (ISI) papers with H-index 27. Prof. Rafie is well recognized internationally in the field of Nanotechnology. Testimony to this, he has been elected in Evaluation Panels for AET and ITR clusters and UPGP and for grants applications at UMRG, PRGS, FRGS and Qatar Foundation. He has been appointed as a panel for Yang di Pertuan Agong Scholarship and COMSTECs for Islamic Organization Country for evaluation of best scientific papers for Muslim Scientist. He also secured funding as PI from the University of Malaya and Malaysian Government. For the past two years, Prof Rafie has been appointed the editor-in-chief of The International Conference of Science and Engineering Materials (ICOSEM). Prof Rafie has been invited as a speaker to numerous talks and conferences and also Guest Editor for Symmetry (ISI journal) and editor for Asean Engineering Journal. He leads Nanomaterials Engineering Research Group of 15 PhD and 22 Master. These supervised students span over a quite broad scientific area going from science (chemistry, physics, material science, biology) to engineering (chemical, material).

Wan Jeffrey Basirun is currently a Professor in Electrochemistry and Physical Chemistry started his career in the department of Chemistry, University Malaya as the department undergraduate tutor in 1991 upon graduation in bachelors in Science with honors majoring in Chemistry, and proceeded with a PhD degree in electrochemistry in 1997 from the University of Southampton in United Kingdom in 1997. Since joining the active research groups in the department of Chemistry in 1997, he has supervised a total of 17 PhD and 7 Master students to completion, in addition have authored and co-authored more than 258 papers in journals indexed ISI web of knowledge, with a H-Index of 36. His appointment as the Deputy Director in Nanocat in July 2018 is aimed to strengthen NanoCat's niche research areas. His research interest is on the use of nanomaterials and nanocomposites in catalytic processes, sensors, biomaterials and energy conversion and storage.



**Prof. Dr. Wan Jeffrey Basirun**

**Director of Nanotechnology & Catalysis  
Research Centre**



# ACADEMIC STAFF



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ong Boon Hoong**

**Areas of expertise:**

Composite Materials, Colloid Chemistry, Nano-Materials (Magnetic and Semiconductor Nanostructure)



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Juan Joon Ching**

**Areas of expertise:**

Water and Wastewater processes, Nano-Materials, Biomass Energy Technology, Chemistry of Catalysis



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yarub Al-Douri**

**Areas of expertise:**

Modeling and Simulation, Semiconductors, Optical Studies, Nanoelectronics, Nanomaterials and Renewable Energy, Coating using Nanocomposites, Film Fabrication, Characterization and Application



**Ir. Dr. Lai Chin Wei**

**Areas of expertise:**

Composite Materials, Energy Storage, Semiconductor Materials, Nano Materials, Solar Energy Technology, Waste Management, Catalysts



**Dr. Nurhidayatullaili Muhd Julkapli**

**Areas of expertise:**

Bio-Polymers (Synthesis; Composites; Functionalization; Characterization), Composite Materials (Metal Oxide Synthesis; Photocatalysis)



**Dr. Lee Hwei Voon**

**Areas of expertise:**

Nano-Materials, Biomass Conversion Technology, Oleochemical Technology, Energy & Fuels, Catalysis



**Dr. Chee Chin Fei**

**Areas of expertise:**

Organic Chemical Synthesis (Synthesis; Organic Chemistry; Medicinal; Natural Products)



**Dr. Zaira Zaman Chowdhury**

**Areas of expertise:**

Chemical and Physical Methods, Nano-Materials, Main Group Chemistry



**Dr. Nor Aliya Hamizi**

**Areas of expertise:**

Nano-Materials, Biomass Conversion Technology, Oleochemical Technology, Energy & Fuels, Catalysis



**Dr. Yasmin Abdul Wahab**

**Areas of expertise:**

IC Testing and Failure Analysis, Device Fabrication and Process Simulation



**Dr. Marlinda Ab Rahman**

**Areas of expertise:**

Nanomaterials, Graphene-Based Composites, Electrochemical Materials (Sensors, Biosensors), Polymer Composites (Natural Rubber)



**Dr. Nader Ghaffari Khaligh**

**Areas of expertise:**

Synthesis (Green Chemistry), Organic Chemical Synthesis



# RESEARCHERS



**Dr. Suresh Sagadevan**  
(Senior Research Fellow)

**Areas of expertise:**  
Material Characterization, Nanomaterials,  
Nanomaterials Synthesis, Nanoparticle  
Synthesis



**Dr. M. A. Motalib Hossain**  
(Post-Doctoral Research Fellow)

**Areas of expertise:**  
Biochemistry



**Dr. Omid Akbarzadeh Pivehzhani**  
(Post-Doctoral Research Fellow)

**Areas of expertise:**  
Chemical Engineering



**Dr. Seyedehmaryam Moosavi**  
(Post-Doctoral Research Fellow)

**Areas of expertise:**  
Physics, Materials Science



**Dr. Yuliza Yusof**  
(Post-Doctoral Research Fellow)

**Areas of expertise:**  
Nanomaterials, Carbon Nanotubes,  
Polymer Composites



**Dr. Billie Hiew Yan Zhang**  
(Post-Doctoral Research Fellow)

**Areas of expertise:**  
Chemical Engineering, Environmental  
Pollution Control, Nanotechnology and  
Nanomaterials, Biomass Processing, Process  
Optimization



## ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF



**Nur'Adilah Md Jelani**  
Assistant Registrar (N41)



**Afzalina Che Kob @Yaacob**  
Project Officer (N41)



**Wan Mazlina Mansor**  
Research Assistant



**Muhammad Al Amin Che Maghtar**  
Research Assistant



**Nursiyadah Abd Hamid**  
Assistant Engineer (J29)



**Muhamad Aniq Ismail**  
Research Assistant

## TECHNICAL STAFF



**Dr. Lee Kian Mun**  
Research Officer (Q47)



**Durga Devi Suppiah**  
Research Officer (Q44)



**Fatimah Zahara Abdullah**  
Research Officer (Q41)



**Noor Fariza Mohd Fawzi**  
Research Officer (Q41)



**Nuramera Pa'dek**  
Science Officer (C41)



**Farhana Abd Wahid**  
Assistant Science Officer (C29)



**Mohamad Safuan Kamaruddin**  
Assistant Science Officer (C29)



**Radziah Saarani**  
Research Assistant



**Norlia Abd Rani**  
Research Assistant



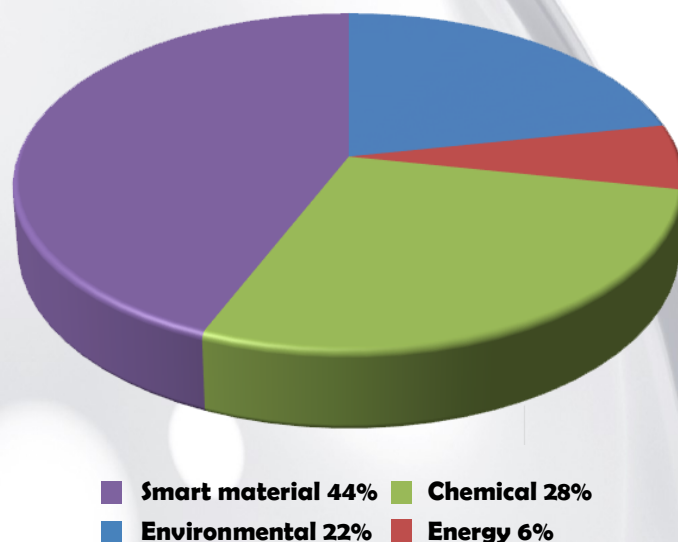
**Nur Azrin Daud**  
Research Assistant



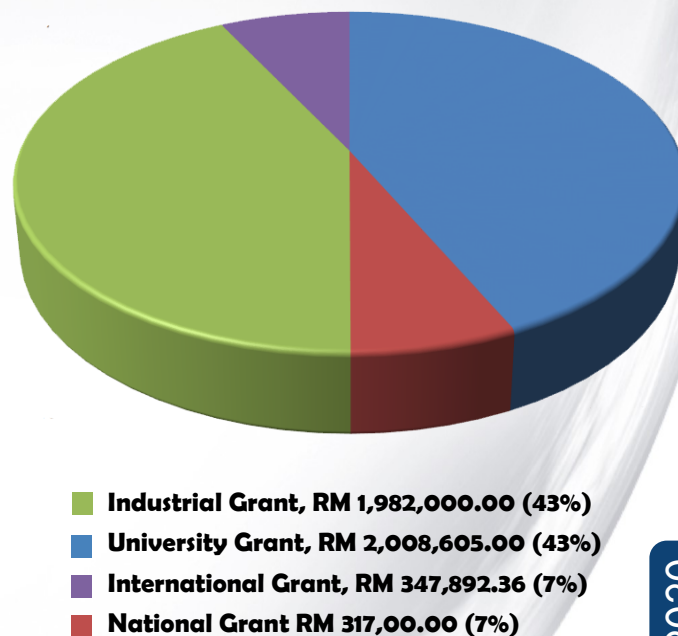
## RESEARCH FUNDINGS

As a national research center focused on nanotechnology and catalysis research areas, NANOCAT has come out with a strategic planning in research grant application. With that in mind, the emphasis has been given to four niche areas of NANOCAT which are environmental, smart materials, chemical synthesis and energy that aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This has been clearly translated to the active research grant 2020 secured by NANOCAT academic staff, which out of RM 4,655,697.36 total amount of research funding received, 44 % was contributed by the smart materials, 28% by chemical synthesis, 22% by environmental studies, and 6% by energy-related studies. The focused of research grant sources selection for NANOCAT Research Center is based on the Industrial grant, UM Research Grant, National Grant, and International Grant with the amount percentage of 43 %, 43 %, 7 % and 7 %, respectively. With this amount of funding received, NANOCAT research thrust could progressively developing and serving catalysis and nanotechnology research not only in Malaysia basis but also over the international region.

### Niche Areas 2020



### Active Research Grant 2020



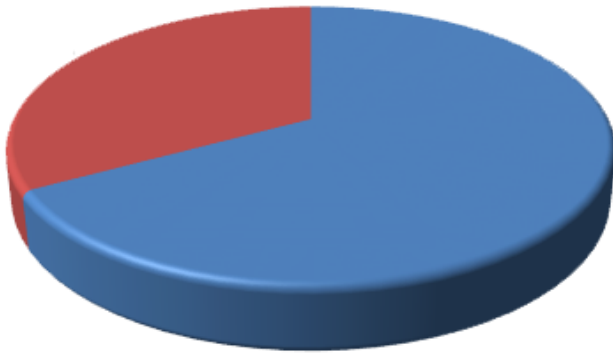
### Total Active Research Grant 2020

**RM 4,655,697.36**



# RESEARCH GRANTS

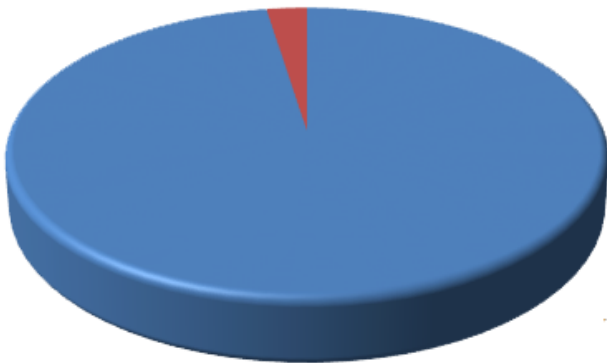
## National Grants



■ FRGS 67%

■ PRGS 33%

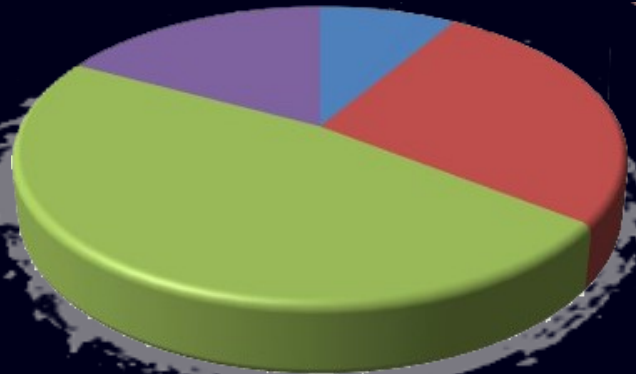
## International Grants



■ Karex Industrie Sdn Bhd 97%

■ MyBiomass Sdn Bhd 3%

## UM Grants



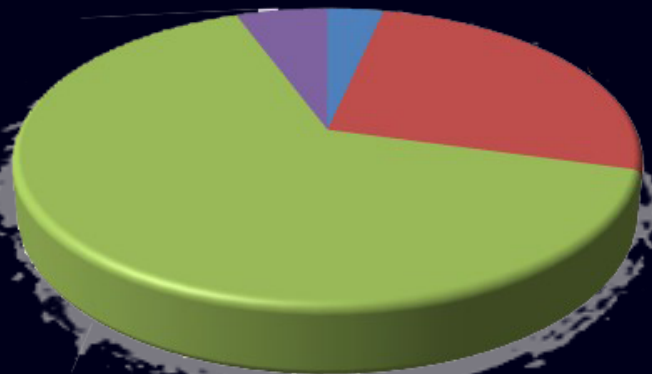
■ GC 47%

■ RU (Cluster) 27%

■ IIRG 17%

■ UMRG 9%

## Industry Grants



■ UAE University 65%

■ ASEAN-India Collaborative R&D Fund 26%

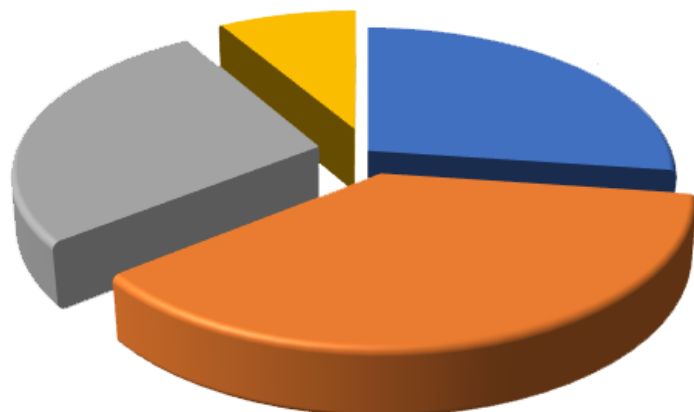
■ IF073-2019 6%

■ Nippon Sheet Glass Foundation Japan 3%



# PUBLICATIONS ANALYSIS

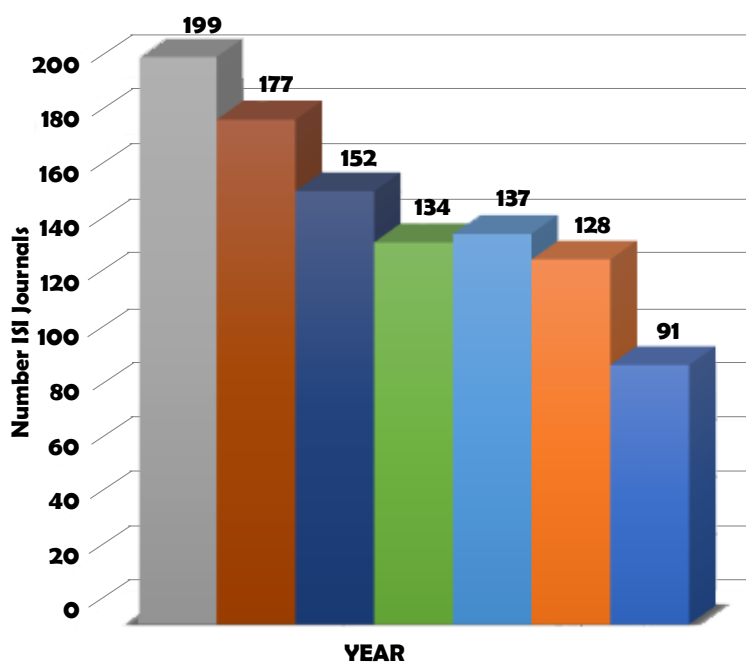
## JOURNAL IMPACT FACTOR QUARTILE—THOMSON REUTERS (AS OF 31 DEC 2020)



■ Q2 - 74, 37%      ■ Q3 - 54, 27%  
■ Q1 - 54, 27%      ■ Q4 - 17, 9%

**Total ISI Publications : 199**  
**Total Number of Q1 and Q2 : 65%**

## ISI PAPERS NANOCAT (UM) INDEXED IN WOS (2014 – 2020)



■ 2020 (12 m)   ■ 2019 (12 m)   ■ 2018 (12 m)   ■ 2017 (12 m)  
■ 2016 (12 m)   ■ 2015 (12 m)   ■ 2014 (12 m)

**The number of ISI paper generated from 2020 was increasing +12.5% from 2019**





# RESEARCH FACILITY

## Spectroscopic Hall

The Spectroscopic Hall, a laboratory within NANOCAT, focuses on determination of physical and chemical structural properties, chemical properties, morphological and texture properties, for liquid, semisolid and solid samples.

- Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM)
- Raman Spectroscopy (RAMAN)
- Elemental Analyser (CHNOS)
- Fourier Transform Infra red (Ex situ-FTIR)
- Fourier Transform Infra red (In situ-FTIR)
- Differential Scanning Calorimetry (DSC)
- Differential Scanning Calorimetry (In situ-DSC)
- Zeta Potential (ZP)
- Particle Size Distribution (PSD)
- Thermogravimetry Analysis (TGA)
- Thermogravimetry Mass Spectroscopy (TG-MS)
- UV-Vis Spectroscopy (UV-VIS)
- Vibration Sample Magnetometer (VSM)
- Hall Effect - Ball milling

## X-Ray Hall

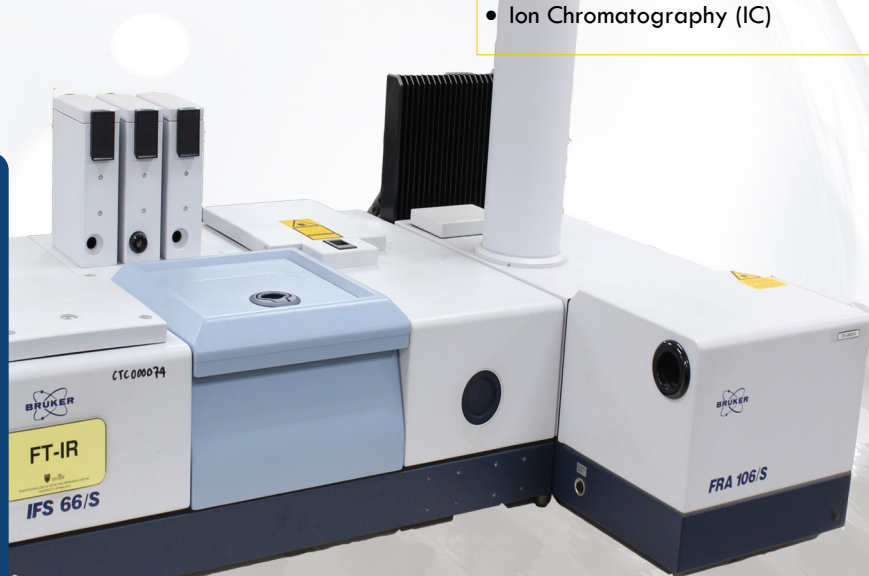
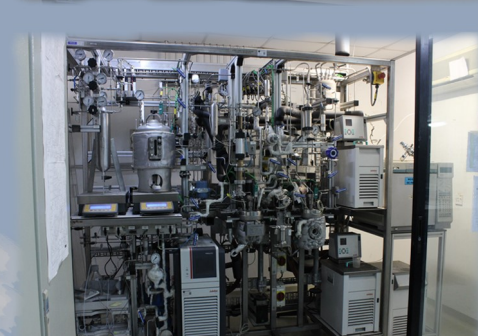
X-Ray Hall provide a non-destructive technique to determine phase composition of solid materials.

- X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF)
- X-Ray Diffraction (Ex situ-XRD)
- X-Ray Diffraction (In situ-XRD)

## Reactor Hall

Reactor Hall focuses on catalytic performance screening and testing especially for petrochemical & bio oil industries. Equipped with GC to quantitatively analyze the reaction products to study the reaction mechanism allowing a reaction selectivity and yield to be optimized.

- Karl Fischer Coulometer (KF)
- Freeze Dryer
- Autoclave 200 ml HS/SS
- Density Meter
- Selective Oxidation Fixed-bed Reactor (SELOX)
- Precipitation Reactor (Lab Max)
- Trickle Flow Reactor (TFR)
- High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC)
- Gas Chromatography (TCD-FID)
- Gas Chromatography (GC-MS)
- Temperature Programmed Desorption, Reduction, and Oxidation (TPDRO)
- Surface Area Analyser (BET Single Port)
- Tensiometer (Surface Tension)
- Fixed-bed Microreactor (atmospheric pressure).
- Gel Permeation Chromatography (GPC)
- Ion Chromatography (IC)





# LABORATORY



## PUSAT PENYELIDIKAN NANOTEKNOLOGI DAN PEMANGKINAN



1. SPECTROSCOPY HALL
2. X-RAY HALL
3. REACTOR HALL
4. COMBINATORIAL TECHNOLOGY HALL
5. HARTALEGA LAB
6. BIOSYNTHESIS LABORATORY
7. NANOMATERIAL LABORATORY
8. ADVANCED FUNCTIONAL NANOGROUP LABORATORY
9. OLEON LABORATORY
10. CHEMICAL CATALYST LABORATORY (NANOCAT)
11. SPECIALTY CHEMICALS HALL
12. ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY
13. ENERGY AND ADDITIVES LABORATORY
14. CHEMICAL STORE
15. QUANTUM NANOTECHNOLOGY LABORATORY
16. NANO MATERIALS ENGINEERING LABORATORY
17. BIOMEDICAL SCIENCE LABORATORY
18. UM-KAREX LAB
19. ENERGY AND BATTERY LABORATORY
20. NANO TRANSITION METAL OXIDE PRODUCTION PLAN



# NANOCAT PRODUCT

## PRODUCT NAME LIST:

1. Highly Concentrated Graphene Oxide
2. Highly Dispersed Graphene Oxide Solution
3. Gel-like Graphene Oxide
4. Crude Graphene Oxide
5. Highly Stabilized Graphene Oxide
6. Graphene Powder
7. Graphene Oxide Flakes
8. Spongey-like Graphene Oxide
9. Flower-like ZnO/Graphene Nanocomposites
10. Rod-like ZnO/graphene nanocomposites



# NANOCAT POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

NANOCAT is highly active in postgraduate supervision and research. These students, both from local and international, serve as important backbone to support the exponential growth of our center's research activities and outputs. With 14 academic staff, NANOCAT takes pride to attract and supervise 70 postgraduate students (52 PhD and 18 MPhil) where 3 of them successfully graduated in 2020 (2 PhD and 1 MPhil). 94% of them with CGPA > 3.0 are study in NANOCAT under various financial aids and scholarship. As a global choice of research center of excellent, 22.9% of them are international postgraduate students. This is indeed an achievement as part of the effort to promote UM as global top university that

## 2 PhD Completions

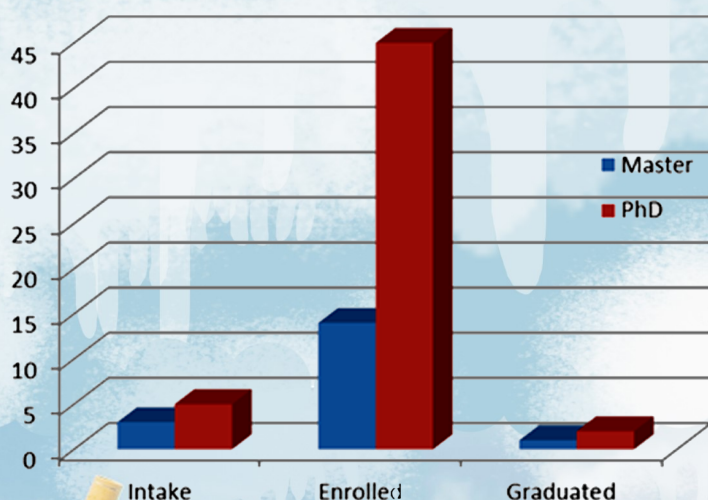
| No | Matric No. | Name               |
|----|------------|--------------------|
| 1  | HHC160003  | Lina Adnan Al Ani  |
| 2  | HHC150006  | Md. Ibrahim Khalil |

## 1 MPhil Completions

| No | Matric No. | Name                  |
|----|------------|-----------------------|
| 1  | HGA150019  | Valerie Siong Ling Er |

## List of Industrial Training Program 2020

| Name of The Institution        | No of Students Joined |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| University of Malaya           | 1                     |
| University Kebangsa Malaysia   | 1                     |
| University Terengganu          | 1                     |
| University Technology Petronas | 3                     |
| UniMap, Malaysia               | 1                     |
| M'sila, Algérie                | 2                     |
| SBA Algeria                    | 1                     |





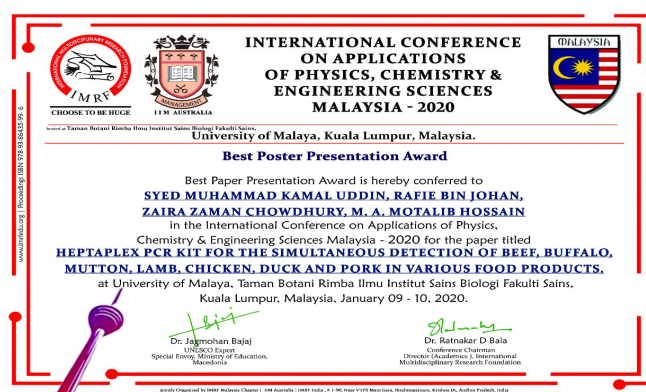
# AWARDS & DISTINCTIONS



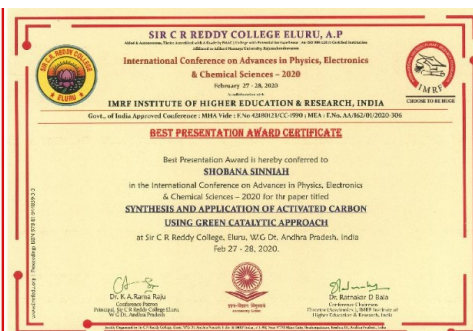
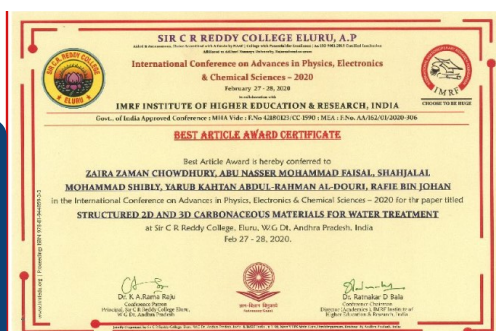
Stanford University has recently released a list of scientists that represents the world's top 2% scientist in various disciplines, in which 7 NANOCAT researchers were featured in the list and another 2 NANOCAT researchers were listed as world the top 2% world's career-long citation impact scientists. Amongst the world's top 2% scientist are Dr. Suresh Sagadevan, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Juan Joon Ching, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yarub Kahtan Abdul-Rahman Al-Douri, Ir. Dr. Lai Chin Wei, Prof. Dr. Wan Jeffrey Basirun, Dr. Lee Hwei Voon, and Dr. Nader Ghaffari Khaligh. The 2 NANOCAT researchers, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yarub Kahtan Abdul-Rahman Al-Douri and Dr. Nader Ghaffari Khaligh have listed as 30 UM Researchers among the World's Top 2% Scientist Career-long Citation Impact by Stanford University.



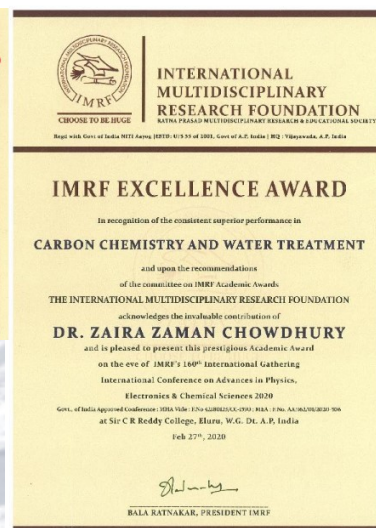
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Juan Joon Ching has been awarded the Top Outstanding Young Malaysian, Junior Chamber International, 2020 in recognition of his outstanding contribution in academic and accomplishment.



October 09, 2020 - Mr. Syed Muhammad Kamal Uddin, a Ph.D. student under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Mohd Rafie Johan, Dr. Zaira Zaman Chowdhury, and Dr. M.A. Motalib Hossain being won the best poster presentation at the International Conference on Applications of Physics, Chemistry & Engineering Sciences Malaysia, 2020.



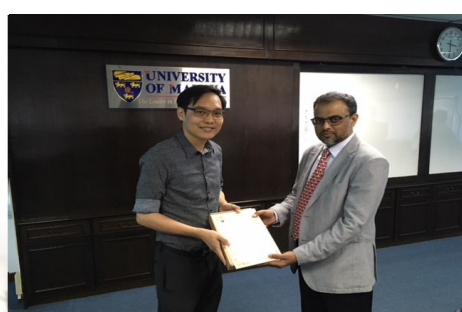
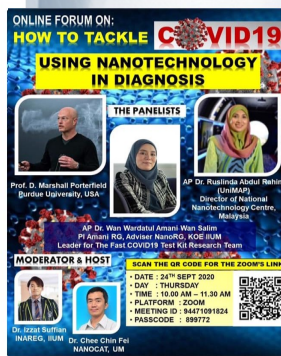
February 27-28, 2020 - Dr. Zaira Zaman Chowdhury et al. and Ms. Shobana Sinniah won the best article award at the International Conference on Advances in Physics, Electronics & Chemical Sciences, 2020. Dr. Zaira also being received the International Multidisciplinary Research Foundation excellence award during the international event.





# SEMINAR/WEBINAR

1. Seminar "Membrane Nanocomposite in water desalination in Arabic Gulf Countries - Sultanate of Oman, present application and research future" by Dr. Mohammed AbdulHakim AlSaadi (University of Nizwa, Sultanet of Oman)
2. Seminar "Metal oxides, graphene and graphitic carbon nitride based photocatalysts nanostructures: Synthesis and application" by Professor Mohammad Mansoob Khan (Universiti Brunei Darussalaam, Brunei Darussalaam)
3. Seminar "Functionalization of Titania Photocatalyst on Different Substrates" by Dr. Sheela Chandren (Universiti Teknologi Malaysia)
4. Seminar "Design and synthesis of anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer agents inspired by curcumin" by Associate Professor Dr Lam Kok Wai (UKM)
5. Seminar "Inhaled Therapy: Key to Rapid Treatment of Tuberculosis" by Dr. Thaigarajan Parumasivam (Universiti Sains Malaysia)
6. Webinar "Advanced Materials for Energy and Environmental Applications"
7. Webinar "Advanced Functional Nanomaterials and Their Application"
8. Webinar "Supercapacitors and Batteries for Future Avenues"
9. Webinar "Experience of a Chemist in Metrology" by Li Hui Ling (Dept of Chemistry Malaysia)
10. Online Forum "How To Tackle Covid19 Using Nanotechnology In Diagnosis" by Prof. D. Marshall Porterfield (Purdue University, USA) and AP. Dr. Ruslinda Abdul Rahim (UniMAP)
11. Webinar "Updates on Authentication of Halal and Kosher Products using DNA Based Methods" by Dr. M.A. Motalib Hossain
12. Webinar "In vitro Bioactivity performances of carbonated hydroxyapatite with different carbonate to phosphate contents" by Dr. Marjan Safarzadeh (University of Malaya)
13. Webinar on Advanced materials and chemical technologies jointly organised by UM and Mapua University, Philippines





# COLLABORATORS



National Research  
Tomsk State  
University



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE



جامعة محمد بوضياف - المسيلة  
Université Mohamed Boudiaf - M'sila



Institute for Color  
Science and Technology

Intensification in networking and research collaboration were formalized through 15 MOUs (2 national and 13 international), 9 MOAs (5 national and 4 international). The co-operation has given mileage for joint publications in WoS journals with high impact and NDAs (1 national and 2 international).





## MOU

### *International*

- ◆ National Research Tomsk State University
- ◆ Guilan University
- ◆ University of the Western Cape
- ◆ Iraqi Forum for Intellectures and Academics
- ◆ Peace University
- ◆ Wajufo Investment Holdings Co. Ltd
- ◆ University of Sydney
- ◆ ProNEXO Engineering Consultancy
- ◆ Cihan University Sulaimaniya
- ◆ GLA University
- ◆ Corporation of Research and Industrial Development
- ◆ Tikrit University
- ◆ Institute for Color Science and Technology

### *National*

- ◆ Universiti Teknologi Petronas
- ◆ Universiti Teknologi Mara

## COLLABORATORS



## NDA

### *International*

- ◆ Thai Kiwa Chemical Co. Ltd

### *National*

- ◆ Karex Industries Sdn Bhd
- ◆ Lynas Malaysia

## MOA

### *International*

- ◆ University of Dhaka
- ◆ University of Mohamed Boudiaf M'Sila
- ◆ Thai Kiwa Chemical Co. Ltd
- ◆ University of Nizwa

### *National*

- ◆ NGL Tech Sdn Bhd
- ◆ Karex Industries Sdn Bhd
- ◆ Sunway University
- ◆ International Islamic University Malaysia
- ◆ Universiti Sains Malaysia



# PUBLICATIONS 2020

| No. | Article                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Quartile |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1   | Guechi, N., Bouhemadou, A., Benaisti, I., Bin-Omran, S., Khenata, R., & Al-Douri, Y. (2020). Temperature and doping effects on the transport properties of SrIn <sub>2</sub> P <sub>2</sub> Zintl compound. <i>Journal of Alloys and Compounds</i> , 815, 152384.                                                                                                 | Q1       |
| 2   | Sagadevan, S., Marlinda, A. R., Johan, M. R., Umar, A., Fouad, H., Alothman, O. Y., Khaled, U., Akhtar, M.S., Shahid, M. M. (2020). Reduced graphene/nanostructured cobalt oxide nanocomposite for enhanced electrochemical performance of supercapacitor applications. <i>Journal of Colloid and Interface Science</i> , 558, 68-77.                             | Q1       |
| 3   | Khalil I., Yehye W.A., Etxeberria A.E., Alhadi A.A., Dezfooli S.M., Julkapli N.B.M., Basirun W.J., Seyfoddin A. (2020). Nanoantioxidants: Recent Trends in Antioxidant Delivery Applications. <i>Antioxidants</i> , 9(1).                                                                                                                                         | Q1       |
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