



From Cultural Bridges to Scholarly Frontiers ✨

Horizon JHSSR and USSH-VNUHCM Sign Landmark Memorandum of Understanding to Advance International Research, Scholarly Publishing and Intercultural Academic Exchange

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A new and significant chapter in Southeast Asian academic collaboration was inaugurated in Kuala Lumpur on **18 September 2026**, when the **Horizon Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research (Horizon JHSSR)** and the **Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Viet Nam National University, Ho Chi Minh City (USSH-VNUHCM), Vietnam**, formally entered into a strategic **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**.

The landmark agreement brings together two institutions with complementary strengths and a shared commitment to academic excellence, international research collaboration and the advancement of knowledge in the humanities and social sciences. It represents an important expansion of Horizon JHSSR's growing network of international academic partnerships and establishes a new scholarly bridge between **Malaysia and Vietnam**.

The MoU was signed on behalf of the Faculty of Oriental Studies by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Phan Thi Hong Xuan, Dean**, and on behalf of Horizon JHSSR by **Professor Dr. Nayan Kanwal, Chief Executive Editor**. The agreement formally establishes a framework through which the two partners will develop mutually beneficial academic, research and scholarly publishing initiatives.

A Partnership Built Around Shared Academic Purpose

The significance of the agreement lies not simply in the signing of another institutional document, but in the breadth of the academic vision it represents.

The Faculty of Oriental Studies at USSH-VNUHCM is a leading academic unit dedicated to the study of **Asian languages, cultures and civilisations**, while actively promoting international cooperation in teaching, research and academic exchange. Horizon JHSSR, established in 2019, is an internationally oriented, double peer-reviewed scholarly journal dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary research in the humanities and social sciences and promoting global academic dialogue and knowledge exchange across institutions and cultures.

The convergence of these two distinctive academic identities creates considerable potential for collaborative scholarship. One institution brings deep expertise in the cultures, languages and intellectual traditions of Asia; the other provides an international scholarly publishing platform through which research can reach a wider academic audience.

Together, they create a partnership capable of transforming **regional knowledge into international scholarship**.

A Comprehensive Framework for Collaboration

The signed MoU establishes a broad framework for cooperation covering a wide range of academic activities.

Among the areas identified are mutual visits involving faculty members, researchers, editorial staff and students; exchange opportunities for teachers, researchers and students; joint interdisciplinary research projects; and the co-organisation of **international conferences, seminars, workshops and academic symposia**.

Particularly significant for Horizon JHSSR is the provision for the **publication of selected conference papers and collaborative research outputs in special issues or editions of the Journal**. This creates a valuable pathway through which collaborative scholarship emerging from future academic initiatives between the two institutions can be disseminated internationally.

The agreement also opens opportunities for scholarly publishing collaboration, including **peer-review participation, editorial cooperation and academic writing workshops**, while providing opportunities for Faculty of Oriental Studies academics to contribute to JHSSR editorial boards, advisory panels and peer-review activities.

Such provisions reinforce an important principle at the heart of Horizon JHSSR's internationalisation strategy: universities and scholarly journals can create substantially greater academic value when they work together not only to publish research, but also to **develop researchers, strengthen research quality and cultivate the next generation of scholarly leaders**.

Empowering Emerging Scholars

A particularly forward-looking dimension of the partnership is its explicit encouragement of academic engagement by **graduate students and early-career researchers**.

The MoU provides opportunities for professional development programmes involving academic writing, peer review and scholarly publishing, while also encouraging the dissemination of research outputs through academic networks and publications.

This commitment is especially important at a time when emerging researchers increasingly need international exposure, editorial experience and access to global scholarly networks. Through the partnership, researchers will have opportunities not only to present and publish their work, but

also to understand the processes through which high-quality international scholarship is developed, evaluated and communicated.

The collaboration therefore looks beyond individual publications. It seeks to help cultivate a **sustainable scholarly ecosystem** in which experienced academics, emerging researchers and students can learn from one another and participate in meaningful international academic exchange.

A New Dimension of Southeast Asian Academic Diplomacy

The partnership also carries significance beyond the immediate interests of the two institutions.

Malaysia and Vietnam occupy increasingly important positions within the dynamic academic and socio-economic landscape of Southeast Asia. Strengthening institutional connections between the two countries contributes to a broader regional culture of academic diplomacy, intercultural understanding and collaborative knowledge creation.

The Faculty of Oriental Studies' focus on Asian languages, cultures and civilisations provides a particularly meaningful foundation for such engagement. Its academic orientation naturally complements Horizon JHSSR's commitment to interdisciplinary research and international scholarly communication.

Through collaborative conferences, comparative research, academic exchange and scholarly publishing, the partnership can help create opportunities for researchers to examine the region not as separate national spaces, but as an interconnected intellectual, cultural and social landscape.

In this sense, the MoU is not merely a bilateral agreement.

It is a bridge between academic communities, cultures and intellectual traditions.

Extending Horizon JHSSR's Global Academic Network

For Horizon JHSSR, the signing represents another major milestone in an internationalisation journey that has gathered considerable momentum over the past two years.

The Journal's partnerships with universities across Malaysia and India have progressively expanded its network of institutional collaborators. The new agreement with USSH-VNUHCM extends that network further into Vietnam and strengthens Horizon JHSSR's position as an increasingly connected scholarly platform within the Asian academic landscape.

The signed agreement itself describes Horizon JHSSR as an internationally oriented scholarly journal dedicated to high-quality interdisciplinary scholarship, global academic dialogue and knowledge exchange across institutions and cultures. It also recognises the Journal's international editorial structure and its role in supporting research communication and scholarly publishing.

The new partnership therefore represents both an achievement and an opportunity: an achievement in terms of the growing confidence placed in Horizon JHSSR by distinguished academic institutions, and an opportunity to transform that confidence into concrete research, publishing and academic initiatives.

From Memorandum to Meaningful Action

The partners have deliberately framed the MoU as a general framework through which more specific collaborative initiatives can subsequently be developed. Individual projects will be implemented through mutual consultation, with matters such as scope, responsibilities, timelines and financial arrangements determined through separate written agreements or implementation plans where required.

This provides the partnership with both flexibility and longevity.

The MoU becomes effective upon signature and is valid for **five years**, with provision for automatic renewal for successive five-year periods unless either partner expresses an intention to terminate the agreement.

Such a framework provides ample scope for the relationship to evolve organically as new academic opportunities emerge.

The most meaningful measure of the partnership, however, will ultimately not be the document itself, but what the two institutions build from it: research collaborations that generate new knowledge, conferences that bring scholars together, publications that cross national boundaries, workshops that empower researchers, and academic relationships that endure long after individual projects have concluded.

A Partnership with a Larger Horizon

The signing of the MoU between Horizon JHSSR and the Faculty of Oriental Studies, USSH-VNUHCM, therefore marks considerably more than the conclusion of an institutional negotiation.

It represents the beginning of a new scholarly journey.

For the Faculty of Oriental Studies, the partnership creates another avenue through which its scholarship on Asian languages, cultures and civilisations can engage with an international research and publishing community.

For Horizon JHSSR, it opens another important gateway into Vietnam's rich intellectual landscape and strengthens the Journal's ability to connect scholars working across cultures, disciplines and national boundaries.

And for the wider academic community, it creates the possibility of new conversations, new research collaborations and new forms of knowledge exchange between Malaysia, Vietnam and the wider region.

At a time when higher education increasingly recognises that the most important research questions cannot be confined within national or disciplinary borders, partnerships of this nature acquire special significance.

A Shared Commitment to Knowledge Without Borders

The signing in Kuala Lumpur on 18 September 2026 marks the beginning of what Horizon JHSSR hopes will become a long and productive academic relationship with USSH-VNUHCM.

Built upon **mutual respect, academic excellence, international collaboration and intercultural understanding**, the partnership provides a foundation upon which scholars from both institutions can work together to expand the horizons of humanities and social sciences research.

The journey ahead will be measured not simply by the number of conferences held or papers published, but by the relationships created, the knowledge generated, the young researchers empowered and the intellectual bridges built between academic communities.

Together, Horizon JHSSR and the Faculty of Oriental Studies, USSH-VNUHCM, have transformed an aspiration for collaboration into a formal commitment to scholarly partnership. From Kuala Lumpur to Ho Chi Minh City, a new bridge has been built between two academic communities, connecting cultures through research and transforming shared knowledge into a force for international understanding.



The agreement has been signed. The partnership has begun. The horizon is now wider. 🌟