

From Nigeria to Hong Kong and Beyond



Adetoyese Oyedun (Ade)

PhD Graduate in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering (Energy Technology Concentration)
• An inaugural scholar awarded the Hong Kong PhD Fellowship

International Innovator

Ade has a lifelong quest to study on a different continent for each stage of his education. He knew that Asia will be the next destination after being in Nigeria and UK.

“To study my PhD in Asia – a part of the world I had never been before – I need somewhere where language would not be a problem and I could settle in easily.”

But it was more than just ease of transition. For Ade, HKUST represented an opportunity to expand his mind, experience new cultures and develop skills that would enable him to contribute to society, particularly those in the developing world.



Transformative Research and Publications

Determined to capitalize upon the many research opportunities available in Hong Kong, Ade's decision to come to HKUST in particular was assisted by the close relationship which he established with his supervisor Professor David Hui.

“I read the profiles of prospective supervisors online and emailed them. Prof Hui's response was so fast and so welcoming that I had already made my decision when other responses came in.”

Coming on board, Ade was given the space to locate his own niche and pursue innovative research. Having previously studied sewage treatment and energy optimization during his Master's at Imperial College London, Ade moved his focus to the pyrolysis of mixed solid wastes, such as bamboo, waste tires and plastics. This complex biofuel research had challenging questions still to be answered, and Ade's research led him to propose several cutting-edge operating strategies.

Upon completing his PhD at HKUST, he had 14 published articles in leading international journals, several as first author.



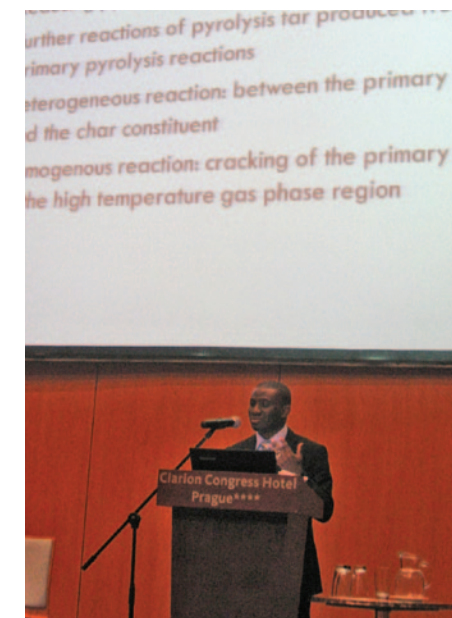
Ade receiving the HKUST School of Engineering PhD Research Excellence Award

International Immersion

In addition to academic accomplishments, Ade found HKUST provided openings to head off campus to attend and present at international conferences.

“Beyond research, the chance to travel had the deepest impact on me. With a personal interest in Asia in this stage, I seized the opportunity to visit different Asian countries.”

Through HKUST initiatives with universities across Asia, Ade had been to nearby countries like Thailand, Singapore and South Korea to find out more about different cultures, and refresh his mind and perspective.



Developing Multicultural People Skills

He met a lot of people from presidents to faculty deans to professors and fellow researchers. Many of these new people were his fellow postgraduate chemical engineers, who represented a diverse range of nationalities and backgrounds.

“In London, there were a larger number of African students and I didn't mix outside the community that much. At HKUST, I was immersed more with students from different cultures. You got to know a lot of views on life and how to get along with different people. This was a major plus for my personal development.”

Even better, Ade found that the HKUST environment actively encouraged integration and exchange among students with diverse backgrounds.



Campus Involvement

On campus, Ade's passion for meeting and helping different people was equally well served. He co-founded the HKUST student chapter of the American Institute of Chemical Engineers and was trained as a peer counselor.

“At the start of every day, I asked myself what I needed to accomplish in the next 10 hours to optimize my time. I wanted to get involved as it is my No.1 chance to have an impact on others.”

Ade strongly holds the belief that your knowledge base and outlook are majorly affected by those you meet, which in turn can bring insight to your research.



Post-graduation Career

Upon obtaining his PhD from HKUST, Ade continued with his continent-straddling academic journey. He moved to Canada to join the University of Alberta as a post-doctoral fellow.

In Alberta, he is leading a comprehensive biofuels project with a multicultural group of researchers. He is so glad and thankful that the PhD experience at HKUST brought him the capacity to lead such a team.

“While I love my life as a researcher, my field is very applicable. I believe it could be especially useful at home in Nigeria and other developing countries.”

Over the longer term, he plans to set up a biofuel-related business, utilizing some of the entrepreneurial knowledge he gained on courses at HKUST.