

# UMS Labuan keeps Covid-19 cases under control

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**LABUAN:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah Labuan International Campus (UMSKAL) has taken serious care to prevent Covid-19 on its campus and ensured that no students are affected by Covid-19.

To date, no positive cases have been reported in the campus since the outbreak began even though the island had the highest infection rate a few months ago. During the first lockdown in 2020, 325 students were stuck on the campus for more than two months. As an immediate act, UMSKAL closed its two-way gate to prevent infection among students and staff.

No one was allowed to go in and out.

The UMSKAL also ensured that all the needs and health of students were being taken care of and several initiatives such as food banks, internet facility, hotline and special allocation to pay runners or e-hailing have been provided. As of May 2020, the management had heaved a huge sigh of relief after sending the last group of 325 students back to their hometowns in the Peninsula.

Since the pandemic has triggered new ways of learning, UMSKAL has switched to online



Universiti Malaysia Sabah Labuan International Campus.



Nur Jehan Ayub

classes using Microsoft Teams, Zoom or other online platforms for undergraduates and postgraduates.

"Many students have initially struggled to grasp the intricacies of Webex and Microsoft Team



Samsul Bahari Mohd Nasir

and somehow slowly they have come to terms with it but the efficiency level of their comprehension learning of class lesson is still a question mark," said UMSKAL lecturer Nur Jehan Ayub.

All scheduled graduation ceremonies were cancelled due to risk of infections and the health and well-being of graduates was prioritized.

"All the memories of university life were shattered and life's treasure to cherish for the rest of life was gone unexpectedly," said Joel Raj Francis, a PhD student.

Rising stress levels and lower engagement with e-learning demotivated UMSKAL students since the start of the pandemic. Since face-to-face education has not yet begun, new students have started to adopt online classes despite they have never been to campus before.

"Despite being in third

semester, I have yet to step my foot into the campus. Campus life is still unknown to me and I'm equivalent to my Juniors as I'm clueless as to how the clubs and associations are running merely by notifications online," said Mahalingam A/P Sankar, an Islamic finance student.

After more than two years, UMSKAL students are now allowed to enter the campus with some restriction and also required to fill up the UMS-Striked Form.

Despite Covid-19 cases have come down in the island but the fear and anxiety from the infections has remained the same. Conducting exam in such atmosphere is equal to exposing students to high risk of getting infected. Thus, protection of students and educational facilities is particularly important. Necessary proactive steps should be put in place by the UMSKAL management in order to prevent the potential spread of Covid-19 in university.

"Students need to prepare themselves mentally to adapt with the new learning environment. The hybrid learning system implemented in the university requires students to cope with the technology, gadgets, tools, etc in their education system entirely," said UMSKAL lecturer Samsul Bahari Mohd Nasir.