

# Scrap irrelevant modules, UMS told

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By Chok Sim Yee

**KOTA KINABALU:** Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has been instructed to review its curriculum and modules as six of the faculties have been identified to produce graduates with low employability due to mismatch between their skills and industry demands.

Minister of Education and Innovation Datuk Dr Yusof B. Jacob said a survey had found that nine faculties of Malaysian universities had been producing graduates with low employability.

"Out of the nine faculties, six are from UMS.

"It means that UMS has been producing graduates who could not find a job in Sabah," he said.

Yusof stressed the need for the university to study and change the content or ways of training to keep up with current demands.

He pointed out that there was no reason to continue with curriculum or modules that were irrelevant to industry demands or the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

"If (the curriculum) is totally irrelevant, why should you continue?"

"We need to develop new training programmes such as robotics, computer, information communication technology (ICT), animation, digitalization, oil and gas and timber," he said at a Hari Raya gathering with his ministry's staff and other departments here yesterday.

In addition, Yusof said university lecturers or dean of faculties must have industrial ties in order to know what to train their students for.

He said Universiti Teknologi



Yusof

Petronas collaborated with more than 480 industry players while, Politeknik Kota Kinabalu had 116 industry partners which enabled them to train students in accordance with the needs of the industry.

"Before the students finish their education, the industry players have identified who they want to employ," Yusof said.

He said some professors did not feel that it was their duty to make sure their students would secure a job in the future.

"But if you are teaching knowledge or expertise that are not required, you are responsible for putting our people in a difficult position."

Yusof said his ministry had set up a committee to formulate a masterplan on manpower needs for both the public service and private sector for various industries in Sabah.

"When we know what the industry needs, we can focus the education at training centres, public and private higher learning institutions based on the demand."

He urged all learning institutions to be sensitive to the job market demand, especially in providing specific skill training that is in line with Industrial Revolution 4.0.

Yusof said Sabah was not short of job opportunities, but the people needed to be trained in order to be employed by the industry.

"For instance, the tourism industry. We need to tell students they could either work as wage earners or entrepreneurs in tourism.

"There are 60,000 tourist arrivals to Sabah each month. Are we going to let foreigners handle tourism in our country?"

"What is the expertise required to be a tour guide? How many of our people can speak in Mandarin or Korean?"

He said higher learning institutions that offered tourism courses must include English, Mandarin or Korean language classes in their curriculum.

"If we train the students in Malay, they are not needed by the job market when they graduate because we need Korean, English and Mandarin-speaking tour guides."

On another note, Yusof said the ministry had formed a digital infrastructure committee to formulate the terms of reference for digital infrastructure development in Sabah.

He said digital infrastructure development would focus on industrial areas, education and tourism.

Also present were Assistant Ministers of Education and Innovation, Mohammad Mohamarin and Jenifer Lasimbang.