

Changing the landscape of higher learning

A NEW breed of private education institutions are set to enter and "add colour" to the higher education landscape in Malaysia.

In announcing this, Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Hou Kok Chung said that the new institutions, to be established by public institutions of higher learning, would raise the quality of higher education in the country.

"To date, the Government has given its approval to Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) to set up such private institutions.

"UM and UPM will each forge partnerships with foreign universities of their choice, to set up the private universities while UiTM will be establishing a private college," he told reporters after opening the ministry's programme in Ipoh, Perak recently. Dr Hou said the

ministry believed that the establishment of such institutions would enable public universities to make use of their expertise to generate their own income while reducing their dependence on government funding.

The ministry, he said, was confident that the new institutions would help in the development of the country's higher education and would not affect the existing private institutions.

Dr Hou, who is also Kluang MP, said applications by a public university to set up private institutions would be done in a controlled manner with each application undergoing a strict process.

"Among the special conditions to be imposed include the need to set up a dedicated subsidiary to operate the new institution, while its management must be separate from that of the public university,"



Forging ties: Dr Hou (second from right) chatting with some of the participants at the event.

he said.

He added that the newly set up private colleges must operate outside the university's campus and not use any of the facilities owned by the public institution.

On the issue that too many private institutions were offering

nursing courses, leading to too many graduates in the field, Dr Hou said the situation was under control.

He said only existing colleges that had been approved to conduct nursing courses were allowed to continue offering them. He added

that the basic requirements had been raised.

"Students who apply for nursing courses must now have at least five credits in the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia compared to three credits previously," he said. — By ROSHIDI ABU SAMAH