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Bosses prefer workers proficient in English

Language and critical thinking ability are assets

SEREMBAN: Proficiency in the English language is the second most important characteristic sought after by potential employers, according to a Universiti Putra Malaysia survey.

UPM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Nik Mustapha R. Abdullah said prospective bosses always looked for employees with good command of the language as they were an asset to any organisation.

"After critical thinking ability, the next characteristic sought by an employer is whether the prospective employee had a good command of the language.

"With a functional ability of the language, many doors will open once students graduate," he said at the opening of the seventh Malaysia International Conference on English Language Teaching (Micelt 2008) here yesterday.

Nik Mustapha said this was the findings from a recent survey conducted by UPM's alumni centre involving more than 4,000 recently graduated students.

He said the university was also the first in the country to offer the Bachelor in Education

in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) programme.

Also present was Higher Education Minister deputy director general (public universities sector) Prof Yusof Kassim who represented Minister Datuk Khaled Nordin. He also read Khaled's speech text.

Khaled said English competency forms an integral element in the success of the ministry's National Higher Education Action Plan.

"Critical thinking, communication skills, excellent English proficiency and enhanced IT skills must form the common foundation for all graduates regardless of their chosen disciplines.

"These new focuses would be incorporated into a compulsory curriculum which runs concurrently with degree programmes at all higher education institutions," said Khaled.

Micelt, which was first organised 14 years ago was the country's premier conference in English language teaching.

The event was organised by the university's Educational Studies Faculty.