Producing Oxbridge-level universities in 20 years

The following are excerpts from the Higher Education Ministry’s Blueprint 2015-2025, a document that outlines its vision for the future of higher education in Malaysia. The blueprint aims to transform Malaysia into a lifelong learning society and an education powerhouse in the region.

- **Higher education quality soaring upwards.**

  The following are excerpts from the Higher Education Ministry’s Blueprint 2015-2025, a document that outlines its vision for the future of higher education in Malaysia. The blueprint aims to transform Malaysia into a lifelong learning society and an education powerhouse in the region.

  - "We are on track to become a world-class higher education system in 20 years,” said Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr. Mohd. Shafie Mohd. Ishak.

  - "The ministry will continue to push the tertiary education sector to deliver the best education that we can, to ensure that Malaysia is the destination of choice for students from around the world.”

  - "We will focus on improving the quality of higher education and making it accessible to all students.”

  - "We will also ensure that our graduates are employable and can compete in the global market.”

  - "The ministry will also work closely with the private sector to ensure that our graduates are industry-ready.”

  - "We are committed to ensuring that our graduates are not only knowledgeable but also well-rounded and equipped with the skills required in today’s job market.”

- **Producing Oxbridge-level universities in 20 years.**

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- **Holistic graduates’ integrated cumulative grade point average.**

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- **Graduate employability in Malaysia.**

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Q: Recently, you had an Away Day with public university vice-chancellors to discuss the future of Malaysia's higher education. Can you share with us the discussions that took place?

A: Basically, we discussed how to improve the quality of higher education based on the (National Higher Education) Blueprint. We also discussed our branding and the need to "shout" on our niche.

For instance, many do not know that, based on a study by QS Top University Rankings, Kuala Lumpur is ranked as the most affordable city for students in 2016.

A survey by the British Council on "The Shape of Global Higher Education: National Policies Framework for International Engagement" has singled out Malaysia and Germany as the best performers in national policies on openness to international higher education. These are some of the plus factors, besides the quality of education that we have.

We also need to adopt technology. Previously, education was all about going to university (and) completing the years required before graduating. Education is getting more flexible today with online learning. We are hoping for more online courses to be offered.

Flexibility in education will allow for a gap year for students. We can introduce credit hours for volunteerism, too. These were some of the things discussed during the session with the vice-chancellors.

In Part II of the interview tomorrow, Idris speaks on university autonomy and rankings, income generation through endowment and waqf, and attracting foreign students to Malaysia.

Undergraduates at an orientation programme at Dewan Tunku Canselor at Universiti Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. UM is one of the country's top research universities. File pic