

# Brain drain as qualified researchers are forced to abandon studies

**THE** slash in the allocations for public universities will result in the dwindling number of qualified researchers in the country, said Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) vice-chancellor Professor Datin Dr Aini Ideris.

She said due to the financial constraints faced by many faculties, scores of research students had been forced to quit their studies.

Budget cuts are also making it im-



**Professor  
Datin Dr Aini  
Ideris**

possible for lecturers to hire help for their research.

"When the allocation is cut, postgraduate research funds, like MyBrain, have to be limited to only a certain number of researchers," she told the *New Straits Times*.

This, she said, caused many researchers to abandon their studies, as they could not afford the fees required for their research.

"Students at the postgraduate level are normally the ones

who have more commitments.

"With their commitments, they cannot afford their research and are forced to quit," she said, adding that the dip in the number of researchers was made worse by the financial constraints faced by existing researchers, many of whom were unable to hire research assistants.

"The lecturers' hands were equally tied. When the allocation was cut, research grants naturally became smaller, and they are not able to hire postgraduate students as their research assistants."

The NST was told by several lead-

ers in public universities that although they had taken proactive measures to generate their own income, their options were limited compared with private universities.

"We do not have the authority to increase the fees for undergraduate programmes. We can only increase the fees for postgraduate programmes.

"Private universities do not face this problem. They can adjust their entrance fees at their discretion," she said, adding that the limited authority given to public universities to adjust their fees, coupled with the

financial limitations of postgraduate students, painted a bleak future for universities.

"While we are doing our best to independently generate more income for the university and save costs in certain areas, our existing budget is only enough to cover the current expenditure.

"However, in the face of these trying times, including the rising cost of research materials and making do with old equipment, developing the university into a world-class institution will be very difficult," she said.