

Back to campus with SOPs

PUBLIC universities are ready with their standard operating procedures (SOPs) to welcome their final year or semester students back on campus.

The Higher Education Ministry announced that priorities were given to students involved in clinical tasks, practical training and workshops to go back to campus.

Universiti Malaya deputy vice-chancellor (Academic & International) Professor Dr Kamila Ghazali said the university had placed measures to ensure students return to a safe and healthy environment.

"We made sure there's sufficient space for social distancing and practising good personal hygiene."

Kamila said the university had imposed SOPs on lab and studio use for its postgraduate research students to do their research work since June 1.

"Similar processes will be implemented for the bachelor degree students as well. There is a set schedule for lab use so that only a certain number of students are in the labs depending on the space capacity."

Kamila said the ministry's decision to allow final year and final semester students to come back on campus was timely as their courses could not be completed without face-to-face teaching and learning.

Management and Science University (MSU) vice-president for academic Professor Datin Dr Norhisham Mohamad echoed in agreement as most of the students involved needed to use some facilities as part of their teaching and learning process.

"Medical students, for example, require a real industry environment only available in hospitals.

"Security on movements on campus will be of utmost importance as students, staff and visitors must use the designated entry points set by the management.

"Those with fever, coughing, sneezing or experiencing respiratory conditions must not come to the campus. They

should seek immediate medical attention via MSU Medical Hospital if they have serious symptoms."

She said it was not compulsory for students to be screened for Covid-19, but are strongly advised to undergo the test.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences dean Professor Dr Zamberi Sekawi said the pandemic and disruptions had

caused significant impact on the students' learning.

"Students will lose touch of what they have learned a couple of months ago and need refresher training. For example, clinical work requires constant practising so that the skills become second nature."

He said preparations were being made to ensure safety to the students and their patients.

"Thorough hygiene has been practiced long before the pandemic as part of the clinical routine and it should not be an issue.

"SOPs have been set up to minimise risk of Covid-19 spread while students' presence in the wards are kept to the minimum."

Zamberi said the university was more concerned about exposure to the external environment and that there was limitation of students from going out of campus and visitors coming in.

Universiti Teknologi Mara director of academic development Professor Dr Nor Aziah Alias said the university emulated the move and procedures by



University students will follow the standard operating procedures during their clinical training and lab sessions.



Professor Dr Kamila Ghazali



Professor Datin Dr Norhisham Mohamad

the National Security Council and Health Ministry.

"We will monitor the number of students per session. Students are not allowed multiple entries into campus. We will optimise their presence at the campus by planning a more intensive session rather than following the normal semester scheduling."

Aziah said the decision to allow students to return to campus was based on the nature of the courses, the urgency for the course completion and the ability of each campus in handling every single pertinent aspect, including accommodation as well as lab and studio capacities.

"Studios and labs with sophisticated tools, high tech equipment and apparatus are allowed for student use."

Zulita Mustafa