

Universities prepared to aid students' journey home

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© Provided by New Straits Times *Universities have prepared the necessary action plans to help stranded students get back to their hometowns. --File pic via BERNAMA*

UNIVERSITIES have prepared the necessary action plans to help stranded students get back to their hometowns once the government gives the go ahead.

To ensure the smooth running of the student movement, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) has appointed leaders in several zones to ensure that the planning of the student movement is carried out in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures

(SOP) set by the National Security Council (MKN), police and the Ministry of Health (MOH).

Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) deputy vice-chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Profesor Datuk Dr Yuserrie Zainuddin, who has been appointed head of the East Coast Zone, will be organising the coordination and data of students from public and private universities, polytechnics and community colleges from the states of Pahang, Kelantan and Terengganu.

In terms of specific plans for UMP which currently has 1,200 students in hostels on campus and off-campus residences, Yuserrie said a committee has been mobilised to coordinate the return of the students to their hometowns.

"Proper SOP has been established to arrange for buses and flights that will ferry the students to their respective drop-off points. A tight schedule for the movement will be established," he said.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) deputy vice-chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Professor Datuk Dr Othman A. Karim said the varsity will facilitate the movement of 1,400 students who have been staying at their main campus in Bangi, Selangor and Kuala Lumpur should they wish to go home.

"The students have been staying at their residential colleges located within each respective campus for almost five weeks, which is two cycles (of 14-days quarantine). As far as the decision to go back or continue to stay on campus, there are factors being considered by students like - Internet connectivity, the situation back home, the safety of their families and so on," he said.

He stated that UKM is currently helping MOHE to develop proper SOP for the students' movement from all tertiary education institutions.

"Coordination is very crucial because there are so many things involved, including conditions and approval from relevant authorities that need to be considered and complied with," he said.

With 838 students in two residential colleges and another 1,189 off-campus - of which 140 are from Sabah and 200 students from Sarawak, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka is taking detailed measures that adhere to directives by relevant authorities to facilitate transporting the students home.

Its deputy vice-chancellor (Student Affairs) Associate Professor Nurulfajar Abd Manap said UTeM will be allocating university transportation to send the students home (where applicable) and will be observing all pertinent measures specified from time to time by NSC and MOHE.

"As soon as the directive is confirmed, the schedules will be released to ensure an organised return-home movement for students from all universities," he said.

Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) deputy vice-chancellor (Student Affairs and Alumni) Associate Professor Dr Afandi Ahmad said the institution is ready to comply with any directives pertaining to the welfare of its 2,756 students located at its Parit Raja and Pagoh campuses in Johor.

"The university has conducted a survey among the students on important information such as the destination and appropriate mode of movement. Movement guidelines have also been prepared to ensure that movement proposals are in full compliance with any decision made by the authorities.

"Once the government has issued any orders, we will fall in line to ensure that the welfare, well-being and safety of the students are maintained," he said.