

Game changer for TVET

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TVET to the fore: Zambrzy (second left) signing the commemorative plaque while Prof Massila (far left), Higher Education Ministry deputy secretary-general (policy) Datuk Dr Megat Sany Megat Ahmad Supian (third from left) and UTHM vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Ruzairi Abdul Rahim look on. — ART CHEN/The Star

Zambrzy: Clear pathway up to doctorate level now available

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) students will now have the chance to further their studies up to university and even pursue a doctorate.

This, said Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambrzy Abdul Kadir, is possible with a clear education pathway outlined in the Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN) Advanced TVET 2030 initiative.

Those from schools under the National TVET Council can continue their education in community colleges before progressing to a polytechnic, he said on June 11.

After that, they can apply to MTUN and even pursue a PhD, he told reporters after the MTUN Industry-Academia Discourse on Advanced TVET closing ceremony in Kuala Lumpur.

Zambry said schools offer TVET at the basic level while the technical universities offer high or advanced TVET courses.

“We have worked together to provide a pathway from the bottom to the top,” he said at the event, held to bring together thought leaders, industry experts and policymakers to delve into the important role TVET plays in shaping the future global workforce.

MTUN comprises Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (Utem), Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah, Universiti Malaysia Perlis and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM).

Zambry said the MTUN initiative is also part of the government’s efforts to remove the perception that “TVET is a second-class education”.

“I hope society understands that the government does not differentiate between vocational schools (and academic schools),” he said, adding that all students have the same potential to excel.

The MTUN Advanced TVET 2030 is an extensive educational initiative emphasising talent development through technical expertise, soft skills and entrepreneurship at the tertiary level, following the Malaysian Qualifications Framework.

It aims to cultivate a skilled workforce equipped with high technical and vocational competencies to address the demands of local and global job markets.

During the event, MTUN vice-chancellor’s committee chairman and Utem vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Massila Kamalrudin said the initiative by MTUN aims to enhance the quality of TVET in Malaysia by equipping the future workforce with essential skills and premium salaries.

She said both academic and TVET pathways must be equally valued and cultivated to ensure sustainable talent development as this plays an important role in bridging the talent gap within the country’s industrial sector.

She also called on TVET students to adopt artificial intelligence (AI) and metaverse technology, which requires cooperation between educational institutions, AI and metaverse industries, and academia.

“With the goal of expanding career opportunities and improving employability, TVET offers training in these high-demand areas, and aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge and abilities to thrive in the modern job market,” she added.

Earlier in Nilai, Negri Sembilan, Zambry said the ministry would review the number of teaching hours for lecturers under the ministry.

He said currently, lecturers teach for an average of 18 hours per week on top of having to carry out other important responsibilities.

The number of hours lecturers are required to teach, he said, depends on the positions they hold, the courses they teach, and the number of students they have.

The ministry, he assured, would look into the workload to ensure that lecturers are able to write and do research while carrying out their other responsibilities, Bernama reported.

He said this after attending the “National Young Leadership Programme Karisma: Madani Thinkers” at the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT), which was attended by 118 lecturers from various universities.

During the engagement session, Zambry said the ministry would prepare a course for lecturers to master the new AI-related education landscape.

He said all educators must align their expertise with digital development so that it can benefit society and the nation.

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