

PERMATApintar contracts signed by 'unauthorised personnel'

KUALA LUMPUR: Ten contracts worth more than RM12 million related to the PERMATApintar programme at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) were signed by officers who were not authorised to do so.

The Auditor General's Report 2018 Series 1, in its findings, also found that more than 80 per cent of the staff hired for its cleaning and maintenance services contracts were illegal immigrants.

The report revealed that nine contracts, worth RM9.18 million, were for counselling services.

The remaining contract, worth RM3.46 million, was for cleaning services.

The report concluded that the contracts were not checked by UKM's legal adviser.

The audit team, which conducted checks on the PERMATApintar programme from September to October, also found that one contract, for the acquisition of equipment worth RM38,500, was carried out without the approval of the UKM vice-chancellor.

Other flaws with regard to the management of contracts related to the PERMATApintar programme, which was aimed at providing gifted and talented children with educational needs that are different from other scholars, included the hiring of illegal immigrants.

"A total of 84.6 per cent or 33 of 39 workers hired through two cleaning and maintenance services contracts were illegal im-



Participants of a PERMATApintar programme conducting scientific experiments in Kuala Lumpur last year. FILE PIC

migrants," said the report.

The audit report said despite its potential, the PERMATApintar High School Diploma curriculum had yet to obtain recognition from the Public Higher Education Institution's University Senate for entry qualification into Year 1 at public universities.

The audit team identified weaknesses in the management of the PERMATApintar programme.

Among the weaknesses was that 25.4 per cent or 2,681 of 10,556 schools never held one of the two online IQ tests — UKM Test 1.

"The UKM registrar's office has yet to fill in the vacancies for 70 new posts under the programme, which was approved by the Education Ministry on Jan 11, 2017.

"Enrolment into PERMATApintar College for eligible students were below the optimum level due to capacity constraints in terms of student hostels," the report noted.

Fifty-one change of work orders were not signed by the project director.

"The audit also found that 18 work orders worth more than

RM500,000 were only approved by the project director after the certificate of practical completion, or CPC, was issued.

"It was found that the certificate of completion and compliance was not issued by the architect consultant as required under the Selangor Uniform Building By-Laws 1986."

Since its inception in 2011, 1,057 students have been enrolled into the programme.

Until last year, 579 students have completed their studies at the PERMATApintar College and received their PERMATApintar High School Diploma.

"A total of 417 diploma holders have secured spots at universities, while the remaining graduates have furthered their tertiary education at universities abroad.

"This is proof that the programme is on the right path in producing gifted and talented students at a young age.

"It was, however, found that the implementation of the programme had yet to reach the optimum level due to lack of promotion, apart from vacancies in posts at the PERMATApintar College."