

# Vocational offerings for jobs of the future

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AUSTRALIA aims to provide study opportunities across many fields that includes mainstreaming vocational education skills at higher education level, said Dan Tehan in his keynote address at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) during his official visit to Malaysia recently.

Titled "Working together for success in international education", his address was delivered at the UKM's 12th Global Talk Series.

Tehan said: "We are looking into enabling students to move between the two education systems because jobs of the future will require multiple skills."

"Jobs of the 21st century don't only call for the ones you learn in higher education but in some instances, you also need vocational skills and vice versa."

"So, we have to make sure that our higher education system and vocational education system will give you those offerings."

With the industrial and business changes happening in Industry 4.0, Tehan said that there has been a shift in the desired skill set.

"We need students who have flexibility in their skills and a jack-of-all-trades approach to adapt to the changing circumstances that the fluid global economy will present globally."

"We still need specialists but we don't want everyone to be a specialist. There is a need for graduates who have a broader set of skills."

According to Tehan, Australia has conducted a review of its national qualification framework in which the ability to earn tertiary credits in secondary school is an interesting development in the framework.

"Through secondary education, students will be able to start getting units for their higher education and vocational education."

"Rather than having a secondary schooling system that is distinct from your tertiary education, we want to ensure a seamless flow



Dan Tehan

between our secondary education and tertiary education system."

A challenge that Australia is facing is to ensure that it continues to produce students that can fill the skills gap, said Tehan.

"For us, those gaps include providing workers for our disability sector, child care sector and aged care sector."

"In the technology field, we make sure that we have STEM students who can then work in areas like cyber-security or information technology," he said, adding that Malaysia is also facing similar issues.

Australia is exploring different types of education providers to reduce the skill shortage.

"We are looking into public and private universities, national institutions or institutions that just work with particular communities to deliver the type of skills that students will need to work in the local economy."

Australia will also continue upholding

universities' autonomy, he added.

"To ensure that our universities have the freedom of speech and freedom of academic inquiry, our former Chief Justice has put some model codes in place."

"We want universities to be places where people can inquire about any subject matter and freely express their ideas. Their ideas can be developed into research that will benefit not only the nation, but the globe."

"Another key component is getting industries and businesses to work more collaboratively with our higher education providers. I know that UKM also continues to explore this."

The event was attended by Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia Andrew Golezdzynowski, UKM vice-chancellor Professor Dr Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor, UKM deputy vice-chancellor (Academic and International Affairs) Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Marzuki Mustafa, UKM staff, students and the public.



Australia Education Minister Dan Tehan (fourth from left) with Australian High Commissioner to Malaysia Andrew Golezdzynowski (third from left) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) vice-chancellor Professor Dr Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor (fifth from left) at the UKM Global Talk Series at the university in Bangl.



## DESTINATION AUSTRALIA

This new scholarship programme for Australian and international students under the Australian Department of Education aims to attract and support students to study in regional Australia while offering them a high quality and unique learning experience.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics' structure classifies regional locations as any area outside of Australian major cities.

The Australia Government has announced a total of A\$93.7 million (RM266 million) funding over four years.

Over 1,000 scholarships are available every year to students from the Certificate IV level to doctorate level qualifications to assist them with their study and living expenses.

Each student will receive a scholarship worth A\$15,000 (RM42,000) per year.

Malaysian students can now apply for a scholarship directly with a successful tertiary education provider from late 2019 to commence from the first semester of 2020.

For more information, including a list of eligible institutions, go to <https://www.education.gov.au/destination-australia>



## THE NEW COLOMBO PLAN

Under The New Colombo Plan (NCP), Malaysia is the sixth most popular location of studies out of 40 eligible NCP host locations.

With an annual funding of A\$51 million (RM145 million) NCP supports around 10,000 Australian students a year to study and undertake internships and other work-based learning in the Indo-Pacific region.

In the past decade, more than 7,500 study experiences have been recorded by Australian students in Malaysia.

These include short-term and semester-length study, internships, mentorships, practicums and research.

Central to the NCP's success, 10 private organisations in Malaysia have registered NCP internship opportunities including the Malaysia Australia Business Council, QBE Insurance and Robert Bird Group.

Other mobility initiatives include the Australian Endeavour Leadership Programme and institution-run programmes. Key partnering Malaysian institutions are UKM, University Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Malaya (UM) and Taylor's University.

A total of 3,376 mobility grants have been awarded for students to participate in mobility projects in Malaysia from 2015 to 2020, including 466 grants in the 2020 round.

Twenty-eight NCP scholars have selected Malaysia as their primary host location over this period.