

# Some of UKM's courses to be in English

By TAN KAH PENG

LONDON: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) has set a target of 50% of its courses in Science and Humanities to be taught in English within the next two years, said its Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Anwar Ali.

"We want to make it flexible and allow both lecturers and students to adjust to English. I want to stress that English is a second language and it will not displace Bahasa Melayu as the medium of instruction," he told Malaysian journalists on Tuesday.

"If we want to go global and open up, we need to use English. I am aware of the opposition (to this move), but teaching in English is necessary for the sake of the students. We'll do our level best to ensure that it is done effectively."

He said he had heard complaints from industry sources in Malaysia that some local graduates could not write proper reports, "all the more in English," adding that the

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usage of English was a necessary tool in this globalised world.

Dr Anwar said many universities in France and Germany were conducting many courses in English, and UKM "has to try for the good of the students" so that they would be able to write and communicate in English.

Asked for his opinion on the recent National Economic Action Council (NEAC) report that a large number of bumiputra graduates were still looking for jobs, Dr Anwar said UKM had taken in 200 graduates in its ongoing attachment programme.

He said some 32% of them were Arts graduates.

UKM, he said, was reviewing its Arts courses, such as History, Psychology and Sociology, to ensure that they were not only relevant to the academic discipline, but also help produce graduates who could be absorbed by industry.

In this regard, three faculties - Social Sciences and Humanities, Language Studies and Developmental Science -

had been restructured and streamlined into a single faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.

Dr Anwar said part of the restructuring was also aimed at enhancing post-graduate studies, with the target of increasing the number of post-graduate students from 22% to 40% by the end of the decade under the present annual undergraduate intake of about 5,500.

UKM's Engineering faculty has also signed a memorandum of understanding with Gerhard-Mercator-Universität (GMU) in Duisburg to facilitate an exchange programme.

About 10 UKM students would start, in the 2003 academic year, a Masters degree course in engineering to be conducted in English.

He said the decision of Prime Minister Datuk Seri D1 Mahathir Mohamad to invite German technical universities to arrange twinning arrangements with Malaysian universities or branch campuses was a good move.