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UKM looks for candidate to lead proposed occidental school

BANGI, Tues. - Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia has set up a committee to find a suitable candidate to lead the proposed Occidental Studies Institute, vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Mohd Salleh Yasin said today.

The committee is led by deputy vice-chancellor (academic affairs) Prof Datuk Ikram Said.

"We have assembled individuals from various disciplines to look for the person who will assume the post of director of the institute," Salleh said after attending the eighth Research Communications Symposium, which was opened by Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob.

Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also Defence Minister, suggested the establishment of an Institute in Occidental Studies to study the behaviour of the European race at the party's recent general assembly.

The proposal was supported by party president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

At the assembly, Dr Mahathir said it was important to know the Europeans' tendencies to better understand them.

Education Minister Tan Sri Musa Mohamad had said UKM had been chosen to undertake the task.

Salleh said UKM had yet to receive an official notification from the ministry, but it had begun preparations.

"We are going ahead with the necessary infrastructure and this includes referring to the experts."

He said the institute would be broadbased and would have local and foreign researchers to conduct studies on language, political economy, international relations and contemporary culture, among others.

Salleh said non-Europeans and envoys who had served in European countries would be invited to give their input on the culture, world view and behaviour of Westerners.