

# Ministry revises soft skills unit

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## Move to produce employable grads

**KOTA BARU:** The Higher Education Ministry has upgraded its soft skills module for public institutions of higher learning to make it easier for graduates to enter the job market.

The revised module provides improvement to skills like interpersonal communication, mastering languages, negotiations and public speaking.

Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the soft skills would greatly help to produce graduates who are critical thinkers with high self-esteem and strong personality.

He said more presentations would be allowed during the teaching of courses and students would be encouraged to

speak out and engage their lecturers in intellectual discourse.

Soft skills are essential for producing graduates capable of competing in the global market besides instilling leadership qualities in them, he told reporters after launching the revised module here yesterday for polytechnics and community colleges.

Mustapa said such skills were previously not given adequate attention in the public institutions of higher learning and this resulted in a high number of jobless graduates.

He said students in polytechnics and community colleges would be given one-hour credits for honing soft skills

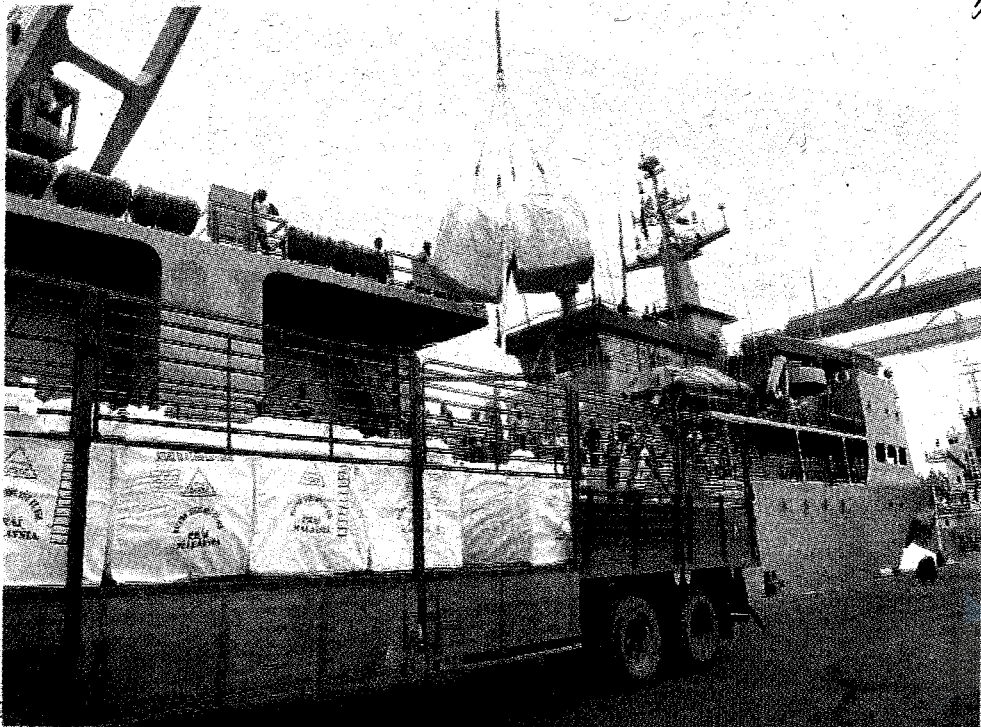
and it would be reflective in their cumulative grade point average.

Lecturers would also be sent to workshops to improve their instruction methods so that they could effectively impart soft skills to students.

On another matter, Mustapa said the ministry would discuss further with the Public Services Department about upgrading the salary of academicians in polytechnics and community colleges.

It was reported that some of them, with Masters and PhD qualifications, were still earning like schoolteachers.

Mustapa said the ministry would negotiate on their behalf for a better salary scale.



**ESSENTIAL ITEM:** The 400 metric tonnes of sugar being loaded onto the *K.D. Mahawangsa* in Butterworth yesterday. The vessel will leave for Tawau today.