

Abdullah: Learn from best foreign varsities

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BANGI: The prime minister wants more students to take part of their studies at established universities abroad.

In line with the country's drive to produce quality human capital, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said students should be linked up for longer attachments at foreign universities, which could offer them valuable new knowledge and skills.

He said while academics from local universities were sent for attachment programmes, enabling credit transfers for students who undergo similar courses at reputable foreign universities would enable them to gain wider experience.

Abdullah said in producing well-rounded students, sending them abroad for short stints of one or two weeks was insufficient as they would not be able to learn much.

He said with new fields of study being introduced in the leading universities, the country's education system must keep up with changing times and cater for students to learn new subjects.

It was thus imperative for local universities to work with top-notch universities abroad in their curriculum, research and development, and other areas, Abdullah said.

He gave the examples of biotechnology and multimedia, which did not exist during his time, but were much in demand today.

"The university now is not an ivory tower, it has become borderless and global.

"We cannot be an education



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi with educational books he received after launching the Institutions of Higher Learning Students Representative Council convention. With him is Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed. — Bernama picture

hub if we don't take up challenges and open ourselves up for co-operation and link-ups with foreign universities, including those that are more developed than ours.

"We must not be afraid that they will outdo us just because they are huge.

"Instead, we should think that because they are huge we can learn from them and even though we are small, there will still be something they can learn from us," he said at the Institutions of Higher Learning Students Representative Council convention here yesterday.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, who was

at the event, agreed that the number of students sent abroad to undergo credit transfer programmes needed to be expanded.

"We are studying the capabilities of these universities and students.

"This will be a very fruitful move as students who have undergone these programmes have great advantages and are always in demand," he said, adding that the plan, which would be effected as soon as possible, would only involve excellent students in public universities.

Mustapa said that while such programmes were currently being conducted on an ad-hoc basis,

his ministry was paving the way to make them permanent.

Abdullah also told student representatives that they must continuously strive to add value to their abilities, be committed and dedicated in their desire to realise Vision 2020.

He said should Vision 2020 fail to be achieved, especially in its human elements, Malaysia could forever be stunted in its progress.

"We can have the best library, science lab, best teachers and all the best facilities. But what is the point if our students are lazy?

"All of you must make the effort by building self-confidence and a burning desire to succeed."