

What makes a university

Ministry to draw up list of criteria

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PETALING JAYA: The Higher Education Ministry will draw up a list of criteria soon for private university colleges wishing to be upgraded to universities.

Their upgrade will be considered on a case-by-case basis, said the ministry's public university management department director-general Prof Datuk Dr Hassan Said.

He added that the ministry had already received several applications from private university colleges but these could only be considered after the criteria had been drawn up.

There are 15 private university colleges in the country.

Asked if there was a timeframe for the move, he said he was optimistic that the upgrade could take place before the end of the year.

"The age of an institution will not matter. We will go by criteria like lecturer-student ratio and quality of programmes," Dr Hassan told reporters after attending the unveiling ceremony of the Taylor's Lakeside Campus yesterday by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Najib said at a press conference that the operators of private university colleges who wished to upgrade to universities would have to go through similar procedures like public

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PROF DATUK DR HASSAN SAID

university colleges.

"But we don't want all the private colleges to become universities because some of them should concentrate their activities at the diploma and certificate level," said Najib when asked to comment on the Government's decision to "rebrand" all six public university colleges as universities effective Feb 1.

Dr Hassan, when pressed for details,

added: "If private university colleges satisfy the requirements set by the ministry and they feel that they are good, they can apply."

He said public university colleges, on the other hand, had met all the criteria.

"We have already asked them to improve on all the important aspects like research, staffing and infrastructure.

"We're very happy and that's why we submitted it to the Cabinet to get the clearance from the Government to change the name from college university to university," he said.

The six university colleges are Kolej Universiti Kejuruteraan dan Teknologi, Kolej Universiti Kejuruteraan Utara Malaysia, Kolej Universiti Sains dan Teknologi Malaysia, Kolej Universiti Islam Malaysia, Kolej Universiti Teknikal Kebangsaan Malaysia and Kolej Universiti Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn.