

E d u c a t i o n

GO TRADITIONAL

The Health Ministry is considering giving recognition to courses in traditional and complementary medicine also accrediting several universities in China, India and Indonesia.

This will happen with the introduction of the Traditional and Complementary Medicine Control Act, which will be tabled at the Parliament next year, to better regulate the sector.

'The ministry has had preliminary talks with the Higher Education Ministry and the National Accreditation Board regarding this matter and further talks have been approved by the Cabinet,' said **Health Minister Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek**.

The Act, once enforced, will enable traditional and complimentary medicine practitioners to ensure that they have training approved by the Government and follow the code of ethics.

According to ministry statistics, there are 219 foreign traditional and complimentary medicine practitioners in Malaysia, mostly in the field of Ayurvedic medicine, massage and reflexology.

'Even the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia is offering courses in TCM. Local universities should look into this,' Chua said after opening the Women's Health and Asian Traditional Medicine Conference and Exhibition on July 26.

Dr Thomas Ong, the president of the Malaysian Association of Chiropractic Practitioners, told The Star that there was a need for accreditation to weed out bogus chiropractors.

'At the moment, anybody can offer the service even though they do not have the qualifications to do so,' he said.

COLLEGES WARNED

TWO private colleges faced the wrath of the higher education regulators when they lost the right to bring in foreign students.

In late-July, the Higher Education Ministry made public its decision to withdraw recognition for two private institutions of

higher learning and while three others were served with warnings for failure to maintain their course management quality performance.

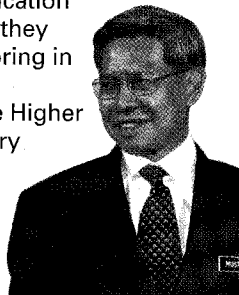
Datuk Mustapa Mohamed, the minister in charge, said the recognition for Regions Colleges well as the International City Technology Institute to recruit foreign students had been withdrawn.

Receiving warnings were Plaza International College, Gemilang College and Rima College.

'The ministry is conducting verification inspections to assess the capability of private institutions of higher learning to recruit international students,' he told Parliament.

In the same briefing, the minister said that the number of international students at the higher institutions of learning grew to 41,559 last year from 32,254 students in 2004, a 29% jump.

According to the statistics, in 2004, there were 6,697 students in the public institutions of higher learning and 25,557 students in the private institutions. In 2005, the figures were 7,656 and 33,903 students, respectively.



FIXING ICT GRADUATES

The Government is very much aware of the need of smart industry-university collaborations in its efforts to equip graduates with industry-relevant skills and other skill sets.

This is on top of the glaring need to equip students with the "last-mile" skills, including industry certifications and soft skills, among ICT graduates that often hamper their prospects of employment.

Hence, the Government has come up with a number of long-term strategies to address the issue of unemployment among local information and communications technology (ICT) graduates, according to Deputy Science, Technology and Innovation **Minister Datuk Kong Cho Ha**.

'Industry-university collaboration is vital, as it will significantly enhance the syllabi and courses offered. Thus, we will be able to produce more graduates with the skills needed by the industry,' he said.

With this in mind, he said that the Government has seen the need of ICT courses offered by multinational companies should be incorporated into the curriculum of the universities.

'This will save the graduates from having to go through another round of training after graduation,' he said.

Providing some data, more than 16% of some 60,000 unemployed graduates in the country are in the ICT discipline.