

**USM Absorbs GST, No Increase In Costs For Now - VC
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GEORGE TOWN, April 3 (Bernama) -- Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) will absorb the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and has given an assurance that for now, there will be no increase in the cost of services and fees.

Its vice-chancellor, Prof Datuk Dr Omar Osman said the university's management was in the process of understanding the implementation of the GST and would do its best not to burden students and patients seeking treatment at the USM Hospital (HUSM) in Kubang Kerian.

"The university administration is still in the process of understanding what would be imposed the GST and what would not, and we have to look at its impact during the next few months as it involves many parties.

"We are also trying to get an exemption for the HUSM which is a teaching hospital," he told reporters after officiating the Career and Education Expo (Ekspen) at the USM main campus, here today.

He said the university had also set up GST@USM operations rooms at its Treasury Department and Finance Sections in the main campus and three other branch campuses which would operate from April 31 from 9 am to 4 pm.

He said the operations rooms would hopefully provide assistance and information relating to the new tax system as well as clarify the confusion of university residents, suppliers and contractors.

He also urged canteen and cafeteria operators not to increase their prices indiscriminately and that university residents inform the management if there were unreasonable charges.

"The university will monitor the situation and ask the cooperation of all parties in reducing the confusion so that the learning environment and the students' focus are not jeopardised," he said.

Earlier, in his speech, Omar said Ekspen which was handled by the USM Students Representative Council, would be held for two days, involving 59 agencies which offer more than 1,000 jobs as well as opportunities for further education.

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