

Malaysia 5th most expensive country for degrees, says report
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Malaysia is the fifth most expensive country to get a university education in relation to its household income, news portal AsiaOne reported.

It cited the London-based Expert Market – a business-to-business marketplace – which found that average working Malaysian parents spent 55% of their pay on allowing each child to finish university, even though Malaysia registered the lowest tuition fee cost among the top 10 "most expensive places to send your kids to university" based on a survey of fees in 40 countries.

"The country has around 20 universities and fees are competitive compared to the rest of the world.

"However, domestically the average wage is still only RM2,052 (S\$673) per month. This means without scholarships or loans, parents will lose over half their wages in tuition fees," AsiaOne's report said, citing business and technology news website Business Insider Malaysia.

Tuition fees in Malaysia cost £11,875 (RM76,925 or S\$25,200), according to a survey of tuition fees in 40 countries on the Quacquerelli Symmonds Top Universities for academic year 2014/2015 and the 2013 Gallup Median Self-Reported Income.

The most expensive country for a university education is Hungary, which has one of the lowest household incomes. Hungarian parents have to spend 92% of their salaries to fund a child's degree.

Other countries more expensive than Malaysia are Romania, where parents spend 86% of their salaries on their children's higher education, Estonia (76%) and Chile (73%).

According to the report, Britain charges fees unlike the rest of Europe. However, Expert Market named countries like Norway, Greece, Poland and Ireland as among several EU states that offer a degree entirely free.

In the recently tabled Budget 2016, Putrajaya slashed allocations to public universities by RM2.4 billion, raising concerns that university tuition fees would be increased.

However, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh reportedly said public universities were not allowed to increase their fees for undergraduate degree programmes just because there was a decrease in allocation to the ministry, from this year's RM15.785 billion to RM13.378 billion next year in the national budget.

He said 90% of public universities were still reliant on government funding and should make money by utilising their assets. – October 28, 2015.

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