



## **Here's How The Ministry Of Higher Education Wants To Help Fresh Graduates**

*The Ministry has several plans lined up to help graduates in the job hunt.*

Hordes of students go through the adventure of higher education, not knowing if there is a light at the end of the tunnel, in their case, a job.

Times are tough for both sides of the employment field, especially for fresh graduates, who tend to have little to no working experience.

Being a party with concern on the matter, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), has gotten involved, sparking various initiatives to help this particular group.

One of the long term strategies the ministry has is the Graduate Employability Strategic Plan, to run from this year till 2025, and is expected to be launched soon.

According to the Ministry's Planning and Research Division Secretary, Datuk Shaharuddin Abu Sohoh in an RTM interview, it would contain 4 strategies, 13 incentives and 31 activities.

The move will also serve as the main guideline for institutes of higher learning to ensure the employability of their graduates, to survive in a competitive world and fit in to various industries.

Shaharuddin said that application of 21st century skills and use of a Future Ready Curriculum in line with industry needs, are among four focus points in the plan.

*Twenty-first century skills are those that have been identified as important and necessary. Skills that every graduate who is entering the job market should have.*

*Datuk Shaharuddin Abu Sohoh, Secretary, MOHE Planning and Research Division*

According to Shaharuddin, those skills include technology literacy, information and communication, creativity and innovation, and critical thinking.

The Future Ready Curriculum, he added, is an organic and flexible curriculum that emphasises on transformative teaching and learning, also enabling alternative interpretations for students.

## **Landing jobs for fresh graduates**

According to a report by the Malay Mail, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) found that unemployment had risen by a concerning 0.4% among graduates in the year 2020, compared to the previous year.

Needless to say, it was the pandemic that had caused this, crippling the economy and causing workforces to shrink rapidly.

Shaharuddin said the employability rate of graduates had dropped by 1.8% to 84.4% in 2020, from 86.2% in 2019.

This percentage is a measurement of a graduate's capability to find a job within six months after completing their studies, meaning the higher the percentage, the better chances graduates have at finding a job.

Under the National Economic Recovery Plan (PENJANA), the Ministry has carried out two programmes – the Career Advancement Programme, and Personal Certification, based on skills and upskilling training to increase employability.

The primary aims of the Career Advancement Programme are job matching and placement, entrepreneurial programmes and and gig economy. The latter, purposed to help graduates pursue income through gig economy and freelancing.

Shaharuddin said the targets are public and private institution graduates from 2019 to 2021 who are still unemployed.

"The uniqueness of these programmes is that it promises job placements the moment they complete their training, but they need to fulfil the necessary criteria," he said.

He added that more than 68,000 students had part-time businesses while learning, and that nearly 8,000 of them continued their businesses after completing their studies.

Stating that the Ministry was always working together with institutions and academia, he proceeded to conclude, "This is not only concentrated on having one-off programmes but looks into medium and long term initiatives such as reviewing modules, improving the curriculum and having a more industry-driven environment for students."

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