

# Guiding students to the best option

## Institutions play a crucial role in showing the way to school leavers

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Students need to be aware of what courses and programmes are available in order to choose the best study and career pathway, say education experts.

Alliance of Government-linked Universities (GLUs) chairman Prof Datuk Dr Mazliham Mohd Su'ud said school leavers, who have just completed their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) exams, need exposure to know what opportunities are available and this is where universities play a part.

"Our role is to guide them on what is the best programme that they could enrol in," he said after the GLUs Open Day 2024 opening ceremony yesterday.

The open day was held together with the Star Education Fair 2024 at IOI Grand Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Prof Mazliham said the main concern of school leavers is whether the programme is suitable and matches the needs of their ambitions and what they want to achieve in the future.

"With a wide array of programmes across various disciplines offered by 20 public universities and 416 private universities and colleges in Malaysia, students may find it challenging to narrow down their choices," he said, adding that it can be overwhelming, especially for those still exploring their interests.

Prof Mazliham said one of the best ways to ensure the correct choice is to choose industry-driven programmes offered by universities that are closely connected or from the industries themselves.

The alliance consists of Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP), Multimedia University (MMU), Universiti Tenaga Nasional (Uniten) and Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL).

Uniten acting deputy vice-chancellor (academic and international) Prof Dr Izham Zainal Abidin said at the GLUs, students can "mix between the worlds".

For example, he said engineering students can learn informa-



**Early birds:** Ameerul and Muhammad Ameerul with their parents Azleen Abdul Rahman and Ruslan Md Salleh visiting the Star Education Fair 2024 at IOI Grand Exhibition and Convention Centre. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star



tion technology, or multimedia students learning some engineering.

"While it is mixed, what GLUs do is provide students the core elements so that when they go out, they can actually adapt," he said.

Prof Mazliham added that students can also take courses at other GLUs and do credit transfer.

He said while each GLU has its own niche area – UTP concentrates on oil and gas, MMU on digital technology, Uniten on energy and UniKL of higher TVET – their graduates have gained employment in many other industries.

"We have an average of 85% employment rate among the four universities," said Prof Mazliham,

who is also MMU president and CEO.

Additionally, he said, they offer affordable tuition fees and scholarships either under their parent companies or foundations.

On the open day, he said it serves as a platform for each university to promote and showcase their niche areas to the public and connect with prospective students.

"This is aligned with the GLUs' aspiration to supply highly skilled workers for the nation, as mandated by the government," he said.

Among the early birds at the fair were 18-year-old twins Ameerul Ruslan and Muhammad Ameerul Ruslan, who together with their family, arrived at 10am for the first day to explore the

many tertiary and postgraduate study options available.

Arriving an hour before the doors were slated to open, Ameerul was keen to check out paediatric programmes offered by some of the country's top institutions.

"I'm a pure science student, and I've always wanted to pursue a field in paediatrics from a young age," she said.

"I think this fair could be a good avenue for me to dig a little deeper into the courses I can study. We've just finished our SPM exams and are awaiting our results," said Muhammad Ameerul.

Their mother Azleen Abdul Rahman, 49, said this was the first time the family was attending the fair.

"We knew there will be a number of reputable universities exhibiting here today.

"We have also applied to a few other universities through UPUonline, but also wanted to explore other options here," she said.

Organised by Star Media Group for the first time this year, the

two-day fair, which ends today, offers various tertiary study options and financial assistance such as study loans and scholarships, with 43 institutions occupying 71 booths.

The main exhibitors are the Alliance of GLUs.

Besides local institutions, the fair also drew the participation of international institutions, namely Health Careers International Australia (MWT); Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Singapore; Zhejiang University International Business School, China; and South East Technological University Ireland.

Among the highlights at the fair are the exciting prizes up for grabs.

Participants stand a chance to win the Realme Pad (RMP2102), Buds T100, Watch 3 and smartphone (C51) during the Register & Win sessions. These exclusive prizes are sponsored by Juara Partners & Anand Foundation.

Don't miss out on the exciting activities happening today, including student performances and talks on blockchain and cloud computing, various career opportunities and nurturing a growth mindset.

There will also be a session on the "Employees Provident Fund (EPF) and You" and an inspirational talk by an education influencer.

The fair is open from 11am to 7pm. Admission is free. Door gifts await early birds.

The Star Education Fair, which is in its 37th year, is one of the country's pioneer education exhibitions. It has continuously provided visitors with educational programmes ranging from pre-university, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate to professional and vocational courses from various local and international institutions.

For details on the Star Education Fair, visit facebook.com/stareducationfair or email edufair@the-star.com.my.

