

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia: 50 years of inspiring excellence



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Monday, 18 May 2020 7:00 AM MYT



UKM graduates throwing their mortar boards into the air at the varsity's 37th convocation.

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UKM Vice-Chancellor Prof Datuk Ir Dr Mohd Hamdi Abd Shukor said its motto was inspired by a philosophy that includes the integration of faith in god and constructive knowledge, the amalgamation of theory and practice as the fundamentals in the advancement of knowledge, the building of an educated society, and the development of the university. "It emphasises the varsity's function in nation-building through knowledge creation and excellence in implementation," he stated.



Some of the 6,817 UKM graduates at the Bangi campus who received their degrees at their convocation, held over 12 sessions from Aug 12-17.

UKM upholds the spirit of its principles in its core functions of research, education and service. "The motto provides the direction for us to serve and contribute towards the nation and the people by holding closely to the national identity," said Prof Hamdi, who stressed the need to stay relevant and significant in Malaysian society and internationally. "UKM is always alert and sensitive to the needs and changes to our socioeconomic ecosystem, to the demands of its stakeholders, and to global challenges."

The institution began half a century ago with a temporary campus on Jalan Pantai Baru, Kuala Lumpur, **n Living** late,



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Sultan Ahmad Shah, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong in 1980, arriving to officiate the opening of the main UKM campus in Bangi.

Moving Forward

UKM's golden jubilee this year marks an important milestone, and the university is all the more committed to being at the forefront of developing a learned, dynamic and moral society. To ensure continuity from strategies implemented since the varsity's inception, the UKM Strategic Plan 2019-2021 was formulated. The programme has 18 strategies and are grouped into five core areas – research, academic, internationalisation, talent and finance, said Prof Hamdi.

UKM was awarded research university status in 2012, and research is its first core for the varsity aims to produce and strengthen impactful, visionary research. "High-quality research will no doubt be valuable to the other four areas and beneficial to students," said Prof Hamdi, adding that academics are encouraged to publish their findings in impactful journals and publications.

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A 1977 photo of the old administrative and basic science building.

Empowering academic and non-academic talents through training and enhancement programmes is their fourth core. As for the finance area, UKM is working towards self-sustainability without forsaking its social role. “To achieve financial sustainability, we need to increase student intake, improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our business arms, monetise our vast land assets, as well as enhance our *waqaf*, endowment roles and portfolios,” said Prof Hamdi.

The first year of the strategic plan saw UKM working towards strengthening its foundation by focusing on quality. This year, it aims to create a culture of high performance and 2021 will be the “empowerment year”.

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UKM's Dewan Canselor Tun Abdul Razak back in the day.

Going Up The Ranks

The key performance index (KPI) set in the plan was developed based on their staff and financial capacity. It includes the KPI set by the Ministry Of Higher Education, as well as indicators for international university rankings, all of which are continuously being monitored and reviewed. "We are strengthening our research across disciplines, continuously improving teaching and learning activities by encouraging the use of technology and innovative approach."

UKM has achieved over 75% of their 2019 KPI in the research, academic and student development components. This year, UKM was ranked in the 101-200 band in the Times Higher Education World University Impact Rankings. Seven of its subjects were ranked second in Malaysia in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings by Subject 2020. Some of these include communication and media studies, medicine and law.

It also ranked 160 in the QS World University Rankings 2020, and climbed from 41 to 39 among Asian institutions. UKM has also been awarded five stars in the QS Stars University Rating, which evaluates varsities' excellence indicators across (at least) eight categories including quality of facilities, programme strength and graduate employability. "We aim to become a world-class university by 2025,"

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