

19 varsities make it to 'excellent'



Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin (right) unveiling the Setara results in Putrajaya yesterday. With him is Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Dr Hou Kok Chung. — NST picture by Izhari Ariffin

By Farrah Naz Karim
farrah@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Not a single institution of higher learning in the country, including Universiti Sains Malaysia, which was granted apex status the year before, was rated "outstanding", in the 2009 Rating System for Institutions of Higher Learning (Setara).

The university managed to attain an "excellent" rating.

USM was recognised as a university with the greatest potential among Malaysian universities to be a world-class one and it was expected to move up the world university rankings to be within top 200 in five years and top 100, if not top 50, by 2020.

USM settled in the fifth tier together with 18 other institutions of higher learning, including 11 private ones.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, speaking at a press conference to announce the Setara results, said 25 universities and university colleges, including 11 public institutions of higher learning, were rated "very good".

Four private institutions of higher learning were rated "good".

No university or university college was ranked as "satisfactory" or "weak".

"The performance of public and private

institutions of higher learning, which are almost balanced, especially in tiers four and five, is a positive development.

"This healthy competition will be a catalyst in the ministry's efforts to improve the higher learning education sector," he said.

The Setara exercise is to measure the quality, responsibility and performance of universities and university colleges in the country in addition to instilling a culture of continuous quality improvement among them.

Khaled said last year's Setara was based on the institutions' teaching and learning of first degree courses, as the two elements were the only common denominators for all and this ensured a level playing field in their assessment.

He said the Setara rating would be used as an input by the Higher Education Ministry to formulate higher education policies.

He added that public and private institutions of higher learning, ranked "excellent" under Setara, would be entitled to local and foreign government-sponsored students besides government research grants.

They would be eligible for research-university status, enrolment of more graduate and postgraduate students as well as exemption from getting approval to set tuition fees.

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