

Amendments to AUKU get Dewan Rakyat nod

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Amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971, tabled by Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambrzy Abdul Kadir, have been passed in the Dewan Rakyat. Bernama pic

KUALA LUMPUR: After a long and arduous process, the amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act (AUKU) 1971 which will give freedom to students in several matters were today passed in the Dewan Rakyat.

The amendments, tabled by Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambrzy Abdul Kadir, aimed to realise the agenda to empower students and cultivate student movements in Malaysia.

Zambrzy said the bill also represents a "progressive" initiative by the government towards empowering students to better manage their lives upon entering adulthood.

"We cannot deny that the bill is a progressive initiative, not a regressive one. The bill is also the aspiration of university students who wish to see changes in the student organisation management landscape," he said during his winding-up speech in the Lower House.

Zambry earlier tabled the [second reading](#) of the bill, which saw the amendments to several sections, including Section 15A and Section 16B.

Section 15A of the act will allow student representative councils or any student body to make, organise or take part in any collection of money or receive money or any other contributions from any person or body of persons, subject to any written law.

Meanwhile, Zambry said the amendment to Section 16B would see the transfer of authority of the vice-chancellor to the student disciplinary committee established by the board to handle disciplinary cases.

The amendment also involved several provisions under the First Schedule namely Section 48 including subsections 4, 11, 11A, 11B and 12A.

Meanwhile, the last amendment of Section 49(2) will allow university student bodies to receive similar facilities provided to the student representative council.

At the same time, Zambry stressed that the amendments were not unilaterally made by the government as engagement sessions had been carried out with student groups since 2021.

"Since 1971 until now, AUKU has undergone seven amendments. Even though the majority of provisions (in the act) focus on the administration of public universities, 16 per cent of seven sections out of a total of 42 outline matters pertaining to students' interests.

"I acknowledge that there may be areas where we need to improve from time to time as it (the improvement) is not static.

"(And) in this regard, the government is open to continuously improving the AUKU from time to time."

AUKU is an act to provide for the establishment, maintenance and administration of universities and university colleges and other matters connected to it.

On Dec 10, 2018, the Dewan Rakyat passed amendments to AUKU involving the removal of Section 15(2)(c), which prevents students from taking part in political party activities on campus, thus, giving them more space and freedom of speech and politics.

On March 19 last year, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the government assured that it would [remove provisions](#) in AUKU that restrict the freedom of students and lecturers.