

# Funding for humanities will boost critical thinking

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More than 75 per cent of government grants for research in universities are reserved for the hard sciences. - NSTP file pic

LETTERS: I urge the government to reinstate funding for research in social sciences and humanities in public universities.

More than 75 per cent of government grants for research in universities are reserved for the hard sciences.

Without exposure to social sciences and humanities, students may develop a narrow worldview focused only on technical skills or vocational training.

This may hinder their ability to understand and address complex societal issues, leading to a lack of empathy and cultural awareness.

While science is a powerful tool for understanding the world and driving progress, it should be complemented by considerations from ethics, philosophy, social sciences and humanities.

Many issues facing humanity — such as climate change, public health crises, poverty and sustainable development — require scientific expertise and mathematical modelling for solutions.

However, science-based solutions are often inadequate to address more complex societal challenges without integrating them with solutions that social sciences and humanities offer.

Steve Jobs, the Apple icon, said in 2011: "Technology alone is not enough. It's technology married with the liberal arts, married with the humanities, that yields the results that make our hearts sing."

Universities offer critical thinking and analysis as a social science subject. Experts believe that those trained in philosophy, law and political science with strong communication skills tend to "think more critically".

Likewise, experts concur that humanities' disciplines celebrate human creativity, expression and cultural heritage through the study of literature, art, music and philosophy.

Skills in critical thinking are essential for making informed decisions, distinguishing fact from fiction and navigating the world.

The Higher Education Ministry must bring back funding for humanities and social sciences.

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