

T20 students benefitting from public university subsidies

By Farah Marshita Abdul Patah - October 2, 2024 @ 1:10pm



The government is heavily subsidising tuition fees at public universities. NST FILE PIC

KUALA LUMPUR: A significant portion of the government subsidies for tuition fees at public universities is also being enjoyed by students from T20 families.

This is based on fee and payment details outlined in recent admission letters from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), as seen by Berita Harian.

For example, the total cost for the four-year Bachelor of Software Engineering programme at UKM is RM88,152, but students only need to pay RM7,520.

These subsidies apply to all students entering for the 2024/2025 academic year, including those from affluent families or the T20 group.

Another example is the Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery programme at UiTM, which has a total cost of RM31,012 per semester, but students only need to pay RM1,048.

At Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), available information shows that the average annual tuition for undergraduate programmes ranges from RM20,000 to nearly RM40,000, depending on the course.

For example, in the Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine, the annual cost for medical studies at UPM is RM39,379, with students only paying RM4,674 after a subsidy of RM34,705.

At the diploma level, the tuition fee for the Faculty of Management and Business at UiTM is RM5,482 per semester, and after a subsidy of RM4,734, students, including those from affluent families, only need to pay RM748.

Private universities are also seen to set tuition fees at similar levels; however, students must secure their own funding, including through loans from the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN), which must be repaid.

For example, IMU University charges RM54,000 for one semester or RM108,000 per year for its Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery programme, while the fee for Multimedia University's (MMU) accounting degree is RM54,250 and Limkokwing University charges RM58,650 for a three-year Bachelor of Creative Multimedia.

The issue of education subsidies was addressed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim during his speech at the National Symposium to End Poverty 2024 in Putrajaya on Monday.

He hinted that the 2025 Budget will [continue to assist the poor](#) and stop the rich from taking advantage of heavily subsidised educational opportunities.

He said there must be a stop to 'leakages' involving wealthy people abusing education opportunities that should go to students from underprivileged backgrounds.

He questioned how many children from elite families attended science schools or institutes intended for the Bumiputera that are actually intended for the underprivileged.

"They (these institutes) are benefitting families of top civil servants, politicians and elite businessmen. Their children are all sent to the best schools that are being heavily funded by the government, which is very unfair," he said.

Meanwhile, former Education director-general Tan Sri Alimuddin Mohd Dom said the large subsidies borne by the government led some students to take their university education less seriously.

He noted that the funds allocated by the government for public university education, without classifying students' financial capabilities, were excessively high, especially

since T20 families also benefit from these subsidies, which could be redirected for other uses.

"The fees at public universities are too low; some even say that the cost of kindergarten is much higher," he remarked, expressing confidence that T20 students have no issues paying full tuition, with many spending hundreds of thousands on education abroad.

He suggested that if wealthy students were required to pay their own tuition fees, those funds could be used by public universities to manage their institutions and improve the quality to match that of foreign institutions.

"If public universities have additional funds and allocations, they would be able to enhance the quality of education to be on par with foreign education institutions," he said, agreeing that restructuring the subsidies for T20 students at public universities would be beneficial.