

Upskilling army personnel with diploma courses

By [Luqman Hakim](#) - December 2, 2024 @ 4:45pm



Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambrzy Abdul Kadir (kanan) addressing the press after the signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding between the two ministries at Wisma Perwira today. - BERNAMA PIC

KUALA LUMPUR: The Defence Ministry and the Higher Education Ministry have joined forces to provide Malaysian army personnel with opportunities to upskill and earn formal qualifications, easing their career transition.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said the initiative aims to provide soldiers with enhanced qualifications and skills recognition, especially for those nearing retirement.

"This partnership will allow army personnel, who often join the service with only SPM (Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia) qualifications, to pursue diploma programmes tailored to their skills and experience.

"It ensures that their contributions to national security are recognised, enabling them to transition smoothly into civilian careers after retirement."

He said this in a speech during the signing ceremony of a memorandum of understanding between the two ministries at Wisma Perwira, here.

Khaled said it was important to upskill army personnel who, after serving 20 to 24 years, retire at an average age of 45.

The collaboration includes Work-Based Learning (WBL) programmes, which validate the skills and expertise acquired during their military service.

10 diploma programmes for WBL were identified, including Culinary Arts, Hotel Management, Islamic Studies, Sports Science, and Geospatial Technology, that align with roles within the military such as chefs, administrative assistants and physical trainers.

"It is expected that 1,000 personnel from various fields of expertise will benefit from the programme next year."

Currently, only three universities are involved in this initiative comprising Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM), Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM) and Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM).

Khaled added that discussions were underway with DRB-Hicom University of Automotive Malaysia to expand the initiative with four programme offerings.

He said that so far, approximately 236 personnel had been identified for the programme, with the costs covered by the Defence Ministry. The main requirement is that the personnel must have served for at least 15 years.

Unlike traditional educational pathways, the programme does not require participants to attend extensive university courses.

Instead, universities such as UiTM, UPM and UTM will evaluate participants' work experience and competencies acquired during their military service.

"This evaluation process ensures that personnel gain academic credentials that reflect their years of practical experience.

"For instance, mechanics who have spent decades maintaining military vehicles can receive formal recognition of their expertise without undergoing additional technical training."

The initiative was backed by a RM3 million allocation that also supports universities in making the accreditation process affordable.

Khaled said that the universities are expected to charge minimal fees as participants will not engage in traditional classroom learning.

Besides WBL, the initiative also offers a Community-Focused Programme to develop and enhance knowledge, talents, and skills within the community, targeting the defence community, including the children of armed forces personnel and members of the Armed Forces Family Welfare Association.

Industrial Collaboration Programme (ICP) Initiative, under the Defence Ministry's Defence Industry Division, involves partnerships with defence industry players. This initiative includes research and development activities as well as training programmes to achieve the goal.

Meanwhile, Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Zambry Abdul Kadir said the joint effort reflected a broader government commitment to breaking silos between ministries and achieving shared national goals.

He lauded Khaled for his vision in initiating the collaboration, adding that Khaled's prior experience as a two-time higher education minister uniquely positioned him to identify synergies between the two ministries.