

MEF opposes Hannah Yeoh's proposal for mandated remuneration for private-sector interns

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YOUTH and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh's proposal on mandatory payment of allowances to interns in the private sector has been opposed by the Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF).

MEF president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman said in a statement that not all enterprises could afford these payments, and that employers paid what they could afford.

According to Syed Hussain, in urban areas, the average allowance for an intern is about RM1,200, but there are also interns who get paid below RM1,000 per month.

"An internship is a chance for students or fresh graduates to gain valuable industry experience that will assist them to be more employable," *The Vibes* reported him as saying.

"Instead of making it mandatory for employers to pay internship allowance, the government should consider giving more incentives to employers to take in more interns and the government may then make it mandatory that all the undergraduates undergo internship attachment."

In reply to Yeoh's news conference yesterday (Feb 16), Syed Hussain noted that making internship allowances mandatory would discourage the private sector from providing such programmes and deny students the chance to interact with people in the workplace and learn skills that are not taught in the classroom.

Meanwhile, Muar MP Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman had also concurred with Yeoh's proposal.

Interns "are not kuli", according to the former youth and sports minister, and should not be taken advantage of. He had also increased government stipends for interns at ministries and other governmental organisations from RM300 to RM900 during his tenure at the ministry. — Feb 17, 2023