

Whose problem is graduate unemployment in Malaysia? Experts weigh in

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 13 — Unemployment of graduates or failing to find jobs that suit their qualifications are the most talked-about issues among today's young people.

When it comes to the employers, they claim that many graduates do not have the knowledge, skills and abilities that are relevant to the industry's needs although they have spent between three and five years pursuing a diploma or bachelor's degree.

There are different views on the problem and among the issues raised is the capability of the institutions of higher learning (IPT) to offer courses and knowledge that are in line with industry's needs and the current needs of their students.

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan said currently, many graduates, who had been pursuing certain courses at the IPT, were having jobs which did not match their qualifications.

"This is due to the university's inability to change the content of their courses quickly. Even though they know that what's needed in the job market is different, but for them to change the courses or create new courses will take a long time," he told Bernama.

Shamsuddin said it was understood that a new course at an IPT would usually take up to five years for approval before it being offered.

"If that's the time taken (to introduce a new course), it's definitely a long one. After we offer the course, it may no longer be relevant to the job market as the job market is changing so fast now," he said.

However, he did not point fingers at the IPT alone on the issue of unemployed graduates.

“To say that the university is not doing its job well, it’s not 100 per cent (IPT’s fault). We also see that the current job market is quite sluggish,” he said.

Meanwhile, National Professor’s Council (MPN) president Prof Datuk Dr Raduan Che Rose said picky employers was one of the contributors to the unemployment rate.

Raduan said apart from the IPT, it was the responsibility of employers and organisations to offer job opportunities so that the graduates could be trained.

“This is the philosophy of education, we produce graduates who can think (and) adapt...they (graduates) do not have the skills to do their work right away. The industry too has a role to train graduates,” he said.

He said it was not fair to point fingers only at graduates and universities when at the moment, the industry did not provide sufficient job opportunities.

Raduan said that almost 50 per cent of graduates were underemployed.

“Underemployed means graduates working in sectors or the types of jobs that don’t require their expertise and qualifications... It’s a big issue,” he said. — Bernama