

Skills are key, says MEF

EDUCATION

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By CHRISTINA CHIN



BUSINESS administration, engineering and computing qualifications will continue to be sought after by companies hiring in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

But what will set one successful candidate apart from another in an increasingly competitive job market is the fresh graduate's ability to acquire skills that can propel them in their chosen career path, said Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) executive director Datuk Shamsuddin Bardan (*pic*).

MEF, which represents the country's largest employers' group, cited English proficiency, technological and technical know-how, agility and flexibility in coming up with new ideas and ways of doing things, data literacy, critical thinking, creativity, digital etiquette, and the ability to work collaboratively, as critical skills that give graduates an edge in the employment market.

“As companies decide on strategies that will transform the future of business, they need to map out which skill pools will be needed to drive it forward.

“They need to rapidly identify skills for business recovery which calls for redeployment of the workforce to other businesses that require more employees. This may mean having to reskill or upskill them,” he said, adding that digital technology lies at the core of the transition, enabling organisations to better meet the needs of their customers, and improving the agility and responsiveness of operations.

Last Sunday, the Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities and Education Malaysia Global Services told StarEdu that traditional degrees were still a popular choice among Malaysian and international students.

Fields related to computing and computer science, in particular, seem to be the top choice for tertiary education.

Programmes in areas such as computing, computer science and related areas, as well as engineering, business administration and accounting, have also remained popular among local students.

Niche-based programmes in areas such as hospitality, architecture, psychology, culinary arts, education and medicine, and health sciences also showed steady enrolment growth, as Covid-19 has brought greater awareness to areas related to health sciences and biomedical sciences.

Shamsuddin said many jobs have been fundamentally changed by the pandemic.

Employees have had to learn how to complete tasks remotely, using digital tools to communicate and collaborate with colleagues, he added.

“Fresh graduates need to understand the current weak labour market and be realistic of their chances to land their dream job.

“Most employers are not able to offer long-term permanent employment as they are not sure of the sustainability of their businesses due to the current volatile market conditions.

“Those who are hiring offer shorter fixed term contracts of one year or less,” he said.