

MALAYSIA

MEF disagrees with Hannah Yeoh's call on mandatory pay for private-sector interns

Companies offering internships should be given incentives instead, group says

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Malaysian Employers Federation president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman (pic) says mandatory internship allowances may discourage the private sector from offering such programmes as not all companies can afford these payments. – MEF pic, February 17, 2023

KUALA LUMPUR – The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has opposed Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh's suggestion on mandatory payment of allowances to interns in the private sector.

Not all companies can afford these payments, MEF president Datuk Syed Hussain Syed Husman said in a statement, noting that employers paid what they could afford.

He said 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.

“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,” he said.

If internship allowances were made mandatory, it would discourage the private sector from offering such programmes and deprive students of the opportunity to experience the working environment and gain skills not taught in classrooms, he added.

Syed Hussain was responding to Yeoh’s remarks in a press conference yesterday, where she said the matter of mandatory allowances for interns in the private sector would be raised to the cabinet.

Muar MP Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman had also agreed with her suggestion.

The former youth and sports minister said interns are “not coolies” and should not be exploited. During his time at the ministry, he had also raised government allowances from RM300 to RM900 for interns at ministries and governmental agencies. – The Vibes, February 17, 2023