



MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

# Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint | 2026-2035







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# Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint

2026-2035



**Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim**  
Prime Minister

# Foreword

*Malaysia's higher education system is the catalyst for a just, prosperous, and sustainable society, shaping individuals who drive national progress and global prominence. Through a strong foundation in knowledge, ethics, and innovation, we empower future generations to lead with purpose and contribute meaningfully to the nation and humanity.*

The Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026–2035 signifies a bold step forward in our nation’s mission to build a sustainable, inclusive, and globally competitive higher education ecosystem. Over the years, Malaysia has transformed its educational landscape, moving from reliance on foreign systems to developing a robust, homegrown framework focused on quality, innovation, and societal advancement.

Guided by the National Education Philosophy and the MADANI framework, this blueprint reflects Malaysia’s aspirations, emphasising sustainability, prosperity, and inclusion. It envisions a future where higher education empowers learners to meet the complexities of a rapidly evolving world. By cultivating humanity-centric, purpose-driven graduates, our institutions will foster nation builders capable of driving Malaysia’s growth and resilience in the post-normal time.

Our achievements in higher education, including the growing international recognition of our higher learning institutions and the rise in international student mobility, reflect the dedication of our educators, policymakers, and industry leaders. Yet, as technological advancements and global shifts accelerate, we must address emerging challenges with agility and foresight. This blueprint provides a comprehensive framework for aligning academia, industry, government and communities, and playing a leading

role with our planetary health and sustainability agenda to deliver impactful and sustainable progress.

The collective commitment of all stakeholders is vital for the success of this initiative. Together, we can build a higher education ecosystem that champions innovation, inclusivity, and ethical leadership, while solidifying Malaysia’s position as a global hub for research, technology, and education.

As Prime Minister, I am confident that this blueprint will guide us in shaping a transformative education system that propels Malaysia toward greater heights of prosperity. By fostering learners who are job-ready, life-ready, future-ready and grounded in integrity, we reaffirm our commitment to creating a brighter, sustainable future for all Malaysians.

Let us unite in advancing education as the cornerstone of our nation’s progress and a legacy for future generations.

**Dato’ Seri Anwar Ibrahim**  
Prime Minister



**Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambrly Abd Kadir**  
Minister of Higher Education

**Malaysia's higher education is dedicated to shaping a dynamic and forward-looking society by fostering knowledge, ethics, and innovation, ensuring that future generations are equipped to drive progress and sustainability.**

It is with immense pride that I introduce the Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026–2035, a visionary framework aimed at transforming our higher education system into a resilient, inclusive, and globally competitive ecosystem. Aligned with the values of Malaysia MADANI, this blueprint reflects our commitment to nurturing graduates who are prepared to lead in a complex and interconnected world.

Over the past decade, Malaysia's higher education sector has achieved remarkable progress in expanding access, improving institutional quality, and enhancing graduate outcomes. The blueprint builds on these achievements, focusing on sustainability, innovation, and inclusivity to ensure our education system remains relevant and impactful amidst global challenges.

Key strategic shifts introduced in the blueprint emphasise the holistic development of learners, fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, and embedding sustainability in education, research, and governance. By championing lifelong learning, enhancing institutional agility, and strengthening global partnerships, the blueprint positions Malaysia as a leading destination for education and innovation.

This document is not merely a policy guide but a call to action for all stakeholders including educators, institutions, students, policymakers, and industry leaders. Through collective efforts, we will prepare learners to become ethical, adaptable, and purpose-driven individuals who contribute meaningfully to society and global progress.

As Minister, I am honoured to lead this transformative journey. Together, let us commit to excellence and innovation, ensuring Malaysia's higher education system continues to inspire and empower future generations.



**Datuk Dr. Anesee Ibrahim**  
Secretary General  
Ministry of Higher Education

## **Successful implementation of Malaysia's higher education agenda requires strong governance, strategic collaboration, and a clear focus on translating policies into meaningful outcomes for national progress and sustainability.**

The Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026–2035 is a testament to our nation's ambition to build a dynamic, inclusive, and globally competitive higher education ecosystem. It offers a roadmap to address emerging challenges, adapt to the demands of the post-normal time, and drive Malaysia's progress through sustainable and humanity-centric education.

At its core, the blueprint prioritises inclusivity, lifelong learning, and sustainability. It envisions the development of graduates who are not only technically proficient but also entrepreneurial, ethical, and resilient, with a strong sense of societal and environmental responsibility. Through strengthened governance, agile leadership, and partnerships with industries and communities, the blueprint ensures the system's responsiveness and long-term impact.

This milestone document builds upon the significant progress achieved in the past decade, such as enhanced access, quality improvements, and innovation within institutions. It outlines strategic shifts to nurture future-ready graduates, align research with national and global priorities, and empower institutions to navigate disruption effectively.

The Ministry recognises that this transformative vision requires collaboration among all stakeholders. Higher learning institutions, educators, students, policymakers, and industry leaders must work in unison to create a system that balances academic excellence with societal needs. This shared commitment will ensure that Malaysia's higher education sector remains a key driver of national development and a beacon of global innovation.

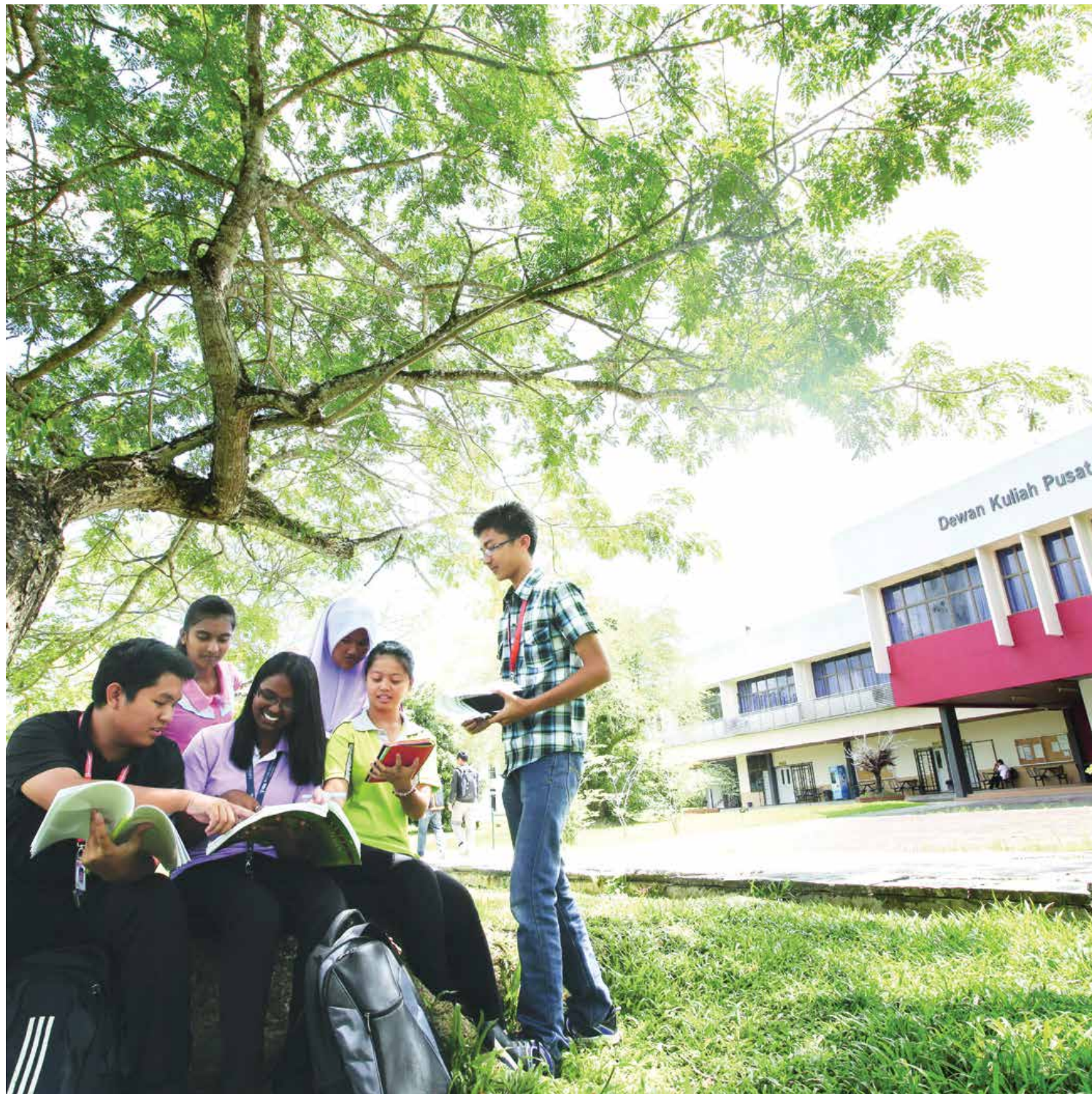
The highest appreciation is extended to all parties who have contributed, directly and indirectly, to the development of this blueprint.

Together, let us embark on this transformative journey with unity and determination, building an education system that serves as a cornerstone for Malaysia's sustainable progress and global prominence.

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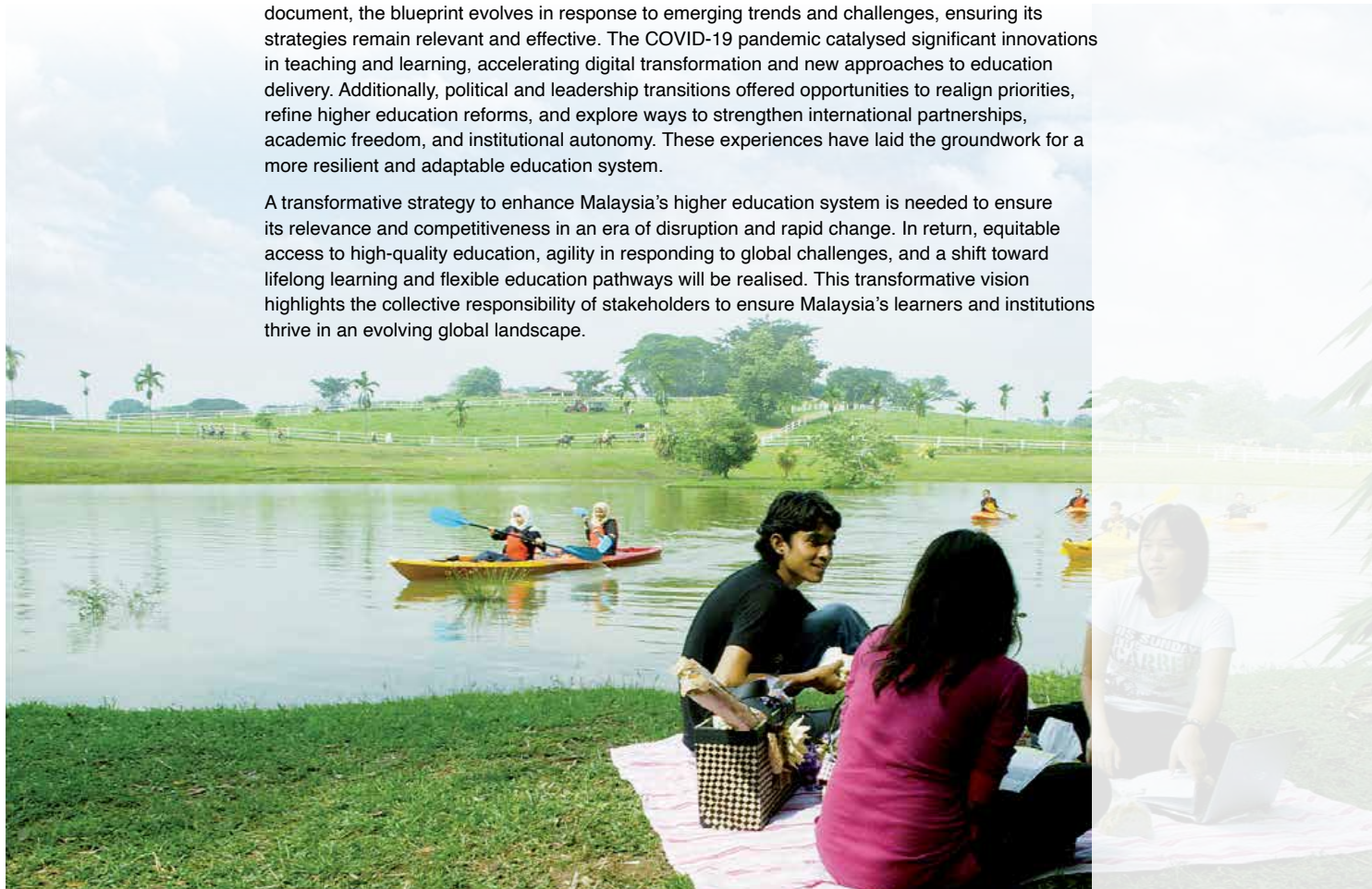


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Malaysian higher education system continuously adapts to global economic, social, technological, and environmental transformations, supporting the megatrends shaping the system. For the last ten years, Malaysia has emphasised the need to tackle inequities, foster lifelong learning, and equip graduates for a digital and knowledge-based economy. A globally competitive and sustainable education prepares graduates for the complexities of an interconnected world.

The implementation of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) or MEB 2015-2025 (HE) provided valuable learning opportunities despite some challenges, including changes brought about by the merging and later separation of education ministries. As a living document, the blueprint evolves in response to emerging trends and challenges, ensuring its strategies remain relevant and effective. The COVID-19 pandemic catalysed significant innovations in teaching and learning, accelerating digital transformation and new approaches to education delivery. Additionally, political and leadership transitions offered opportunities to realign priorities, refine higher education reforms, and explore ways to strengthen international partnerships, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy. These experiences have laid the groundwork for a more resilient and adaptable education system.

A transformative strategy to enhance Malaysia's higher education system is needed to ensure its relevance and competitiveness in an era of disruption and rapid change. In return, equitable access to high-quality education, agility in responding to global challenges, and a shift toward lifelong learning and flexible education pathways will be realised. This transformative vision highlights the collective responsibility of stakeholders to ensure Malaysia's learners and institutions thrive in an evolving global landscape.



## MALAYSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: TWO DECADES OF GROWTH TOWARD A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Malaysian higher education has significantly transformed over the last two decades, reflecting the nation's evolving priorities and opportunities. Malaysian universities have evolved through four stages. First-generation universities focused on teaching and learning, second-generation universities added research, third-generation universities emphasised society and environmental impact, and fourth-generation universities focus on humanistic values and sustainability. This reflects a commitment to holistic education, innovation, societal impact, and global goals for sustainability and inclusivity. The establishment of the Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA) in 2007 marked a critical milestone in ensuring quality assurance and standardisation, enhancing global recognition of Malaysian qualifications. The focus has shifted from producing graduates to cultivating holistic, entrepreneurial learners equipped with the skills needed for a dynamic, interconnected world.

The MEB 2015-2025 (HE) set ambitious goals for governance reform, internationalisation, and alignment with industry needs. During this period, universities improved their global rankings,

strengthened collaborations with industries and communities, and reinforced the system's relevance to national development through initiatives like public-private partnerships and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes.

Challenges have become opportunities for innovation and growth. Efforts to balance academic excellence with inclusivity have expanded access for marginalised communities, fostering a more equitable system. Rapid technological advancements and the complexities of post-normal times have encouraged institutions to adopt innovative approaches, enhancing their resilience and adaptability.

Guided by aspirations for sustainability, humanity-centric values, and global competitiveness, Malaysia's higher education system continues to evolve, shaping resilient nation-builders prepared to contribute to an advanced and sustainable future. In summary, the evolution of Malaysian higher education has progressed from foreign dependency to local sufficiency. It now focuses on interconnectivity and interdependency, reflecting a shift towards self-reliance and active global engagement.



## DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026-2035, or MHEB 2026-2035, was developed through a collaborative and consultative process driven by leading Malaysian thinkers with over 8,000 stakeholders and individuals engaged in providing input and feedback. The stakeholders included Malaysian and global education experts, university administrators, university Boards, the academic community, unions and associations, Ministry staff,

industry bodies and employers, relevant agencies, parents, students, and public members. The development process began with a comprehensive review of current performance through scoping, data collection, surveys, and stakeholder engagements, involving more than 100 documents, 8,000 stakeholders, and a detailed analysis of the MEB 2015-2025 (HE). The development of the MHEB 2026–2035 was structured into three distinct phases:

### PHASE 1 Review, assessment and analysis (May 2024–July 2024)

The Ministry started with a comprehensive review of current performance through scoping, data collection, survey and stakeholder engagements. This phase identified issues and gaps.

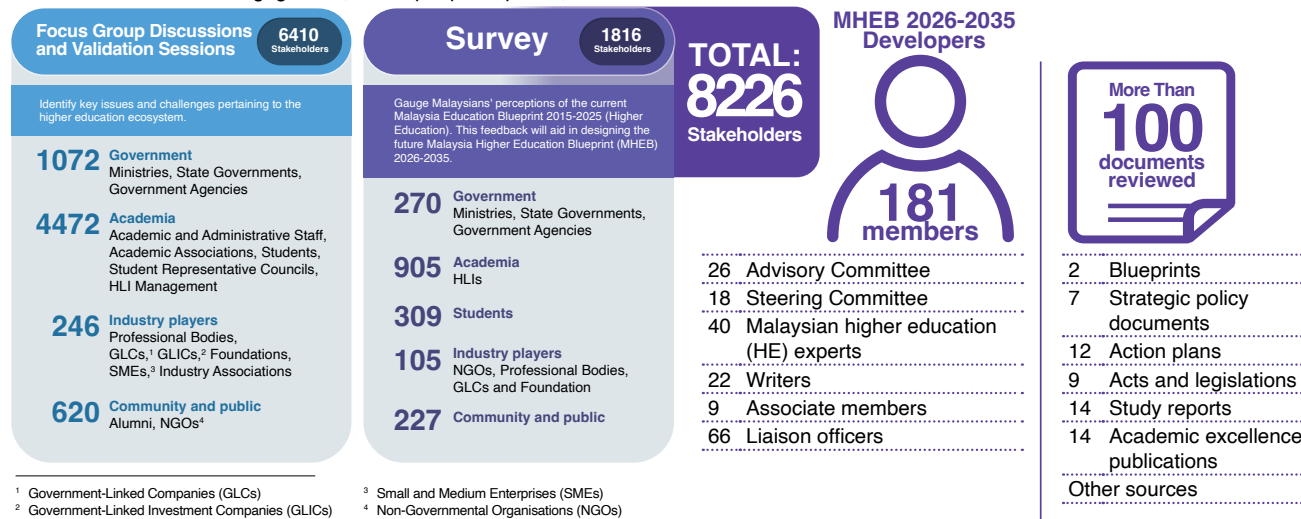
### PHASE 2 Conceptualisation of the 10 Shifts (August 2024 to October 2024)

Based on the review team’s findings and in consultation with stakeholders, 10 Shifts were identified to elevate the Malaysian higher education system to the next level. These Shifts were also carefully aligned with existing national plans.

### PHASE 3 Finalisation of the MHEB 2026–2035 (November 2024 to mid-February 2025)

The details of these 10 Shifts were finalised following another extensive round of public consultation and guidance from the Cabinet.

**Exhibit 1: Stakeholder engagement, developer participation, and document review**



<sup>1</sup> Government-Linked Companies (GLCs)  
<sup>2</sup> Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs)

<sup>3</sup> Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)  
<sup>4</sup> Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

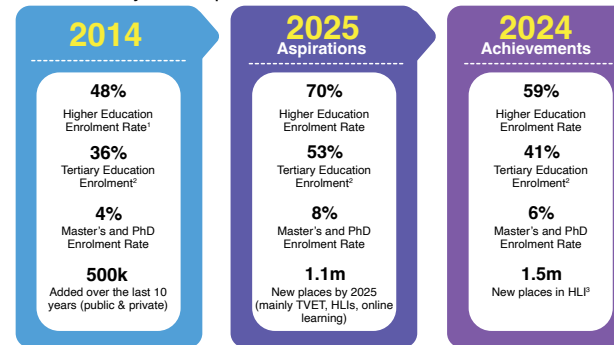
## CURRENT PERFORMANCE

The Ministry has made significant progress in fulfilling its core aspirations for higher education, most notably in broadening access and expanding overall system and institutional quality.

### ACCESS The access to higher education has considerably expanded

Malaysia has made notable progress in higher education enrolment, increasing from 48% in 2014 to 59% currently, though still below the 70% target set for 2025. Tertiary enrolment grew from 36% to 41%, remaining short of the 53% goal, while postgraduate enrolment rose from four to six percent but has yet to reach the eight percent target. Despite these gaps, the system exceeded its target for new places, achieving 1.5 million between 2014-2024, surpassing the 1.1 million planned by 2025. These achievements highlight Malaysia's commitment to expanding access to education while building an inclusive and globally competitive system. The growing enrolment, coupled with exceeding infrastructure targets, underscores the nation's strategic investments in higher education to support socio-economic development and global engagement.

Exhibit 2: System aspiration: Access



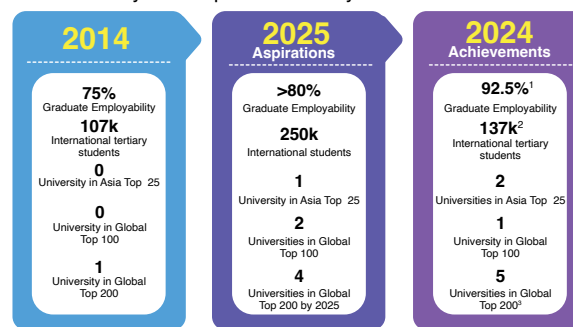
Source: MOHE (as at 31 December 2023)

- Higher Education comprises International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) 3+ (Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary Education such as Pre-U, Matriculation, STPM, A-Level, Certificate Year 1, and Diploma Year 1), ISCED 5, 6, 7 and 8.
- Tertiary Education comprises of ISCED 5 (Year 2 Certificate, Year 2 & 3 Diploma, Advance Diploma), ISCED 6, 7 and 8.
- New places refer to the number of additional participations in higher learning institutions, including flexible education and lifelong learning.

### QUALITY Advancing higher education with improved employability

Malaysia showed significant progress in achieving improved graduate employability surpassing the 2025 target, rising to 92.5% from 75% in 2014, exceeding the >80% goal. International tertiary student numbers increased from 107,000 in 2014 to 137,000 but fell short of the 2025 target of 250,000. Malaysia's higher education system is increasingly recognised as a key driver of socio-economic development. By prioritising quality education, innovative teaching and learning methods, and comprehensive support systems, the nation is well-positioned to maintain its upward trajectory in higher education, further strengthening its global standing and contributing to its vision of becoming a leading higher education destination.

Exhibit 3: System aspiration: Quality



Source: MOHE (as at 31 December 2024)

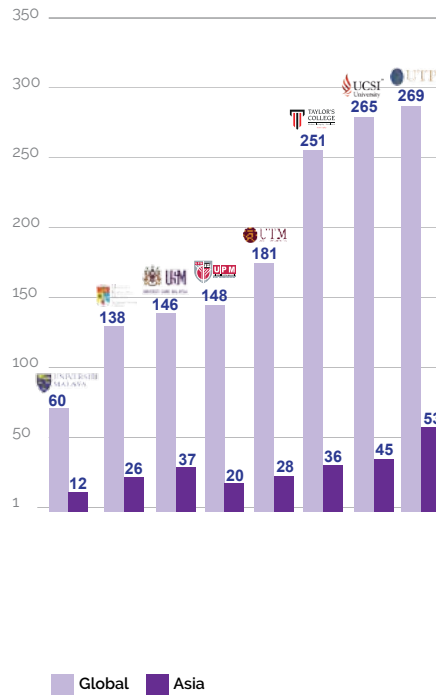
- Graduate Tracer Study System or *Sistem Kajian Pengesanan Graduan* (SKPG), MOHE
- MyMoheS and e-IPTS, MOHE
- QS World University Rankings 2025

## Malaysia's universities achieving regional and global success

Malaysia successfully achieved its goal of having two universities in Asia's Top 25, with Universiti Malaya ranked 12th and Universiti Putra Malaysia ranked 20th. Similarly, the target for universities in the Global Top 100 was met by Universiti Malaya, which secured the 60th position in the QS World University Rankings. Notably, Malaysia also achieved its goal of having five universities in the Global Top 200 by 2025, ahead of schedule (Exhibit 4).

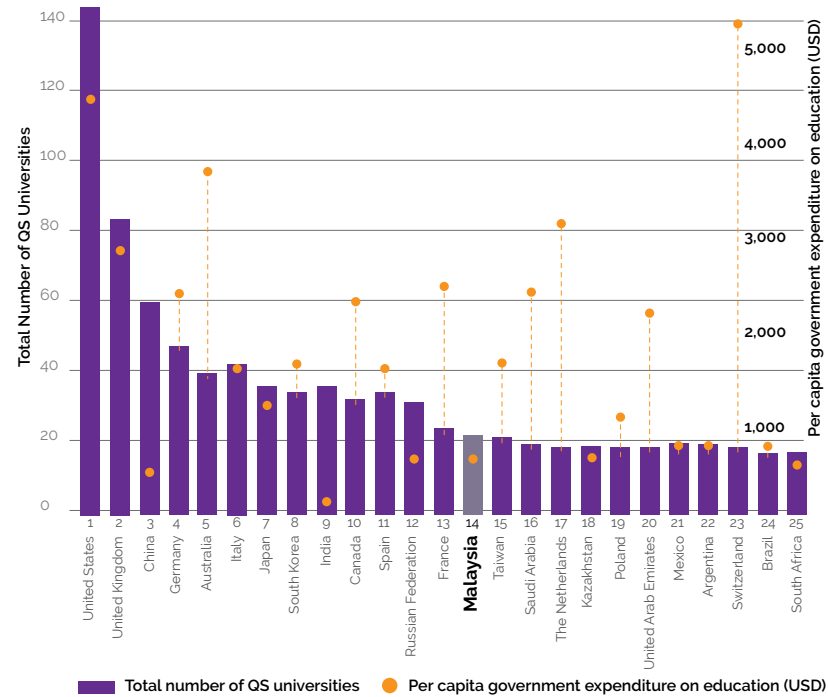
Furthermore, according to the Global Education Index 2024, Malaysia was ranked 14th among the 25 countries with the best education systems (Exhibit 5). These accomplishments reflect the nation's steadfast commitment to strengthening higher education through strategic investments in research, innovation, and teaching excellence. Malaysian universities continue to gain international recognition, reinforcing their reputation for academic rigour and pioneering research. These achievements affirm the country's dedication to developing globally competitive institutions and realising its vision of becoming a premier higher education hub.

**Exhibit 4:** Malaysian universities global ranking



Source: QS World University Rankings 2025

**Exhibit 5:** Global Education Index top 25 countries with best education system in the world

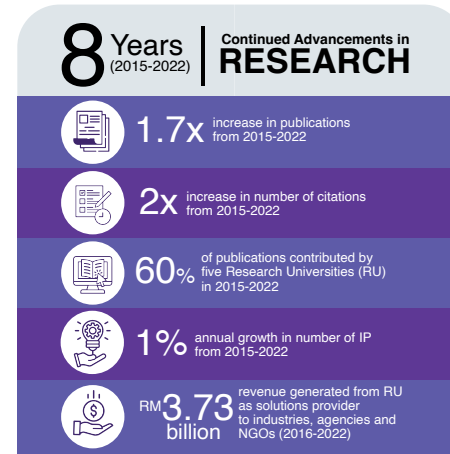


Source: Insider Monkey Global Education Index, 2024

### Sustained growth in research excellence

Between 2015 and 2022, Malaysia saw substantial growth in research output, with publications increasing by 1.7 times and citations doubling. The five Research Universities (RU) contributed 60% of the nation's total publications. Intellectual Property (IP) filings grew by one percent annually, while revenues from these universities, serving as solution providers for industries, agencies, and NGOs, reached RM3.73 billion. These advancements demonstrate Malaysia's growing influence in the global research ecosystem, driven by its commitment to fostering innovative and impactful studies. By bridging academia and industry, Malaysia's RU continue to position the country as a hub for knowledge generation and real-world solutions, driving excellence and innovation in support of national and global development goals.

Exhibit 6: Continued advancements in research

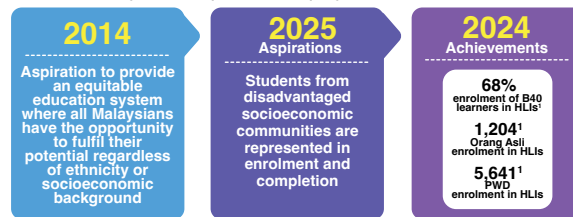


Source: Malaysia Research Assessment Instrument (MyRA) Data 2015-2022, MOHE

## EQUITY

### Towards equitable access to higher education in Malaysia

Exhibit 7: System aspiration: Equity



Source:

<sup>1</sup> MyMoheS and e-IPTS, MOHE (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)

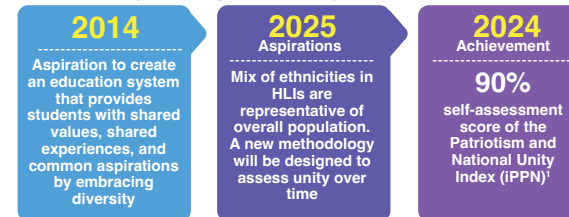
Malaysia aims to create an equitable higher education system ensuring all citizens, regardless of socioeconomic background, can fulfil their potential. By 2025, the goal is to prevent underrepresentation of students from disadvantaged communities in enrolment and completion. Currently, 68% of B40 (low-income group) students are enrolled in higher learning institutions (HLIs), along with 719 Orang Asli students. From 2015 to 2023, Orang Asli enrolment grew steadily from 480 to 1006, however, their proportional enrolment remains low, with Orang Asli at 0.04% in 2023 while Persons with Disabilities (PWD) enrolment remains around 0.18%. These figures underscore ongoing efforts to enhance inclusivity in Malaysian higher education.

## UNITY

### Advancing diversity and unity in Malaysian HLIs

Malaysia aspires to create an education system that fosters shared values, experiences, and aspirations among students while embracing diversity. By 2025, the aim is for the ethnic composition in HLIs to reflect the overall population, supported by a new methodology for assessing unity over time. Currently, the Patriotism and National Unity Index (IPPN) shows a high self-assessment score of 90%, indicating strong unity within HLIs. These efforts emphasise the importance of diversity and unity in strengthening national cohesion through education.

Exhibit 8: System aspiration: Unity

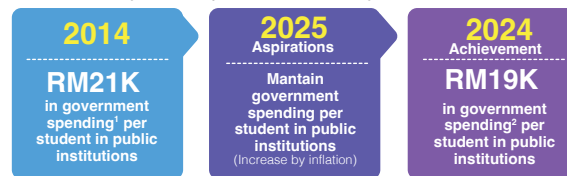


Source: MOHE (as at 31st December 2023)

## EFFICIENCY

### Balancing cost and quality in public education

Exhibit 9: System aspiration: Efficiency



<sup>1</sup> Includes operating expenditure (OE) (RM16,200) and development expenditure (DE) (RM4,500) of public HLIs and ministry expenditures (eg, teaching hospitals, MQA, Divisions under Ministry). This is the portion of government contribution to the overall cost per student. Excludes operating expenditure covered by non-government sources, e.g., tuition fees, investment income, rentals, among others.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to government spending per student, the total cost per student in public institutions is supplemented by minimal tuition fees and the institutions' generated income.

Source: MOHE, 2023

Malaysia's education system aspires to maintain efficient government spending per student in public institutions while adjusting for inflation. In 2014, the government spent RM21k per student, which has decreased to RM19k in recent years. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of government spending from 2013 to 2023 stands at negative one percent, aligning closely with the 2025 target. It is important to note that the total cost of educating a student at public HLIs is funded by government grants, tuition fees paid by the students and the income generated independently by the institution. The emphasis on measuring cost per student highlights the importance of optimising costs while sustaining the quality of public education. It also reflects Malaysia's commitment to balancing fiscal responsibility with the delivery of quality education. By investing strategically and focusing on efficiency, the system ensures the long-term sustainability of public education while fostering equitable access to learning.

**Exhibit 10:** Summary of issues and challenges in Malaysia's higher education



Source: Desk research and focus group discussions

# 11 Main Gaps and Challenges

## 1 Ethical leadership and values

- Strengthening the emphasis on ethical values is essential for shaping responsible future leaders.
- While there are growing concerns around academic integrity and the impact of technology on ethical behavior, there are also opportunities to enhance ethical leadership through targeted initiatives and education.

## 2 Global competitiveness and exposure

- Challenges remain in enhancing global citizenship, with barriers to international mobility, credit transfers, and inclusivity for international students.
- Prioritising global exposure is essential to prepare students for an interconnected world.

## 3 Future-ready skills and employability

- The current gap in future-ready skills and practical, industry-relevant training is contributing to both unemployment, where graduates face challenges in securing jobs, and underemployment, where they are employed in roles that do not fully utilise their skills and qualifications.
- Declining enrollment in certain areas presents further challenges in aligning educational outcomes with the evolving demands of the industry. Addressing these issues requires rethinking educational approaches to better equip graduates for meaningful and suitable employment.

## 4 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

- Insufficient opportunities for *Orang Asli* and Natives of Sabah and Sarawak, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), and marginalised groups remain a significant challenge within the education system.
- At the same time, barriers persist for international students due to inclusivity and language issues. Ensuring equity across all levels of the system is essential for creating a more inclusive, diverse, and competitive educational environment.

## 5 Mental health and well-being

- The increasing concern for mental health and well-being is heightened by a shortage of professionals, limited services, and insufficient support systems.
- Both learners and staff experience challenges such as academic pressures, workload demands, and uncertain career pathways, contributing to stress and emotional strain that may affect their overall well-being and progression.

## 6 Entrepreneurial ecosystem and innovation

- The entrepreneurial ecosystem in higher education would benefit from a broader approach, focusing on developing diverse entrepreneurial skills beyond traditional business ventures.
- Additionally, there is a strong reliance on government funding, and more effective impact tracking is needed. Strengthening this ecosystem to drive innovation, particularly in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI)-based industries, is essential for economic growth.

## 7 Unity, national identity, and sustainability

- HLIs must play a greater role in fostering unity, with a need for cross-ministry collaboration.
- The curriculum should better reflect the global sustainability and planetary health agenda, encouraging students to contribute to national unity while addressing critical issues such as climate change, environmental protection, and sustainable development.

## 8 Governance and accountability

- Governance structures in HLIs require further enhancement, particularly in addressing issues like political appointments and limited board effectiveness.
- Strengthening accountability and improving governance practices are essential to ensuring transparent and effective leadership across the education sector.

## 9 Financial sustainability and institutional stability

- HLIs face financial pressures, with some private institutions closing due to unsustainable funding models, impacting education quality, research output, and overall resilience.
- Establishing a sustainable financial framework is crucial for ensuring the long-term stability of HLIs, enabling them to maintain high-quality education while adapting to evolving demands.

## 10 Infrastructure and accessibility

- Inadequate physical and digital infrastructure limits access to education, especially in rural areas. Investing in both infrastructure and infostructure is vital to ensure broader accessibility to quality education.

## 11 Research, innovation, and societal impact

- The higher education system must focus on ensuring that research and innovation efforts are both responsible and impactful. This includes aligning research activities with national priorities and the planetary health agenda, benefiting society and the environment, while driving economic growth through commercialisation.
- Enhancing the connection between research, innovation, and societal needs will strengthen the role of HLIs in contributing to sustainable development and global well-being.

## THE NEW HIGHER EDUCATION FOCUS

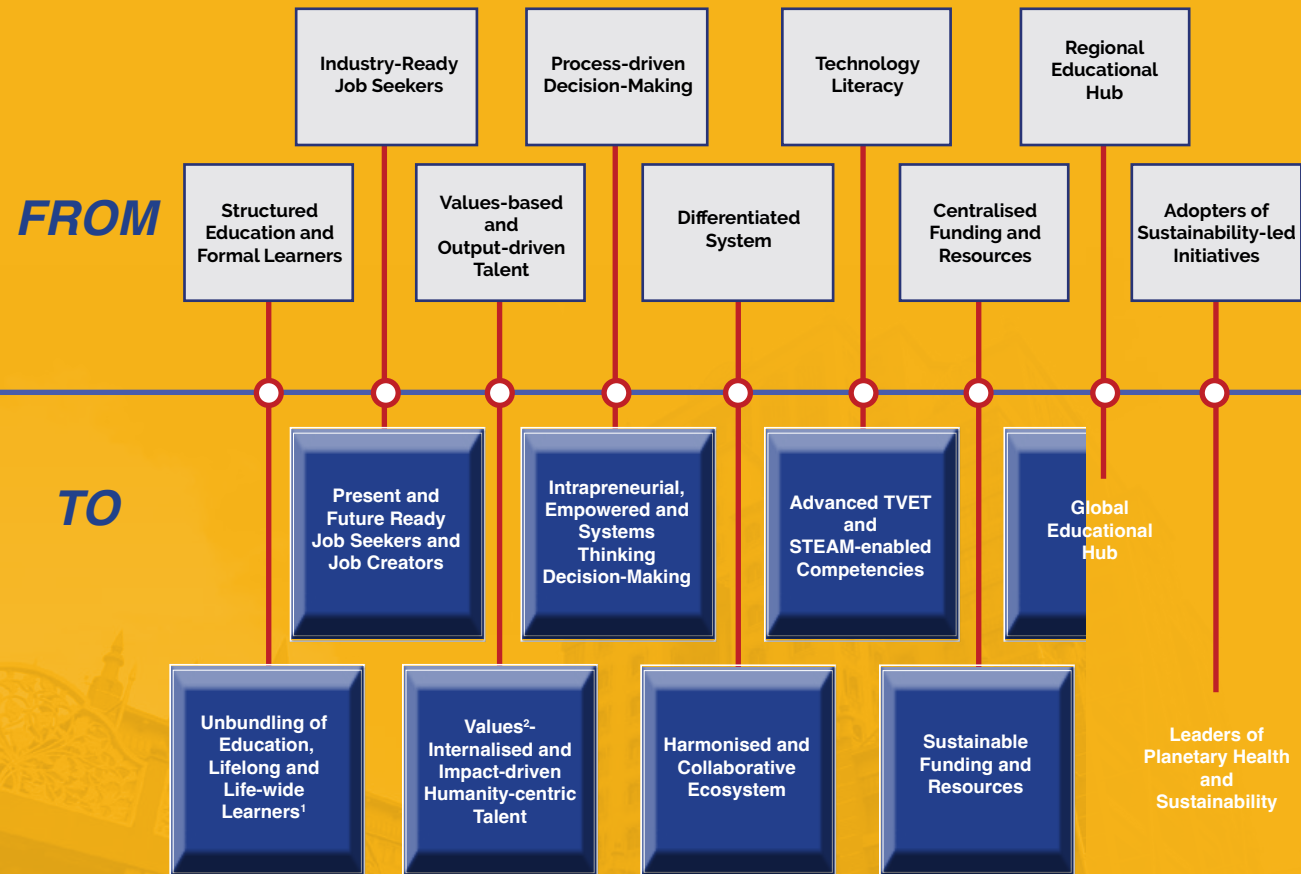
The New Higher Education Focus outlines a transformative shift in Malaysia's higher education system to align with future demands and global challenges. It marks a transition from structured education and formal learners to the unbundling of education that supports lifelong and life-wide learning, offering flexible pathways for diverse learners. The focus on industry-ready job seekers evolves to producing present- and future-ready job seekers and job creators, equipping graduates with entrepreneurial and innovative skills. Similarly, the shift from values-based and output-driven talent emphasises cultivating values-internalised and impact-driven talent grounded in ethics and purpose.

The blueprint moves from process-driven decision-making to fostering intrapreneurial, empowered, and systems-thinking leadership that drives innovation and adaptability. A differentiated system transforms into a harmonised and collaborative ecosystem promoting unity and efficiency across institutions. The focus on technology literacy progresses to STEAM-enabled competencies, integrating Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics. Centralised funding and resources transition to ensuring sustainable funding through responsible governance.

Additionally, the goal of being a regional educational hub expands to establishing Malaysia as a global educational hub with international recognition. Lastly, the adoption of sustainability-led initiatives advances into leadership in planetary health and sustainability, embedding environmental responsibility at the core of higher education. This holistic transformation emphasises innovation, lifelong learning, sustainability, and global competitiveness to prepare Malaysia's education system for an evolving world.

Exhibit 11: The new higher education focus

## THE NEW HIGHER EDUCATION FOCUS



<sup>1</sup> In this Blueprint, "learners" is used instead of "students" to convey a broader scope that includes individuals engaged in lifelong learning. This usage aligns with the Blueprint's emphasis on the unbundling of education, which enables flexible and self-directed learning pathways beyond traditional academic structures.

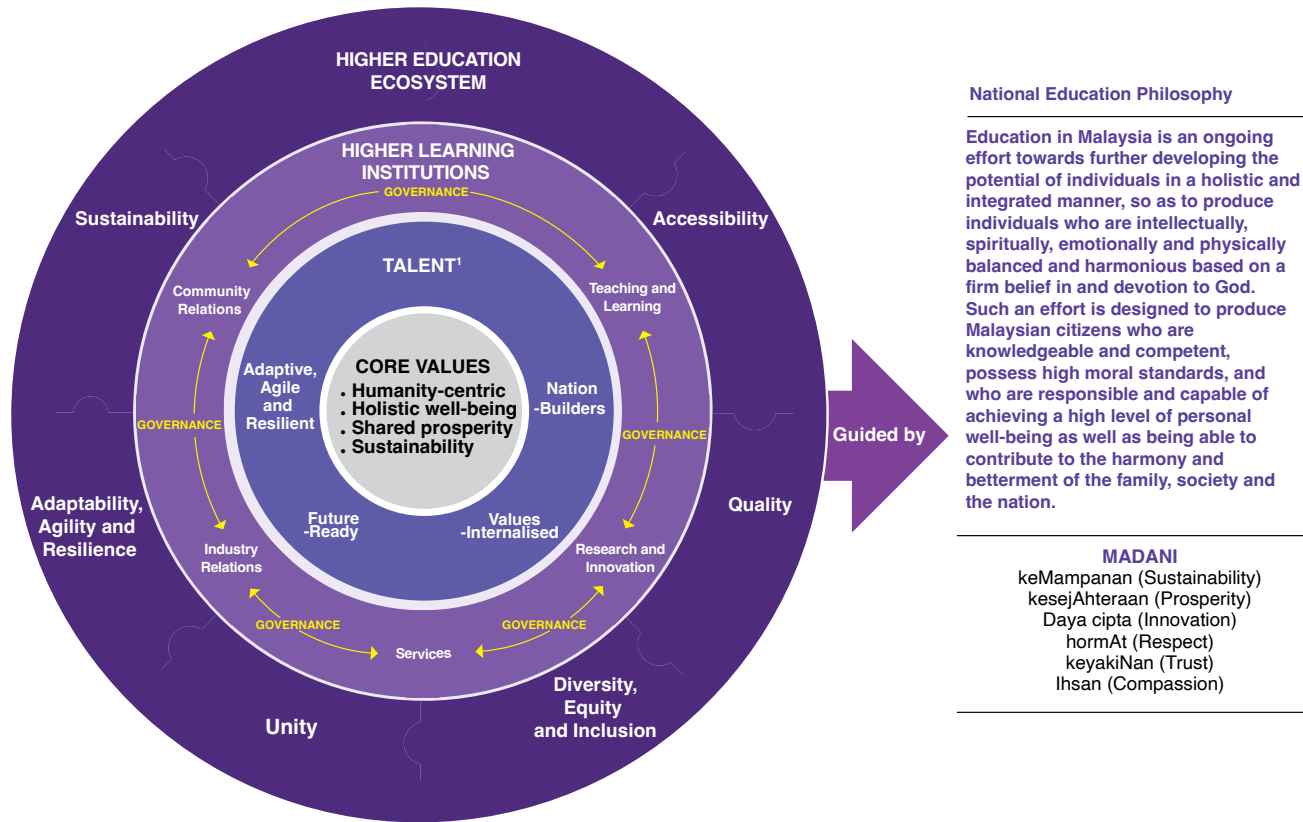
<sup>2</sup> "Values" is used instead of "value" to avoid the economic connotation that "value" might imply. "Values" refer to a set of principles, moral standards, or cultural norms that individuals or groups adopt and integrate into their identity.

# MALAYSIA HIGHER EDUCATION FRAMEWORK AND ASPIRATIONS

## Purpose of Malaysia’s Higher Education

The Malaysian higher education framework articulates the aspiration to achieve the ultimate purpose of higher education; producing humanity-centric purpose-driven nation builders for a harmonious, prosperous, advanced, and sustainable future. It aims to nurture talent across all levels of the higher education ecosystem, encompassing learners, as well as academic and administrative staff.

**Exhibit 12:** Higher education framework



### National Education Philosophy

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, society and the nation.

### MADANI

- keMampanan (Sustainability)
- kesejAhteraan (Prosperity)
- Daya cipta (Innovation)
- hormAt (Respect)
- keyakiNan (Trust)
- Ihsan (Compassion)

<sup>1</sup> Talent refers to the learners developed by the system, as well as the academic and administrative staff within the system.

**The purpose of Malaysia's higher education is driven by the following core values:**

- **Humanity-centric** reflects a dedication to prioritising human dignity, compassion, empathy, planetary stewardship, and societal well-being, fostering inclusive, empathetic growth while adapting and showing resilience to change.
- **Holistic well-being** promotes balance and harmony across intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions, ensuring individuals thrive comprehensively with *adab*.
- **Shared prosperity** emphasises diversity, inclusion and equity in advancing societal and economic growth, ensuring collective progress and opportunities for all.
- **Sustainability** for generations highlights a commitment to responsible practices that safeguard environmental, social, and economic well-being for present and future generations.

This framework establishes overarching aspirations for Talent, Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) and the Higher Education Ecosystem. Talent aspirations envision individuals as nation-builders who are knowledge-driven, and future-ready, with internalised values and competencies that equip them with adaptability, agility, and resilience.

As enablers, HLIs must excel in dynamic teaching and learning, impactful research and innovation, meaningful community and industry engagement, and comprehensive services. These functions are unified by strong governance, driving holistic development and sustainable progress aligned with both national and global aspirations.

The aspirations of Talent and HLIs collectively drive the realisation of the Higher Education Ecosystem aspirations. The aspirations for the higher education ecosystem focus on:

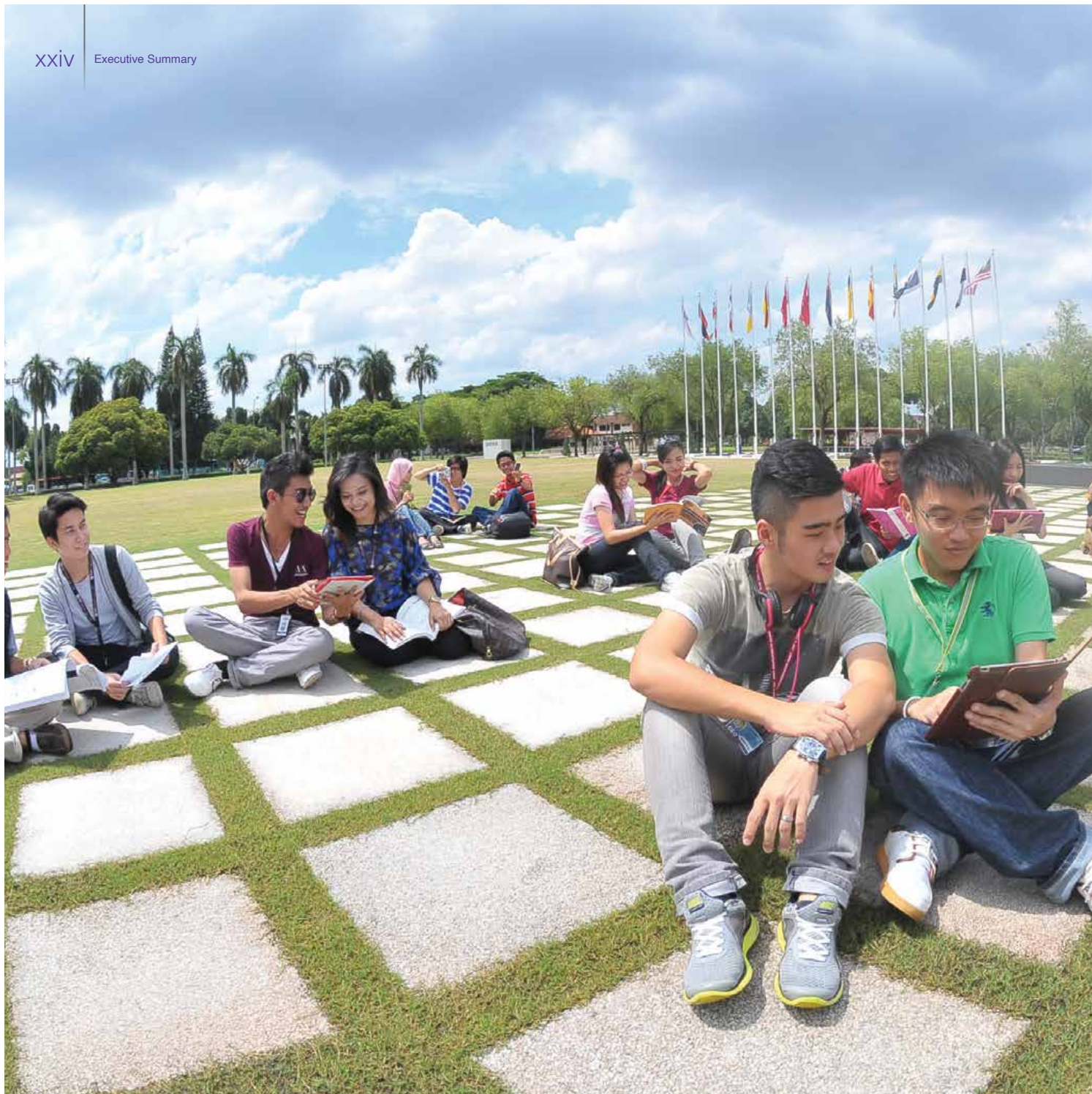
- Accessibility
- Quality
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Unity
- Adaptability, agility, and resilience
- Sustainability

The framework is aligned and guided by the National Education Philosophy and the "MADANI" principles (Sustainability, Prosperity, Innovation, Respect, Trust, and Compassion) which reinforces its dedication to inclusion and diversity.<sup>1</sup>

The core values of the framework, along with the aspirations for talents, HLIs and higher education ecosystem, are explained in greater detail.



<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister's Department (2024). *Malaysia Madani*. <https://malaysiamadani.gov.my>



# Core Values

The MHEB 2026-2035 will therefore build on the four core values set out in the Higher Education Framework: humanity-centric, holistic well-being, shared prosperity and sustainability.

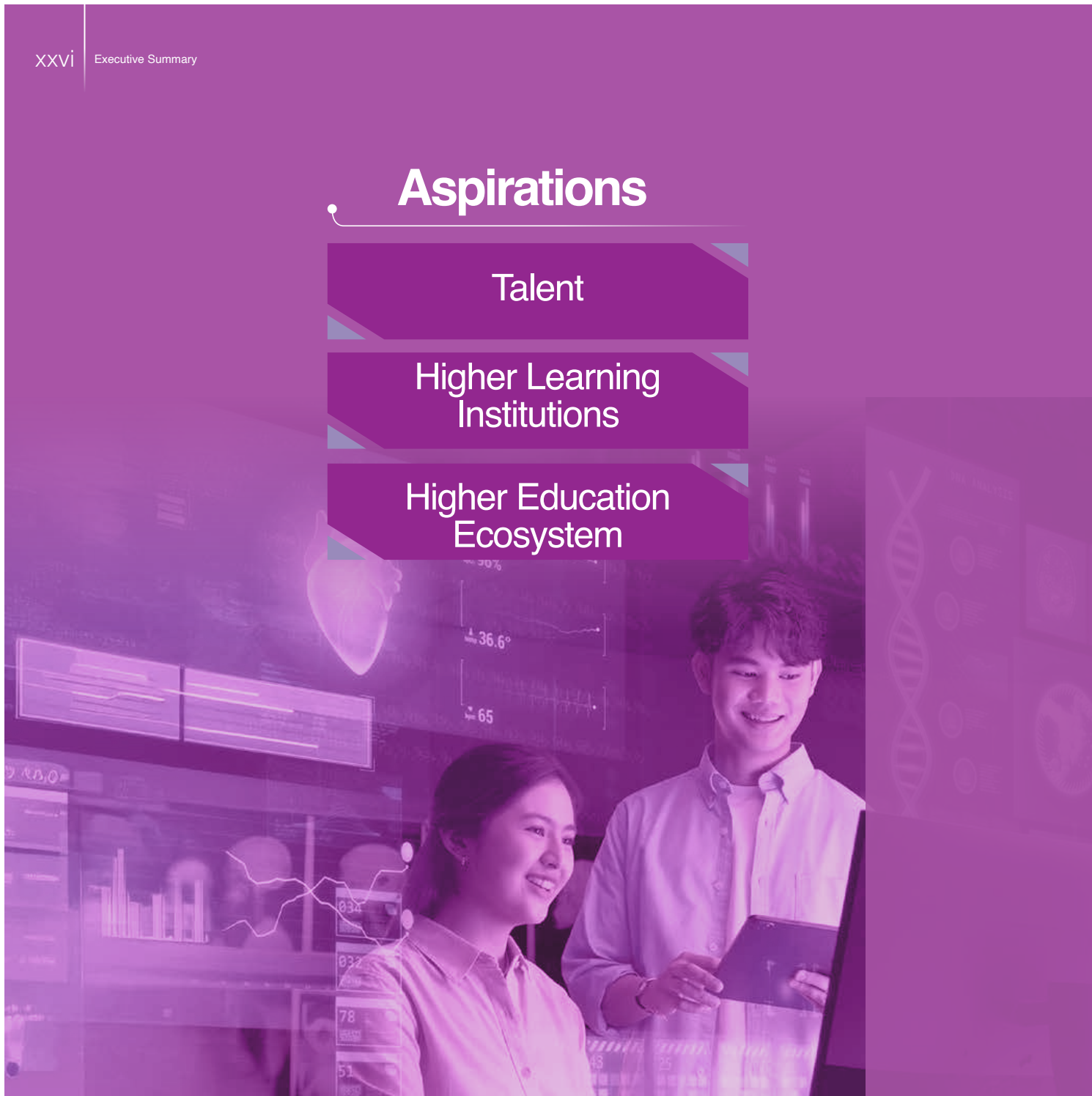
Values	Definition
<b>Humanity-centric</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seamlessly integrating collaborative (smart) and digital (sharp) skills with inclusive knowledge, these individuals embody a balance between knowledge and character (adab).</li> <li>They prioritise the well-being of people, the preservation of the planet, and the pursuit of shared prosperity.</li> </ul>
<b>Holistic well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The National Education Policy emphasises the holistic development of intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced individuals.</li> <li><b>Intellectually</b>, it cultivates curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, knowledge and value creation for innovation and problem-solving.</li> <li><b>Spiritually</b>, it nurtures moral and ethical values like integrity, compassion, and responsibility.</li> </ul>
<b>Shared prosperity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prosperity is a core value that <b>fosters holistic well-being</b> through <b>inclusive economic growth, social harmony, and personal fulfilment</b>.</li> <li>In alignment with the MADANI concept, it <b>prioritises shared success, equitable resource distribution, and innovation that addresses societal challenges</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In alignment with the MADANI concept, sustainability emphasises <b>moral and ethical stewardship, inclusivity, and environmental awareness</b>, guiding talents to adopt eco-friendly practices, promote social equity, and foster green innovation.</li> <li>Implementing <b>equitable solutions that protect ecosystems</b> while ensuring <b>shared prosperity</b>.</li> </ul>

# Aspirations

Talent

Higher Learning  
Institutions

Higher Education  
Ecosystem



# Talent Aspirations

Talent aspirations encompass four key dimensions aimed at fostering a progressive, dynamic, and inclusive future workforce. These dimensions are Adaptive, Agile and Resilient, Nation Builders, Values-Internalised, and Future-Ready. Talent refers to the learners developed by the system, as well as the academic and administrative staff within the system.

## Adaptive, agile, and resilient

Talents equipped to thrive in dynamic and uncertain post-normal time environments, demonstrating resilience, agility, and an entrepreneurial mindset. They embrace continuous learning, adapt swiftly to shifting landscapes, and address complex challenges with innovative and impactful solutions. Guided by a future-focused and humanity-centric approach, they proactively align with evolving stakeholder needs, contributing meaningfully across diverse professions and societal contexts.

## Nation builders

Talents with a strong sense of national identity and pride, promoting unity by valuing Malaysia's heritage, values, and diversity. They actively support the nation's progress and harmony, preserving cultural traditions while working towards sustainable development and a stronger, more united future.

## Values-internalised

Talents who have fully assimilated the core values into their character, guiding their contributions as ethical, responsible, and compassionate nation-builders. This reflects a transformation from superficial knowledge of values to their intrinsic application in real-world scenarios.

## Future-ready

Talents prepared to thrive as both job seekers and creators in an ever-evolving world. Equipped with digital fluency, critical thinking, and adaptability, they leverage collaboration, an entrepreneurial mindset, and expertise in emerging technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), and STEAM skills to excel. Resilient and grounded in mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, they embrace lifelong learning to navigate complex and dynamic environments. By addressing societal challenges with ethical and purposeful actions, they drive meaningful innovation and contribute to sustainable progress, shaping a better future for all.



# Higher Learning Institution Aspirations

As enablers, HLIs excel in the following areas:

## Dynamic teaching and learning

Adapting to evolving needs with innovative approaches that inspire critical thinking and lifelong learning.

## Impactful research and innovation

Driving advancements that address societal and global challenges while contributing to knowledge and economic growth.

## Meaningful community engagement

Building strong connections with communities to address societal needs, promote well-being, and foster inclusive development.

## Strategic industry engagement

Establishing partnerships with industries to drive economic development, enhance employability, and support innovation through collaborative initiatives.

## Administrative and academic services

Delivering additional support and contributions beyond teaching and research, encompassing administrative work by academics and administrators that enhances the overall institutional ecosystem.

# Higher Education Ecosystem Aspirations

The MHEB 2026-2035 will, therefore, build on six characteristics of the higher education ecosystems;

- **Accessibility**
- **Quality**
- **Diversity, equity and inclusion**
- **Unity**
- **Adaptability, agility and resilience**
- **Sustainability**

## Accessibility

By 2035, the Ministry aims to expand higher education access, focusing on personalised, flexible learning for diverse learners, including adults and non-traditional learners. This unbundled approach supports lifelong learning, enabling skills development at an individualised pace and preparing learners to adapt and excel in an ever-changing global landscape.

## Quality

The Ministry focuses on producing values-driven, future-ready graduates, cultivating high-performing educators, positioning institutions globally while excelling locally, and creating an agile, ethical higher education system. Emphasising innovation, accountability, and continuous growth, this vision aims to establish Malaysia as a global education hub, supporting national development and preparing the nation for global challenges in a dynamic, knowledge-based economy.

## Diversity, equity and inclusion

The higher education system values diversity in race, gender, and ability while promoting equity by enhancing access for disadvantaged students. It fosters inclusivity by integrating diverse perspectives into curricula and institutional culture. Through inclusive practices, open communication, and accessible resources, the Ministry creates a strong sense of community and belonging in education.

## Unity

The Ministry strives to ensure higher education enrolment reflects Malaysia's ethnic diversity, fostering unity through shared values and experiences. By embracing all backgrounds, the education system promotes understanding and appreciation of all cultures, aligning with Malaysia's multi-ethnic heritage to create a harmonious and inclusive learning environment for all students.

## Adaptability, agility and resilience

Adaptive, agile, and resilient higher education systems address evolving demands by embracing flexibility, innovation, and sustainability. Adaptive systems respond to new technologies and trends, agile systems enable rapid implementation of changes, and resilient systems ensure uninterrupted education during disruptions. Together, these qualities support lifelong learning and ensure institutional relevance and sustainability.

## Sustainability

Sustainability in higher education, grounded in Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), ensures long-term educational, social, and environmental roles through responsible resource management, resilience, and equitable access. Visionary leaders drive initiatives like eco-friendly, green campuses, and renewable energy, prioritising people, planet, and prosperity to minimise environmental impact, promote well-being, and support future generations while advancing global sustainability goals.

# WHAT IMPACT WILL THIS TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY HAVE?

The transformation of the higher education system in the MHEB 2026-2035, will lead to a collective set of desirable benefits, rights, and corresponding responsibilities for each stakeholder group:

## Learners will...

...benefit from unbundled education and flexible learning pathways, allowing them to customise their learning experiences to suit their individual needs and career aspirations while accessing diverse credentials from multiple institutions or providers.

...be humanity-centric, impact-driven, ready to innovate and contribute to society.

...receive equitable, high-quality education with global exposure.

...be balanced, possess future- and present-ready skills, including AI, digital analytics, and a combination of relevant sharp and smart skills.

...gain entrepreneurial and innovation skills and attain unipreneurship opportunities through Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation and Economy (RDICE)-informed learning to thrive in a globalised economy.

...acquire knowledge, skills and values aligned with sustainability and planet-friendly practices, enabling responsible use of national resources for sustainable development.

**In return, learners will be asked to actively engage in their education, uphold integrity, and contribute to an inclusive environment. They must be agile, adaptive, resilient, future-ready, develop impact-driven mindsets, and align personal growth with societal and global needs.**

## The academic and administrative staff will...

...thrive in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment that fosters an intrapreneurial spirit that is purpose-driven with systems thinking.

...benefit from increased opportunities for professional growth through the Differentiated Career Pathways and holistic talent performance indicators that promotes the discovery of purpose, job fulfilment, and good health and well-being.

...align with the collective mission of the national higher education ecosystem while upholding academic freedom.

...deliver innovative teaching, impactful research, and foster collaboration with the quintuple helix to address societal challenges supported by Academia Research Fund (AReF).

...gain international recognition and relevance for excellence in teaching and research innovation.

...possess future- and present-ready competencies, including AI, digital analytics, and a combination of relevant sharp and smart skills.

...be in a leading position to leverage industry partnerships and unipreneurship opportunities within the RDICE framework.

... be referred leaders in planetary health and sustainability education, research, outreach, and policy.

**In return, as drivers of the HLIs, the academic and administrative staff will need to equip themselves with the necessary competencies to deliver innovative teaching and services, impactful research, collaborative solutions and services for the quintuple helix.**

### HLI leaders will...

...enjoy greater autonomy to implement strategies that advance institutional excellence and sustainability.

...integrate intrapreneurial approaches and systems thinking to drive transformation.

...receive financial sustainability support through a strategic study on sustainable infrastructure financing and the implementation of endowment fund matching.

...enjoy transparent governance and improved alignment with national priorities through the appointment of competent Boards of Directors and the implementation of Board Effectiveness Assessment.

...benefit from strengthened legal and governance frameworks through the establishment of an Ombudsman, One Higher Education Act, TVET Act and the National Education Council or *Majlis Pendidikan Negara* (MPN) to ensure seamless continuity and cohesion between the Education and Higher Education sectors.

...operate within an inclusive, flexible and agile governance structure that includes relevant ministries, industry and societal leaders.

...gain increased autonomy and flexible RDICE funding, and receive recognition for leadership in planetary health and sustainability efforts, as well as for guiding stakeholders to adopt global best practices.

**In return, HLI leaders will be asked to foster excellence, diversity, equity, inclusivity, and innovation, empower staff and students, integrate systems thinking into governance, build sustainable partnerships, and align their institutions with higher education reform goals, including global competitiveness and social equity.**

### Industry will...

...benefit from graduates who are values-internalised and humanity-centric, equipped with ethical awareness, empathy, and a strong sense of social responsibility, enabling them to contribute meaningfully as nation-builders.

...access future-ready talents with relevant skills and impact-driven mindsets, balanced, possess future- and present-ready skills, including AI, and a combination of sharp and smart skills.

...received Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates who excel in advanced technical skills in emerging technologies like AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and cybersecurity while also being polished in critical soft skills.

...gain access to cutting-edge research and a skilled workforce with in-demand STEAM competencies through RDICE.

...acquire talent to drive sustainable practices, meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals, and boost global competitiveness.

**In return, the industry will be asked to collaborate with HLIs by co-developing curricula, supporting research, offering internships, and aligning efforts with societal needs. They should provide opportunities for students to apply skills and contribute to a future-ready, impact-driven talent pipeline.**



### Community will...

- ...benefit from knowledge transfer, innovative solutions, and empowerment opportunities provided by HLIs.
- ...participate in initiatives and access resources to improve socio-economic outcomes.
- ...possess technical knowledge to contribute to a highly developed nation, with TVET education offered as a flexible and viable pathway alongside traditional programmes.
- ...directly benefit from RDICE's focus on impactful research addressing pressing socio-economic challenges.
- ...gain lifelong skills in planetary health and sustainability through a community engagement platform that fosters experiential learning, supports innovation, and enables researchers and academics to create societal impact and value.
- ...be provided with a flexible option of TVET education as main pathways of education in addition to the traditional programmes.

**In return, communities will be asked to collaborate with HLIs to address local and national challenges, provide programme feedback, engage in lifelong learning, and support socio-economic projects. They should also advocate for higher education's role in fostering societal progress and development.**

### Government will...

- ... enjoy a talent pool that is humanity-centric, adaptive, and entrepreneurial, capable of enhancing global competitiveness and national resilience, contributing to a prosperous, harmonious, and advanced society.
- ... benefit from a future-ready, globally competitive workforce that attracts foreign direct investment, stimulates economic activity, and enhances Malaysia's position in the dynamic, technology-driven global economy.
- ... secure societal well-being, inclusive growth, regional development, and equitable opportunities by linking higher education outcomes to Malaysia's socio-economic objectives and aligning education policies with national economic priorities.
- ... benefit from governance promoting DEI and a whole-of-nation approach, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, reducing

### Ministry will...

- ...have a harmonised and collaborative ecosystem, enabling seamless coordination across higher education stakeholders, including an integrated governance structure for TVET.
- ...enjoy enhanced governance and capacity to formulate inclusive and globally competitive policies, ensuring stakeholder engagement, strengthening HLIs-industry collaboration, and positioning Malaysia as a leader in higher education.
- ...be able to streamline policies and governance, reducing administrative complexities, providing clearer educational priorities, and supporting coordinated efforts across HLIs.
- ...have strengthened oversight of the RDICE ecosystem, empowering it to achieve measurable impacts on socioeconomic development, planetary health and sustainability, supported by robust monitoring of key performance indicators and an integrated approach to TVET governance.
- ...be able to strengthen financial sustainability through the transformation of the PTPTN business model.

**In return, the Ministry of Higher Education will be asked to lead by example, streamline policies and governance incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and ensure equitable funding distribution. It should promote collaboration, adopt a whole-of-nation approach, engage stakeholders, monitor outcomes, drive internationalisation, and align reforms with national priorities. Officers must remain responsive and outcome-focused and act as role models for transformative changes.**

policy fragmentation, and ensuring cohesive development of the higher education sector and the nation.

- ... gain from enhanced global positioning through a strengthened Malaysian higher education system. As a globally trusted brand, it enhances the nation's reputation, attracts international collaborations, and drives inbound investments in research, talent, and economic development.

**In return, the government will be asked to strengthen policy frameworks, ensure sustainable funding, and support inclusive collaboration among stakeholders. It must commit to enhancing governance, prioritising equitable access to education, and driving initiatives that align higher education outcomes with national priorities. By championing innovation and inclusivity, the government must support ongoing advancements in the higher education sector.**

Exhibit 13: 10 Shifts



To achieve this new higher education focus, the MHEB outlines 10 strategic shifts designed to build humanity-centric purpose-driven nation builders for a harmonious, prosperous, advanced, and sustainable future. These shifts emphasise a comprehensive transformation of the higher education system to meet global and national demands while fostering sustainability and inclusivity.

The first shift prioritises humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive learners, preparing graduates to thrive in an ever-changing interconnected world. The second shift focuses on purpose-driven, high-performance talent, ensuring a workforce equipped with the skills and mindset needed for evolving industries. The third shift emphasises advanced TVET competency, strengthening technical expertise and industry readiness for complex and specialised sectors. Financial sustainability, addressed in the fourth shift, promotes the efficient use of resources and the long-term resilience of institutions.

The fifth shift focuses on agile and resilient governance, enhancing institutional adaptability and strategic decision-making. The sixth shift emphasises Responsible RDICE, driving ethical, impactful research and innovation.

The seventh shift highlights global prominence, strengthening Malaysia’s international standing. The eighth shift prioritises flexible education and lifelong learning, ensuring accessibility and continuous skill development for diverse learners. The ninth shift addresses planetary health and sustainability, integrating environmental and social consciousness into education. Finally, the tenth shift ensures responsive and dynamic delivery, emphasising adaptability in teaching, learning, and institutional operations to meet evolving needs. Together, these shifts lay the foundation for a transformative higher education ecosystem for Malaysia.



## Shift 1

### Humanity-centric, entrepreneurial and adaptive learners

#### Why does it matter?

The nation needs effective members of society that starts with a good human being. It is the core business of the higher education institutions to ensure this is achieved. As primary contributors to the development of talents, higher education institutions are

entrusted to nurture adaptable, ethical, and resilient individuals who are able to address national and global challenges in post-normal times.

#### What will success look like?

Learners will embody humanity-centric, innovative, entrepreneurial, and adaptive skills and be future-ready to drive lifelong and life-wide learning. They will be ethically grounded with spiritual strength and resilience to thrive with integrity and purpose. Equipped with soft, sharp, and smart skills, these humanity-centric, entrepreneurial and adaptive learners will

leverage AI and emerging technologies, systems thinking, and interdisciplinary approaches to address challenges and real-world problems making an impact and becoming enablers for sustainable nation-building and economic growth. These learners are global players with internalised values to support national identity and unity.

#### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, the Ministry and HLIs will focus on developing more holistic and integrated curricula and enhancing the ecosystem for learner development. Key initiatives include:

- **Enhancing curriculum for humanity-centric, ethical, inclusive, and future-ready learners** by embedding values, diversity, equity and inclusion, ethics, research and problem-solving skills, systems thinking, AI and emerging technologies and focusing on learner empowerment, intercultural competencies to make them unity-enabling and future ready nation builders.
- **Creating an innovative, entrepreneurial, and sustainable learning framework** by offering personalized learning pathways, supporting lifelong and life-wide learning through modular programmes, fostering innovation with entrepreneurial

projects, enhancing experiential learning, building sustainable partnerships, and strengthening entrepreneurial ecosystems with mentorship and shared resources/venture funds for start up.

- **Strengthening learning infrastructure and outcome-driven support systems** by applying Universal Design for inclusivity, upgrading digital infrastructure for learning, establishing mental health support system, ensuring equitable access for under-represented learners, and developing necessary policies and regulations.



## Shift 2

### Purpose-driven high-performance talent

#### Why does it matter?

Aligned to Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), purpose-driven high-performance talent ensures a competent, committed and values-aligned HLI workforce that harmonises excellence with the purpose of HE. This fosters greater job fulfilment, compliance to the highest ethical standards, and resilience in the face of adversity that enables HLIs to make a positive impact on both local and global communities.

Purpose-Driven talent across diverse roles - academics (educators, researchers, industry practitioners, leaders), administrators and support staff will unite HLIs towards a shared mission of excellence, collective resilience and global competitiveness. Evidence-informed holistic talent governance and management as well as robust leadership succession planning will help foster a high-performing HLI workforce that are adept and agile in addressing the fast-evolving challenges in post-normal times.

#### What will success look like?

As core drivers of the Malaysian Higher Education ecosystem, HLI talent will serve the collective purpose of “One Higher Education” and develop a stronger sense of belonging. By creating an environment that promotes holistic competency-relevant, values-internalised, and purpose-driven flexible and differentiated professional development pathways, every individual will have the opportunity to realise their full potential. Nobody will be left behind. Led by MOHE, the democratisation of access to the refined talent development frameworks and continuous professional development opportunities will enable all HLIs to create a conducive environment that promotes mission-oriented staff who are able to lead innovations and the unbundling of the higher education system.

Meanwhile, the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) will spearhead the development of leadership talent across HLIs, aligning

with each institution’s unique DNA, the evolving priorities of higher education, and the broader demands of national and global contexts.

By facilitating greater evidence-informed staff talent management, staff mobility, and sharing of resources between HLIs, critical national talent gaps and disparities between institutions across the HE landscape will be markedly reduced. Despite the uncertainties of a post-normal future, the renewed focus on inclusivity, diversity, equity, mutual respect, and integrity will ensure that HLI talent is able to achieve high levels of well-being and job fulfilment. The impact of the enculturation of purpose-driven high-performance talent is manifested through their impact on local and global knowledge creation and translation, socio-economic transformation, sustainable development, and planetary health.

#### How will we achieve this?

The Ministry of Higher Education is committed to nurturing purpose-driven high-performance talent within HLI, empowered by a dynamic framework and a supportive ecosystem. By championing lifelong and life-wide learning opportunities, this vision will prepare HLI leaders and talent to excel in an ever-evolving global landscape. This mission is anchored in three core strategies, each driving impactful initiatives:

- Enhancing integrated talent management and leadership sustainability:** Institutionalising a competency-relevant, values-internalised and purpose-driven talent framework with relevant learning and development opportunities to produce leaders with enhanced capabilities and strengthen succession planning.
- Empowering talent governance and enhancing talent well-being:** Mainstreaming evidence-informed approaches to talent governance, balanced and equitable performance indicators and remuneration, and promoting mental, physical, economic, and emotional health and well-being to boost job fulfilment and impact.
- Fostering a culture of diversity, equity, inclusivity and integrity:** Achieving collective impact by building trust, embracing differences, enhancing collaboration, and safeguarding reputation amongst purpose-driven high-performance talent.



## Shift 3 Advanced TVET competency

### Why does it matter?

Malaysia is poised to achieve top 12 ranking in the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) within 10 years as outlined in the Madani Economy: Empowering People framework. In a globalised economy, countries and industries compete based on the skills and expertise of their workforce. Since TVET is offered by multiple ministries and institutions, Majlis Pendidikan dan Latihan Teknikal dan Vokasional Negara (MTVET) has formulated a National TVET policy framework to ensure coordination at national level.

Malaysia will require competency-based education, aligned with industry needs, ensures employability, addressing global talent shortages and supporting lifelong learning. In line with SDG 4: Quality Education, TVET promotes equitable access to quality education and fosters foundational and advanced competencies essential for nation contribution. Advanced TVET competency plays a pivotal role in equipping learners with technical, analytical and leadership competencies for the evolving workforce.

### What will success look like?

Industries gain access to a pipeline of job-ready talent with skills aligned to evolving needs, addressing critical skills gaps and boosting productivity. Ultimately, it strengthens economic contributions, attracts investments, and builds trust, positioning industries for sustainable growth in a rapidly changing global market.

The Ministry through its HLIs, polytechnics, and community colleges will be developing highly sought after TVET graduates by the industry in recognition of the graduates' competency, attributes, and promotes individual opportunities for career development. With strong industry partnerships, the enrolment in TVET programmes will expand significantly across ministries. Unbundling various TVET Programmes will result in a flexible learning experience.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, the Ministry will focus on:

- Integrated governance and industry collaboration:** Developing an integrated governance framework through the enactment of the Malaysia Polytechnic Act. Enhancing industry partnerships to align TVET education with workforce needs and future industry demands. Coordinating across institutions ensures curriculum relevance, drives innovation, and strengthens the symbiotic relationship between industry and TVET, promoting sustainable economic growth.
- Recognition, data-driven insights, and competitive salaries:** Adopting automated data systems and a dedicated TVET Chamber of Commerce/Craftsmanship Chamber to refine programme effectiveness and ensure fair wages for TVET graduates. Competitive salaries, performance monitoring, and recognition elevate TVET's appeal and retain skilled professionals for national growth.
- Flexible, relevant, and future-ready programmes:** Enhancing TVET programmes by integrating flexible learning pathways, micro credentials, emerging technologies, and industry-aligned hybrid mode education. This equips learners with adaptable, future-ready skills while fostering lifelong learning and career progression in a dynamic global economy. Reskilling and upskilling will ensure graduates with adaptive mode to upgrade their technical skills. The introduction of Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) Skills (APEL S) as a recognition of prior learning, along with the enhancement of pathways for Malaysian Skills Certification (Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia, SKM) graduates, will create a greater impact.



## Shift 4 Financial sustainability

### Why does it matter?

Financial sustainability allows HLIs to maintain excellence in teaching, research, innovation, and services over the long term, ensuring they can fulfil their role as key contributors to societal and economic progress. A financially sustainable higher education system promotes self-reliance, reducing over-dependence on government support and enabling institutions to adapt effectively to fluctuating funding landscapes.

With secure finances, HLIs can operate efficiently, invest in infrastructure and innovation, and remain adaptable in post-normal economic conditions, ensuring they thrive amid global uncertainties. Financial sustainability enables HLIs to address social and educational gaps by providing robust financial aid and support programmes, ensuring higher education remains accessible and affordable for all segments of society.

### What will success look like?

Public and private HLIs will leverage diverse funding sources to continuously enhance the quality of their programmes while adopting more innovative and efficient resource management practices. They will strengthen financial governance, prioritising accountability and transparency to build stakeholder trust. Advanced business models will drive improvements in student loan initiatives, ensuring more effective and equitable financial support.

Targeted assistance will make enrollment more affordable and accessible, particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged students, fostering inclusivity. Furthermore, the Government will maintain substantial investment in higher education, allocating a significant portion of the national budget and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to ensure the system's long-term resilience and progress.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes the Ministry will adopt a multifaceted approach to support HLIs in achieving financial sustainability. Key initiatives include:

- Reviewing sources and models of development financing** to support the construction and upgrading of HLI infrastructure, strengthening universities' financial sustainability without increasing the ministry's financial burden, underpinned by sound governance and professional fund management.
- Transforming the PTPTN business model** to assess progressive and purpose-driven financing approaches aimed at strengthening financial sustainability through the diversification of funding sources, allocation mechanisms, and repayment efficiency. This approach will also enhance the flexibility of higher education financing.
- Encouraging the mobilisation of endowment and Waqf funds and seeking long-term government funding commitments.** The Ministry will provide matching grants during the initial fundraising phase to encourage HLIs to build sustainable endowment and Waqf funds. In addition, the ministry will seek permanent allocations based on operating expenditure or GDP to support the financial sustainability of higher education.



## Shift 5 Agile and resilient governance

### Why does it matter?

Strengthening the governance of HLIs is crucial in addressing challenges arising from political changes and the COVID-19 pandemic. These events exposed vulnerabilities in current governance structures, highlighting the need for resilience, adaptability, and alignment with societal needs. Frequent leadership changes within the Ministry disrupted continuity and clarity, hindering the implementation of strategic plans. However, these changes also created opportunities for innovation, fresh perspectives, and the potential to realign priorities. A robust and flexible governance framework is essential to harness these

opportunities, ensuring HLIs maintain stability and effectively adapt to evolving demands. Having separate acts for public and private HLIs creates governance and equity disparities, as public institutions face stricter government control, while private ones prioritise autonomy and revenue. This duality leads to variation in student rights, inconsistent practices, and divergent priorities. A unified legal framework could address these gaps, promoting fairness, collaboration, and alignment with Malaysia's higher education goals.

### What will success look like?

A harmonised ecosystem and governance recognises diversity of HLIs. It allows greater autonomy and empowerment for HLIs to foster innovation, adaptability, and agility to transform into high-performance institutions.

HLIs are led by transformational leaders who are empowered to align institutional objectives with national priorities. Increased collaborative efforts are established among HLIs, communities, industries, and international partners.

An inclusive governance framework (IGF) fosters enhanced stakeholder engagement, addressing different expectations, including student and staff well-being, while integrating diverse perspectives to develop equitable policies and drive effective solutions.

A strengthened accountability mechanism ensures transparency and trust while preserving flexibility for sustainable growth.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, the Ministry will focus on:

- **Develop a unifying One Higher Education Act (OHEA)** to integrate and harmonise existing legislation related to higher education.
- **Establishing National Education Council or *Majlis Pendidikan Negara (MPN)*** to ensure seamless continuity and cohesion between the education and higher education sectors.
- **Revise the governance and organisational structure** to support the implementation of the OHEA and the establishment of the MPN.



## Shift 6 Responsible RDICE

### Why does it matter?

Responsible Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation, and Economy (RDICE), is crucial for fostering impactful sustainable growth and enhancing Malaysia's global competitiveness. By prioritising national sovereignty, this approach reduces reliance on foreign resources and bolsters homegrown innovations, ultimately leading to a more resilient economy. To truly integrate planetary health and sustainability within the RDI ecosystem, Malaysia must align its economic ambitions with environmental, social, and governance objectives and advance the SDGs.

This comprehensive strategy is designed to nurture high-quality job providers and cultivate a skilled workforce, significantly elevating Malaysia's position in the Global Innovation Index (GII). By embracing Responsible RDICE, through Academia Research Fund (AReF), HLIs play an important role in generating knowledge and tackling societal challenges and delivering solutions that improve the quality of life for Malaysians. Malaysia must evolve in its approach to RDI, ensuring that these principles are embedded in its economic framework to drive transformative progress.

### What will success look like?

A well-formulated, integrated and consolidated AReF mechanism will create fertile grounds in facilitating mission-oriented RDICE and cross-sector collaboration. This is to ensure a seamless transition from ideation to innovation to meet market or communities' needs as well as nurturing and retaining an empowered, diverse and inclusive talent pool.

To anchor such an ecosystem, the "responsible" component in RDICE is to enforce ethical practices of its stakeholders, as well as to inculcate sustainable and responsible use of resources and expertise in addressing mission-oriented RDI for the prosperity of the planet and people. Such a seamless, well-integrated system will strengthen cross-border collaborations, technology transfer, resource sharing, intellectual protection, market penetration, and eventually economic growth.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, this Shift will focus on establishing a comprehensive ecosystem aligned with mission-oriented RDICE principles, fostering ethical research practices, driving socioeconomic growth, and enhancing stakeholder connections within the quintuple helix. Key strategies include:

- **Building a robust ecosystem integrating AReF** that promotes mission-oriented RDI while advancing global competitiveness and innovation that prioritises ethical conduct in research and sustainable practices. AReF also allocates grants for community engagement, fostering collaborative ideation processes.
- **Implementing incentive and support mechanisms** that catalyse industry-energised RDICE initiatives and projects
- **Optimising the development of RDICE** talents and leaders to foster a culture of impactful innovation via commercialisation of ideas.

These actions aim to cultivate a thriving environment for research and innovation, ultimately driving national progress and global standing.



## Shift 7 Global prominence

### Why does it matter?

The rapidly evolving global higher education landscape, driven by increased talent mobility, technological advancements, and intensified competition, underscores Malaysia's ambition to transition from a regional to a global educational hub.

By positioning itself as a center for quality education and global talent development, Malaysia aims to attract diverse

students, drive innovation, and produce graduates equipped for global leadership. This transformation will enhance Malaysia's international standing, contribute to economic growth, promote educational diplomacy, and establish the country as a key player in the global higher education arena.

### What will success look like?

Malaysia will be globally recognised as a hub for higher education defined by academic excellence, inclusivity, and reliability. International student enrollment from diverse nationalities, supported by more strategic immigration policies and a world-class learning experience will empower graduates from Malaysian higher learning institutions (HLIs) to emerge as influential global leaders.

HLIs will excel in impactful research and partnerships with prestigious international institutions, strengthening their reputation for quality and innovation. Robust quality assurance practices will elevate the global standing of Malaysia's higher education system, ensuring its credibility as a trusted and culturally rich education provider. Strong alumni networks will further enhance Malaysia's influence in the global knowledge economy.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, the Ministry will focus on:

- Strengthening institutional quality and global recognition** by establishing robust accountability metrics and aligning accreditation standards with global benchmarks to ensure Malaysia's higher education institutions remain credible, attain mutual recognitions and continue to be competitive internationally.
- Building strategic global partnerships for educational diplomacy** by expanding academic collaborations, leadership programmes, and prestigious scholarships to attract top international talent and foster impactful international networks.
- Creating a world-class learner experience** by developing inclusive and multicultural learning environments, streamlining administrative processes, and enhancing credit transfer opportunities to support seamless global education pathways.



## Shift 8 Flexible education and lifelong learning

### Why does it matter?

The dynamic nature of technological advancements and disruptive events necessitates a flexible and lifelong approach to education. Malaysia's workforce must continuously adapt to emerging challenges, acquire new skills, and reskill to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global economy. Modern learners increasingly seek personalised learning experiences that align with their individual goals and aspirations. The demand for flexible education

is growing, with alternative credentials becoming highly valuable for both personal and professional development. Additionally, the trend of unbundling education through the offering of modular and tailored learning experiences is gaining momentum. Flexible Education and Lifelong Learning (LLL) empower learners to access education that meets their specific needs, enhancing national resilience and agility in the face of disruptions.

### What will success look like?

Flexible education and lifelong learning will be fully integrated into Malaysia's higher education system. There will be seamless pathways connecting formal, non-formal, and informal learning, enabling individuals to access and combine various credentials to achieve their personal and professional goals. Education will be

accessible, flexible, and supported by innovative and disruptive technologies, fostering inclusivity and relevance across all sectors of society. Malaysia's institutions will be globally recognised as leaders in delivering high-quality, flexible education that meets both local and international workforce demands.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, the Ministry will focus on:

- **Streamlining unbundling processes** that minimise bureaucratic barriers while upholding rigorous quality assurance, enabling the seamless recognition of diverse learning experiences and pathways.
- **Establishing HLIs as central, sustained sources for lifelong learning** by developing and delivering innovative educational programmes, fostering continuous skill development, and promoting inclusive access to learning at all stages of life.
- **Incentivising flexible education efforts** by providing targeted support to HLIs and educators for creating high-quality, innovative learning programmes. Nurture the adoption and readiness of emerging technologies in an ethically responsible manner, ensuring alignment with evolving workforce and learner needs.



## Shift 9 Planetary health and sustainability

### Why does it matter?

Malaysia is ranked 12th among the world's megabiodiverse countries, home to a rich variety of flora and fauna. However, its natural biodiversity, or khazanah, is under threat, with six out of nine planetary boundaries already breached. This has major adverse impacts on the health of the people, the productivity of the workforce and the economic outlook of many sectors that are depended on natural environment and resources of the nation.

Continuous deterioration of the planetary health boundaries will have destabilising impacts on the socioeconomic and the social fabric of the nation. The higher education sectors need to make major transformative changes to incorporate planetary health and sustainability in all the leaderships, capability development, education, research and the Convention's Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) programmes.

### What will success look like?

The Malaysian higher education sector will attract, develop and retain talents that have sound knowledge in planetary health, sustainability by means of SDG and ESG. This will enable the HLIs to create a conducive and supportive environment for professional development that will enable the people, the workforce, and businesses to adhere to global planet-friendly businesses and sustainable best practices. This contribution will improve the global positioning of Malaysian HLIs and will reinforce Malaysia's aspiration to become a global hub for planetary health and sustainable education and research.

Strong planetary-friendly workforce and talent will enhance the RDICE ecosystem; nurture planet-friendly industrial clusters; and enable Malaysian industries to move up the global innovation and competitiveness value chain. The reversal of planetary boundary trends, alongside progress in sustainability-focused policies and initiatives, will demonstrate the tangible impacts of this transformation to natural khazanah of the country and the health of the rakyat.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, the Ministry will focus on:

- **Transforming HLI leadership for sustainability and planetary health** emphasising on cultivating sustainability-integrated leadership within HLIs to foster responsible stewardship, management and inspire a culture of planetary health and sustainability across campus communities.
- **Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability in curriculum.** This strategy integrates sustainability and planetary health principles across all programmes, working closely with industry and community to provide experiential learning for learners in reducing breaches in planetary health boundaries. Multidisciplinary curriculum transformation is critical for nurturing planet-friendly talent; and transitioning current industrial value chain and jobs to be planet-friendly.
- **Incorporating planetary health and sustainability into the national agenda for higher education** to nurture talent of the future and research initiatives that contribute to the sustainable agenda of the nation and produce sustainability-focused learners through the Planetary Health and Sustainability Higher Education Playbook.
- **Creating planet-friendly environment and ecosystem** that promotes a sustainable campus by nurturing eco-conscious values and implementing impactful practices that promote and advance planetary health and sustainability education and knowledge among current and future generations.



## Shift 10 Responsive and dynamic delivery

### Why does it matter?

The Responsive and Dynamic Delivery shift is crucial for ensuring Malaysia's higher education system can swiftly adapt to global and local challenges. It addresses issues such as ministerial transitions, institutional silos, and the need for more data-driven decision-making. Additionally, it promotes equitable access to education, especially for marginalised groups like Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and indigenous communities.

By fostering collaboration, innovation, and flexibility, this shift aligns with the goals of the MHEB 2026-2035 and the evolving needs of learners, institutions, and society. The MHEB 2026-2035 will not succeed without effective implementation, as well as commitment and collaboration across the Ministry, HLIs, the academic community, and relevant stakeholders.

### What will success look like?

Success in implementing this shift will result in a streamlined and cohesive higher education ecosystem that is agile, inclusive, and globally competitive. Governance structures such as the National Education Council or *Majlis Pendidikan Negara* (MPN) will ensure effective policy alignment and seamless implementation of initiatives across ministries and institutions. HLIs will achieve enhanced excellence through redesigned Institutional Transformation Programmes (ITP) and robust rating systems, driving socio-economic impact and global competitiveness.

Technological advancements, including the integration of AI and emerging technologies, will modernise digital infrastructure, enabling data-driven decision-making and efficient service delivery. Inclusivity will be significantly improved, with higher enrolment, retention, and completion rates among marginalised groups, supported by specialised facilities like Centres of Excellence for PWD. A unified framework, underpinned by harmonised standards and centralised processes, will foster collaboration, reduce silos, and ensure consistent quality across institutions, positioning Malaysia as a leader in innovative, inclusive, and adaptive higher education.

### How will we achieve this?

To achieve these outcomes, the Ministry will focus on:

- Enhancing governance and institutional excellence through the establishment of the MPN**, chaired by the Prime Minister, which will provide strategic oversight and align policies across ministries. Delivery units at HLIs will ensure the effective implementation of MHEB 2026-2035 initiatives, while redesigned ITP will be geared towards advancing national objectives, fostering excellence, and strengthening the global competitiveness of Malaysia's higher education sector.
- Leveraging technology, including AI and data-driven decision-making**, alongside upgraded digital infrastructure and a centralised data warehouse, will modernise the education system, enhance accessibility, streamline services, and support evidence-based policies to address evolving challenges.
- Promoting inclusivity and accessibility** through the establishment of Centres of Excellence for PWD, equitable admission pathways, tailored support, and stronger DEI policies will create an inclusive, adaptable higher education system that empowers marginalised groups, enhances retention, and enables all learners to thrive and contribute to society.

# INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

The 10-year transformation of Malaysia's higher education system under the MHEB 2026–2035 is strategically structured and sequenced across three waves to ensure effective implementation, sustained progress, and to prevent system overload and execution fatigue. The Ministry has deliberately phased the strategies and initiatives of the 10 Shifts across these waves, ensuring that each builds upon the previous one in alignment with the system's evolving capacity, capabilities, and the readiness of higher learning institutions (HLIs).

These waves have been aligned with that of the MHEB:

- 2026-2028: Ignite
- 2029–2031: Propel
- 2032–2035: Elevate

**Wave 1 (2026-2028): Ignite** focuses on building foundational frameworks and piloting key initiatives. It emphasises embedding ethical and values-internalised learning, enhancing mental health and diversity frameworks, and fostering governance through initiatives like the One Higher Education Act (OHEA). TVET programmes will establish foundational governance, industry-aligned certification systems, and flexible learning pathways. Financial sustainability will be strengthened through innovative funding models, zakat, and Waqf to support education financing. Responsible RDICE initiatives will consolidate funding mechanisms and prioritise ethical research, while global prominence efforts will lay the groundwork for international collaborations and benchmarking. Flexible education and sustainability-focused curricula will ensure inclusivity and prepare institutions for further transformation.

**Wave 2 (2029–2031): Propel** accelerates structural reforms to drive innovation and global competitiveness. Governance will be strengthened through full implementation of the OHEA and enhanced talent frameworks for leadership. Industry and community engagement will expand, fostering partnerships to align education with market needs. Flexible and inclusive education will be scaled through modular courses, micro-credentials, and AI-driven learning tools. Sustainability initiatives will integrate eco-friendly practices across all educational, research, and campus activities. Malaysia's global prominence will grow through transnational education programmes, streamlined international student services, and impactful research collaborations in climate change and sustainability.

**Wave 3 (2032–2035): Elevate** consolidates reforms to position Malaysia as a global leader in higher education. Institutions will achieve international recognition for research excellence and sustainability leadership. Financial sustainability will be institutionalised through robust funding models and endowments. Lifelong learning pathways will be fully established, providing flexible education for diverse demographics, including marginalised communities. Data-driven decision-making and inclusivity will be prioritised to improve accessibility and completion rates for under-represented groups, such as Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Orang Asli. By the end of the transformation, Malaysia's higher education system will be globally competitive, inclusive, financially sustainable, and aligned with the needs of a rapidly evolving world, producing adaptive, ethical graduates ready to address future challenges.

# WAVE 1 2026-2028

## IGNITE

### SHIFT 1 – Humanity-centric, entrepreneurial and adaptive learners

- Embed ethics and values in education: Enhance ethical modules and promote responsible technology use among learners.
- Strengthen experiential and entrepreneurial learning: Expand work-based projects, revise Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (iCGPA), and adopt Entrepreneurship Integrated Education (EIE) framework.
- Promote inclusivity and mental well-being: Establish Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and National Higher Education Mental Health frameworks, and enhance personalised support systems.
- Ensure accessible and sustainable infrastructure: Audit campus readiness to support inclusive, innovative, and sustainable learning environments.

### SHIFT 2 – Purpose-driven high-performance talent

- Align HLIs with One Higher Education Act (OHEA) mission: Launch campaigns, cascade purpose, and foster stakeholder engagement from leadership levels.
- Strengthen talent and performance frameworks: Establish Values-internalised and Purpose-Driven High-Performance Talent Framework (Orange Playbook updates), establish databases, and create holistic performance indicators.
- Embed ethics and integrity in governance: Develop ethics frameworks, training, and establish integrity-focused committees at various levels.
- Promote inclusive leadership: Address barriers for women, and educate on unconscious bias in processes and interactions.

### SHIFT 3 – Advanced technical and vocational education and training (TVET) competency

- Establish robust governance and legislative frameworks: Develop TVET Act, National Skills Certification Framework (NSCF), and industry-aligned standards.
- Foster strong industry partnerships: Co-create programmes, strengthen collaborations, and align certifications with industry needs.
- Enhance flexible learning pathways: Develop Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) frameworks and systems for seamless learner mobility.
- Leverage technology for data management: Build automated systems and blockchain frameworks for tracking TVET progression and employability.

### SHIFT 4 – Financial sustainability

- Review development financing and infrastructure upgrading to strengthen the financial sustainability of universities.
- Optimise financial sustainability through targets and endowments: Expand Waqf, zakat, and unbundling of programmes income strategies.
- Align funding with cost and efficiency frameworks: Launch cost-efficiency playbook and simulate funding formula.
- Enhance National Higher Education Fund Corporation or *Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional* (PTPTN)'s structure for improved accessibility: Focus on repayment rates, savings, and need-based loan distribution.

### SHIFT 5 – Agile and resilient governance

- Strengthen legal and governance frameworks: Revise key Acts, establish Ombudsman, and draft OHEA and TVET frameworks.
- Enhance leadership and governance capabilities: Appoint skilled Board of Directors (BOD), strengthen Higher Education Leadership Academy or *Akademi Kepimpinan Pendidikan Tinggi (AKEPT)* and develop future HLIs leaders.
- Implement effective performance tracking systems: Establish dashboards for real-time insights and data-driven decision-making.
- Foster inclusive and technology-driven governance: Develop IGF and required infrastructure for broader stakeholder engagement.

### SHIFT 6 – Responsible research, development, innovation, commercialisation and economy (RDICE)

- Consolidate funding and prioritise innovation: Streamline resource allocation, develop innovation hubs, and align priorities with socio-economic needs.
- Foster international and industry collaboration: Establish global consortia, launch incentive programmes, and ensure sustainable RDICE funding.
- Cultivate entrepreneurial research talent: Implement training and mentorship for unipreneurial and omnipreneurial mindsets in researchers.
- Strengthen ethical research practices: Refine guidelines, provide Malaysian Code of Responsible Conduct in Research (MCRCR)-based training, and establish monitoring systems for ethical concerns.

### SHIFT 7 – Global prominence

- Strengthen quality and accountability frameworks: Develop the Integrated Quality and Accountability Metrics (IQAM), engage stakeholders, and align evaluation metrics with global standards.
- Expand international partnerships and recognition: Establish collaborations with top universities and accreditation bodies, and pilot credit transfers.
- Promote global inclusivity and multiculturalism: Develop inclusive learning frameworks and streamline visa processes for international students.
- Enhance global mobility and leadership: Launch flagship scholarships, leadership programmes, and transnational education in target regions.

### SHIFT 8 – Flexible education and lifelong learning

- Enhance flexible and innovative education: Develop a playbook, integrate micro-credentials, and adopt the 4-Quadrant Model.
- Ensure quality and standards: Establish Public-Private university consortiums and implement mutual recognition policies with APEL pathways.
- Foster regional and cultural relevance: Build partnerships for learning materials tailored to regional and cultural contexts.
- Advance educator capabilities in technology: Upskill educators in AI, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR), and incentivise unbundled educational resource development.

### SHIFT 9 – Planetary health and sustainability

- Embed sustainability in leadership and governance: Develop training modules, competency criteria, and policies for sustainability in HLIs.
- Advance sustainability-focused education: Evaluate curricula, launch interdisciplinary courses, and foster industry-community collaboration.
- Promote sustainability and planetary health Research and Development (R&D): Allocate special grants and launch an HLI planetary health and sustainability playbook.
- Transition towards sustainable campuses: Conduct environmental audits and develop planet-friendly, sustainable campus roadmaps.

### SHIFT 10 – Responsive and dynamic delivery

- Strengthen governance and coordination; enhance Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Delivery Units and its coordination with HLI Delivery Units.
- Implement robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms: Develop a national dashboard, publish annual reports, and codify updated playbooks.
- Enhance data-driven decision-making: Review digital facilities, create a data warehouse, and optimise institutional rating systems.
- Promote inclusivity and accessibility: Assess HLI readiness for Persons With Disabilities (PWD) and address barriers for marginalised communities' education success.

# WAVE 2 2029-2031

## PROPEL

### SHIFT 1 – Humanity-centric, entrepreneurial and adaptive learners

- Embed values and experiential learning: Institutionalise values-internalised education, interdisciplinary programmes, and revised iCGPA frameworks in HLIs.
- Foster innovation and entrepreneurship: Enhance ecosystems, secure funding, and promote real-world technological fluency.
- Strengthen inclusivity and mental well-being: Institutionalise DEI initiatives and adopt AI-driven mental health support tools.
- Upgrade infrastructure and support systems: Modernise learning facilities and expand inclusive, student-focused support mechanisms.

### SHIFT 2 – Purpose-driven high-performance talent

- Strengthen mission alignment and talent development: Launch cross-HLIs Vice-Chancellor (VC) cascade, Talent Opinion Survey, and high-performance talent frameworks.
- Promote well-being and work-life balance: Implement HLI health assessments, flexible schedules, and wellness campaigns across institutions.
- Enhance inclusivity and ethics: Improve inclusivity policies, increase women leadership roles, and launch ethics training initiatives.
- Foster talent mobility and performance tracking: Publish talent profiles, promote resource mobility, and implement holistic talent performance indicators.

### SHIFT 3 – Advanced technical and vocational education and training (TVET) competency

- Strengthen governance and operational integration: Develop guidelines, monitoring mechanisms, and ensure smooth system and institutional reforms.
- Enhance TVET relevance and visibility: Convert 30% of programmes to Code of Practice for TVET Programme Accreditation (COPTPA), deepen industry engagement, and advisory boards.
- Expand flexible and accessible learning pathways: Integrate micro-credentials, standardise certifications, and launch a centralised portal for learners.
- Adopt innovative credentialing systems: Institutionalise blockchain tracking for TVET certifications and align systems with labour market needs.

### SHIFT 4 – Financial sustainability

- Strengthen financing and investment strategies: Propose development financing and infrastructure upgrading to strengthen the financial sustainability of universities without placing an additional financial burden on the Ministry.
- Implement a rational financing framework: Design and monitor the new funding formula.
- Enhance financial sustainability initiatives: Improve repayment rates and track increased savings through National Education Savings Scheme or Skim Simpanan Pendidikan Nasional (SSPN) effectiveness assessments.
- Facilitate capacity building and iterative refinements: Conduct training, monitor implementation, and refine processes based on impact assessments.

### SHIFT 5 – Agile and resilient governance

- Establish robust legislative and governance frameworks: Draft and implement OHEA, TVET Act, and National Education Council or *Majlis Pendidikan Negara* (MPN) to ensure seamless continuity and cohesion between the Education and Higher Education sectors.
- Strengthen leadership and inclusivity: Appoint transformational leaders, evaluate talent pools, and implement Inclusivity in IGF.
- Implement and evaluate funding and structural reforms: Approve and monitor funding formula and MOHE structural changes.
- Enhance accountability and stakeholder engagement: Monitor Ombudsman impact, Board Effectiveness Assessment (BEA) implementation, and launch a stakeholder engagement platform.

### SHIFT 6 – Responsible research, development, innovation, commercialisation and economy (RDICE)

- Evaluate and optimise funding mechanisms: Assess resource allocation, innovation hub impact, and refine the funding model accordingly.
- Strengthen global research collaborations: Expand partnerships, secure funding, and promote Malaysia's research capabilities internationally.
- Enhance academia-industry engagement: Expand industry incentives, foster collaboration, and showcase successful projects to attract investment.
- Refine talent and ethical frameworks: Adjust talent programmes, update ethical guidelines, and enhance compliance and enforcement systems.

### SHIFT 7 – Global prominence

- Implement and monitor quality metrics: Fully implement IQAM, conduct audits, and secure international accreditation recognitions for HLIs.
- Enhance global partnerships and programmes: Expand dual-degree initiatives, faculty exchanges, and transnational education collaborations.
- Foster inclusivity and global engagement: Increase cultural exchange participation, scholarship diversity, and student satisfaction in inclusive environments.
- Boost research and employability outcomes: Showcase high-impact research and grow graduate employment in multinational corporations.

### SHIFT 8 – Flexible education and lifelong learning

- Enhance global alignment and benchmarking: Expand mutual recognition and pilot APEL for skills-based accreditation in institutions.
- Strengthen HLI-industry collaboration: Incentivise co-created programmes to meet regional and global workforce demands.
- Advance educational technology adoption: Implement Edtech innovation incentives to empower impactful content creation by educators.
- Scale emerging technology training: Develop and expand training modules to integrate emerging technologies in education delivery.

### SHIFT 9 – Planetary health and sustainability

- Build leadership for sustainability: Train leaders in decision-making and evaluate outcomes based on societal and environmental impact.
- Institutionalise sustainability principles: Embed planetary health values into policies, programmes, courses, and pedagogical approaches.
- Strengthen research and innovation networks: Develop interdisciplinary hubs and increase R&D grants for sustainability-focused initiatives.
- Advance sustainable campus initiatives: Implement planet-friendly roadmaps and measure performance against Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDG), Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), and planetary health metrics.

### SHIFT 10 – Responsive and dynamic delivery

- Strengthen governance and oversight: Solve interministerial issues, review delivery units, and conduct annual and midterm MHEB implementation evaluations.
- Enhance institutional transformation: Launch redesigned ITPs, new playbooks, and monitor achievement of rating systems and outcomes.
- Leverage emerging technologies: Improve digital services, use AI and data warehouses, and upgrade student admission platforms.
- Promote inclusivity and accessibility: Enhance facilities for PWD, establish Centres of Excellence, and support marginalised communities.

# WAVE 3 2032-2035

## ELEVATE

### SHIFT 1 – Humanity-centric, entrepreneurial and adaptive learners

- Foster impactful collaborations: Build inter-institutional partnerships and scale globally with flagship projects aligned to SDGs.
- Advance innovative and sustainable learning: Launch revised iCGPA frameworks and promote excellence in entrepreneurial and sustainable initiatives.
- Strengthen inclusive infrastructure and support: Enhance learning facilities, mental health frameworks, and benchmark DEI best practices.
- Address future challenges proactively: Provide solutions for disruptive technologies and align with global workforce trends.

### SHIFT 2 – Purpose-driven high-performance talent

- Measure talent competency and performance: Assess benchmarks, performance indicators, and training effectiveness through impact studies.
- Ensure staff well-being: Conduct annual assessments of mental, physical, economic, and emotional health indicators.
- Strengthen trust and integrity: Monitor Talent Opinion Survey Index to gauge trust and diversity among staff.
- Enhance framework effectiveness: Evaluate and refine campaign strategies and framework impact for continuous improvement.

### SHIFT 3 – Advanced technical and vocational education and training (TVET) competency

- Strengthen governance and global positioning: Consolidate frameworks, institutionalise Chamber of Commerce (CoC) and Craftsmanship Chamber (CC), and market Malaysia as a TVET hub.

- Enhance programme delivery and partnerships: Expand advanced TVET programmes, build international collaborations, and achieve global accreditations.
- Institutionalise policies and systems for sustainability: Align with the National Skills Certification Framework and integrate flexible, holistic learning systems.
- Leverage technology for innovation: Institutionalise automated data systems and AI platforms for governance and workforce development.

### SHIFT 4 – Financial sustainability

- Strengthen governance and policy compliance: Assess proposed development financing and infrastructure upgrading for HLLs.
- Evaluate and optimise income streams: Assess endowment, Waqf, programme unbundling revenues, and tuition fee rationalisation impacts.
- Enhance funding sustainability: Improve the funding formula and reinforce PTPTN repayment initiatives.
- Promote education savings growth: Introduce and refine initiatives to ensure continuous SSPN growth and sustainability.

### SHIFT 5 – Agile and resilient governance

- Implement and monitor governance reforms: Execute OHEA, MPN, TVET Act, and assess impacts on MOHE and Act 605.
- Strengthen leadership and talent management: Evaluate transformational leadership appointments, talent pools, and the impact of leadership programmes.
- Evaluate funding and governance frameworks: Monitor the new funding formula, Ombudsman feedback, and IGF best practices.
- Leverage technology for engagement: Assess and refine infrastructure and infostructure to enhance broad stakeholder engagement.

### SHIFT 6 – Responsible research, development, innovation, commercialisation and economy (RDICE)

- Evaluate ecosystem effectiveness: Conduct a large-scale impact assessment to address socio-economic and planetary health challenges.
- Analyse global collaborations: Assess international partnerships' contributions to research, advancements, and future collaboration opportunities.
- Measure industry partnership returns: Evaluate economic benefits, job creation, and growth from industry-led research initiatives.
- Assess talent and ethical impacts: Track talent programme outcomes and analyse ethical frameworks promoting responsible research practices.

### SHIFT 7 – Global prominence

- Achieve global recognition: Align IQAM with global standards and increase top-ranked institutions in education.
- Expand international collaborations: Institutionalise partnerships, transnational programmes, and global graduate leadership initiatives.
- Lead impactful global research: Position Malaysian institutions as leaders in addressing global challenges and visibility platforms.
- Foster global inclusivity: Enhance multicultural campuses, international enrolments, and seamless global learner mobility systems.

### SHIFT 8 – Flexible education and lifelong learning

- Establish seamless credential recognition: Fully implement mutual recognition systems and standardise modular credentials across institutions.
- Enhance global positioning: Scale international partnerships and position HLIs as regional and global leaders.
- Integrate advanced technologies: Foster workforce-ready ecosystems and prepare for future EdTech X innovations.
- Recognise lifelong learning contributions: Institutionalise recognition of lifelong learning resources as valuable scholarly achievements.

### SHIFT 9 – Planetary health and sustainability

- Position Malaysia as a regional hub: Develop leadership frameworks, global benchmarking, and training for planetary health.
- Future-proof education and research: Integrate global dynamics into curriculum, R&D grants, and experiential learning programmes.
- Promote sustainable practices in HLIs: Institutionalise planet-friendly campuses, monitoring systems, and sustainability performance rankings.
- Encourage excellence in sustainability: Create incentives and recognise achievements in sustainability and planetary health initiatives.

### SHIFT 10 – Responsive and dynamic delivery

- Strengthen governance and oversight: The MOHE Delivery Unit tracks the progress of MHEB implementation through annual reviews.
- Enhance frameworks and systems: Refine quality assurance, institutional ratings, and harmonise HE regulations and policies.
- Leverage digital and technological advancements: Upgrade digital facilities, emerging technologies, and data systems for improved service delivery.
- Prioritise inclusivity and excellence: Expand PWD Centres of Excellence and improve accessibility across all HLIs.

# CONCLUSION

The MHEB 2026–2035 envisions a transformative shift in Malaysia’s higher education system to address the evolving demands of a dynamic global landscape. Rooted in inclusivity and sustainability, the blueprint focuses on empowering learners, enhancing institutional excellence, and fostering innovation across both private and public higher learning institutions. It prioritises equitable access to high-quality education aligned with international standards while integrating lifelong learning and flexible pathways to meet diverse learner needs.

The blueprint, as a living document, adapts to emerging trends and challenges to maintain its relevance and effectiveness. It emphasises partnerships with industries and communities, leveraging collaboration to ensure relevance and global competitiveness. It aims to empower learners, enhance institutional excellence, promote lifelong and life-wide learning, nurture purpose-driven talent, foster mission-oriented and impact-driven research, and ensure equitable access to quality education. This holistic approach positions Malaysia’s higher education system as a key driver of national progress and global competitiveness.

Key strategies include advancing technological adoption, embedding planetary health and sustainability in curricula, and nurturing values-internalised, future-ready talents. In short, Malaysian higher education is moving towards the development of HLIs that go beyond the traditional roles of teaching, research, and knowledge dissemination to actively engage in a multidisciplinary approach to societal transformation and innovation. These HLIs aim to address global and local challenges, foster mission-oriented innovation and entrepreneurship, encourage formation of start-ups and create a social, economic, and environmental impact on a larger scale. With a collective commitment and a whole-of-nation approach from all stakeholders, the MHEB aims to transform the higher education ecosystem into a globally recognised hub for excellence.





Chapter

A

# Introduction and Current Performance

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## Introduction

The Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint (MHEB) 2026-2035 is designed to propel the nation's higher education system to address the challenges of a rapidly changing, unpredictable global landscape. Building on the successes of previous plans, the blueprint emphasises learner-centred education, equitable access to quality education, and the importance of innovation, collaboration, and institutional excellence. It highlights the need for higher education to adapt to disruptions such as emerging technologies that go beyond the Industry 4.0 framework, demographic shifts, globalisation, and planetary health issues. The plan also prioritises skills development, lifelong learning, and unbundled education models to meet the evolving needs of students, employers, and society, while fostering sustainability and social impact.<sup>1</sup>

Recognising the disruptive changes affecting higher education, the MHEB 2026-2035 introduces strategies for agility and adaptability, such as digitalisation, multidisciplinary research, and values-driven education. Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) are encouraged to adopt flexible education models, integrate emerging technologies, and emphasise mental health, well-being, and diversity. The blueprint focuses on preparing students for future roles through personalised and innovative approaches, addressing risks like data security and public trust. As a "living document," the MHEB evolves to remain relevant, aiming to equip Malaysian learners with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to thrive in an increasingly complex world.

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<sup>1</sup> Academy of Sciences Malaysia (2019). *Mid-Term Review of Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)*. Kuala Lumpur, Academy of Sciences Malaysia

# Background to the MHEB 2026-2035

The Malaysian higher education system has made significant strides over the years. In 2007, the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) launched the National Higher Education Strategic Plan, or the *Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara* (PSPTN). This initiative was designed to drive the transformation of Malaysia's higher education sector and institutions. Among its notable achievements were the opening of the sector to private providers and international branch campuses, the promotion of cross-border mobility for students and academic staff, and the establishment of Malaysian Research Universities (MRUs).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the higher education system must continue to evolve in response to global trends and to prepare for future challenges.<sup>3</sup> To guide this progression, the Ministry introduced the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education) or MEB 2015–2025 (HE), outlining the next phase of growth and transformation for Malaysia's education system.

Building on this foundation, the MHEB 2026–2035 proposes significant strategic shifts to accelerate the upward trajectory of Malaysia's higher education system. At its core, the blueprint prioritises the needs and interests of learners, reaffirming the government's commitment to equitable access to high-quality education aligned with international standards. The blueprint emphasises engagement, collaboration, and partnerships with industry and the community, aiming to empower private and public HLIs to excel and innovate. Recognising the importance of collective efforts, the blueprint calls on all stakeholders to prepare Malaysians for the challenges and opportunities of a dynamic global landscape. The future of Malaysia's youth and the nation depends on this transformative agenda.

The MHEB 2026–2035 is designed to navigate an era of post-normal times, characterised by disruption, complexity, and contradiction. Traditional planning and linear approaches are no longer sufficient to address the challenges posed by this environment.

<sup>2</sup> Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (2022). *Study Report on Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)*. Johor Bahru, Uni-Technologies Sdn. Bhd.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Education Malaysia (2019). *Humanising Higher Education For Future-Proof Talents: Action Plan*. Putrajaya, Department of Higher Education



# The MHEB 2026-2035 Development Approach

The Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026-2035, or MHEB 2026-2035, was developed through a collaborative and consultative process driven by leading Malaysian thinkers with over 8,000 stakeholders and individuals engaged in providing input and feedback. The stakeholders included Malaysian and global education experts, university administrators, university Boards, the academic community, unions and associations, Ministry staff,

industry bodies and employers, relevant agencies, parents, students, and public members. The development process began with a comprehensive review of current performance through scoping, data collection, surveys, and stakeholder engagements, involving more than 100 documents, 8,000 stakeholders, and a detailed analysis of the MEB 2015-2025 (HE). The development of the MHEB 2026–2035 was structured into three distinct phases:

## Phase 1 Review, assessment and analysis (May 2024–July 2024)

The Ministry started with a comprehensive review of current performance through scoping, data collection, survey and stakeholder engagements. This phase identified issues and gaps.

## Phase 2 Conceptualisation of the 10 Shifts (August 2024 to October 2024)

Based on the review team’s findings and in consultation with stakeholders, 10 Shifts were identified to elevate the Malaysian higher education system to the next level. These Shifts were also carefully aligned with existing national plans.

## Phase 3 Finalisation of the MEHB 2026-2035 (November 2024 to mid-February 2025)

The details of these 10 Shifts were finalised following another extensive round of public consultation and guidance from the Cabinet.

### Focus Group Discussions and Validation Sessions 6410 Stakeholders

Identify key issues and challenges pertaining to the higher education ecosystem.

- 1072 Government**  
Ministries, State Governments, Government Agencies
- 4472 Academia**  
Academic and Administrative Staff, Academic Associations, Students, Student Representative Councils, HLI Management
- 246 Industry players**  
Professional Bodies, GLCs,<sup>1</sup> GLICs,<sup>2</sup> Foundations, SMEs,<sup>3</sup> Industry Associations
- 620 Community and public**  
Alumni, NGOs<sup>4</sup>

### Survey 1816 Stakeholders

Gauge Malaysians’ perceptions of the current Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education) MEB(HE) 2015-2025. This feedback will aid in designing the future Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint (MHEB) 2026-2035.

- 270 Government**  
Ministries, State Governments, Government Agencies
- 905 Academia**  
HLIs
- 309 Students**
- 105 Industry players**  
NGOs, Professional Bodies, GLCs and Foundation
- 227 Community and public**

Total **8226** stakeholders engaged



### MHEB 2026–2035 Developers

- 26 Advisory Committee
- 18 Steering Committee
- 40 Malaysian higher education (HE) experts
- 22 Writers
- 9 Associate members
- 66 Liaison officers



- 2 Blueprints
- 7 Strategic policy documents
- 12 Action plans
- 9 Acts and legislations
- 14 Study reports
- 14 Academic excellence publications
- Other sources

<sup>1</sup> Government-Linked Companies (GLCs)  
<sup>2</sup> Government-Linked Investment Companies (GLICs)  
<sup>3</sup> Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)  
<sup>4</sup> Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

## Survey findings

Exhibit A-1 presents the survey results regarding the overall achievement of the MEB 2015–2025 (HE), based on responses from students, academic and administrative staff of HLIs, and industry representatives. The evaluation is categorised into five levels: poor, unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good, and excellent.

The overall rating indicates that most respondents rated the blueprint as either satisfactory (41.7%) or good (40.5%), with 7.2% considering it excellent and 8.6% rating it as unsatisfactory. Only 2% rated it as poor.

**Exhibit A-1:** Survey findings on the overall achievement of the MEB 2015–2025 (HE)

Group	Scale				
	Poor (%)	Unsatisfactory (%)	Satisfactory (%)	Good (%)	Excellent (%)
Overall	21 (2)	91 (8.6)	439 (41.7)	426 (40.5)	76 (7.2)
Students	3 (2.5)	5 (4.1)	52 (43)	43 (35.5)	18 (14.9)
Academic and administrative staff of HLIs	8 (1.3)	45 (7.1)	276 (43.7)	273 (43.3)	29 (4.6)
Industry representatives	0	14 (30.4)	21 (45.7)	11 (23.9)	0

Note: Overall achievement MEB 2015-2025 (HE) was only answered by respondents who answered Yes to the statement "Are you familiar with the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)?"

Most students' responses fall into the Satisfactory (43%) and Good (35.5%) categories, with 14.9% rating it as Excellent. The academic staff of HLIs showed a similar distribution, with 43.7% rating it as Satisfactory and 43.3% as Good. However, fewer academic and administrative staff members rated the blueprint as Excellent (4.6%). Responses from the industry sector indicate a more critical perspective: 45.7% rated the blueprint as Satisfactory, and 23.9% rated it as Good, but no respondents from this group rated it as Excellent.

In conclusion, while the majority of respondents, particularly students and academic staff view the blueprint positively (with most ratings falling between satisfactory and good), the industry sector appears less satisfied, with a significant proportion rating it as Unsatisfactory (30.4%) and none awarding it an Excellent score. Overall, the consensus is that the blueprint performs well, but there remains room for improvement, especially from the industry's perspective.



## Objectives of MHEB 2026-2035

The objectives of the development of the MHEB are as follows:

- **Assess performance and address challenges**  
Improve education access, raise quality standards, close achievement gaps, and nurture resilient learners. Ensure system resilience, harmonise HLIs, and adopt a humanity-centric approach supporting mental health, sustainability, and planetary health.
- **Set ambitious aspirations**  
Align higher education aspirations with Malaysia's national priorities and global trends, ensuring they reflect evolving societal needs while fostering talents equipped to contribute to the nation's progress.
- **Drive comprehensive system transformation**  
Develop an adaptive, agile, and dynamic higher education system aligned with Ministry's strategic priorities and the MEB 2015–2025 (HE), ready to tackle post-normal challenges and achieve long-term goals.

# Alignment with National Aspirations

The MHEB 2026–2035 has been developed to align with the National Education Philosophy outlined in the Education Act 1996 and Malaysia MADANI, ensuring consistency and coherence with the nation's agenda. Its implementation will also be guided by existing circulars, general orders, government directives, and current laws and legislation in force.

## National Education Philosophy in Education Act 1996

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic and integrated manner, so as to produce individuals who are intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically balanced and harmonious based on a firm belief in and devotion to God. Such an effort is designed to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable and competent, possess high moral standards, and who are responsible and capable of achieving a high level of personal well-being as well as being able to contribute to the harmony and betterment of the family, society and the nation.

## Malaysia MADANI

Malaysia MADANI is a policy framework and government slogan introduced by the administration led by the 10th Prime Minister, Anwar Ibrahim.<sup>4</sup> The concept primarily emphasises good governance, sustainable development, and racial harmony within the country. MADANI embodies core values such as *keMampunan* (Sustainability), *kesejahteraan* (Prosperity), *Daya cipta* (Innovation), *hormat* (Respect), *keyakinan* (Trust), and *Ihsan* (Compassion). It specifically focuses on eight domains: (i) Economy and finance, (ii) Legislation, (iii) Institutions, (iv) Education, (v) Community, (vi) Culture, (vii) Urban, and (viii) Rural. The Ministry of Higher Education plays a vital role in ensuring the success of the MADANI Economy framework, concentrating on talent preparation, research and innovation, and promoting the transfer and sharing of knowledge from universities to society, as well as the internationalisation of the education sector.

<sup>4</sup> Prime Minister's Department (2024). *Malaysia Madani*. <https://malaysiamadani.gov.my>

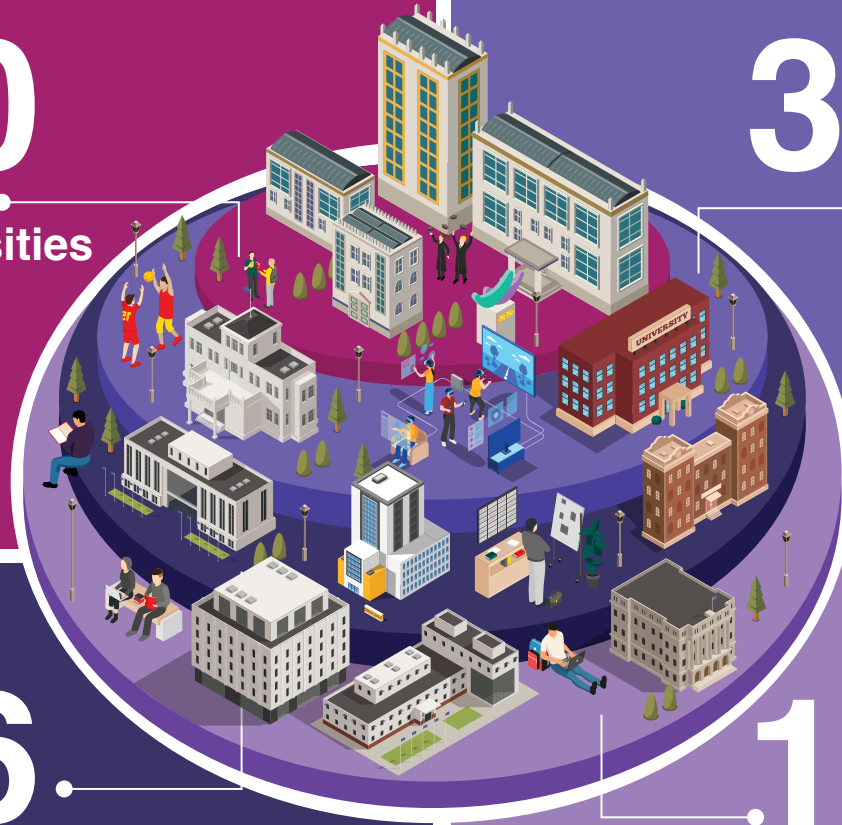
# Higher Learning Institution Landscape

20

Public  
Universities

382

Private  
HLIs



36

Polytechnics

106

Community Colleges

STUDENT  
ENROLMENT

**1,350,502**

INSTITUTIONS

**544**

ACADEMIC  
STAFF

**73,650**

## Public Universities

- 20 Universities
- 211,181 Student Intake
- 613,194 Student Enrolment
- 148,436 Graduates
- 33,083 Academic Staff

## Private HLIs

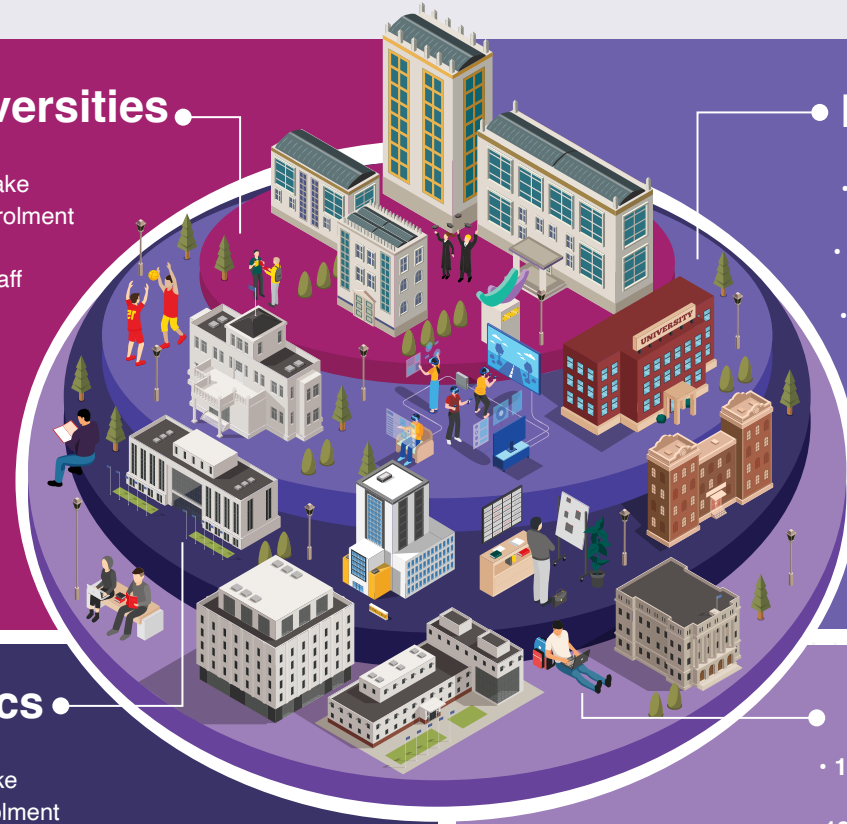
- 64 Universities
- 36 College Universities
- 271 Colleges
- 11 Campuses of foreign universities
- 211,573 Student Intake
- 639,754 Student Enrolment
- 111,890 Graduates
- 30,572 Academic Staff

## Polytechnics

- 36 Polytechnics
- 30,054 Student Intake
- 79,119 Student Enrolment
- 26,722 Graduates
- 7,230 Academic Staff

## Community Colleges

- 106 Community Colleges
- 9,888 Student Intake
- 18,435 Student Enrolment
- 6,830 Graduates
- 2,765 Academic Staff



### 20 Higher Institution Centres of Excellence (HICoE)

Source: MyMoheS, e-IPTS MOHE (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)

### Key legislative acts governing Malaysia higher education

- University of Malaya Act 1961 (Act 682)
- Ungku Omar Polytechnic Act 1974 (Act 145)
- Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555)
- National Higher Education Fund Corporation Act 1997 (Act 566)
- Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (Act 679)
- Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (AUKU) (Act 30)
- Educational Institutions (Discipline) Act 1976 (Act 174)
- National Council on Higher Education Act 1996 (Act 546)
- Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 1976 (Act 173)
- Constitution of the International Islamic University Malaysia (Companies Act 2016)
- Statutory Bodies Act (Act 605)

Source: Federal Legislation: <https://lam.agc.gov.my/>

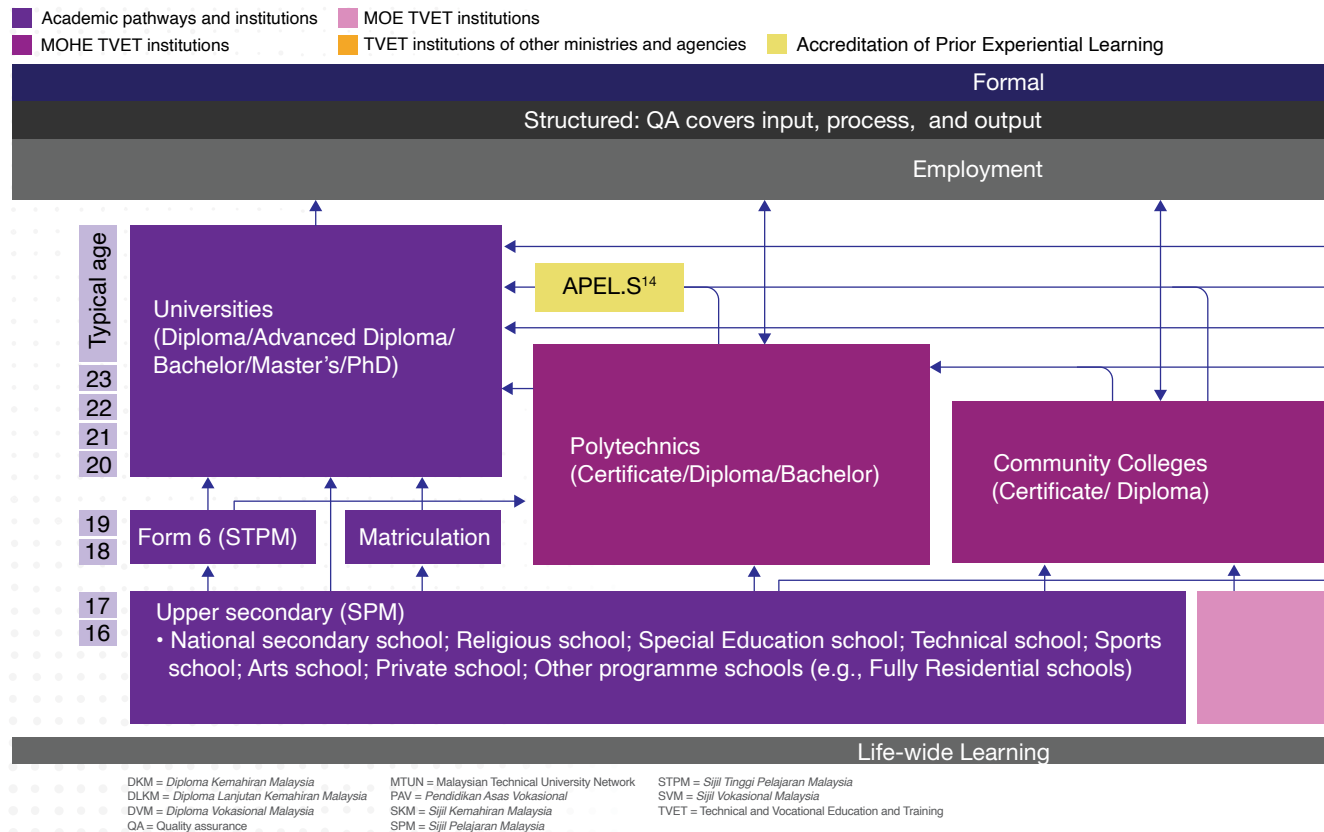
# Malaysia Higher Education Pathways

Malaysia higher education pathways (Exhibit A-2) present the various academic and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) routes available to students. After completing lower secondary education (ages 13-15), students can choose between academic and vocational streams in upper secondary education (ages 16-17). Upper secondary education culminates with the *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) examination (Form 5),

after which students have multiple pathways to pursue further education or enter the workforce.

Students who choose the academic pathway can continue through Form 6 (Malaysian Higher School Certificate or *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia*, STPM) or Matriculation, which leads to university programmes at Diploma, Bachelor, Master's, or PhD levels. Alternatively, students may opt for TVET pathways, which

**Exhibit A-2: Malaysia higher education pathways**

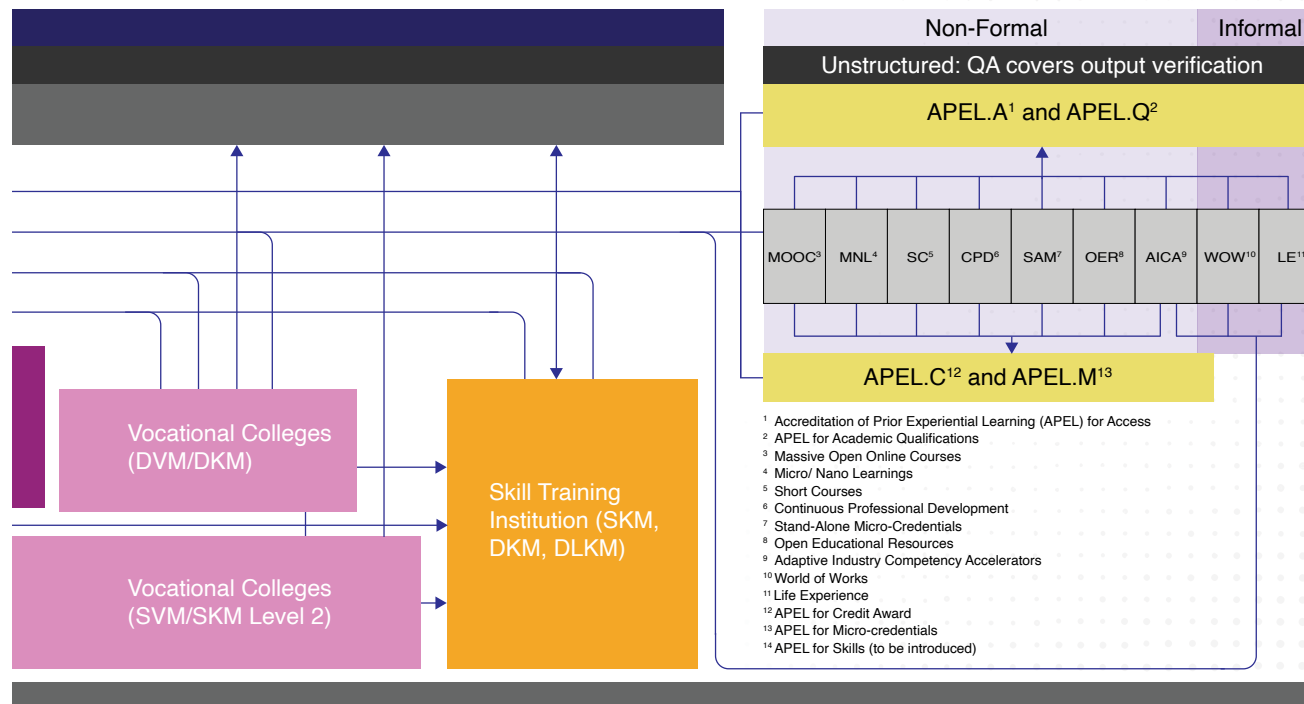


include institutions such as the Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN), polytechnics, and community colleges. These institutions offer qualifications that provide direct access to employment or further studies.

The vocational and skill-based routes are also well-structured, with vocational colleges, skills training institutes, and other TVET institutions offering qualifications such as the *Diploma Vokasional Malaysia* (DVM), *Diploma Kemahiran Malaysia* (DKM), and *Diploma Lanjutan Kemahiran Malaysia* (DLKM). These programmes equip students with industry-relevant skills, preparing them for specialised career opportunities.

Additionally, the Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) pathways, namely APEL.A, C and Q, provide flexible routes for individuals to access higher education or obtain formal qualifications based on their prior learning and work experiences.

The diagram underscores the flexibility of Malaysia's education system, demonstrating how students can transition between academic and vocational tracks at various stages. By offering a clear visual representation of available options, it supports students in making informed decisions about their educational and career pathways, ensuring alignment with their aspirations and competencies.



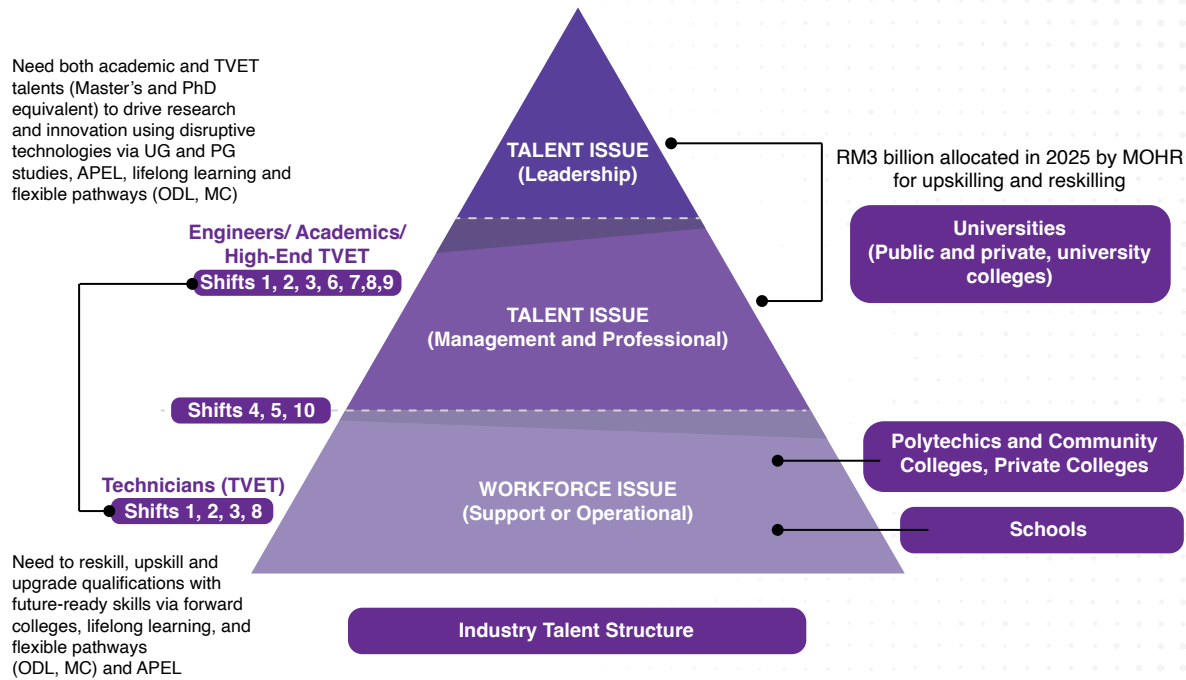
Source: Adapted from:  
 PEMANDU-PADU TVET Lab, 2014  
 Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) (2015). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)*  
 Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) (2024). *Alternative credentials playbook for adaptive industry competency accelerator (AICA)*



## Industry-Ready Talent Scenario

The diagram in Exhibit A-3 illustrates Malaysia's industry-ready talent ecosystem, highlighting the structured pipeline necessary to address workforce and talent issues affecting various industries. The base of the pyramid emphasises technicians trained through TVET pathways, who are equipped with practical and specialised skills to meet workforce needs in support and operational roles. These technicians are developed through institutions such as schools, polytechnics, community colleges, and private colleges. It underscores the importance of reskilling, upskilling, and future-ready skills via flexible pathways such as APEL, Open and Distance Learning (ODL), and lifelong learning (LLL). The middle and upper segments focus on engineers, academics, high-end TVET professionals, and management experts to tackle talent issues in research, innovation, and professional roles. Universities play a vital role in nurturing talent through undergraduate and postgraduate studies, adaptable learning pathways, and disruptive technologies. The ecosystem integrates strategic educational shifts such as Shifts 1 through 10 of the MHEB 2026-2035 to align the education system with industry needs and talent development strategies. Additionally, enhanced allocation will be needed for upskilling and reskilling initiatives aimed at enhancing Malaysia's competitiveness and readiness for future challenges.

**Exhibit A-3: Strengthening Malaysia's industry-ready talent ecosystem to drive economic growth**



TVET = Technical and Vocational Education and Training  
 PhD = Doctor of Philosophy  
 UG = Undergraduate  
 PG = Postgraduate

APEL = Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning  
 ODL = Open and Distance Learning  
 MC = Micro-credentials  
 MOHR = Ministry of Human Resources

Source: Ministry of Higher Education. (2024). *A new horizon for science, technology, and innovation: A strategy to enhance higher education in Malaysia*. Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM)

# Overall Performance of Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education)

The Ministry has made significant progress in fulfilling its core aspirations for higher education, most notably in broadening access and expanding overall system and institutional quality. The analysis of the overall performance of the MEB 2015-2025 (HE) focuses on System Aspirations—Access, Quality, Equity, Unity and Efficiency—as well as student aspirations.

## Access

### Expanding education access in Malaysia: APEL achievements and flexible learning growth

The data summarises the APEL assessment outcomes and information related to flexible learning programmes in Malaysia as of 2024. It highlights that 12,722 candidates passed the APEL.A assessments, which grant access to education based on prior experiential learning, and that 16,005 credits were successfully transferred through APEL.C, enabling students to receive academic credits for their prior learning. Additionally, 20 candidates obtained formal qualifications through APEL.Q, which recognises prior learning for qualification purposes.

The data also highlights the increasing number of flexible learning programmes developed in response to rising demand, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 1,291 micro-credential (MC) programmes and 20,863 micro-credential courses were made available, providing flexible and skill-specific learning opportunities. Furthermore, 266 Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes were delivered to broaden access to education. However, despite the growth of flexible learning during COVID-19, not everyone could benefit equally due to infrastructure and infostructure limitations, which impacted access to the essential resources for online learning. This underscores the ongoing challenges in ensuring equitable access to flexible learning opportunities.

Malaysia’s higher education system aims to broaden access to education as part of the MEB 2015-2025 (HE). The achievements thus far reflect the progress made over the past decade and set the direction for future goals, with continued emphasis on expanding opportunities for a more diverse group of learners.

Exhibit A-4: APEL assessment and flexible learning outcomes

APEL Assessment Overview	ODLs and MCs by MQF Level
<b>APEL.A</b> <b>12,722</b> Passed Candidates	<b>Micro-credential</b> <b>1,291</b> Programmes
<b>APEL.C</b> <b>16,005</b> Passed Credits	<b>Micro-credential</b> <b>20,863</b> Courses
<b>APEL.Q</b> <b>20</b> Passed Qualifications	<b>ODL</b> <b>20</b> Programmes
Data as at June 2024	Data as at March 2024

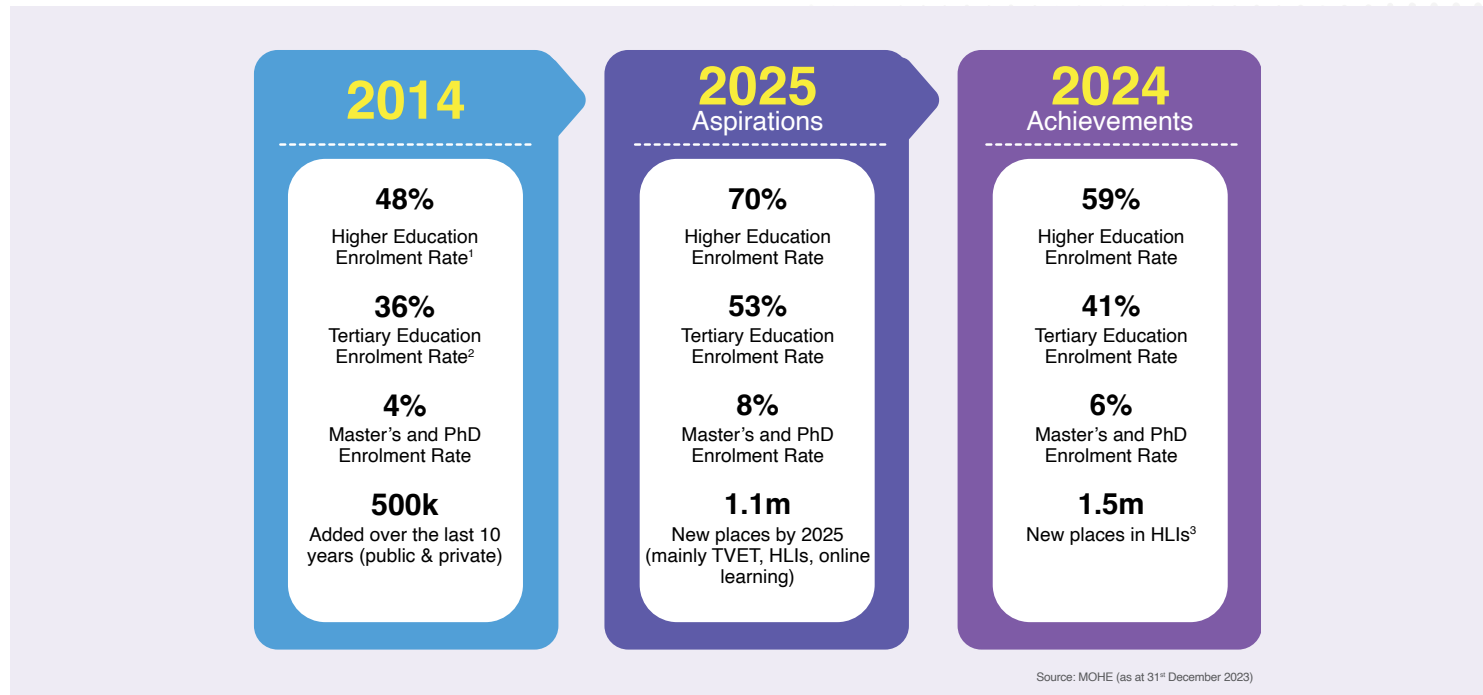
Source: Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). (2024). Annual Report 2024 MQA [Unpublished document].

### The access to higher education has considerably expanded

Malaysia has made notable progress in higher education enrolment, rising from 48% in 2014 to 59% currently, though still below the 70% target set for 2025. Tertiary enrolment increased from 36% to 41%, remaining short of the 53% goal, while postgraduate enrolment improved from four to six percent but has yet to reach the eight percent target. Despite these gaps, the system exceeded its target for new placements, reaching 1.5

million between 2014 and 2024, surpassing the 1.1 million planned by 2025 (Exhibit A-5). These achievements highlight Malaysia's commitment to expanding access to education while building an inclusive and globally competitive system. The growing enrolment, coupled with exceeding infrastructure targets, underscores the nation's strategic investments in higher education to support socio-economic development and global engagement.

Exhibit A-5: System aspiration: Access



<sup>1</sup> Higher Education comprises ISCED 3+ (Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary Education such as Pre-U, Matriculation, STPM, A-Level, Certificate Year 1, and Diploma Year 1), ISCED 5, 6, 7 and 8.

<sup>2</sup> Tertiary Education comprises of ISCED 5 (Year 2 Certificate, Year 2 & 3 Diploma, Advance Diploma), ISCED 6, 7 and 8.

<sup>3</sup> New places refer to the number of additional participations in higher learning institutions, including flexible education and lifelong learning.

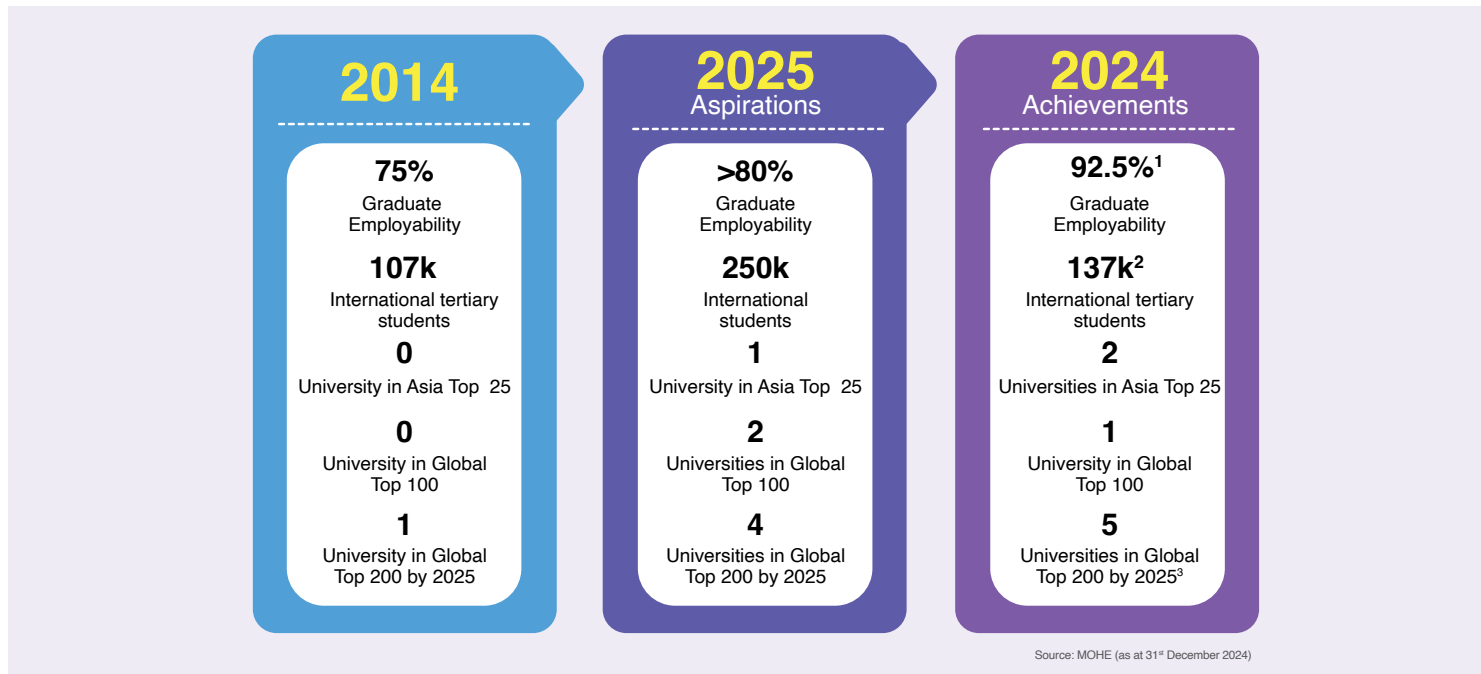
## Quality

### Advancing higher education with improved employability

Malaysia showed significant progress in achieving improved graduate employability surpassing the 2025 target, rising to 92.5% from 75% in 2014, exceeding the >80% goal. International student numbers increased from 107,000 in 2014 to 137,000 but fell short of the 2025 target of 250,000. Malaysia's higher education system is increasingly recognised as a key driver of socio-economic

development. By prioritising quality education, innovative teaching methods, and comprehensive support systems, the nation is well-positioned to maintain its upward trajectory in higher education, further strengthening its global standing and contributing to its vision of becoming a leading education destination.

Exhibit A-6: System aspiration: Quality



<sup>1</sup> Graduate Tracer Study System or *Sistem Kajian Pengesanan Graduan* (SKPG), MOHE

<sup>2</sup> MyMoheS and e-IPTS, MOHE

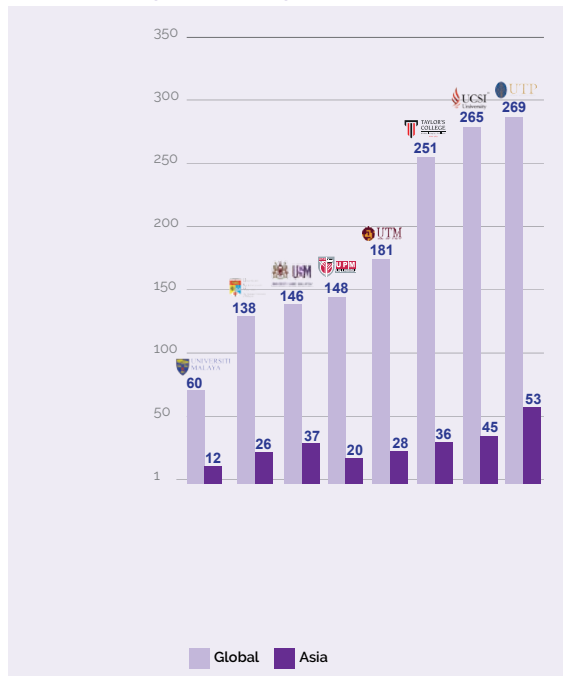
<sup>3</sup> QS World University Rankings 2025

### Malaysia's universities achieving regional and global success

Malaysia successfully achieved its goal of having two universities in Asia's Top 25, with Universiti Malaya ranked 12<sup>th</sup> and Universiti Putra Malaysia ranked 20<sup>th</sup>. Similarly, the target for universities in the Global Top 100 was met by Universiti Malaya, which secured the 60<sup>th</sup> position in the QS World University Rankings. Notably, Malaysia also achieved its goal of having five universities in the Global Top 200 by 2025, ahead of schedule (Exhibit A-7).

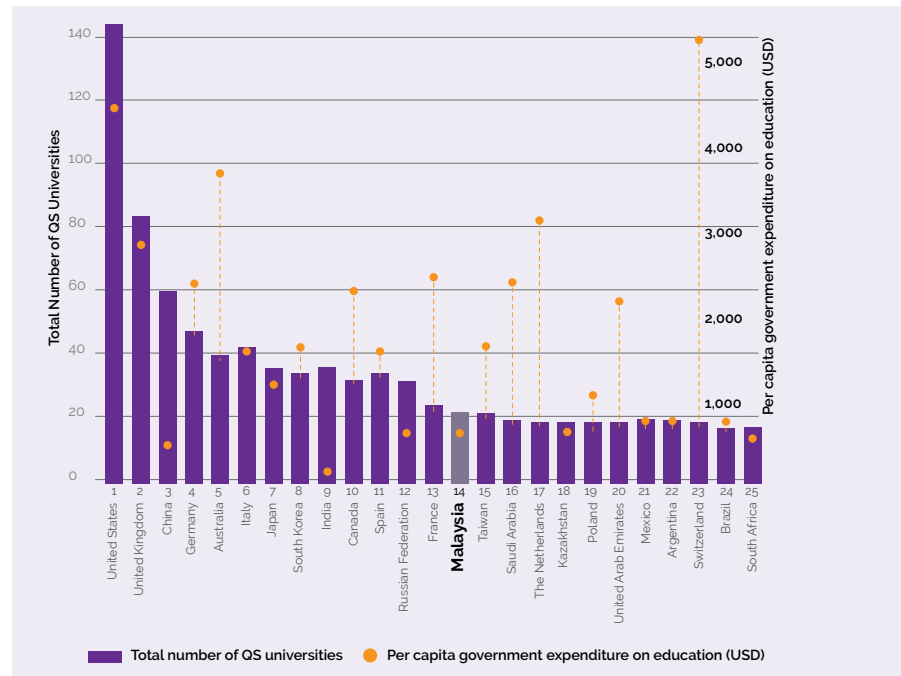
Furthermore, according to the Global Education Index 2024, Malaysia was ranked 14<sup>th</sup> among the 25 countries with the best education systems (Exhibit A-8). These accomplishments reflect the nation's steadfast commitment to strengthening higher education through strategic investments in research, innovation, and teaching excellence. Malaysian universities continue to gain international recognition, reinforcing their reputation for academic rigour and pioneering research. These achievements affirm the country's dedication to developing globally competitive institutions and realising its vision of becoming a premier higher education hub.

**Exhibit A-7: Malaysian universities global ranking**



Source: QS University Ranking 2025

**Exhibit A-8: Global Education Index top 25 countries with best education system in the world**

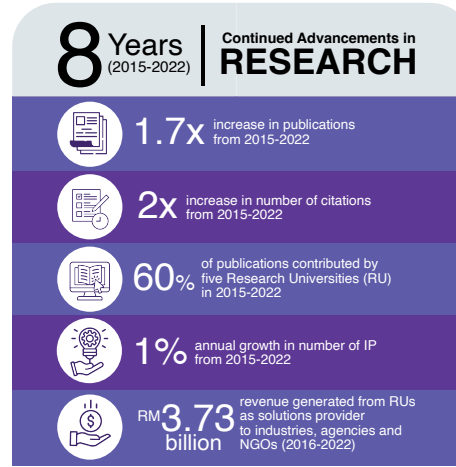


Source: Insider Monkey Global Education Index, 2024

### Sustained growth in research excellence

Between 2015 and 2022, Malaysia saw substantial growth in research output, with publications increasing by 1.7 times and citations doubling. The five Research Universities (RU) contributed 60% of the nation’s total publications. Intellectual Property (IP) filings grew by one percent annually, while revenues from these universities, serving as solution providers for industries, agencies, and NGOs, reached RM3.73 billion. These advancements demonstrate Malaysia’s growing influence in the global research ecosystem, driven by its commitment to fostering innovative and impactful studies. By bridging academia and industry, Malaysia’s research universities continue to position the country as a hub for knowledge generation and real-world solutions, advancing national and global development goals excellence and innovation.

Exhibit A-9: Continued advancements in research

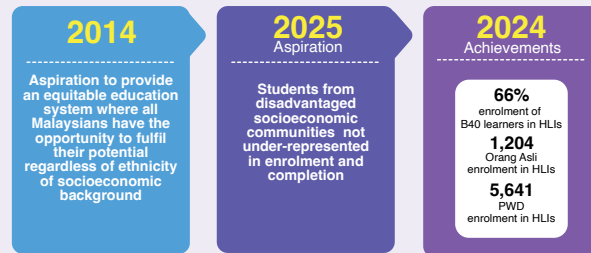


Source: Malaysia Research Assessment Instrument (MyRA) Data 2015-2022, MOHE

### Equity

### Towards equitable access to higher education in Malaysia

Exhibit A-10: System aspiration: Equity



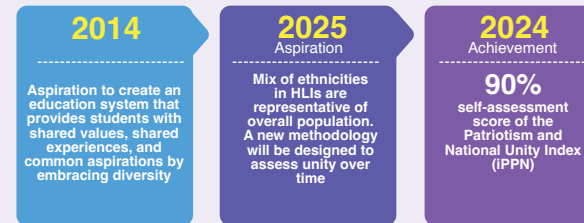
Source: MyMoHES and e-IPTS, MOHE (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)

Malaysia aims to create an equitable education system ensuring all citizens, regardless of socioeconomic background, can fulfil their potential. By 2025, the goal is to prevent underrepresentation of students from disadvantaged communities in enrolment and completion. In 2024, the projected achievements include a 66% enrolment rate of B40 (the bottom 40% income group) learners in HLIs, with specific targets of 1,204 *Orang Asli* students and 5,641 Persons with Disabilities (PWD) students enrolled in HLIs. This reflects a commitment to inclusivity and equity in education. These figures underscore ongoing efforts to enhance inclusivity in Malaysian education.

## Unity Advancing diversity and unity in Malaysian HLIs

Malaysia aspires to create an education system that fosters shared values, experiences, and aspirations among students while embracing diversity. By 2025, the aim is for the ethnic composition in HLIs to reflect the overall population, supported by a new methodology for assessing unity over time. Currently, the Patriotism and National Unity Index (IPPN) shows a high self-assessment score of 90%, indicating strong unity amongst HLI students. These efforts emphasise the importance of diversity and unity in strengthening national cohesion through education.

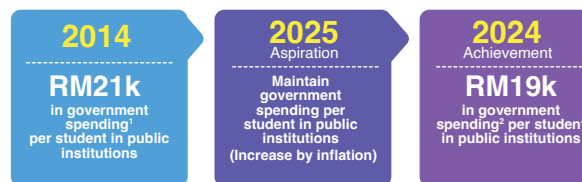
Exhibit A-11: System aspiration: Unity



Source: MOHE (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023)

## Efficiency Balancing cost and quality in public education

Exhibit A-12: System aspiration: Efficiency



<sup>1</sup> Includes operating expenditure (OE) (RM16,200) and development expenditure (DE) (RM4,500) of public HLIs and ministry expenditures (e.g., teaching hospitals, MQA, Divisions under Ministry). This is the portion of government contribution to the overall cost per student. Excludes operating expenditure covered by non-government sources, e.g., tuition fees, investment income, rentals, among others).

<sup>2</sup> In addition to government spending per student, the total cost per student in public institutions is supplemented by minimal tuition fees and the institutions' generated income.

Source: MOHE, 2023

Malaysia's education system aspires to maintain efficient government spending per student in public institutions while adjusting for inflation. In 2014, the government spent RM21k per student, which has decreased to RM19k in recent years. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of government spending from 2013 to 2023 stands at negative one percent, aligning closely with the 2025 target. It is important to note that the total cost of educating a student at public HLIs is supported by government grants, tuition fees paid by students and income generated independently by the institution. The emphasis on measuring cost per student highlights the importance of optimising costs while sustaining the quality of public education. It also reflects Malaysia's commitment to balancing fiscal responsibility with the delivery of quality education. By investing strategically and focusing on efficiency, the system ensures the long-term sustainability of public education while fostering equitable access to learning.

# Student Aspirations

The MEB 2015–2025 (HE) was built on the National Education Philosophy's vision of a balanced education, establishing the foundation for individual student aspirations. Across Malaysia's preschool, primary, secondary, and higher education systems, a shared vision was developed to define the desired outcomes of Malaysian education and their significance for individual students. Central to this vision was the Ministry's emphasis on balancing knowledge and skills (*ilmu*) with ethics and morality (*akhlak*) (Exhibit A-13).

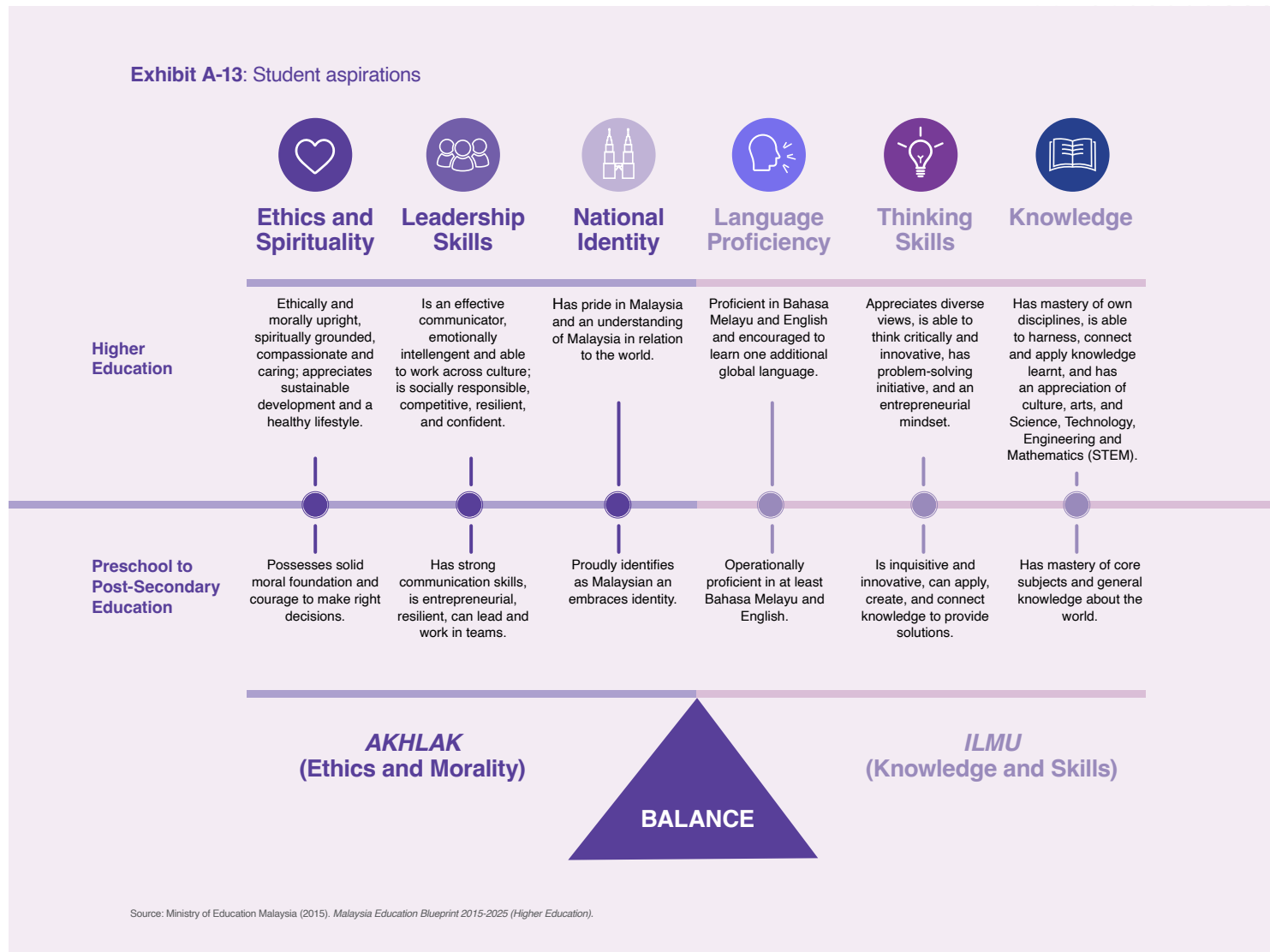
The student aspirations in the MEB 2015–2025 (HE) were anchored around six primary attributes: ethics and spirituality, leadership skills, national identity, language proficiency, thinking skills, and knowledge. These six attributes, designed to shape well-rounded graduates, remain the cornerstone of Malaysia's higher education system. Developed during a time when Malaysian graduates faced intensifying global competition, these attributes were intended to equip students with both a strong national and cultural identity alongside the adaptability needed for a globalised job market.

The Ministry's commitment to a balanced approach that integrates knowledge with ethical and moral considerations has proven enduringly relevant as the nation navigates global challenges.

While Malaysian HLIs have focused on improving global rankings and aligning with international standards, they have also faced local challenges, such as graduate employability and fostering social cohesion. By prioritising ethical leadership and critical thinking, the education system aimed to produce learners who are not only employable but also socially responsible and capable of addressing the fast-evolving demands of the 21st-century economy.

However, the system continues to face hurdles, including disparities in education quality across institutions and the need to effectively integrate these values into real-world student experiences. Despite these challenges, the student aspirations of the MEB 2015–2025 (HE) provided a critical foundation for the attributes outlined in the new higher education framework under the MHEB 2026–2035.

Exhibit A-13: Student aspirations



Source: Ministry of Education Malaysia (2015). Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education).

# Safeguarding the Relevance of Malaysia's Higher Education

Malaysia's higher education faces growing challenges in ensuring its continued relevance amid rapid global and national changes. The accelerating pace of technological advancements, shifting economic structures, and evolving societal expectations are reshaping the landscape of higher education. Without a strategic response, there is a risk that institutions may struggle to equip learners with future-ready skills and produce leaders capable of navigating these disruptions. The growing dominance of artificial intelligence, automation, and digital economies calls for a fundamental shift in learning approaches to ensure that graduates are not only technically proficient but also adaptive, ethical, and entrepreneurial. At the same time, institutions must develop agile leadership that can steer HLIs towards sustained excellence, ensuring higher education remains a key driver of national development.

A key risk is the misalignment between education and industry needs, which could lead to a workforce ill-prepared for emerging economic demands. As global uncertainties including economic fluctuations, climate change, and geopolitical shifts continue to impact national priorities, there is increasing pressure on higher education to produce ethical, innovative, and resilient talent. However, gaps in university-industry

collaboration, the research ecosystem, and policy coherence could hinder this progress. If institutions fail to integrate leadership development into curricula, learners may lack the strategic thinking and decision-making abilities necessary to thrive in complex environments. Furthermore, internationalisation efforts are at risk if Malaysia does not strengthen its global positioning through cross-border collaborations, inclusive mobility policies, and stronger institutional branding.

Institutional governance and financial sustainability pose further challenges to the sector's relevance. Many higher learning institutions (HLIs) face rising financial pressures, with declining enrollment rates and funding constraints affecting the quality of education, research, and institutional stability. Governance structures that lack agility and responsiveness may slow decision-making and hinder the ability of institutions to adapt to external disruptions. If these challenges remain unaddressed, Malaysia's higher education system may struggle to retain its competitiveness, ultimately affecting its ability to produce talent and leadership that can contribute meaningfully to national and global progress. To safeguard relevance, urgent measures are needed to ensure higher education institutions remain financially sustainable, strategically governed, and aligned with the demands of an increasingly complex world. Exhibit A-14 summarises the key issues and challenges in Malaysia's higher education.

Exhibit A-14: Summary of issues and challenges in Malaysia's Higher Education



Source: Desk research and focus group discussions

# 11 Main gaps and challenges

## 1 Ethical leadership and values

- Strengthening the emphasis on ethical values is essential for shaping responsible future leaders.
- While there are growing concerns around academic integrity and the impact of technology on ethical behavior, there are also opportunities to enhance ethical leadership through targeted initiatives and education.

## 2 Global competitiveness and exposure

- Challenges remain in enhancing global citizenship, with barriers to international mobility, credit transfers, and inclusivity for international students.
- Prioritising global exposure is essential to prepare students for an interconnected world.

## 3 Future-ready skills and employability

- The current gap in future-ready skills and practical, industry-relevant training is contributing to both unemployment, where graduates face challenges in securing jobs, and underemployment, where they are employed in roles that do not fully utilise their skills and qualifications.
- Declining enrollment in certain areas presents further challenges in aligning educational outcomes with the evolving demands of the industry. Addressing these issues requires rethinking educational approaches to better equip graduates for meaningful and suitable employment.

## 4 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

- Insufficient opportunities for *Orang Asli* and Natives of Sabah and Sarawak, Persons with Disabilities (PWD), and marginalised groups remain a significant challenge within the education system.
- At the same time, barriers persist for international students due to inclusivity and language issues. Ensuring equity across all levels of the system is essential for creating a more inclusive, diverse, and competitive educational environment.

## 5 Mental health and well-being

- The increasing concern for mental health and well-being is heightened by a shortage of professionals, limited services, and insufficient support systems.
- Both learners and staff experience challenges such as academic pressures, workload demands, and uncertain career pathways, contributing to stress and emotional strain that may affect their overall well-being and progression.

## 6 Entrepreneurial ecosystem and innovation

- The entrepreneurial ecosystem in higher education would benefit from a broader approach, focusing on developing diverse entrepreneurial skills beyond traditional business ventures.
- Additionally, there is a strong reliance on government funding, and more effective impact tracking is needed. Strengthening this ecosystem to drive innovation, particularly in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI)-based industries, is essential for economic growth.

## 7 Unity, national identity, and sustainability

- HLIs must play a greater role in fostering unity, with a need for cross-ministry collaboration.
- The curriculum should better reflect the global sustainability and planetary health agenda, encouraging students to contribute to national unity while addressing critical issues such as climate change, environmental protection, and sustainable development.

## 8 Governance and accountability

- Governance structures in HLIs require further enhancement, particularly in addressing issues like political appointments and limited board effectiveness.
- Strengthening accountability and improving governance practices are essential to ensuring transparent and effective leadership across the education sector.

## 9 Financial sustainability and institutional stability

- HLIs face financial pressures, with some private institutions closing due to unsustainable funding models, impacting education quality, research output, and overall resilience.
- Establishing a sustainable financial framework is crucial for ensuring the long-term stability of HLIs, enabling them to maintain high-quality education while adapting to evolving demands.

## 10 Infrastructure and accessibility

- Inadequate physical and digital infrastructure limits access to education, especially in rural areas. Investing in both infrastructure and infostructure is vital to ensure broader accessibility to quality education.

## 11 Research, innovation, and societal impact

- The higher education system must focus on ensuring that research and innovation efforts are both responsible and impactful. This includes aligning research activities with national priorities and the planetary health agenda, benefiting society and the environment, while driving economic growth through commercialisation.
- Enhancing the connection between research, innovation, and societal needs will strengthen the role of HLIs in contributing to sustainable development and global well-being.

## Higher education system in Malaysia: Challenges and opportunities

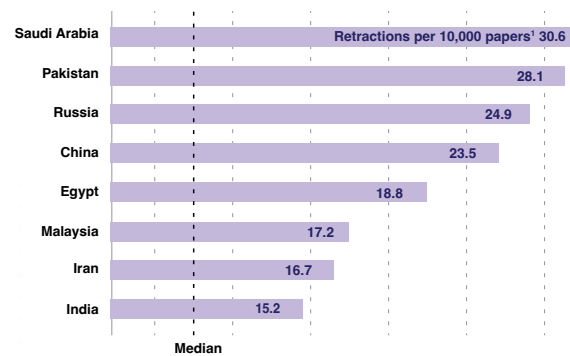
Exhibit A-15: Higher education system in Malaysia: Challenges and opportunities



### Academic integrity

MHEB 2026-2035 highlights a significant opportunity for improvement within the country's academic sector, particularly regarding research integrity. With 17.2 per 10,000 research papers retracted, three times the global average, Malaysia ranks sixth globally in terms of research paper retractions, alongside countries such as Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which face similar challenges (Exhibit A-16). This statistic underscores the urgent need for improved oversight, transparency, and ethical standards in academic publishing. By addressing issues related to peer-review processes and publication integrity, Malaysia has a unique opportunity to enhance its research credibility and establish itself as a leader in ethical and high-quality scientific output. The current challenges serve as a catalyst for positive transformation, paving the way for a more robust and accountable research ecosystem within Malaysian academic institutions.

Exhibit A-16: Malaysia ranked 6<sup>th</sup> for countries with the highest publication retraction rates



<sup>1</sup> Total number of research papers according to Scopus: articles and reviews. Analysis excludes conference papers (and their retractional)

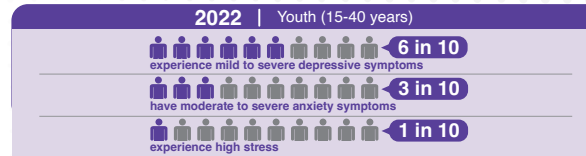
Source: Van Noorden, R. (2023). More than 10,000 research papers were retracted in 2023 — a new record. Nature, 624(7992), 479–481. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-023-03974-8>

**Mental health and well-being**

MHEB 2026-2035 offers a significant opportunity to enhance well-being and resilience within Malaysia’s academic sector. As both academics and students navigate increasing workloads and responsibilities, they can thrive in an evolving educational landscape with appropriate support systems in place. Balancing teaching, research, innovation, community engagement, and industry collaboration can be challenging for academics. However, this multidimensional role also fosters professional growth, interdisciplinary learning, and stronger connections between academia and industry. By implementing improved work-life balance initiatives, mental health support, and reforms to performance evaluation, institutions can cultivate an environment where educators can excel without undue stress.

Students are also facing mental health challenges. However, recognising these issues presents an opportunity to cultivate a more inclusive, supportive, and resilient educational environment. Addressing concerns such as online learning infrastructure, cyber safety, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) will enhance student well-being. The increasing emphasis on mental health services and campus support systems signifies a positive shift towards a holistic, student-centred educational model. In 2022, six out of ten youths aged 15 to 40 experienced mild to severe depressive symptoms, three out of ten faced moderate to severe anxiety, and one in ten reported high stress levels (Exhibit A-17). Furthermore, the number of individuals who intend to take their own lives rose from 953 in 2019 to 2,119 in 2020 (Exhibit A-18). These statistics underline the urgent need for improved mental health frameworks, campus wellness programmes, and student support services. Malaysia can transform these challenges into opportunities for a healthier, more balanced, and future-ready academic community by concerted efforts to strengthen mental health initiatives, upgrade learning infrastructure, and promote inclusivity.

**Exhibit A-17: Mental health statistics for youth (aged 15-40) in 2022**



Source: Institute for Youth Research Malaysia & United Nations Children’s Fund (2024). Facts & Figures Malaysian Youth Mental Health Index 2023 (MyMHI’23).

**Exhibit A-18: Alarming increase in reported suicide intentions (2019 - 2020)**



Source: Institute for Youth Research Malaysia & United Nations Children’s Fund (2024). Facts & Figures Malaysian Youth Mental Health Index 2023 (MyMHI’23).

**Planetary health and sustainability:** The MHEB 2026-2035 addresses Malaysia’s sustainability agenda, highlighting the economic progress achieved particularly between 2000 and 2010. However, the country’s advancement in Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) has stagnated since 2010, while social and environmental issues have worsened.<sup>5</sup> This imbalance between economic growth and environmental degradation has resulted in severe consequences. For instance, in 2019, the welfare cost of premature deaths related to environmental issues was estimated at RM64.2 billion, representing 7% of the country’s Gross domestic product (GDP). This underscores the immense cost of neglecting environmental and health risks. Despite existing frameworks such as Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the MHEB 2026-2035 indicates that these efforts are inadequate to tackle the pressing challenges of climate change, pollution, and other environmental hazards. It advocates for a more robust approach, urging the integration of planetary health and sustainability into all educational disciplines to bridge the gap between knowledge and action.

<sup>5</sup> Academy of Sciences Malaysia (2021). *Sciences Outlook 2020*. Kuala Lumpur, Academy of Sciences Malaysia. <https://www.akademisains.gov.my/so2020/>

Chapter

B

# Vision and Aspirations

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Building on the strengths and addressing the gaps of the previous MEB 2015–2025 (HE), MHEB 2026–2035 aims to propel Malaysia's higher education system over the next decade. The higher education system and HLIs hold the critical responsibility of nurturing Malaysia's greatest resource, the next generation of Malaysians. While the system and its institutions have made significant strides, nearly all stakeholders agree that much more must be accomplished to fulfil the ambitions and aspirations of all Malaysians.

MHEB 2026–2035 emphasises humanity-centric, values-internalised education, agility, adaptability, and future-readiness as essential qualities for preparing graduates to navigate undefined roles and challenges. It highlights the importance of adaptability in the face of transformative trends, particularly the rise of flexible education, lifelong learning, and life-wide learning. Graduates of Malaysia's higher education system are envisioned as continuous learners who are knowledgeable, competent, socially conscious, and equipped to navigate complexity.

The Blueprint represents a bold step towards transforming Malaysia's higher education system. By addressing the challenges of post-normal times and embracing opportunities presented by a rapidly changing world, it ensures that Malaysian institutions are prepared to meet future demands. Through collective efforts, the nation can cultivate resilient, adaptable, innovative, and responsible learners who will drive Malaysia's progress in an increasingly complex global landscape.

## The New Higher Education Focus

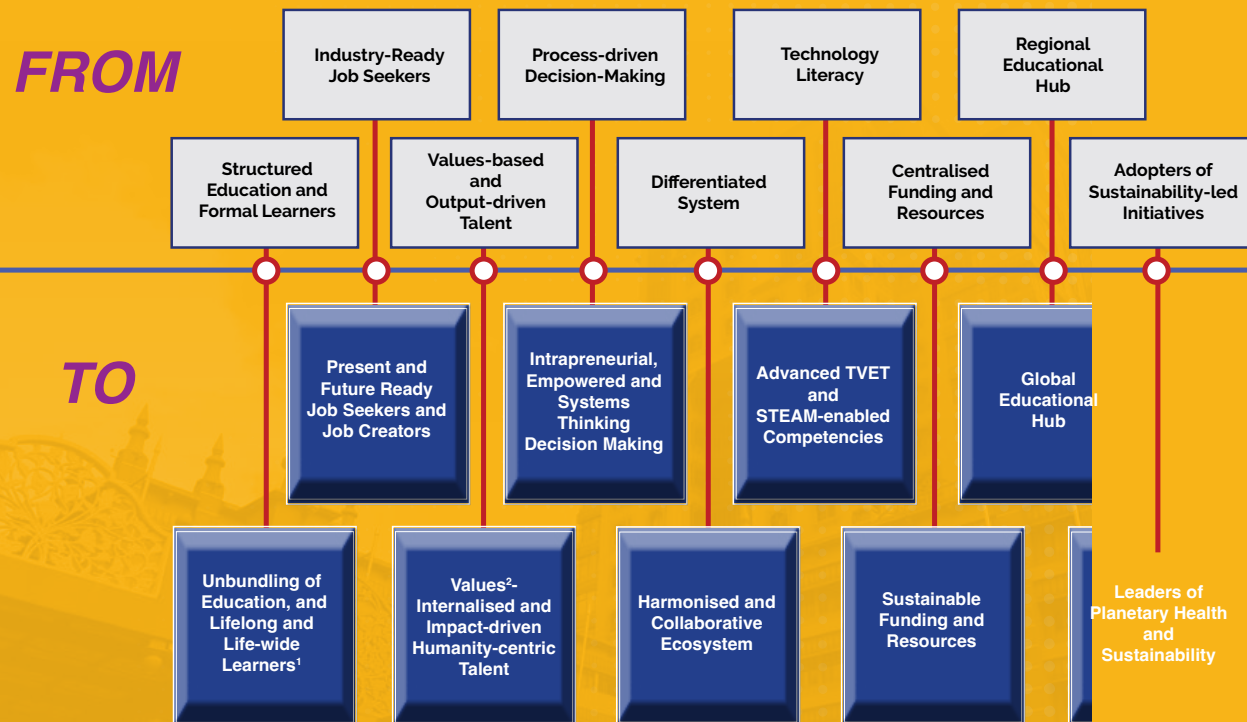
The New Higher Education Focus outlines a transformative shift in Malaysia's higher education system to align with future demands and global challenges (Exhibit B-1). It marks a transition from structured education and formal learners to the unbundling of education that supports lifelong and life-wide learning, offering flexible pathways for diverse learners. The focus on industry-ready job seekers evolves to producing present- and future-ready job seekers and job creators, equipping graduates with entrepreneurial and innovative skills. Similarly, the shift from values-based and output-driven talent emphasises cultivating values-internalised and impact-driven talent grounded in ethics and purpose.

The blueprint moves from process-driven decision-making to fostering intrapreneurial, empowered, and systems-thinking leadership that drives innovation and adaptability.

A differentiated system transforms into a harmonised and collaborative ecosystem promoting unity and efficiency across institutions. The focus on technology literacy progresses to Advanced TVET and STEAM-enabled competencies, integrating science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics. Centralised funding and resources transition to ensuring sustainable funding through responsible governance.

Additionally, the goal of being a regional educational hub expands to establishing Malaysia as a global educational hub with international recognition. Lastly, the adoption of sustainability-led initiatives advances into leadership in sustainability and planetary health, embedding environmental responsibility at the core of higher education. This holistic transformation emphasises innovation, lifelong learning, sustainability, and global competitiveness to prepare Malaysia's education system for an evolving world.

Exhibit B-1: The new higher education focus



<sup>1</sup> In this Blueprint, "learners" is used instead of "students" to convey a broader scope that includes individuals engaged in lifelong learning. This usage aligns with the Blueprint's emphasis on the unbundling of education, which enables flexible and self-directed learning pathways beyond traditional academic structures.

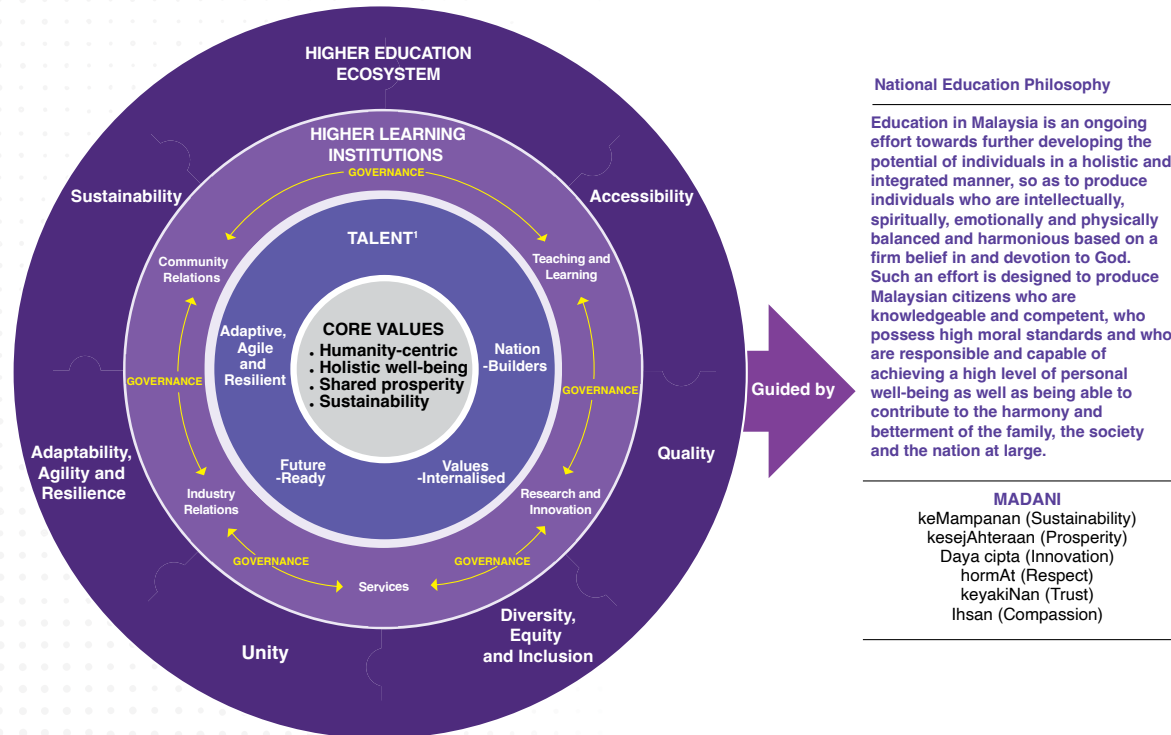
<sup>2</sup> "Values" is used instead of "value" to avoid the economic connotation that "value" might imply. "Values" refer to a set of principles, moral standards, or cultural norms that individuals or groups adopt and integrate into their identity.

# Malaysia Higher Education Framework and Aspirations

## Purpose of Malaysia's Higher Education

The Malaysian higher education framework articulates the aspiration to achieve the ultimate purpose of higher education; producing **humanity-centric purpose-driven nation builders** for a harmonious, prosperous, advanced, and sustainable future. It aims to nurture talent across all levels of the higher education ecosystem, encompassing learners, as well as academic and administrative staff.

## Exhibit B-2: Higher education framework



<sup>1</sup> Talent refers to the learners developed by the system, as well as the academic and administrative staff within the system.

**The purpose of Malaysia's higher education is driven by the following core values:**

- **Humanity-centric** reflects a dedication to prioritising human dignity, compassion, empathy, planetary stewardship, and societal well-being, fostering inclusive, empathetic growth while adapting and showing resilience to change.
- **Holistic well-being** promotes balance and harmony across intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical dimensions, ensuring individuals thrive comprehensively with *adab*.
- **Shared prosperity** emphasises diversity, inclusion and equity in advancing societal and economic growth, ensuring collective progress and opportunities for all.
- **Sustainability** for generations highlights a commitment to responsible practices that safeguard environmental, social, and economic well-being for present and future generations.

This framework establishes overarching aspirations for Talent, Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) and the Higher Education Ecosystem. Talent aspirations envision individuals as nation-builders who are knowledge-driven, and future-ready, with internalised values and competencies that equip them with adaptability, agility, and resilience.

As enablers, HLIs must excel in dynamic teaching and learning, impactful research and innovation, meaningful community and industry engagement, and comprehensive services. These functions are unified by strong governance, driving holistic development and sustainable progress aligned with both national and global aspirations.

The aspirations of Talent and HLIs collectively drive the realisation of the Higher Education Ecosystem aspirations. The aspirations for the higher education ecosystem focus on:

- Accessibility
- Quality
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Unity
- Adaptability, agility, and resilience
- Sustainability

As enablers, HLIs will excel in dynamic teaching and learning, impactful research and innovation, meaningful community and industry engagement, and comprehensive services. These functions are unified by strong governance, driving holistic development and sustainable progress aligned with both national and global aspirations.

The framework is aligned and guided by the National Education Philosophy and the "MADANI" principles (Sustainability, Prosperity, Innovation, Respect, Trust, and Compassion) which reinforces its dedication to inclusion and diversity.<sup>1</sup>

The core values of the framework, along with the aspirations for talents, HLIs and higher education ecosystem, are explained in greater detail.

<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister's Department (2024). *Malaysia Madani*. <https://malaysiamadani.gov.my>

# Core values

The MHEB will, therefore, build on the four core values: **Humanity-centric**, **Holistic well-being**, **Shared prosperity** and **Sustainability**.

Values	Definition
<b>Humanity-centric</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seamlessly integrating collaborative (smart) and digital (sharp) skills by converging diverse disciplines in addressing complex and interconnected global challenges</li> <li>• They prioritise the well-being of people and planet with the use of science, technology and innovation alongside nature-based approaches to balance economic growth and planetary health</li> <li>• By fostering personal growth, sustainability, and equity, individuals are empowered to thrive in a changing world, align with humanity's well-being through empathy and ethics, address systemic barriers to equity, and balance global competencies with local identity for a resilient and sustainable future.</li> </ul>
<b>Holistic well-being</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The National Education Policy emphasises the holistic development of intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, and physically balanced individuals.</li> <li>• Intellectually, it cultivates curiosity, critical thinking, creativity, knowledge and value creation for innovation and problem-solving.</li> <li>• Spiritually, it nurtures moral and ethical values like integrity, compassion, and responsibility.</li> <li>• Emotionally, it builds resilience, empathy, and self-awareness for effective communication and harmonious relationships.</li> <li>• Physically, it promotes health, well-being, and an active lifestyle to support productivity and long-term resilience.</li> <li>• By integrating these dimensions, this core value aims to produce well-rounded, ethical, and capable individuals with <i>adab</i> who contribute meaningfully to personal growth, societal progress, and national development.</li> </ul>



### Shared prosperity

- Prosperity is a core value for talent that fosters holistic well-being through inclusive economic growth, social harmony, and personal fulfilment.
- In alignment with the MADANI concept, it prioritises shared success, equitable resource distribution, and innovation that addresses societal challenges.
- Talents are guided by moral and ethical leadership and contribute to community-centered growth and purpose-driven development. By promoting collaboration and empathy, they ensure their efforts uplift individuals, strengthen communities, and drive sustainable national progress, embodying MADANI's vision of transformative and inclusive prosperity.

### Sustainability

- In alignment with the MADANI concept, sustainability emphasises moral and ethical stewardship, inclusivity, and environmental awareness, guiding talents to adopt eco-friendly practices, promote social equity, and foster green innovation.
- Implementing equitable solutions that protect ecosystems while ensuring shared prosperity.
- Reflects a commitment to balancing development with the preservation of resources, ensuring well-being for current and future generations.
- Engage with stakeholders to drive impactful, long-lasting initiatives, creating a harmonious balance between progress and environmental and societal preservation.

# Aspirations

Talent

Higher learning  
institutions

Higher education  
ecosystem



# Talent Aspirations

Talent aspirations encompass four key dimensions aimed at fostering a progressive, dynamic, and inclusive future workforce. These dimensions are **Adaptive, Agile and Resilient**, **Nation Builders**, **Values Internalised** and **Future-Ready**. Talent refers to the learners developed by the system, as well as the academic and administrative staff within the system.

## Adaptive, agile and resilient

Talents equipped to thrive in dynamic and uncertain post-normal time environments, demonstrating resilience, agility, and an entrepreneurial mindset. They embrace continuous learning, adapt swiftly to shifting landscapes, and address complex challenges with innovative and impactful solutions. Guided by a future-focused and humanity-centric approach, they proactively align with evolving stakeholder needs, contributing meaningfully across diverse professions and societal contexts.

## Nation builders

Talents with a strong sense of national identity and pride, promoting unity by valuing Malaysia's heritage, values, and diversity. They actively support the nation's progress and harmony, preserving cultural traditions while working towards sustainable development and a stronger, more united future.

## Values internalised

Talents who have fully assimilated the core values into their character, guiding their contributions as ethical, responsible, and compassionate nation-builders. This reflects a transformation from superficial knowledge of values to their intrinsic application in real-world scenarios.

## Future-ready

Talents prepared to thrive as both job seekers and creators in an ever-evolving world. Equipped with digital fluency, critical thinking, and adaptability, they leverage collaboration, an entrepreneurial mindset, and expertise in emerging technologies, AI, and STEAM skills to excel. Resilient and grounded in mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being, they embrace lifelong learning to navigate complex and dynamic environments. By addressing societal challenges with ethical and purposeful actions, they drive meaningful innovation and contribute to sustainable progress, shaping a better future for all.

## Exhibit B-3: Talent aspirations

### 2024

To deliver quality higher education tailored to lifelong and life-wide learners, equipping them with the skills and adaptability needed to thrive in post-normal times.

### 2035 Aspiration

To nurture humanity-centric, purpose-driven nation builders who will shape a harmonious, prosperous, advanced, and sustainable future. To realise this vision, a new framework will be developed to effectively assess talent outcomes.

# Higher Learning Institution Aspirations

As enablers, HLIs will excel in the following areas:

- **Dynamic teaching and learning:** Adapting to evolving needs with innovative approaches that inspire critical thinking and lifelong learning.
- **Impactful research and innovation:** Driving advancements that address societal and global challenges while contributing to knowledge and economic growth.
- **Meaningful community engagement:** Building strong connections with communities to address societal needs, promote well-being, and foster inclusive development.
- **Strategic industry engagement:** Establishing partnerships with industries to drive economic development, enhance employability, and support innovation through collaborative initiatives.
- **Administrative and academic services:** Delivering additional support and contributions beyond teaching and research, encompassing administrative work by academics and administrators that enhances the overall institutional ecosystem.



# Higher Education Ecosystem Aspirations

The MHEB 2026–2035 sets out six aspirational characteristics for Malaysia’s higher education ecosystem:

- Accessibility
- Quality
- Diversity, equity and inclusion
- Unity
- Adaptability, agility and resilience
- Sustainability

## Accessibility

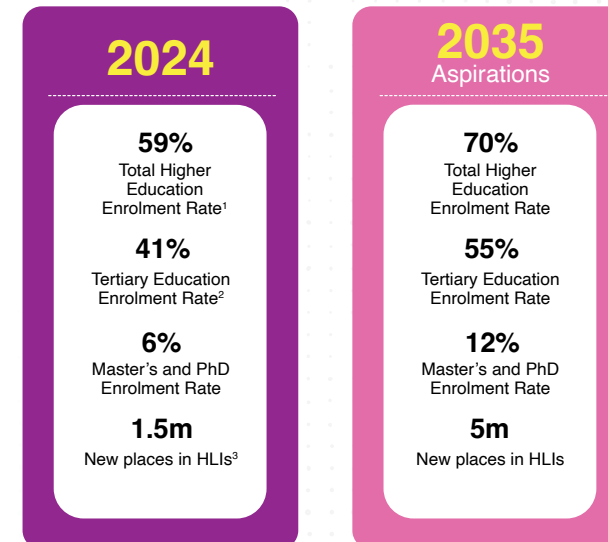
By 2035, the Ministry aims to expand higher education access, focusing on personalised, flexible learning for diverse learners, including adults and non-traditional students. This unbundled approach supports lifelong learning, enabling skills development at an individualised pace and preparing learners to adapt and excel in an ever-changing global landscape.

This diagram (Exhibit B-4) illustrates both the current state and the 2035 aspirations for access within Malaysia’s higher education ecosystem. At present, the enrolment rate in higher education stands at 59%, which includes 41% in tertiary education, 6% in Master’s and PhD programmes, and 1.5 million new places offered by higher learning institutions (HLIs). By 2035, the goal is to increase the higher education enrolment rate to 70%, raise tertiary education enrolment to 55%, double enrolment in Master’s and PhD programmes to 12%, and expand HLI capacity to 5 million places, including participation in LLL programmes. These targets reflect Malaysia’s commitment to widening access and participation across age groups and skill levels.

### Key performance indicators

- Percentage of tertiary education enrolment.
- Percentage of higher education enrolment.
- Percentage of Master’s and PhD enrolment.
- Number of new places in HLI system.
- Enrolment or participation in lifelong learning and flexible education programmes.

Exhibit B-4: Accessibility



Source: MOHE (As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023)

<sup>1</sup> Higher Education comprises ISCED 3+(Post-Secondary, Non-Tertiary Education such as Pre-U, Matriculation, STPM, A-Level, Certificate Year 1, and Diploma Year 1), ISCED 5, 6,7 and 8.

<sup>2</sup> Tertiary Education comprises of ISCED 5 (Year 2 Certificate, Year 2 & 3 Diploma, Advance Diploma), ISCED 6,7 and 8.

<sup>3</sup> New places refer to the number of additional participations in higher learning institutions, including flexible education and lifelong learning.

### Quality

The Ministry focuses on producing values-driven, future-ready graduates, cultivating high-performing educators, positioning institutions globally while excelling locally, and creating an agile, ethical higher education system. Emphasising innovation, accountability, and continuous growth, this vision aims to establish Malaysia as a global education hub, supporting national development and preparing the nation for global challenges in a dynamic, knowledge-based economy.

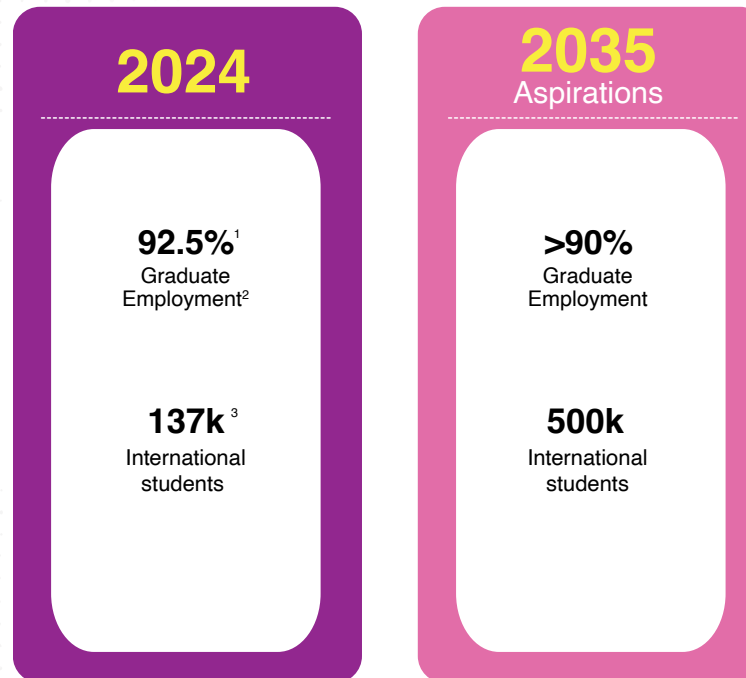
This diagram (Exhibit B-5) illustrates the current state and the 2035 aspirations for the quality of Malaysia's higher education ecosystem. The MEB 2015-2025 (HE) measured graduate employability by including those furthering studies and enhancing skills. To better assess labour market participation, MHEB 2026-2035 will exclude these categories and focus on graduate employment. Under this new definition, the current graduate employment rate stands at 92.5%, with the aspiration to maintain it consistently above 90%.

At present, 137,000 international students enrolled in Malaysian institutions. By 2035, the goal is to increase the number of international students to 500,000. Although the 2035 target for international students far exceeds the current achievement, MOHE will implement more granular tracking of the number of international students, including those in mobility programmes, using the full-time equivalency (FTE) concept. This approach is essential for monitoring the growth of international students participating in Malaysia's higher education through both the regular pathway and academic programme unbundling. These objectives demonstrate Malaysia's commitment to enhancing both the employment of its graduates and its position as a global hub for international education.

#### Key performance indicators

- Graduate employment rate.
- The number of international students in HLIs.

Exhibit B-5: Quality



Source: MOHE (as at 31st December 2024)

<sup>1</sup> Graduate Tracer Study System or *Sistem Kajian Pengesanan Graduan* (SKPG), MOHE

<sup>2</sup> With the change in operational definition, the data excludes graduates pursuing further studies

<sup>3</sup> MyMoheS and e-IPTS, MOHE

### Underemployment and workforce alignment in higher education

Underemployment remains a critical challenge in the evolving job market, particularly in higher education. As labour markets shift due to technological advancements, economic fluctuations, and policy changes, many graduates struggle to secure employment that matches their qualifications and skills.

Despite a labour force participation rate of approximately 70% and an unemployment rate of 3.5% in 2023, underemployment persists in Malaysia. High-skilled job opportunities have remained stagnant at around 25% of total job vacancies between 2015 and 2022.<sup>2</sup> Job vacancies declined from 235,000 in 2015 to 175,000 in 2020 before rising to 190,000 in 2022, with 25.3% classified as high-skilled, 55% as semi-skilled, and 19.7% as low-skilled.<sup>2</sup> While national development plans aim to increase high-skilled employment, the number of tertiary-educated individuals in the workforce grew from four million in 2015 to 5.2 million in 2022, yet high-skilled jobs increased only marginally from two million to 2.2 million.<sup>2</sup> This widening gap underscores the persistent mismatch between graduate qualifications and labour market demands.

Addressing underemployment requires a coordinated effort beyond placing responsibility solely on graduates or higher learning institutions. Structural shortages of high-skilled job opportunities must be addressed through targeted reforms focused on job

creation, industry-academia collaboration, and curriculum alignment with evolving market needs.<sup>3</sup> Key strategies include enhancing vocational training, promoting entrepreneurship, incentivising employers to invest in upskilling, and strengthening partnerships between industry and academia.

To drive a more structured approach, efforts will be made to establish a unifying platform that aligns policies, strategies, and initiatives across the education landscape. This platform will enhance decision-making processes and strengthen policy coordination among ministries that influence education in Malaysia. Through closer collaboration with relevant ministries and stakeholders, higher education policies can be more effectively aligned with current and future workforce needs. A multi-faceted approach will be adopted to equip graduates with relevant competencies while ensuring that labour market structures are responsive to their skills. Strengthening synergy between higher education, industry, and policymakers will contribute to a more dynamic and resilient job market, optimising talent utilisation and addressing underemployment.

<sup>2</sup> Khazanah Research Institute (2024). *Shifting Tides: Charting Career Progression of Malaysia's Skilled Talents*. Kuala Lumpur

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



### Diversity, equity and inclusion

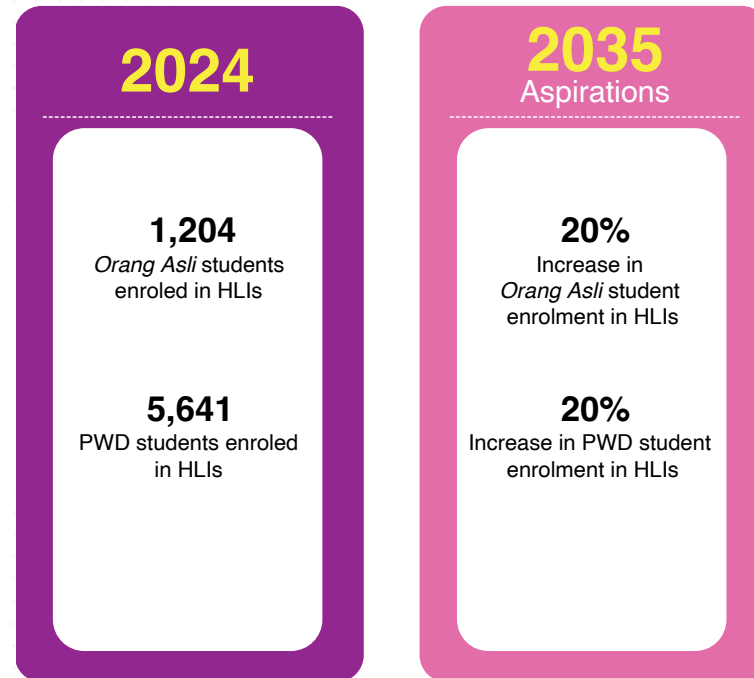
Malaysia higher education system values diversity in race, gender, and ability, promoting equity by improving access for disadvantaged students. It fosters inclusivity by integrating diverse perspectives into curricula and institutional culture. Through inclusive practices, open communication, and accessible resources, the Ministry cultivates a strong sense of community and belonging within the education system.

The diagram (Exhibit B-6) highlights the current state and aspirations for diversity, equity, and inclusion in Malaysia's higher education ecosystem, focusing on Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Currently, 1,204 *Orang Asli* students and 5,641 Persons with Disabilities (PWD) students are enrolled in HLIs. The aspiration for 2035 aims to enhance inclusivity by achieving a 20% increase in enrolment for both *Orang Asli* and PWD students in HLIs. This aspiration reflects Malaysia's commitment to creating more accessible spaces and infrastructure in line with UDL principles to support diverse, equitable and inclusive education system.

#### Key performance indicators

- Increased number of *Orang Asli* enrolment in HLIs.
- Increased number of PWD enrolment in HLIs.

Exhibit B-6: Diversity, equity and inclusion



Source: MOHE (as at 31st December 2024)

**Unity**

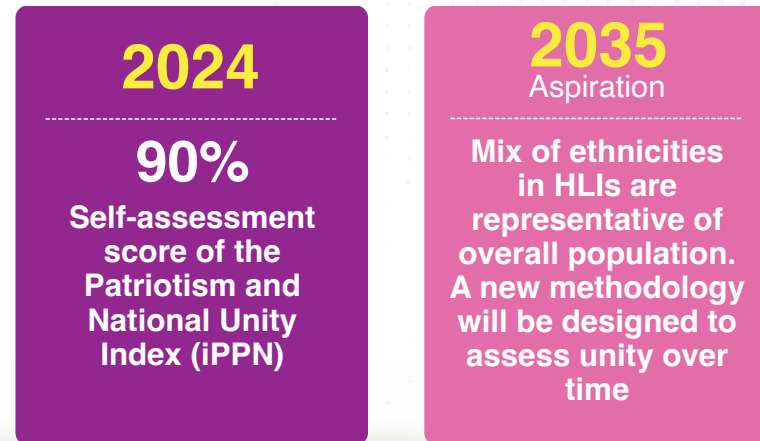
The Ministry strives to ensure higher education enrolment reflects Malaysia’s ethnic diversity, fostering unity through shared values and experiences. By embracing all backgrounds, the education system promotes understanding and appreciation of all cultures, aligning with Malaysia’s multi-ethnic heritage to create a harmonious and inclusive learning environment for all students.

This diagram (Exhibit B-7) highlights the role of unity as a key aspect of Malaysia’s higher education ecosystem. Currently, the self-assessment score for the iPPN stands at 90%. The aspiration for 2035 is to maintain this high level of patriotism and national unity among students and stakeholders in the education sector. This reflects a commitment to fostering a cohesive and harmonious society through higher education initiatives that emphasise unity and a shared national identity.

**Key performance indicator**

- Development or enhancement of an index that effectively measures the level of unity within Malaysia’s higher education ecosystem.

**Exhibit B-7: Unity**



Source: BHEP, JPT, MOHE (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2023)



### Adaptability, agility and resilience

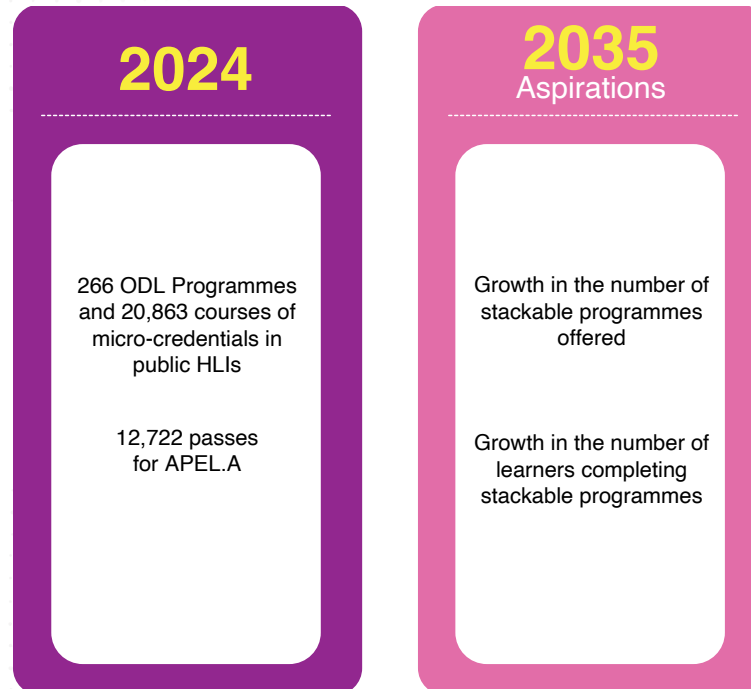
Adaptive, agile, and resilient higher education systems address evolving demands by embracing flexibility, innovation, and sustainability. Adaptive systems respond to new technologies and trends, agile systems enable rapid implementation of changes, and resilient systems ensure uninterrupted education during disruptions. Together, these qualities support lifelong learning and ensure institutional relevance and sustainability.

The diagram addresses adaptability, agility, and resilience within Malaysia's transformed higher education ecosystem. Currently, the system is structured around robust accreditation standards set by the MQA and emphasises empowering HLIs as anchors of the nation's lifelong learning ecosystem. By 2035, the aspiration is to develop a more flexible and unbundled education system, focusing on establishing an agile accreditation model for flexible education through MQA. This includes expanding the number of courses and programmes aligned with lifelong learning, particularly concentrating on the Quad-3 and Quad-4 learning ecosystem to better adapt to changing educational and societal needs.

#### Key performance indicators

- Growth in the number of stackable programmes offered.
- Growth in the number of learners completing stackable programmes.

#### Exhibit B-8: Adaptability, agility and resilience



Source: MOHE (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)

## Sustainability

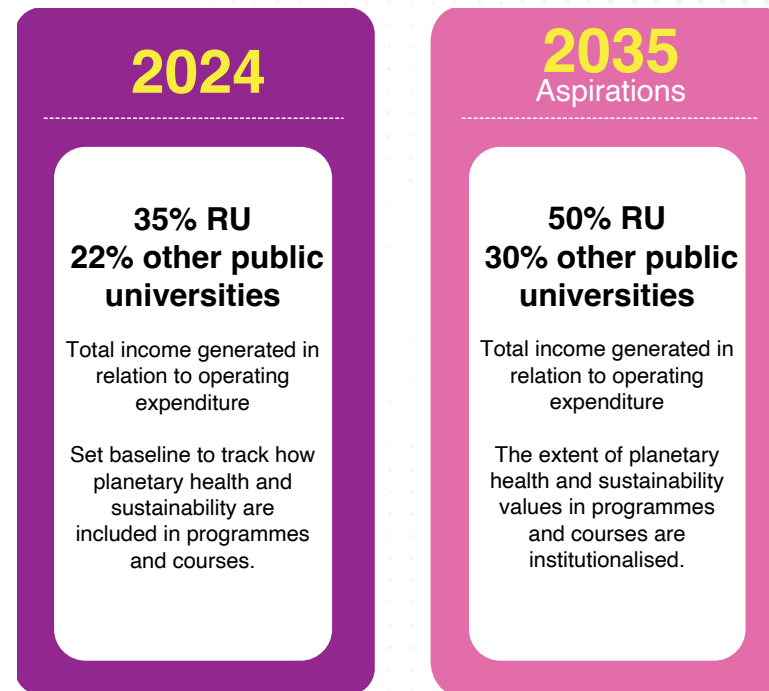
Sustainability in higher education ensures long-term educational, social, and environmental roles through responsible resource management, resilience, and equitable access. Visionary leaders drive initiatives like eco-friendly, green campuses, and renewable energy, prioritising people, planet, and prosperity to minimise environmental impact, promote well-being, and support future generations while advancing global sustainability goals.

The diagram highlights sustainability initiatives within Malaysia’s transformed higher education ecosystem. Currently, higher education institutions generate 35% (RU) and 22% (Non-RU) of their total income in relation to operating expenditure. However, there is no clear understanding or tracking of how sustainability and planetary health values are integrated into programmes, courses, and experiential learning. By 2035, the goal is to increase the income generation to 50% (RU) and 30% (Non-RU) of operating expenditure. Furthermore, sustainability initiatives will be integrated into university strategic plans, further embedding these priorities into the operational and academic frameworks of higher education.

### Key performance indicators

- Percentage of total income generated relative to operating expenditure.
- Extent to which sustainability and planetary health values are institutionalised within programmes and courses

### Exhibit B-9: Sustainability



Source: MOHE (as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024)



# What impact will this transformation journey have?

The transformation of the higher education system in the MHEB 2026-2035, will lead to a collective set of desirable benefits, rights, and corresponding responsibilities for each stakeholder group:

## Learners will

...benefit from unbundled education and flexible learning pathways, allowing them to customise their learning experiences to suit their individual needs and career aspirations while accessing diverse credentials from multiple institutions or providers.

...be humanity-centric, impact-driven, ready to innovate and contribute to society.

...receive equitable, high-quality education with global exposure.

...be balanced, possess future- and present-ready skills, including AI, digital analytics, and a combination of relevant sharp and smart skills.

...gain entrepreneurial and innovation skills and attain unipreneurship opportunities through Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation and Economy (RDICE)-informed learning to thrive in a globalised economy.

...acquire knowledge, skills and values aligned with sustainability and planet-friendly practices, enabling responsible use of national resources for sustainable development and able to support green-based industries.

**In return, learners will be asked to actively engage in their education, uphold integrity, and contribute to an inclusive environment. They must be agile, adaptive, resilient, future-ready, develop impact-driven mindsets, and align personal growth with societal and global needs.**



### The academic and administrative staff will

- ...thrive in a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment that fosters an intrapreneurial spirit that is purpose-driven with systems thinking.
- ...benefit from increased opportunities for professional growth and holistic talent performance indicators that promotes the discovery of purpose, job fulfilment and good health and well-being.
- ...align with the collective mission of the national higher education ecosystem while upholding academic freedom.
- ...deliver innovative teaching, impactful research, and foster collaboration with the quintuple helix to address societal challenges supported by Academia Research Fund (AReF) via handshake mechanism.
- ...gain international recognition and relevance for excellence in teaching and research innovation.
- ...possess future- and present-ready competencies, including AI, digital analytics, and a combination of relevant sharp and smart skills.
- ...be in a leading position to leverage industry partnerships and unipreneurship opportunities within the RDICE framework.
- ... be referred leaders in planetary health and sustainability education, research, outreach, and policy.

**In return, as drivers of the HLIs, the academic and administrative staff will need to equip themselves with the necessary competencies to deliver innovative teaching and services, impactful research, collaborative solutions and services for the quintuple helix.**

### HLI Leaders will

- ...enjoy greater autonomy to implement strategies that advance institutional excellence and sustainability.
- ...integrate intrapreneurial approaches and systems thinking to drive transformation.
- ...receive financial sustainability support through a strategic study on sustainable infrastructure financing and the implementation of endowment fund matching.
- ...enjoy transparent governance and improved alignment with national priorities through the appointment of competent Boards of Directors and the implementation of Board Effectiveness Assessment.
- ...benefit from strengthened legal and governance frameworks through the establishment of an Ombudsman, One Higher Education Act, TVET Act and the National Education Council or *Majlis Pendidikan Negara* (MPN) to ensure seamless continuity and cohesion between the Education and Higher Education sectors.
- ...operate within an inclusive, flexible and agile governance structure that includes relevant ministries, industry and societal leaders.
- ...gain increased autonomy and flexible RDICE funding, and receive recognition for leadership in planetary health and sustainability efforts, as well as for guiding stakeholders to adopt global best practices.

**In return, HLI leaders will be asked to foster excellence, diversity, equity, inclusivity, and innovation, empower staff and students, integrate systems thinking into governance, build sustainable partnerships, and align their institutions with higher education reform goals, including global competitiveness and social equity.**

## Industry will

...benefit from graduates who are values-internalised and humanity-centric, equipped with ethical awareness, empathy, and a strong sense of social responsibility, enabling them to contribute meaningfully as nation-builders.

...access future-ready talents with relevant skills and impact-driven mindsets, be balanced, possess future- and present-ready skills, including AI, digital analytics, and a combination of sharp and smart skills.

...receive Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates who excel in advanced technical skills in emerging technologies like AI, Internet of Things (IoT), and cybersecurity while also being polished in soft, sharp and smart skills.

...gain access and uplifted to do cutting-edge research with a skilled workforce trained in relevant STEAM competencies through RDICE.

...acquire talent to drive sustainable practices, meet environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals, and boost global competitiveness.

**In return, the industry will be asked to collaborate with HLIs by co-developing curricula, supporting research, offering internships, and aligning efforts with societal needs. They should provide opportunities for students to apply skills and contribute to a future-ready, impact-driven talent pipeline.**

## Community will

...benefit from knowledge transfer, innovative solutions, and empowerment opportunities provided by HLIs via community engagement and inclusive innovation.

...participate in initiatives and access resources to improve socio-economic outcomes.

...possess technical knowledge to contribute to a highly developed nation, with TVET education offered as a flexible and viable pathway alongside traditional programmes.

...directly benefit from RDICE's focus on impactful research addressing pressing socio-economic challenges.

...gain lifelong skills in planetary health and sustainability through a community engagement platform that fosters experiential learning, supports innovation, and enables researchers and academics to create societal impact and value.

...be provided with a flexible option of TVET education as main pathways of education to the traditional programmes

**In return, communities will be asked to collaborate with HLIs to address local and national challenges, provide programme feedback, engage in lifelong learning, and support socio-economic projects. They should also advocate for higher education's role in fostering societal progress and development.**

### Ministry will

...have a harmonised and collaborative ecosystem, enabling seamless coordination across higher education stakeholders, including an integrated governance structure for TVET.

...enjoy enhanced governance and capacity to formulate inclusive and globally competitive policies, ensuring stakeholder engagement, strengthening HLIs-industry collaboration, and positioning Malaysia as a leader in higher education.

...be able to streamline policies and governance, reducing administrative complexities, providing clearer educational priorities, and supporting coordinated efforts across HLIs.

...have strengthened oversight of the RDICE ecosystem, empowering it to achieve measurable impacts on socioeconomic development, planetary health and sustainability, supported by robust monitoring of key performance indicators and an integrated approach to TVET governance.

... be able to strengthen financial sustainability through the transformation of the PTPTN business model.

**In return, the Ministry of Higher Education will be asked to lead by example, streamline policies and governance incorporating diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and ensure equitable funding distribution. It should promote collaboration, adopt a whole-of-nation approach, engage stakeholders, monitor outcomes, drive internationalisation, and align reforms with national priorities. Officers must remain responsive and outcome-focused and act as role models for transformative changes.**

### Government will

...enjoy a talent pool that is humanity-centric, adaptive, and entrepreneurial, capable of enhancing global competitiveness and national resilience, contributing to a prosperous, harmonious, and advanced society.

...benefit from a future-ready, globally competitive workforce that attracts foreign direct investment, stimulates economic activity, and enhances Malaysia's position in the dynamic, technology-driven global economy.

...secure societal well-being, inclusive growth, regional development, and equitable opportunities by linking higher education outcomes to Malaysia's socio-economic objectives and aligning education policies with national economic priorities.

...benefit from governance promoting DEI and a whole-of-nation approach, fostering collaboration among stakeholders, reducing policy fragmentation, and ensuring cohesive development of the higher education sector and the nation.

...gain from enhanced global positioning through a strengthened Malaysian higher education system. As a globally trusted brand, it enhances the nation's reputation, attracts international collaborations, and drives inbound investments in research, talent, and economic development.

**In return, the government will be asked to strengthen policy frameworks, ensure sustainable funding, and support inclusive collaboration among stakeholders. It must commit to enhancing governance, prioritising equitable access to education, and driving initiatives that align higher education outcomes with national priorities. By championing innovation and inclusivity, the government must support ongoing advancements in the higher education sector.**



# The 10 Shifts

Exhibit B-10: 10 Shifts



nation builders for a harmonious, prosperous, advanced, and sustainable future. These shifts emphasise a comprehensive transformation of the higher education system to meet global and national demands while fostering sustainability and inclusivity.

The first shift prioritises humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive learners, preparing graduates to thrive in an ever-changing interconnected world. The second shift focuses on purpose-driven, high-performance talent, ensuring a workforce equipped with the skills and mindset needed for evolving industries. The third shift emphasises advanced TVET competency, strengthening technical expertise and industry readiness for complex and specialised sectors. Financial sustainability, addressed in the fourth shift, promotes the efficient use of resources and the long-term resilience of institutions. The fifth shift focuses on agile and resilient governance, enhancing institutional adaptability and strategic

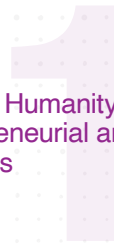
decision-making. The sixth shift emphasises responsible RDICE, driving ethical, impactful research and innovation.

The seventh shift highlights global prominence, strengthening Malaysia's international standing. The eighth shift prioritises flexible education and lifelong learning, ensuring accessibility and continuous skill development for diverse learners. The ninth shift addresses planetary health and sustainability, integrating environmental and social consciousness into education. Finally, the tenth shift ensures responsive and dynamic delivery, emphasising adaptability in teaching, learning, and institutional operations to meet evolving needs. Together, these shifts lay the foundation for a transformative higher education ecosystem for Malaysia.

# Overview of the 10 Shifts

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## Shift 1: Humanity-Centric, Entrepreneurial and Adaptive Learners



This Shift shapes humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive learners with a foundation in spirituality, complemented by soft, smart, and sharp skills. These learners are equipped to address global sustainability challenges, integrating social, environmental, economic, and spiritual values into their work, thereby contributing to a more equitable world focused on People, Planet, and Prosperity. This approach fosters national identity and pride, uniting learners in nation-building. Prepared with digital literacy, critical thinking, and an entrepreneurial mindset, they are ready for dynamic careers, with mental health support strengthening resilience. Spirituality further guides their personal growth, grounding them in compassion, integrity, and social responsibility.

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## Shift 2: Purpose-Driven High-Performance Talent



The goal is to build a dynamic, high-performance academic community comprising educators, researchers, leaders, practitioners, and support staff with a clear purpose and impact. The system emphasises attracting, retaining, and nurturing talent through meritocratic environments, continuous development, and institutional specialisation within multi-track career pathways. By integrating expertise from various sectors, it fosters a vibrant academic culture that inspires students and enhances institutional excellence. Leadership development, succession planning, mental well-being, ethics, equity, and job satisfaction are prioritised to ensure sustainable success. This approach empowers talent to align personal and professional growth with a clear purpose, advancing education and societal progress.

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### Shift 3: Advanced TVET Competency

To improve TVET talent quality, the system emphasises industry-driven programmes that equip learners with specialised skills, including AI literacy. By aligning TVET with the demands of key sectors such as technology, healthcare, and services, learners are prepared for a global, technology-focused economy. Competency-based education with a focus on hands-on skills enhances employability and drives national economic growth. Sustainable funding, secured through stakeholder partnerships, is essential for broadening access, while simplified pathways will make navigation easier for students and employers. Enhancing the appeal of TVET careers is also crucial to attracting a diverse, capable student body, ensuring Malaysia produces adaptable, globally competitive talent ready to meet evolving industry needs.



### Shift 4: Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability ensures consistent, quality education by optimising resources and reducing reliance on government funding. This resilient approach addresses post-normal economic conditions and rising global education costs. HLIs should focus on income generation through strategic resource allocation, performance-based funding, and innovative business models. Key areas include strengthening financial governance, embracing digital transformation, and developing assets like infrastructure and renewable energy. Effective leadership with entrepreneurial and financial expertise is critical to drive this transformation. Additionally, improving the National Higher Education Fund Corporation or Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (PTPTN)'s loan sustainability through innovative repayment options and better financial literacy supports equitable access to higher education, ensuring long-term viability for both students and institutions.



### Shift 5: Agile and Resilient Governance

Strengthening the governance of HLLs is crucial in addressing challenges arising from political changes and the COVID-19 pandemic. These events exposed vulnerabilities in current governance structures, highlighting the need for resilience, adaptability, and alignment with societal needs. Frequent leadership changes within the Ministry disrupted continuity and clarity, hindering the implementation of strategic plans. However, these changes also created opportunities for innovation, fresh perspectives, and the potential to realign priorities. A robust and flexible governance framework is essential to harness these opportunities, ensuring HLLs maintain stability and effectively adapt to evolving demands. Having separate acts for public and private HLLs creates governance and equity disparities, as public institutions face stricter government control, while private ones prioritise autonomy and revenue. This duality leads to variation in student rights, inconsistent practices, and divergent priorities. A unified legal framework could address these gaps, promoting fairness, collaboration, and alignment with Malaysia's higher education goals.



### Shift 6: Responsible Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation and Economy (RDICE)

Responsible RDICE requires a mission-driven approach to address complex societal and planetary challenges, prioritising innovation ecosystems that focus on knowledge creation, human capital, and income generation, while upholding ethical and sustainable practices. RDICE should emphasise real-world impact over mere outputs, driving socioeconomic growth through diverse technologies, products, and processes. Strengthening local industry's adoption of indigenous technologies and increasing research and development investment are key to reducing reliance on foreign innovations. Ethical guidelines and open science platforms are essential to navigate challenges like generative AI. Enhanced innovation capabilities and technology readiness will boost global competitiveness and attract foreign investment, while a Quintuple Helix model accelerates RDICE, supporting Malaysia's path to a high-income economy.



### Shift 7: Global Prominence

The shift to global prominence emphasises trust, quality, and reputation beyond visibility and rankings. This approach prioritises sustainable practices, ethical standards, and stakeholder confidence for lasting success in the global education market. By enhancing education quality, research output, and industry collaboration, institutions attract top talent and drive innovation for national progress. A trusted brand boosts international student flows, generates economic benefits, and strengthens global partnerships, enriching research and technological advancements. As global talent mobility increases, this trusted brand positions institutions to retain top talent and equip students for success in a competitive global landscape.

## Shift 8: Flexible Education and Lifelong Learning

Flexible learning and lifelong education are essential for meeting diverse learner needs, offering adaptable entry and exit points for personalised paths. This inclusive approach makes education accessible to all, including non-traditional learners, through options like micro-credentials, nano-degrees, and industry certifications. Integrating formal, non-formal, and informal learning aligns education with industry, ensuring workforce relevance. Flexible education fosters innovation through collaboration, positioning HLIs as community learning hubs. By emphasising credentialing systems like the Academic Credit Bank and recognising informal learning, it supports continuous, life-wide education. Preparing for emerging models like “Edtechnology X” promotes resilience, placing lifelong learning at the core of a dynamic, future-ready system.

## Shift 9: Planetary Health and Sustainability

Planetary Health represents a transformative shift, emphasising the interdependence of human well-being and planetary health. It provides a framework for tackling complex environmental, social, and economic challenges aligned with the SDGs. Integrating Planetary Health principles fosters interdisciplinary learning, equipping future generations to address global issues holistically. This shift is crucial as Malaysia faces economic challenges, climate change, and technological disruptions. Planetary Health promotes sustainability through environmental stewardship, sustainable practices, and ethical guidelines. Ultimately, it positions Malaysia to meet global standards, address pressing environmental concerns, and ensure long-term societal and planetary well-being.

## Shift 10: Responsive and Dynamic Delivery

Responsive and dynamic delivery is essential for transforming the education system to meet global and local challenges. Adopting flexible, data-driven methods enables institutions to adapt quickly, ensuring continuous improvement and relevance. Harmonising standards across public and private institutions reduces fragmentation, creating a unified approach. Collaborative engagement with stakeholders including students, academia, industry, and government incorporates diverse perspectives to align policies with societal needs. Streamlined performance management and quality assurance enhance institutional effectiveness, while centralised services boost operational efficiency. Ultimately, responsive and dynamic delivery fosters agility, collaboration, and innovation, ensuring that the education system evolves in alignment with the blueprint’s goals for long-term success.

# Conclusion

The MHEB 2026-2035 presents an ambitious vision for transforming the nation's higher education system to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global landscape. By focusing on core areas such as access, equity, sustainability, and global competitiveness, the blueprint outlines a pathway toward creating a more inclusive and flexible educational ecosystem. Through initiatives such as lifelong learning, unbundled education pathways, and the adoption of technologies beyond Industry 4.0 including emerging technologies, Malaysia aims to prepare its learners to thrive in a dynamic and knowledge driven economy. The integration of values-internalised education, innovation, and mental health support further exemplifies the holistic and forward-thinking approach of the MHEB.

While progress has been made in enhancing enrollment rates, graduate employability, and international recognition of Malaysian HLIs, the blueprint acknowledges critical challenges such as gaps in digital accessibility, sustainability concerns, and the necessity for greater alignment with industry demands. The proposed ten strategic shifts aim to tackle these challenges by promoting adaptability, resilience, and collaboration among stakeholders. The vision of MHEB 2026-2035 is to nurture globally competitive, values-internalised learners who contribute to societal progress, ensuring Malaysia's position as a leader in higher education and a sustainable global future. Through collective efforts, the blueprint envisions a higher education system that not only meets immediate needs but also anticipates the challenges and opportunities of the decade to come.





**Shift**



# Humanity-Centric, Entrepreneurial and Adaptive Learners

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## Introduction

Malaysia's vision for higher education continues to evolve, building on the foundations of the earlier blueprint that emphasised producing holistic, entrepreneurial, and balanced individuals, who embody a balance of knowledge (*ilmu*) and character (*akhlak*), integrating moral and intellectual foundations to meet national priorities.

While the approach was critical in shaping graduates with strong ethics and intellectual capability, the complex demands of an interconnected and post-normal world require an expanded focus. Shift 1: Humanity-Centric, Entrepreneurial, and Adaptive Learners evolves this vision by prioritising humanity-centric approach that extends beyond academic achievement to emphasise ethics, social responsibility, global outlook and planetary stewardship.

The blueprint advances this vision through values-internalised Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education, transdisciplinary approaches, and entrepreneurial mindsets that foster critical thinking, creativity, and innovation. It also integrates ethical leadership, mental well-being, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles to prepare learners for tackling global challenges and uncertainties in post-normal times.

Through these strategies, the Ministry seeks to shape a generation ready to adapt and lead with integrity and purpose, contribute to nation-building, and promote sustainability in an evolving global landscape.

## Why it matters

Preparing learners to thrive in dynamic and interconnected environments is essential for Malaysia's higher education system. Through fostering ethical leadership, innovation, social responsibility, and inclusivity, learners are empowered with the resilience and adaptability required to address global challenges, drive national development, and contribute meaningfully to a sustainable future. Global risks such as extreme weather, biodiversity loss, challenges posed by artificial intelligence (AI), and cyber insecurity<sup>1</sup> highlight the need for proactive measures. Higher learning institutions (HLIs) must modernise infrastructure, establish strategic partnerships, and integrate resilience-focused approaches into curricula. These steps will equip learners with the skills and mindset necessary to navigate complex challenges and support sustainable development at both national and global levels.

### Nurturing humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive learners

To be a successful individual, one must be a good human being first. In an unpredictable world, nurturing learners who embody humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive qualities is essential. Unlike humanity-centric approaches that focus mainly on individual capacities, humanity-centric learning broadens its scope to include collective and planetary well-being. This approach prioritises people by nurturing empathy, compassion and ethical responsibility, promoting global perspectives and planetary stewardship. It also integrates holistic intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical development to cultivate well-rounded individuals who uphold good character (*adab*)

“*Adab is the right action that springs from self-discipline founded upon knowledge whose source is wisdom.*”

Prof. Diraja Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al Attas

and contribute meaningfully to personal growth, societal progress, and national development. Equally important are entrepreneurial qualities that foster creativity, innovation, and the capacity to drive economic and social progress, while adaptive qualities build resilience and flexibility to seize opportunities, overcome challenges, and thrive in transformative settings. Instilling soft, sharp, and smart skills empowers learners to communicate effectively, think critically, innovate creatively, and make informed decisions in complex environments.

<sup>1</sup> World Economic Forum. (2024). *The global risks report 2024*. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2024/>

### Box 1-1: The pillars of humanity-centric education<sup>2</sup>

#### Ethics and values

- Fostering integrity, empathy, and accountability while prioritising societal and planetary well-being over individual needs. Graduates embody values-driven impact, balancing personal growth with collective benefit.

#### Inclusivity and equity

- Providing inclusive education for all, especially marginalised groups such as Persons with Disabilities (PWD), Orang Asli, and low-income communities, by embedding DEI principles and fostering respect for diversity and multiculturalism.

#### Experiential learning (learning through action)

- Promoting real-world engagement through service learning, interdisciplinary integration, and collaborative problem-solving to address ethical and societal challenges with meaningful impact.

#### Spiritual, emotional and intellectual balance

- Building resilience, intellectual growth, and emotional well-being while cultivating empathy and aligning personal values with societal needs.

#### Intercultural competence and global perspectives

- Encouraging global citizenship through international collaborations and cultural exchange, fostering unity, mutual respect, and a global outlook.

#### Mental health and well-being

- Integrating support systems such as counselling and resilience programmes to ensure positive learning outcomes and holistic well-being for students and educators.

#### Planetary and social stewardship

- Equipping graduates to tackle global challenges like climate change, inequality, and poverty with sustainability-driven, STI-enabled solutions.

#### Responsible research and technology use

- Promoting ethical research and technology to deliver nature-based, STI-enabled, and planet-friendly solutions that balance growth, equity, and planetary health while upholding privacy, diversity, and ethics.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from:

Adnan, M. F., Hamzah, R., & Udin, A. (2010). *Implikasi Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan dalam pendidikan teknik dan vokasional di Malaysia*. In *Seminar EduPress* (pp. 1–16).

Ministry of Higher Education. (2024). *A new horizon for science, technology, and innovation: A strategy to enhance higher education in Malaysia*. Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM), Ministry of Higher Education.

Norman, D. A. (2023). *Design for a better world: Meaningful, sustainable, humanity-centered*. The MIT Press. <https://lccn.loc.gov/2022028462>

### Enhancing curricula for future-ready learners

The current curriculum will evolve to better prepare learners for societal and workforce demands. Emphasising ethical and values-internalised education is critical to navigating societal complexities with integrity. Expanding entrepreneurial and experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, project-based modules, and student-led ventures, exposes learners to real-world challenges. Flexible program structures, including modular courses and micro-credentials, promote lifelong learning and career adaptability. Incorporating global competencies and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education further enhances critical thinking, creativity, and resilience, ensuring learners apply interdisciplinary knowledge and collaborate globally to address diverse challenges.

### Learning ecosystem in support of diversity, equity and inclusion

A supportive learning ecosystem is vital for fostering DEI. HLIs must address cultural and language barriers to strengthen cohesion between local and international learners, fostering unity and mutual respect. Enhancing mental health support systems, such as counselling, peer networks, and stress management resources, builds emotional resilience. Addressing infrastructure gaps, including accessible spaces and assistive technologies for PWD, is essential to ensure equitable participation. Integrating DEI principles into teaching strategies, assessments, and extracurricular activities helps learners thrive in multicultural environments and promotes a shared sense of identity.

“To put the world in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must first cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.”

Confucius

### Fostering impactful partnerships between HLIs, industries and governments

Collaboration among HLIs, industries, and governments is essential to create ecosystems that drive innovation and economic growth. Partnerships help diversify funding, modernise infrastructure, and align academic programmes with industry demands. These collaborations can support the development of inclusive and innovative learning spaces while preparing learners for workforce needs. Strategic partnerships also address global challenges, such as climate change and AI, by embedding resilience into curricula and fostering research and development. Strengthened partnerships empower HLIs to cultivate graduates with leadership, decision-making, and resource management skills, ensuring their meaningful contributions to nation-building and sustainable development.

#### BOX 1-2: Experiential learning in action

Experiential learning bridges the gap between theory and practice, equipping learners with real-world skills and fostering holistic development. Engaging directly with diverse environments equips learners to adapt, collaborate across cultures, develop empathy and respect, and innovate effectively in real-world scenarios.

- **Community engagement:** Learners tackle societal challenges such as education, health, and sustainability through service-learning and community-based research. They engage communities to identify needs, co-develop solutions and seek feedback, fostering tangible impact, civic responsibility, and mutual trust.
- **Innovation and entrepreneurship:** Platforms such as innovation hubs, entrepreneurship boot camps, and hackathons foster creativity and problem-solving, empower students to address real-world issues through creativity and innovation.
- **Industry partnerships:** Internships, capstone projects, and flexible course selections connect students with industries, allowing them to personalise their educational pathways and align with technological advancements.
- **Adaptive learning platforms:** Customisable industry-led certification programmes and non-traditional platforms empower learners to organise their learning based on demand and personal preference, fostering autonomy and aligning with regulatory-recognised standards.
- **Radical self-organised learning:** Emphasises self-determined learning for personal satisfaction, students engage in curriculum-unbound experiences. Recognitions are provided by professional bodies, industries, or communities, enabling lifelong learning and adaptability.
- **Global and digital opportunities:** Cross-border exchanges, dual-degree programmes, and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) projects build global competencies, complemented by virtual internships and digital platforms to expand access and inclusivity.
- **Skill development and inclusion:** Certifications in market-relevant skills and tailored programmes for all learners including marginalised groups, promote workforce readiness and inclusive growth.

## ● Where we are

Malaysia's higher education system has experienced significant advancements, reflecting the government's commitment to aligning educational strategies with global demands and national priorities. Guided by the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education) or MEB 2015-2015 (HE), the sector has prioritised enhancing curriculum design, fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, and developing holistic assessments to ensure graduates are equipped for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Efforts to coordinate student development initiatives and recognise instructional excellence have further strengthened the foundation of HLIs. While these initiatives have contributed to preparing learners for a dynamic, competitive world, continuous innovation is essential to address emerging challenges and sustain progress in a dynamic global landscape.

### **Achievements in enhancing curriculum**

Under this strategy, Work-Based Learning and 2u2i have expanded significantly, with 130 programmes implemented by 2024. The 2u2i programme is an innovative education model that bridges the gap between academic learning and real-world application. It combines two years of on-campus theoretical learning with two years of industry immersion or internship-based learning, enabling students to apply academic knowledge to practical challenges in their chosen fields. This programme has been strategically developed to enhance employability, industry readiness, and lifelong learning, while fostering robust university-industry partnerships.

Additionally, initiatives such as the Experiential Learning and Competency-Based Education Landscape (EXCEL) framework, Service Learning Malaysia, University for Society (SULAM), and Entrepreneurship Integrated Education (EIE) have elevated hands-on learning, ensuring learners are prepared with the competencies needed for the modern workforce. These initiatives reflect the commitment to align educational outcomes with industry demands, fostering learners' entrepreneurial skills and societal engagement.

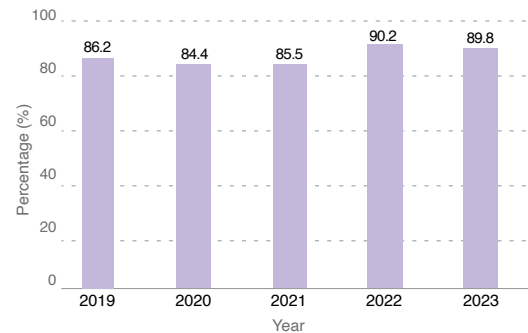
### **Integrated assessment of holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced graduates**

Despite notable accomplishments, challenges remain in fully harnessing the potential of key initiatives. For example, the Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (iCGPA) system, designed to evaluate holistic student development, was piloted at five public universities, UMT, UMK, UMP, UKM and UiTM. However, its adoption declined following the decision to discontinue mandatory implementation in 2018. Nonetheless, four of the pilot universities continue to use the iCGPA system, indicating a need for greater alignment and support to streamline and integrate holistic assessment frameworks across all institutions effectively.

### Graduate employability and entrepreneurship

The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) defines graduate employability as the percentage of graduates in four categories: employed, upskilling and reskilling, awaiting placement, and pursuing further studies. In 2023, graduate employability surpassed the 80% target set by the MEB 2015-2025 (HE), exceeding 90% (Exhibit 1-1).<sup>3</sup> However, the significant inclusion of those pursuing further studies, primarily Diploma holders progressing to higher academic levels, may skew the indicator of job market absorption. Hence, MOHE is refining its operational definition of graduate employability to align with the Department of Statistics Malaysia, ensuring a more accurate reflection of graduates' ability to secure employment.

**Exhibit 1-1: Graduate employability, 2019-2023**



Graduate entrepreneurship, recorded under self-employment, has fluctuated in recent years. After peaking at 15.2% in 2020, it declined to 11.0% by 2023,<sup>4</sup> reflecting challenges faced by entrepreneurs in a post-pandemic economy. Strengthening entrepreneurship as a viable pathway requires targeted support

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2024) *Pelaporan SKPG 2024*

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM). (2024). *Graduates statistics 2023*

<sup>6</sup> World Bank. (2024). *Farming the future: Harvesting Malaysia's agricultural resilience through digital technologies*. *Malaysia Economic Monitor*, October 2024

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

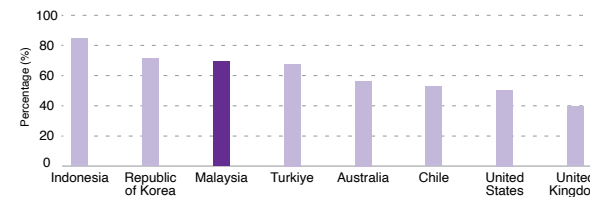
systems, incentives, and initiatives such as CEO@Faculty Programme to equip learners with practical business insights. These efforts are vital to diversifying graduate pathways, addressing barriers to direct employment, and fostering closer collaboration between HLIs and industries to enhance graduates' readiness for entrepreneurial ventures and continuous innovations.

### Addressing graduate skills-related underemployment

Despite improvements in graduate employability, skills-related underemployment (SRU) has emerged as a critical challenge. SRU, defined as those with tertiary education working in semi-skilled or low-skilled jobs,<sup>5</sup> has risen both in Malaysia and globally. Malaysia experienced an increase in SRU from 27.2% in 2010 to 37.3% in 2022, equivalent to more than two million workers.<sup>6</sup> The underemployment situation is not unique to Malaysia, as it is also observed in other countries, including high-income countries such as the Republic of Korea, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (Exhibit 1-2).<sup>7</sup>

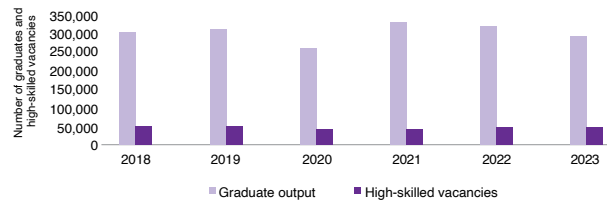
The primary driver of SRU is the insufficient creation of high-skilled jobs, evident in the gap between graduate output and available vacancies (Exhibit 1-3).<sup>8</sup> Addressing SRU within MOHE requires efforts focused on auditing internships to ensure alignment with market needs, offering flexible upskilling options for graduates, and strengthening education-industry partnerships to facilitate smoother workforce transitions. However, resolving underemployment challenges necessitates inter-ministerial collaboration to drive high-skilled job creation across sectors.

**Exhibit 1-2: Percentage of skills-related underemployment across various countries, including Malaysia**



Source: DOSM (2024) and World Bank staff calculations based on ILOSTAT for latest available year  
 Note: The skill-related underemployment rate for other countries is measured as the share of those with post-secondary education and above in low and medium skill occupations (skill level 1 and level 2)

**Exhibit 1-3: Percentage of skills-related underemployment among degree holders, 2010-2022**



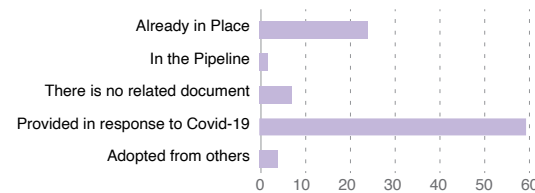
Source: DOSM and MOHE (various years)  
 Note: Graduate output refers to the total number of students who had completed pre-university or foundation, professional, certificate, diploma, advanced diploma, Bachelor's degree, postgraduate diploma, Master's degree, and Doctor of Philosophy programs. High-skilled vacancies for each year are calculated by taking the average of quarterly data on vacancies.

### Supporting student success

Beyond curriculum development, significant strides have been made to strengthen the learning support ecosystem in Malaysia. The Ministry has introduced frameworks that promote student development, entrepreneurship, and instructional excellence. Among these initiatives is the Job-Creator Framework, which fosters an entrepreneurial mindset among learners, complemented by recognition systems designed to reward excellence in education and entrepreneurship.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a critical moment, reshaping Malaysia's higher education landscape. Institutions demonstrated remarkable adaptability to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning during unprecedented disruptions. Key transformations included a rapid transition to online learning, upgrades to learning support systems, and innovative approaches to extracurricular activities such as sports, student mobility, and internships. A 2021 survey conducted by MOHE highlighted this agility.

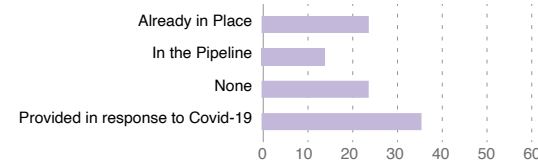
**Exhibit 1-4a: Percentage of HLLs with online learning policies or guidelines during the COVID-19 pandemic**



<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2021). *A report on digitalization of teaching and learning in higher education: A reality check*.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

**Exhibit 1-4b: Percentage of HLLs allocating budgets for online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic**



It revealed that 64.5% of HLLs developed policies or guidelines to support online learning during the pandemic (Exhibit 1-4a).<sup>9</sup> This reflects a proactive response to the challenges posed by remote education.

Moreover, the pandemic brought financial challenges associated with online learning to the forefront. Exhibit 1-4b<sup>10</sup> underscores this shift: prior to the pandemic, only 24.3% of institutions had allocated budgets specifically for online education. However, the crisis prompted a significant change, with 36.6% of HLLs establishing dedicated budgets to support the transition. This reallocation of resources signals an increased recognition of the vital role financial investment plays in sustaining high-quality online education. These efforts collectively highlight Malaysia's commitment to ensuring a resilient and adaptive higher education system that prioritises student success in a dynamic and challenging environment.

Despite advancements in digital education, significant challenges remain in ensuring equitable access and infrastructure. Limited access to essential resources such as internet connectivity, learning management systems, and high-tech software has hindered the seamless adaptation to online learning.<sup>11</sup> Ensuring equal access to these resources continues to be a pressing issue. Learners in remote areas face persistent challenges, including unreliable internet connectivity, high costs, and inadequate learning management systems, all of which disrupt their ability to fully engage with online education.

Efforts to address these challenges must prioritise improving internet connectivity, providing affordable digital tools, and fostering equitable access for all learners.<sup>12</sup> These initiatives will help reduce financial pressures, bridge the digital divide, and empower learners to fully participate in a modern, connected educational ecosystem. By addressing these critical issues, HLLs, in collaboration with MOHE, can build a resilient and inclusive foundation for the future of education.

<sup>11</sup> Maqableh, M., & Alia, M. (2021). *Evaluation online learning of undergraduate students under lockdown amidst COVID-19 Pandemic: The online learning experience and student's satisfaction*. Children and Youth Services Review, 128, 106160

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). (2021). *A report on digitalization of teaching and learning in higher education: A reality check*

## Objectives

The Ministry aspires to nurture humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive learners equipped with balanced knowledge, skills, and strong ethical values. These learners will be empowered to contribute to nation-building, drive innovation, and address complex global challenges in post-normal times. This educational framework emphasises inclusivity and sustainability, ensuring alignment with the National Education Philosophy or *Falsafah Pendidikan Negara* (FPK) and preparing graduates to build a more equitable and resilient future.

## Principles

The strategies and initiatives for humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive learners are guided by the following principles:

- Cultivating balanced and future-ready graduates who integrate knowledge, skills, values, and social responsibility to thrive in dynamic environments and contribute to nation-building and societal progress;
- Ensuring seamless alignment of curriculum, delivery, and assessment while emphasising experiential and interdisciplinary learning to foster ethical practices, entrepreneurial thinking, problem-solving and job-market relevance;
- Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) principles to create an inclusive academic environment that values multicultural perspectives and equity, particularly for marginalised groups such as PWD, *Orang Asli*, rural and low-income communities;
- Strengthening collaboration with local and global stakeholders to broaden learning opportunities, enhance community engagement, and drive positive social impact;
- Equipping learners with digital literacy, technological skills, and a commitment to sustainability to innovate and address global challenges effectively; and
- Building a lifelong, adaptable learning ecosystem that supports continuous skills development, addresses underemployment and skills mismatch, and prepares learners for future workforce demands.

## Strategies and initiatives

<b>Strategy 1A</b>	Enhancing curriculum for humanity-centric, ethical, inclusive and future-ready learners
<b>Strategy 1B</b>	Creating an innovative, entrepreneurial, and sustainable learning framework
<b>Strategy 1C</b>	Strengthening learning infrastructure, infostructure and inclusive support systems

### Strategy 1A

#### Enhancing curriculum for humanity-centric, ethical, inclusive and future-ready learners

This strategy embeds Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to nurture ethical values, mental well-being, and a strong sense of identity, while integrating global perspectives to prepare learners for a rapidly evolving world. It emphasises equipping students with future-ready skills to foster a responsible, resilient society capable of addressing complex global challenges. By producing graduates with ESD competencies who are ethically grounded, culturally aware, and innovative, Malaysia's higher education system ensures alignment with national aspirations and global expectations. Through a balanced curriculum, the strategy aims to empower learners to drive sustainable development, contribute to nation-building, and shape a more equitable and inclusive future.

### Initiatives

#### 1A.1: Implementing holistic, ethical and values-internalised education for learner development

This initiative integrates ethical and values-internalised education with a comprehensive approach to learner development, addressing personal, professional, and societal dimensions. Academic programmes will incorporate courses on ethical decision-making, values education, and an in-depth understanding of Malaysian history, culture, and heritage, fostering *adab*, integrity, accountability, and a strong national identity among learners.

By merging ethical awareness with global competencies, the initiative promotes holistic development, ensuring graduates are socially responsible individuals. They will be equipped to navigate diverse environments, uphold ethical practices, and contribute meaningfully to their communities and professions, advancing both personal growth and societal well-being.

#### 1A.2: Cultivating experiential learning opportunities

This initiative bridges the gap between academia and professional practice by expanding internship programmes, service-learning projects, and real-world problem-solving initiatives. The Ministry will provide strategic direction, develop policies, and facilitate partnerships with industries to create structured and impactful work-based and experiential learning opportunities. HLIs will play a critical role in implementing these programmes by embedding experiential learning into curricula, fostering collaborations with industry stakeholders, and ensuring alignment with market trends and demands. Recognising experiential learning as a core component of education encourages broader participation, enhances graduate employability, and fosters resilience in a dynamic workforce. Together, the Ministry and HLIs will prepare learners with the practical skills and adaptability needed to excel in a rapidly evolving professional landscape.

**1A.3: Enhancing research and innovation capability**

Learners will gain opportunities to engage in inquiry-based learning through the establishment of innovation labs and research hubs, fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Partnerships with industries and government agencies will support applied research projects focused on community impact and economic development. The Ministry will provide strategic guidance, policy support, and funding to strengthen Malaysia's research ecosystem, while HLIs will integrate research into academic programmes, mentor learners in methodologies, and provide access to cutting-edge facilities. These efforts aim to prepare learners to advance innovation and contribute to national progress in critical and emerging fields. HLIs are encouraged to collaborate with private sectors to establish public-private initiatives to ensure research financial sustainability.

**1A.4: Integrating disruptive technology to enhance future skills**

Disruptive and emerging technologies such as AI, robotics, and data analytics will be integrated into academic programmes to equip learners with skills for evolving job markets. Practical experiences, including hackathons and project-based assignments, will foster real-world applications. Collaborative programmes with technology companies will provide certifications and internships, and flexible learning opportunities. Platforms such as MyMAHIR can play an important role by offering micro-credentials, modular courses, and industry-driven training programmes, enabling learners to participate in hybrid and remote learning aligned with market demands. This approach will develop graduates who are industry-ready, self-directed and innovative problem-solvers. The Ministry will lead policy development, facilitate partnerships, and provide resources to integrate disruptive technologies effectively. HLIs will implement these technologies within curricula, design experiential learning opportunities, and ensure alignment with industry standards, preparing learners to excel in dynamic, tech-driven environments and contribute to national progress.

**1A.5: Cultivating STEAM and global competency development**

Global awareness and interdisciplinary skills will be enhanced through courses on global issues, cultural diversity, and international relations. STEAM competencies will be nurtured via collaborative projects that encourage innovation and critical thinking. Partnerships with international institutions will support academic collaborations, including student exchanges, joint research, and global internships, equipping learners to address global challenges effectively. The Ministry will facilitate international partnerships, set strategic priorities, and allocate resources, while HLIs will implement globally relevant curricula, design collaborative learning experiences, and ensure students are prepared to thrive in an interconnected, globalised environment.

**1A.6: Revitalising the Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average (iCGPA)**

The iCGPA framework will be revitalised to assess holistic learner development by incorporating evaluations of values, ethics, and skills alongside academic achievements. The updated framework will align with industry needs, equipping graduates with future-ready competencies to meet workforce demands. Facilitators will receive specialised training to ensure consistent implementation and assessment across institutions. The Ministry will provide policy guidance, and oversee the alignment of iCGPA with national and global standards. HLIs will integrate the refined framework into academic systems, fostering balanced competencies that support national aspirations and global competitiveness.

## Strategy 1B

### Creating an innovative, entrepreneurial, and sustainable learning framework

This strategy builds adaptable learning experiences and entrepreneurial ecosystems to drive innovation, resilience, and sustainable economic growth. It creates dynamic opportunities for learners to cultivate innovative and entrepreneurial and problem-solving skills while ensuring that graduate success is not solely measured by employability, but also by their ability to secure high-skilled jobs that match their qualifications. By integrating sustainability into learning frameworks, the approach ensures learners are equipped to meet future economic and environmental needs. Through collaboration with industries and communities, the strategy fosters forward-thinking mindsets, preparing learners to contribute meaningfully to national progress, global sustainability efforts and high-skilled employment sectors.

## Initiatives

### 1B.1: Driving innovative and entrepreneurial learning ecosystem

This initiative empowers learners to engage in hands-on projects that cultivate skills in business planning, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving. By integrating entrepreneurship modules with platforms such as incubators, innovation hubs, and pitch competitions, the initiative fosters creativity, collaboration, and practical application. Hackathons and challenges immerse learners in real-world scenarios, while mentorship from industry leaders bridges the gap between academia and the workforce. To ensure graduates are job-ready and to reduce skills mismatch, the initiative will incorporate entrepreneurial training sessions that aligns with industry needs, offering targeted upskilling in high-demand sectors. The Ministry will provide strategic direction, policies, and resources to support HLIs in developing entrepreneurial ecosystems and fostering industry collaborations. HLIs will implement this framework, designing programmes that not only encourage job creation but also address the pressing issue of SRU.

### 1B.2: Establishing sustainable partnerships and funding models

Sustainable partnerships with government agencies, industries, and non-governmental organisations will secure funding for student-led initiatives and innovative projects. Endowment programmes and venture funds will provide long-term support for entrepreneurial and research activities, ensuring consistent resources for innovation. These partnerships will prioritise curriculum alignment with industry needs, funding structured apprenticeships, and integrating employer-led skills training within HLIs. The Ministry will facilitate partnerships, develop funding frameworks, and allocate resources strategically, while HLIs will implement initiatives, manage partnerships, and drive resource-sharing efforts that directly contribute to graduate employment in high-skilled jobs. Together, these measures will create a resilient ecosystem that not only fosters innovation and sustainable economic growth but also ensures that graduates are equipped with the right skills for the dynamic job market.



## Strategy 1C

### Strengthening learning infrastructure, infostructure and inclusive support systems

This strategy focuses on creating accessible, inclusive, and resource-rich learning environments to support all learners. Modernising infrastructure will include upgrading facilities, integrating digital technologies, and improving accessibility for marginalised learners. Equitable opportunities will be fostered through tailored support systems, bridging gaps in resources and accessibility. The Ministry will provide policy direction, funding, and frameworks to drive infrastructure development and inclusivity. HLIs will implement these improvements, design inclusive ecosystems, and deliver targeted support programmes. Together, these efforts ensure that all learners can thrive in environments aligned with modern educational and societal demands.

## Initiatives

### 1C.1: Creating accessibility and inclusive learning environments

Equitable access opportunities will be prioritised for Orang Asli learners and PWD through tailored support systems, assistive technologies, and specialised facilities that address their unique needs. Universal Design principles will underpin the development of accessible environments, ensuring all students, including marginalised groups, can thrive. Enrolment, retention, and success rates of these groups will be closely monitored to identify and address gaps, fostering a truly inclusive ecosystem. DEI principles will guide policies and practices to create welcoming and empowering spaces. Personalised advisory and support systems will aid learners in navigating challenges, while institutional DEI policies will undergo regular evaluation to ensure continuous improvement. The Ministry will provide policy direction, resources, and monitoring mechanisms, while HLIs will implement tailored support systems, integrate Universal Design, and evaluate institutional DEI practices to maintain inclusivity.

### 1C.2: Enhancing mental health and well-being support

The mental health support system will prioritise students' psychological well-being through accessible counselling services, peer mentoring programmes, and digital mental health tools. Professional counselling centres will provide individual and group sessions, addressing diverse mental health needs. Peer mentors will offer empathetic guidance, fostering a supportive community and reducing stigma. Digital tools, including AI-driven platforms and self-help modules, will ensure continuous availability, delivering personalised recommendations and enabling early intervention. This holistic approach aims to build resilience, improve coping mechanisms, and empower students to excel both academically and personally. The Ministry will develop policies, allocate funding, and oversee the integration of digital tools, while HLIs will establish and manage counselling centres, train peer mentors, and implement comprehensive support programmes.

### 1C.3: Upgrading infrastructure, infostructure and digital access

Modern campuses with state-of-the-art facilities and technology-enhanced learning spaces will be developed to meet diverse educational needs. Reliable, high-speed internet connectivity will bridge the digital divide, ensuring equitable access for learners in urban and rural areas. Integrated learning platforms will seamlessly combine in-person and online education, providing flexible, adaptive, and inclusive learning experiences. Digital tools, such as virtual labs and AI-driven platforms, will enhance interactivity and innovation in teaching and learning.

The Ministry will set strategic priorities, allocate funding, and establish nationwide standards for digital infrastructure, while HLIs will implement upgrades, maintain technology systems, and integrate advanced learning platforms into academic programmes. These efforts will ensure learners are well-prepared for a digitally driven future.

### Box 1-3: Graduate outcomes: A snapshot

- Ethical and values-driven graduates**  
 Graduates grounded in values, integrity, and social responsibility, committed to making ethical decisions that foster unity, justice, and positive societal impact.
- Adaptability, resilience, and lifelong learning**  
 Graduates equipped with critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and the agility to navigate complex, dynamic environments. They demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning, enabling continuous adaptation and growth.
- Global competency with cultural identity**  
 Graduates proficient in intercultural competence, capable of addressing global challenges through collaboration, while upholding and promoting their cultural and national identity.
- Innovative and entrepreneurial leaders**  
 Graduates who embody an entrepreneurial mindset, proactively creating sustainable, impactful solutions that drive nation-building, economic growth, and global competitiveness.
- Technologically proficient and ethical innovators**  
 Graduates skilled in leveraging disruptive technologies and innovation to design ethical, inclusive, and real-world solutions that align with societal and environmental values.
- Sustainability advocates and planetary stewards**  
 Graduates committed to environmental stewardship, advancing climate action, and integrating sustainable practices into their professional and personal lives to support planetary health.
- Empathetic and inclusive collaborators**  
 Graduates who value diversity and inclusivity, fostering mutual respect and collaboration across cultures, disciplines, and societal contexts.
- Emotionally resilient and holistic individuals**  
 Graduates who prioritise mental well-being and holistic development, balancing emotional, physical, and intellectual resilience to thrive in post-normal times.
- Responsible researchers and technology practitioners**  
 Graduates who critically evaluate societal and environmental impacts of research and technology, advancing ethical, nature-based, and planet-friendly solutions aligned with humanity's well-being.

### Box 1-4: Education system outcomes: A snapshot

- Interdisciplinary integration**  
 HLIs that encourage the convergence of diverse disciplines to foster creative and holistic approaches to solving complex societal and environmental issues.
- Inclusive and equitable education system**  
 HLIs that ensure equity and access through inclusive infrastructure, digital equity, and tailored support systems for marginalised groups.
- Sustainability advocates and planetary stewards**  
 HLIs committed to embedding sustainability into curricula, research, and operations while fostering a culture of planetary responsibility and advancing solutions for global challenges.
- Well-being and mental health support**  
 HLIs are equipped with support systems such as counselling services, peer networks, and AI-driven tools to foster emotional resilience and holistic growth.
- Community engagement and social impact**  
 HLIs that build strong partnerships with local and national communities, empowering graduates to engage in meaningful service and address societal challenges through community-driven initiatives.
- Graduate employment and workforce alignment**  
 HLIs that strengthen education-industry collaboration, ensuring graduates are equipped with market-relevant skills to reduce underemployment and job-skills mismatch, fostering high-skilled employment opportunities.
- Ethical research and technology application**  
 HLIs that promote ethical research and STI-enabled, nature-based innovations to address societal and environmental challenges with accountability and inclusivity.

## Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Number of experiential learning programmes and their impact on planet-friendly real-world problem solving.
- Implementation of revised iCGPA metrics.
- Graduate employment and impact measured based on national guidelines.
- Number of student-led innovations that received recognition.
- Number of student-led startups.
- Number of academic programmes with Universal Design and future learning infrastructure and infostructure.
- Enrollment and retention rates of under-represented groups.
- Learners' satisfaction with mental health and wellbeing support services.
- Number of institutions implementing DEI policies.



## Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 1-5.

**Exhibit 1-5:** Initiative implementation roadmap

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Propel
<b>Strategy A</b> Enhancing curriculum for humanity-centric, ethical, inclusive, and future-ready learners	Enhance core ethical and values-based modules across programmes.	Institutionalise values-based education across all institutions.	Establish inter-institutional collaboration.
	Expand service-learning, research-driven problem-solving projects and industry and community collaborations.	Institutionalise experiential learning through innovation hubs and interdisciplinary programmes.	Scale globally with international collaborations, flagship impact projects, and SDG programmes.
	Launch revised iCGPA metrics in not more than 30% of the programmes among five pilot universities.	Launch revised iCGPA metrics in another 10 HLIs.	Launch revised iCGPA metrics in an additional 20 HLIs.
	Educate learners and implementers on the responsible use of technology.	Establish opportunities to enhance fluency and responsible use of technology with impact.	Provide solutions to future challenges impacted by disruptive technologies.
<b>Strategy B</b> Creating an innovative, entrepreneurial, and sustainable learning framework	Establish institutional level innovative entrepreneurial and sustainable learning framework and hub by adopting the MOHE Guide to Entrepreneurship Integrated Education (EIE).	Accelerate institutional innovative and entrepreneurial ecosystems and secure funding for entrepreneurial initiatives.	Exhibit excellence through the number of innovative, entrepreneurial and sustainable learning projects at national and global levels.

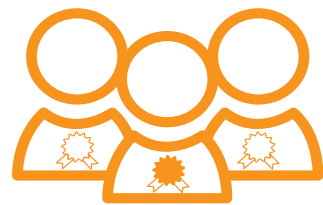
	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Accelerate
<b>Strategy C</b> Strengthening learning infrastructure, infostructure and inclusive support systems	Audit campus infrastructure and infostructure readiness for accessibility and learning.	Upgrade all learning infrastructure, infostructure and inclusive support systems.	Strengthen all learning infrastructure, infostructure and inclusive support system to sustain excellence.
	Strengthen institution-wide mental health and personalised well-being support systems in collaboration with mental health organisations.	Scale access to mental health support with AI-driven tools and expand student-led advocacy programmes.	Revise and improve the National Higher Education Mental Health Framework.
	Establish a National Higher Education Mental Health Framework.	Adopt the National Higher Education Mental Health Framework.	
	Establish institutional framework for DEI.	Institutionalise DEI initiatives and implement monitoring systems.	Benchmark and share best practices for DEI at national and regional levels.

## Conclusion

The Ministry is committed to nurturing humanity-centric, entrepreneurial, and adaptive learners aligned with the FPK. These learners will possess interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, ethical grounding, spiritual strength, and a strong sense of social responsibility, alongside intercultural and global competencies. To achieve this, an integrated and holistic curricular approach will be designed to embed values-internalised learning, innovation and inclusivity. The Ministry will collaborate with HLIs to strengthen learning ecosystems by enhancing infrastructure and infostructure, providing mental health support, and ensuring equitable access to education. Greater emphasis will be placed on aligning education with industry needs, fostering job-market relevance, and tracking graduate employment outcomes to reduce skills mismatch. These efforts will prepare graduates to thrive in a complex and interconnected world and contribute to societal harmony, nation-building, and global progress. In summary, these efforts will drive national development, enhance global competitiveness, and promote sustainable practices for future generations.



**Shift**



# Purpose-Driven High-Performance Talent

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## Introduction

As core drivers of the Malaysian Higher Education ecosystem, Higher Learning Institution (HLI) talent will serve the collective purpose of the One Higher Education concept, a unified vision fostering inclusion, collaboration, and shared goals. This vision strengthens the sense of belonging and supports competency-relevant, values-internalised, purpose-driven and differentiated professional development pathways to ensure every individual talent has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Under the guidance of the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), equitable access to talent development frameworks and continuous professional development opportunities will empower all HLIs to cultivate mission-oriented talent, drive innovation, and advance the unbundling of higher education for greater adaptability and impact. By advancing evidence-informed talent management, promoting staff mobility, and optimising resource sharing among HLIs, disparities across institutions and critical national talent gaps can be effectively addressed. The uncertainties and widening inequities associated with a post-normal future necessitate a greater emphasis on diversity, equity, inclusion, mutual respect, and integrity as core guiding principles.

## Why it matters

By fostering a competent, committed, and values-driven workforce within HLIs, the purpose-driven high-performance talent shift aligns with SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). It is critical to harmonise excellence with the purpose of higher education, promote job fulfillment, adhere to the highest ethical standards, and build resilience amongst HLI talent. Evidence-informed talent governance, holistic management, and robust leadership succession planning will enable HLIs to build agile, high-performance teams that are capable of collectively addressing the fast-evolving challenges of post-normal times and creating tangible positive local and global impact.

### Unified purpose for a sustained impact

Purpose-driven talent brings together diverse roles including academics, administrators, and support staff under a shared mission that fosters collective resilience and strengthens global competitiveness.

By aligning around common values and objectives, HLIs are better equipped to navigate challenges and ensure long-term institutional sustainability. This unified institutional and ecosystem purpose promotes a sense of belonging and shared accountability that are essential factors in addressing the growing complexities of the global education landscape. As HLIs compete to strive to be better, a unified One Higher Education mission helps to promote greater collaboration and develop synergistic partnerships between HLIs.

### Strategic talent development

Strategic talent governance and development play a crucial role in cultivating high-performance teams within HLIs. Strategic governance refers to a structured approach that aligns institutional goals with effective decision-making processes, while talent development, including leadership development led by the Higher Education Leadership Academy or *Akademi Kepimpinan Pendidikan Tinggi (AKEPT)*, focuses on nurturing talent and capabilities to achieve these goals.

Evidence-based governance frameworks, efficient talent management, and proactive leadership succession planning foster a workforce that is both agile and adaptable. This adaptability is essential in a rapidly evolving world shaped by technological advancements and socio-economic shifts that demand innovative responses. By prioritising strategic development, HLIs can ensure their workforce remains relevant, capable, and prepared to address emerging challenges.

### Promoting an ethical and inclusive culture

A commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and integrity is foundational to fostering a supportive environment in HLIs. These principles ensure that no one is left behind and the promotion of holistic well-being and socio-economic impact. A robust ethical culture strengthens trust and collaboration amongst HLI talent as well as external stakeholders, which in turn enhances the institution's overall effectiveness. Moreover, the emphasis on inclusion enriches academic and cultural experiences, preparing students and staff to embrace and contribute meaningfully to a diverse and interconnected world.

## ● Where we are

The landscape of Malaysia's higher education has experienced significant transformation in recent years, driven by strategic initiatives to enhance quality, institutional productivity, and global competitiveness. Key focus areas have included the promotion of differentiated career pathways (DCP), institutional excellence, academic productivity, and industry collaboration. These efforts have been pivotal to support Malaysia's aspiration of becoming a global educational hub.

### Differentiated career pathways

The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) introduced a major reform through the implementation of the Differentiated Career Pathways (DCP) for academic staff at public universities. By the end of 2018, five out of 20 public universities had adopted the DCP framework. This model was designed to provide flexible career development opportunities, enabling academics to pursue specialised trajectories aligned with their strengths in teaching, research, or leadership.

However, the implementation has faced challenges, particularly in terms of consistency across institutions. Insights from focus group discussions (FGDs) highlight the absence of a central monitoring mechanism and a lack of clarity among academic staff regarding the rationale and benefits of the flexible career pathways. This misalignment has led to the perception that the DCP did not achieve its intended objectives. Inconsistency in implementation, overemphasis of surrogate objective measures of performance, gaps in recognising diversity and heterogeneity of impact, and limited awareness of the opportunities to develop differentiated careers have ultimately hindered its broader acceptance among HLI talent.

### Institutional excellence and rankings

Malaysia has made significant strides in terms of institutional excellence, particularly among research universities. These institutions, which include Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), have collectively led the country's research output and visibility. UM has emerged as the top performer, achieving the highest H-index among all public universities, a reflection of its research impact on a global scale.<sup>1</sup> In recent years, several private universities have also intensified their research activity and output. These achievements highlight the increasing strength and influence of Malaysia's higher education institutions in driving innovation and knowledge creation.

As such, Malaysia has consistently outperformed its counterparts in the region in international university rankings, with both public and private universities making significant strides on the global stage. This upward trajectory reflects the country's growing prominence in the higher education sector, enhancing its academic reputation and bolstering its efforts to attract international students as well as foreign direct investment.

<sup>1</sup> QS World University Rankings 2023

### Academic talent, teaching and research productivity

The productivity of academic talent remains a key priority, with Malaysia's five major public research universities contributing a substantial portion of the nation's scholarly output. Based on SciVal database, between 2019 and 2024, there were 265,354 publications by authors in Malaysian HLIs with researchers from UM, UPM, USM, UKM and UTM listed as authors in 52.8% of these publications. Forty-one Malaysian HLIs published more than 1000 scholarly articles during this period; underscoring a strengthening research culture with more institutions intensifying their efforts in developing their own niche of excellence.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of patents, UPM led with 136 patent applications, followed by USM with 114, and UM with 104. These achievements highlight the universities' dedication to translating academic research into real-world solutions, cementing their position as key drivers of Malaysia's innovation ecosystem.<sup>3</sup>

### Academia-industry partnerships

The CEO@Faculty Programme (CFP) stood out as a key initiative that bridges the gaps between academia and industry. Launched in 2017, the programme connected 65 CEOs from public and private sectors with young university lecturers, fostering mentorship and knowledge exchange. The programme subsequently evolved into CEO@Faculty 2.0 and broadened the CEOs' roles as mentors and coaches to nurture future academic leaders.

The programme's first two cycles enabled 102 young lecturers who were identified as Fellows to immerse themselves in the corporate culture of high-profile companies under the mentorship of iconic industry leaders. This initiative helped deepen these academics' understanding of industry needs and equipped them with practical skills to lead and innovate in academia as well as serve the needs of industry and society. While the pandemic impacted the development of subsequent cycles of the programme, the success of the two editions suggest a need to reactivate the programme and increase its access to more talent across all HLIs.

<sup>2</sup> SciVal (2025, February 26). *Publications by authors in Malaysian HLIs 2019-2024*. SciVal Database. <https://www.scival.com>

<sup>3</sup> SciVal (2025, February 26). *Patent applications in Malaysian HLIs 2019-2024*. SciVal Database. <https://www.scival.com>



**Box 2-1:** His Majesty Yang Maha Mulia Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong XVII Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar conferred the 'Royal Professor' title upon Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas



Source: Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar. (2024, October 23). *Announcement of the conferment of the title 'Royal Professor' upon Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas.* [Status update]. Facebook. [https://www.facebook.com/officialsultanibrahim/?locale=ms\\_MY](https://www.facebook.com/officialsultanibrahim/?locale=ms_MY)

On October 23, 2024, His Majesty Yang Maha Mulia Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong XVII Sultan Ibrahim Ibni Almarhum Sultan Iskandar, the King of Malaysia, bestowed the esteemed title of Royal Professor upon Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas in recognition of his profound contributions to Islamic education and scholarship. This prestigious title, the highest academic honour in Malaysia, has only been awarded once before in 1978 to the late Royal Professor Ungku Abdul Aziz Ungku Abdul Hamid.

Tan Sri Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas is widely regarded as a pioneering thinker in Islamic philosophy, metaphysics, and

epistemology. His works have significantly shaped contemporary discourse on Islamic thought, particularly in the development of an Islamic worldview and the decolonisation of knowledge. The conferment of this title reaffirms his legacy as an intellectual giant whose influence extends beyond Malaysia to the global academic and Islamic communities.

The ceremony, a historic moment in Malaysia's academic landscape, underscores the nation's commitment to honoring individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to knowledge and education.

## Objectives

The Ministry aims to nurture purpose-driven high-performance talent through a dynamic framework that supports lifelong and life-wide learning. This mission is focused on enhancing integrated talent management and leadership sustainability, empowering talent governance, enhancing talent well-being, and fostering a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion and integrity.

Integrated talent management focuses on competency-relevant and values-internalised frameworks to strengthen leadership capabilities and ensure sustainable succession planning. Talent governance promotes evidence-based practices, equitable indicators, and well-being to enhance job satisfaction and impactful contributions. A culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, and integrity builds trust, fosters collaboration, and safeguards institutional reputation within our higher education ecosystem.

## Principles

The strategies and initiatives outlined in this Shift are guided by the following principles:

- Values and competency-based talent development underpins the cultivation of ethical and adaptable professionals while promoting cross-institutional talent mobility and ensuring alignment with Malaysia's dynamic and evolving educational priorities.
- Global and local talent attraction highlights the importance of recruiting diverse, high-performance individuals with integrity and leadership potential, fostering innovation, and addressing the complexities of post-normal time challenges.
- Holistic talent development and leadership stability prioritises continuous professional growth, mentorship, and career progression while ensuring effective succession planning for seamless leadership transitions that sustain and drive institutional excellence
- Knowledge transfer and the Quintuple Helix collaboration drive impactful partnerships across academia, government, industry, civil society, and the environment to create a comprehensive ecosystem that supports inclusive socio-economic progress.

## ● Strategies and initiatives

The Ministry will support HLIs in driving talent excellence with the following strategies, each with its own corresponding initiatives.

<p><b>Strategy 2A</b></p>	<p>Institutionalising a competency-relevant, values-internalised and purpose-driven talent framework with relevant learning and development opportunities</p>
<p><b>Strategy 2B</b></p>	<p>Advancing evidence-informed talent governance with balanced, equitable performance indicators and promoting holistic well-being</p>
<p><b>Strategy 2C</b></p>	<p>Fostering integrity, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for collective impact and safeguarding institutional reputation</p>

### Strategy 2A

#### **Institutionalising a competency-relevant, values-internalised and purpose-driven talent framework with relevant learning and development opportunities**

To address talent readiness and succession planning gaps, a Competency-Relevant, Values-Internalised and Purpose-Driven Talent Framework will be developed. A nationwide campaign will align institutional missions with the Ministry’s vision, fostering unity and belonging. MOHE and HLIs will introduce training modules focused on mentorship, career pathways, and cross-institutional collaboration to empower a future-ready workforce. These initiatives promote lifelong, autonomous learning while cultivating high-performing talent with a strong sense of purpose. Success will be measured through alignment surveys, the recognition of emerging scholars, and improved leadership succession ratios, which reflect the ability to internally fill leadership roles with well-prepared candidates.



## Initiatives

### 2A.1: Launching a campaign to communicate and promote the purpose of talent development in higher education across HLIs

The Ministry will launch a comprehensive campaign to articulate and propagate its talent development mission across all HLIs. This initiative aims to align institutional values with national goals, fostering a unified understanding of purpose among academic and administrative talent. By clearly communicating the broader vision of higher education, the campaign will emphasise the importance of aligning personal aspirations with institutional and national priorities.

Through workshops, seminars, and targeted communication strategies, the campaign will engage stakeholders at all levels to ensure a shared commitment to excellence, integrity, and innovation. This cohesive understanding will strengthen collaboration, inspire purpose-driven actions, and contribute to building a resilient and forward-thinking higher education ecosystem that supports Malaysia's aspirations.

### 2A.2: Establishing a competency-relevant, values-internalised and purpose-driven talent framework

MOHE will develop the framework as a guiding structure to embed values and purpose into all aspects of talent development. It emphasises leadership, accountability, and the nurturing of individuals who align personal aspirations with organisational goals. The framework will integrate talent development efforts with the core values and missions of the nation and institutions, fostering a culture of excellence, integrity, and innovation.

Focusing on key principles such as ethical leadership, continuous learning, and collaboration, the framework will guide the recruitment, development, and retention of high-performing individuals. This effort will be achieved through clear guidelines, targeted training programmes, and regular evaluations to ensure talent is nurtured in a manner that supports both personal and institutional goals. The Ministry will revise the University Transformation Programme (UniTP) Orange Book, Strengthening Academic Career Pathways and Leadership Development, to reinforce this effort.

### 2A.3: Developing and implementing training modules by MOHE and across HLIs

MOHE, in collaboration with HLIs, will develop and implement training modules designed to enhance key competencies essential for academic, administrative, institutional, and management leadership. These modules will be developed using the Competency-Relevant, Values-Internalised and Purpose-Driven Talent Framework, ensuring alignment with institutional and national goals.

To maintain relevance, the modules will undergo regular revisions based on stakeholder feedback, comprehensive needs assessments, and effectiveness evaluations. This iterative approach ensures that the training addresses the dynamic challenges of leadership within HLIs and equips participants with skills to navigate evolving educational landscapes. By fostering strong leadership capabilities, these initiatives contribute to the long-term growth, success, and sustainability of Malaysia's HLIs.



## Strategy 2B

### Advancing evidence-informed talent governance with balanced, equitable performance indicators and promoting holistic well-being

Governance reforms will prioritise evidence-informed decision-making and holistic performance evaluations. Evidence-informed governance integrates data with broader considerations to ensure contextually relevant decisions. A National Higher Education Talent Database, centralising academic and administrative talent profiles, will facilitate data-driven human resource (HR) strategies. Biennial reports will benchmark performance, celebrate achievements, and introduce holistic performance indicators that evaluate contributions beyond traditional metrics. These initiatives aim to enhance institutional reputation, foster inter-HLI collaboration, and optimise HR resource utilisation, with progress tracked through database updates and performance indicator adoption rates. Recognising the importance of well-being, HLIs will launch a Work-Life Integration Campaign, featuring flexible work schedules, wellness programmes, and family-friendly events. Mobility programmes and innovative reward systems will encourage autonomy and productivity, fostering an energised and fulfilled workforce.

## Initiatives

### 2B.1: Establishing a national higher education talent database and publishing biennial high-performance talent reports

MOHE will establish a centralised National Higher Education Talent Database to integrate comprehensive profiles of academic and administrative talent across HLIs, including the leadership talent pool. This database will build on and strengthen existing HLI talent databases, including AKEPT's leadership talent database, ensuring regular updates, reliability, and accuracy. It will support evidence-informed decision-making in recruitment, performance management, and succession planning. By facilitating efficient resource utilisation and strategic workforce planning, the database will help institutions identify talent gaps, optimise staff allocation,

and benchmark performance across HLIs. Additionally, it will foster inclusion by offering a unified, transparent platform that benefits institutions, staff, and students while aligning with national priorities.

MOHE will also publish a biennial benchmark report based on data from the database. This report will highlight success stories, analyse workforce trends, and provide actionable recommendations for improvement. It will enhance transparency and encourage HLIs to adopt evidence-informed, high-performance practices. Serving as a comparative tool, the report will evaluate institutional talent performance against national and global benchmarks, facilitating the adoption of proven best practices to strengthen talent management across the sector.

### 2B.2: Developing a holistic talent performance indicator and reviewing recognition and rewards systems

MOHE and HLIs will collaboratively develop a holistic talent performance indicator framework to provide a comprehensive assessment of individual contributions within higher education. These indicators will go beyond traditional quantitative metrics to include qualitative dimensions such as leadership potential, creativity, collaboration, and community impact. By capturing the breadth of talent contributions, this framework will guide decisions on career progression, promotions, and institutional support, fostering a well-rounded approach to performance evaluation and talent management.

The adoption of holistic performance indicators will encourage a more inclusive and multidimensional view of talent, motivating institutions to invest in professional development and leadership training. This approach will cultivate a culture of continuous improvement, inspiring academic, administrative, and support staff to excel in diverse areas, thereby enhancing institutional effectiveness and the quality of education. HLIs will refine compensation structures to recognise not only high-performance but also contributions to institutional values and well-being. Additionally, recognition programmes will reward innovative and impactful contributions, further promoting excellence across the sector.

### 2B.3: Launching a work-life integration campaign and conducting a national mental health assessment programme

HLLs will implement policies to help employees balance family responsibilities with career growth. These initiatives include providing childcare facilities, flexible work schedules, and parental leave. Additionally, HLLs will introduce stress management programmes and wellness initiatives such as joint innovation days, wellness clinics, and family-oriented events to support a healthy balance between professional and personal lives. This initiative aims to identify systemic challenges affecting mental health and use the findings to inform policies that enhance employee well-being and address stress-related issues in higher education environments.

Regular mental health assessments will be conducted, and policies introduced to combat burnout, reduce absenteeism, and improve job fulfilment. The impact of these efforts will be monitored through mental health scores, burnout rates, and job fulfilment indices, fostering a supportive, healthier, and more productive work environment.

### 2B.4: Optimising talent mobility and sustainability

HLLs will facilitate cross-institutional mobility, enabling talent to gain diverse experiences, enhance skills, broaden perspectives and contribute to a dynamic institutional culture. Inter-HLL collaborations will support resource sustainability and optimise talent utilisation.

Academic and administrative staff will be encouraged to engage in post-doctoral programmes, sabbaticals, or secondments with industries or Ministries. Initiatives such as innovation incubators will create platforms for individuals to pitch and implement projects aligned with institutional priorities. To sustain talent in HLLs, the Ministry will explore extending the retirement age of professors to 70 years. Contributions will be recognised and rewarded through a holistic talent performance indicator framework.

## Strategy 2C

### Fostering integrity, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for collective impact and safeguarding institutional reputation

To institutionalise integrity, a Higher Education Ethics Framework will establish clear ethical standards and conduct guidelines for HLLs. Integrity committees at both institutional and Ministry levels will oversee compliance and address ethical concerns, ensuring accountability and ethical governance. Incentives for ethical leadership and responsible conduct will further reinforce these values. Collectively, these initiatives will strengthen governance, enhance transparency, and foster a culture of trust. Success will be measured through Talent Opinion Survey Annual Index scores, the frequency of performance reviews, and a reduction in ethics-related incidents.

DEI efforts will focus on promoting equitable representation and implementing inclusive policies. Initiatives will address barriers to leadership for women, improve accessibility for talent with disabilities, and bridge income gaps among support staff. Recruitment policies will prioritise ethnic diversity, while family-friendly practices will help employees balance career and personal responsibilities. These initiatives will create equitable and inclusive environments, measured by leadership diversity rates, DEI index improvements, and proportional representation of underrepresented groups.

## Initiatives

### 2C.1: Developing and integrating a Higher Education Ethics Framework for training

Ethics-related training is already in place at HLLs but requires significant enhancement, particularly in the context of academic ethics. The Academic Ethics Guidelines issued by the Ministry need revision to remain relevant to current challenges and standards. An updated ethics framework for training will establish clear ethical standards and conduct for HLLs to uphold. This framework will be incorporated into leadership and faculty development programmes to ensure widespread understanding and adherence across institutions.

To promote a culture of ethics and integrity for all staff, the Governance, Integrity, and Anti-Corruption Reinforcement Module or *Modul Pengukuhan Governan, Integriti dan Antirasuah* (MPGIA), should be implemented and conducted regularly. This initiative will be especially critical for those in administrative positions, ensuring consistent reinforcement of ethical practices and integrity in governance. The Malaysian Code of Responsible Conduct in Research, endorsed by the National Science Council, serves as the primary reference for training researchers at HLIs. By addressing these gaps, HLIs can foster a more accountable, ethical, and resilient higher education environment.

### **2C.2: Strengthening integrity and academic ethics committees and incentivising responsible conduct**

The Integrity and Ethics Committee will oversee ethical conduct, address integrity-related issues, and provide regular performance reviews to uphold accountability. Ideally, such committees should be established under the Board of Directors, or *Lembaga Pengarah Universiti* (LPU), to address integrity and misconduct cases involving senior management and LPU members. For polytechnics and community colleges, the committee will operate at the Ministry level.

Currently, the Governance Committee, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, does not have terms of reference to handle cases involving university management and LPU members. Closing this gap is crucial to ensuring transparency and upholding the highest standards of integrity within universities. HLIs will also implement recognition programmes for individuals demonstrating ethical leadership and transparency. Incentives may include awards, funding opportunities, or career advancement based on contributions to integrity. Individuals free from disciplinary action are often regarded as exemplars of ethics and transparency in service.

*“What we need is both soul and excellence. It is not enough to have soul but no excellence or excellence and no soul.”*

**Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim**  
Tenth Prime Minister of Malaysia

### **2C.3: Addressing barriers for women in leadership, promoting ethnic diversity, and supporting talent with disabilities**

HLIs will enhance gender-focused leadership programmes and mentorship opportunities to increase the representation of women in senior roles. These initiatives aim to address systemic barriers and foster an environment that encourages leadership development for women. Additionally, HLIs will review existing policies to identify and eliminate biases, creating equitable pathways for leadership advancement.

Recruitment policies will emphasise proportional representation of ethnic minorities, including indigenous communities, ensuring that the diversity within HLIs reflects the broader societal makeup. This approach will foster inclusion and promote a richer, more dynamic institutional culture. To support individuals with disabilities, HLIs will establish comprehensive systems that include accessible facilities, inclusive hiring practices, and tailored professional development opportunities. Together, these initiatives aim to create a supportive and accommodating environment that champions diversity, equity, and inclusion across all facets of higher education.

## Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Talent Opinion Survey Annual Index (measures the alignment of MHEB 2026-2035 with HLIs' vision and mission, including trust and integrity levels).
- Succession coverage targets a 2:1 ratio of successors to senior leaders or subject matter experts.
- Percentage of talent achieving the desired competency benchmark score.
- Percentage of women in leadership roles in HLIs.
- Annual HLI staff mental, physical, economic, and emotional health and well-being assessment indicators, including job fulfilment and DEI measures.



## ● Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 2-1.

**Exhibit 2.1:** Initiative implementation roadmap

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Propel
<p><b>Strategy A</b> Institutionalising a competency-relevant, values-internalised and purpose-driven talent framework with relevant learning and development opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define a campaign to cascade the One Higher Education mission (purpose) of the Ministry for alignment with all HLIs.</li> <li>Kick off campaign and rally all stakeholders starting from the top.</li> <li>Establish Values-Internalised and Purpose-Driven High-Performance Talent Framework (the Framework). Revise UniTP Orange Book.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nationwide rollout: clarifying the why (mission), what (vision) and (how) strategy, driven by a VC cascade, strong media and international communications, and sustained follow through across HLIs.</li> <li>Succession coverage 2:1 (Ratio of Successor to Senior Leader or Subject Matter Expert).</li> <li>Talent Opinion Survey Annual Index (Alignment of mission and vision of MHEB (2026-2035) and HLIs).</li> <li>Implement the Framework incorporating cross-HLI, industry, and international mentorship, career ownership pathways, coaching circles, and collaborative innovation labs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of talent who achieve the desired competency benchmark score.</li> <li>Evaluate campaign effectiveness and feedback loop.</li> <li>Evaluate effectiveness of the framework.</li> <li>Review and refine.</li> </ul>

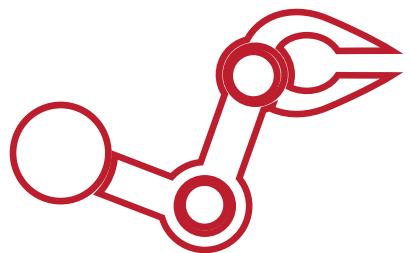
	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2034) Thrive
<p><b>Strategy B</b> Advancing evidence-informed talent governance with balanced, equitable performance indicators and promoting holistic well-being</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish National HLI Talent Database.</li> <li>Develop the Holistic Talent Performance Indicator.</li> <li>Develop academic staff talent equivalency of non-traditional academic qualifications.</li> <li>Review recognition and rewards system.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data collection for talent and publish the biennial high-performance talent profile report.</li> <li>Implementation of Holistic Talent Performance Indicator.</li> <li>Launch an HLI Work-Life Integration Campaign with flexible work schedules, joint innovation days, stress management resources, wellness clinics, and family time-out options.</li> <li>Launch HLI Health and Wellbeing Assessment Programme.</li> <li>Promote mobility of talent resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of talent performance indicator.</li> <li>Annual HLI staff mental, physical, economic, and emotional health and well-being assessment indicators (job fulfilment measures).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy C</b> Fostering integrity, diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) for collective impact and safeguarding institutional reputation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and integrate a new HLI Ethics Framework and training programme.</li> <li>Establish Integrity and Academic Ethics Committees at university board level/ ministry level for polytechnics and community colleges.</li> <li>Address barriers that limit representation of women in HLI leadership.</li> <li>Education on unconscious bias in daily interactions and processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of the HLI Ethics training.</li> <li>Quarterly review committee meeting.</li> <li>Develop incentives to promote responsible and ethical conduct.</li> <li>Annual HLI staff mental, physical, economic, and emotional health and well-being assessment indicators (DEI measures).</li> <li>Percentage of women in leadership roles in HLIs.</li> <li>Improve implementation of the inclusion policies for talent pool.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact study on training effectiveness.</li> <li>Talent Opinion Survey Annual Index (Trust and Integrity Measures).</li> <li>Evaluation of the diversity amongst HLI staff.</li> </ul>



## Conclusion

In the evolving landscape of Malaysia's higher education sector, cultivating a high-performance talent ecosystem is essential to achieving national and global excellence. This initiative emphasises fostering purpose-driven academics, administrators, and support staff who not only excel in their roles but align their efforts with the institution's mission of educational integrity, innovation, and inclusion. For academics, this translates to a commitment to impactful research, progressive teaching methodologies, and upholding ethical standards. Administrators play a pivotal role by steering strategic initiatives, driving quality assurance, and fostering a transparent, accountable environment that supports both staff and students. Meanwhile, support staff are integral to sustaining operational excellence and enhancing the student experience, ensuring a seamless and supportive academic environment. Together, these high-performance talents, united by a shared purpose, create a resilient and thriving ecosystem that propels Malaysia's higher learning institutions towards global recognition and sustained educational impact.

**Shift**



**B**

# Advanced TVET Competency

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## Introduction

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) highlights the pivotal role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in fostering lifelong learning and skill development, which are essential for sustainable economic and social progress. TVET equips individuals with critical skills and competencies to actively engage in the workforce while addressing the dynamic needs of contemporary industries.<sup>1</sup>

The Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint (MHEB) 2026–2035 prioritises Advanced TVET Competency, emphasising specialised psychomotor skills, in-depth knowledge and practical experiences that align with evolving industry demands. This competency involves the execution of advanced tasks across qualification levels within TVET programmes. It addresses complex, industry-specific challenges by integrating cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics, ensuring alignment with emerging technological advancements.

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<sup>1</sup> UNESCO. (2022). *UNESCO Strategy for TVET 2022–2029*

## Why it matters

The global economy is undergoing rapid and dynamic transformation, particularly in the post-pandemic era, driven by technological advancements and a shift towards knowledge-based industries. In this evolving landscape, TVET plays a critical role in equipping individuals with the skills required to thrive in the future workforce.

This significance is further underscored in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4,<sup>2</sup> which focuses on fostering the acquisition of foundational and advanced skills across all stages of education and development. SDG 4 also highlights the need for equitable access to quality education, including TVET, towards ensuring individuals gain the knowledge, skills, and values essential to contribute effectively to society and promote sustainable progress.

### Demand for specialised skills

As industries and societies advance and adopt greater digital sophistication, the demand for professionals with specialised skills, AI literacy, and data analytics capabilities continues to grow.<sup>3</sup> Advanced TVET programmes address this need by equipping learners with expertise in critical fields such as technology, engineering, healthcare, services, and craftsmanship. Beyond technical knowledge, advanced TVET learners are expected to demonstrate strong communication, creativity, innovation, analytical thinking, and leadership skills. Recognising the importance of specialised skills, the government has prioritised investment in the TVET sector. Notably, under the 12th Malaysia Plan,<sup>4</sup> RM 6.6 billion was allocated to strengthen TVET programmes, ensuring alignment with the evolving demands of industries and the global economy.

### Global competitiveness

In a globalised economy, workforce skills and expertise are critical drivers of national and industry competitiveness. Malaysia aspires to secure a top 12 ranking in the Global Competitiveness Index<sup>5</sup> within the next decade, as outlined in the Madani Economy: Empowering People Framework.<sup>6</sup> Advanced TVET plays a pivotal role in realising this goal by equipping the workforce with cutting-edge skills aligned with international standards. These programmes focus on fostering industry-specific expertise, technological proficiency, and adaptability to global trends. By producing a workforce capable of meeting complex global demands, Advanced TVET ensures Malaysia's sustained competitive advantage in the global market.

### Practical application and industry alignment

By 2030, it is estimated that over 85 million jobs globally may remain unfilled due to a shortage of skilled talents, as highlighted in a recent *Forbes*<sup>7</sup> report. Competency-based education addresses this challenge by focusing on practical skills and task-specific expertise, ensuring learners are equipped to contribute immediately to workplaces upon completing their training.

TVET competency frameworks are designed in collaboration with industry stakeholders to align training with current industry demands and standards. This alignment enhances employability and ensures graduates are prepared to tackle workplace challenges. Additionally, the rapid evolution of emerging technologies and industry best practices underscores the importance of lifelong learning, making continuous reskilling and upskilling as the essential components of TVET's success.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. (2015). *Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

<sup>3</sup> Academy of Sciences Malaysia. (2020). *10-10 Malaysian Science, Technology, Innovation and Economy (MySTIE) Framework*

<sup>4</sup> Economic Planning Unit. (2021). *Twelfth Malaysia Plan 2021–2025*

<sup>5</sup> World Economic Forum. (2024). *The global competitiveness index 5.0: Measuring productivity and prosperity*

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Finance Malaysia. (2024). *Madani economy to boost Malaysian economy and improve quality of life: PM Anwar*

<sup>7</sup> Forbes. (2024). *Global workforce crisis: Unfilled jobs by 2030*

## Where we are

Malaysia's TVET landscape is at a pivotal juncture, with efforts focused on aligning programmes with industry needs and global standards. While strides have been made in enhancing accessibility and quality, challenges remain in achieving seamless integration of advanced competencies and emerging technologies within the current framework.

### Malaysia TVET ecosystem

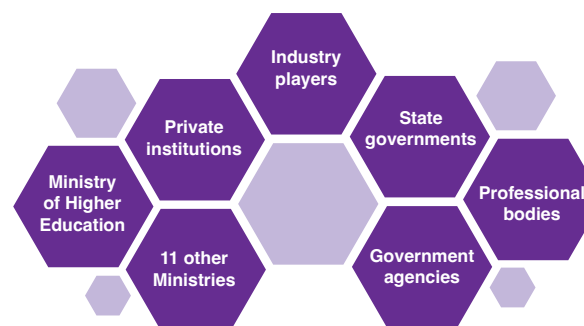
The National TVET Council, or *Majlis TVET Negara* (MTVET), was established on 18 December 2020 to enhance coordination within Malaysia's diverse TVET ecosystem. This ecosystem, as depicted in Exhibit 3-1, involves 12 ministries, public and private institutions, and industry players, highlighting the need for a unified approach to streamline efforts and elevate TVET's strategic value. MTVET, initiated through a Cabinet Memorandum by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), serves as a central body to align TVET programmes with national and international standards while addressing industry demands.<sup>9</sup> Currently, MTVET operates under the purview of the Deputy Prime Minister's office, playing a pivotal role as the highest decision-making body for the direction of national TVET.

MOHE is one of the most important players among the 12 ministries in Malaysia's TVET ecosystem, and MOHE contributes to producing 50% of the nation's TVET graduates. Other contributors include state governments, government agencies, private institutions, professional bodies like the Malaysia Board of Technologists (MBOT) and other professional bodies related to TVET, and industrial partners. These entities collectively support the vision of advanced TVET competency as the key drivers for Malaysia's goal of becoming a developed nation.

Under the MTVET framework, efforts are centred on producing high-quality graduates who meet the aspirations of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education). A key initiative involves strengthening TVET credentials from Level 3 to Level 8 of the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), ensuring a structured progression of competencies. Level 8 represents the highest qualification, signifying advanced education and

competencies. Under MOHE, these TVET programmes are offered by TVET higher learning institutions (TVET HLIs) consisting of public and private universities, university colleges, colleges, and polytechnics and community colleges (POLYCC). The establishment of POLYCC, the Malaysian Technical University Network (MTUN), and currently MTUN+ which comprises MTUN, Universiti Kuala Lumpur, and Universiti Selangor to drive TVET ecosystem is a significant commitment by MOHE to champion TVET agenda. Additionally, other HLIs are strongly encouraged to offer TVET programmes, ensuring that they meet quality standards of the Code of Practice for TVET Programme Accreditation (COPTPA). MBOT plays a key role in recognising and accrediting TVET professionals, ensuring institutionalised collaboration and a holistic value chain for TVET advancement.

Exhibit 3-1: Key players in the Malaysia TVET ecosystem



<sup>9</sup> Sekretariat Majlis TVET Negara. (2023, May 31). *Fakta Ringkas MTVET sehingga 31 Mei 2023*

### The quality of TVET graduates

Significant progress has been made in Malaysia's TVET sector, enhancing the quality and employability of its graduates. Work-based learning programmes are now fully implemented for bachelor's degree programmes at polytechnics, and 65% of TVET instructors at MTUN institutions hold competency certifications.<sup>9</sup> Governance and oversight have improved through the establishment of MTVET and MBOT, which streamline accreditations and professional recognitions.

Despite these advancements, limited autonomy for polytechnics and community colleges restrict their responsiveness to the industry needs, while curriculum approvals and international recognition for TVET qualifications require further improvement.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, while the TVET graduate employability rate reached 97.2% in 2023, only 52.4% of graduates from MOHE institutions pursued careers in technical fields.<sup>11</sup> Graduates' salaries, typically ranging from RM2,000 to RM3,000, also highlight the need for an upgraded salary structure to attract and retain talent.

Encouragingly, TVET student intake reached 43.55% in 2023, reflecting a shift in interest towards technical education.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, 147 of Malaysia's 824 TVET programmes are internationally accredited, showcasing increased global recognition and the potential of local TVET graduates to compete in international markets.<sup>13</sup>

### Consolidated TVET governance

A new TVET Act is essential for Malaysia to address the decentralised governance structure that limits focus and efficiency. The absence of such an act has led to fragmented laws across multiple ministries and agencies, as highlighted in the Dasar TVET Negara 2030.<sup>14</sup> This fragmentation creates bureaucratic hurdles, delays approvals, and restricts talent flexibility and mobility.<sup>15</sup> Highly industrialised nations demonstrate that robust TVET Acts drive unified and effective systems.<sup>16</sup> A comprehensive TVET Act for Malaysia would streamline regulatory processes, reduce redundancies, and align governance with industry needs, ensuring a responsive, efficient, and sustainable TVET ecosystem.

<sup>9</sup> Malaysian Technical University Network. (2023). *MTUN TVET Termaju 2030*

<sup>10</sup> Jabatan Pendidikan Politeknik dan Kolej Komuniti. (2023). *Halatuju Transformasi Politeknik (2023–2030)*

<sup>11</sup> Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. (2024). *Laporan Kajian Pengesanan Graduan 2023*

<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2023). *Statistics of Higher Education*

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2024). *HEAD Review Report*

<sup>14</sup> Sekretariat Majlis TVET Negara. (2024). *Dasar TVET Negara 2030*

<sup>15</sup> Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE). (2023). *National Policy Review Committee Report*

<sup>16</sup> Germany and Singapore are exemplary models of successful TVET implementation due to the presence of a strong legislative framework. In Germany, the *Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz (BBiG))*, and in Singapore, the *SkillsFuture Singapore Agency Act 2016*, play a crucial role in regulating and advancing TVET.

### National TVET qualifications

Malaysia's TVET qualifications, offered by institutions across various ministries, require an integrated and harmonised framework to support academic progression. TVET qualifications are recognised either by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) under COPTPA or by the Department of Skills Development (JPK) under the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS). TVET programmes under MOHE are defined as programmes recognised and accredited by MQA or Professional Bodies that complies with COPTPA.<sup>17</sup>

The recent recognition of the flexible and open pathways by MQA and MBOT, enabling transitions from TVET institutions under different Ministries to HLIs under MOHE, serves as a successful model. This approach can be expanded to include services and craftsmanship sectors, elevating TVET expertise and industry relevance. Broadening this model to other ministries would further enhance the value of TVET graduates as critical contributors to national economic growth.

### Alignment of TVET programmes with industry needs

The misalignment of TVET curricula with industry demands<sup>18</sup> and slow adaptation to emerging technologies have hindered graduate readiness for the workforce. Current programmes often prioritise supply-side training over demand-driven skills, leaving students and lecturers lacking industry-relevant competencies.<sup>19</sup> Investing in specialised centres of technology can address regional needs by delivering sector-specific training using modern equipment. Repurposing outdated machinery can improve efficiency in other institutions, while partnerships with companies to upgrade equipment every five years will ensure that resources remain current.<sup>20</sup> These measures will enhance the preparedness of students and lecturers, aligning TVET programmes with evolving industrial requirements.

<sup>17</sup> Malaysian Qualifications Agency. (2020). *Code of practice for TVET programme accreditation (COPTPA) (Second edition)*

<sup>18</sup> Khazanah Research Institute. (2023). *Shifting tides: Policies to support Malaysia's transition to a high-income nation*

<sup>19</sup> Academy of Sciences Malaysia. (2023). *Review of the Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education)*

<sup>20</sup> The success of initiatives like the Penang Skills Development Centre (PSDC)—which has developed highly skilled talents through close industry collaboration—can serve as a model to address regional demands by concentrating on thriving local sectors, providing sector-specific training, and utilising advanced equipment.

## Quality of teaching staff and programme delivery

Developing holistic TVET educators with strong technical expertise and soft skills is crucial for effective programme delivery. A balanced approach that integrates technical training with communication skills, creativity, critical thinking, and the ability to collaborate effectively is essential. Recruiting industrial experts and providing opportunities for current educators to engage in industry settings can significantly enhance teaching quality. While such measures were outlined in previous blueprints, their implementation has not achieved the desired results due to financial and resource constraints. Addressing these gaps is vital to ensure TVET educators are equipped to meet industry demands and deliver impactful programmes.

### Objectives

To align with the National TVET Policy, the Ministry aims to develop skilled talents with advanced TVET competencies to meet the demands of a technology-driven industry while fostering future-ready expertise for career growth and evolving workforce needs.

This strategic direction requires continuous competency enhancement encompassing a blend of skills, knowledge, attitude, and behaviour to navigate the rapid changes driven by emerging and disruptive technologies. As industry landscapes evolve, the demand extends beyond traditional psychomotor, cognitive, and digital skills, necessitating a broader and more adaptive skillset.

Strengthening collaboration and integration among stakeholders is key to nurturing resilient and adaptable TVET talents. A robust TVET ecosystem empowers individuals and the nation to keep pace with technological advancements and market shifts, contributing to a globally competitive, technology-oriented workforce. Enhancing workforce productivity is vital to bolstering Malaysia's economic resilience and driving socio-economic transformation.

### Principles

The transformation of the Advanced TVET ecosystem is guided by several interrelated principles:

**Integrated governance:** Establish a coordinated governance structure that fosters collaboration among TVET institutions, stakeholders, and industries to improve accountability and standardised wage structures for TVET graduates, ensuring fair compensation across sectors.

**Industry alignment:** Ensure that TVET programmes and curricula are developed in collaboration with industry partners to meet current job market demands and enhance employability.

**Seamless learning pathways:** Promote open and flexible learning pathways offered by various TVET providers under different ministries.

**Data-driven decision-making:** Implement an automated data management and tracking system to facilitate informed decision-making, enhance programme quality, and effectively monitor the outcomes of TVET initiatives.

## Strategies and initiatives

The strategies for transforming the advanced TVET ecosystem are aligned with the MTVET framework and UNESCO's global strategy for TVET. These approaches strengthen collaboration, address emerging challenges, and ensure programme alignment with industry needs to develop resilient and future-ready TVET talent.

<b>Strategy 3A</b>	Creating integrated and coordinated governance structures for TVET HLIs
<b>Strategy 3B</b>	Enhancing TVET programmes and curriculum
<b>Strategy 3C</b>	Nurturing symbiotic relationship between industry and TVET institutions
<b>Strategy 3D</b>	Improving salary structures for TVET graduates
<b>Strategy 3E</b>	Enhancing flexible learning pathways
<b>Strategy 3F</b>	Implementing an automated data management and tracking system for MOHE TVET

“TVET is very important to ensure that the younger generation and the existing workforce are equipped with skills relevant to the current needs of the job market.”

**Datuk Seri Dr. Ahmad Zahid Hamidi**  
Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia  
and the Chairman of MTVET

### Strategy 3A

#### **Creating integrated and coordinated governance structures for TVET HLIs**

Establishing integrated and coordinated governance structures for TVET HLIs is crucial for aligning education, industry, and policy to address skills gap, drive economic growth, and meet evolving labour market needs. Policy coordination and stakeholder alignment including government agencies, industry partners, and education institutions will ensure quality, relevance, and access in TVET governance. This approach enhances collaboration, streamlines decision-making, and optimises resource allocation, equipping individuals with employable skills and fostering knowledge-driven economies. It also strengthens the recognition of qualifications among TVET providers, enabling seamless progression towards higher qualifications. Transforming governance in HLIs requires unified efforts and innovative leadership.

## Initiatives

### 3A.1: Expediting the development of the TVET ACT championed by MTVET

Expediting the development of a dedicated TVET Act, championed by MTVET with active leadership from MOHE, is crucial to strengthening Malaysia's skills ecosystem. MOHE plays a pivotal role in coordinating stakeholders, aligning national priorities, and ensuring the Act reflects the needs of HLIs. By establishing a clear legal framework, the Act will streamline governance, enhance transparency, and foster strategic collaboration among government agencies, industry partners, and educational institutions. This legislative measure ensures robust quality assurance, upholds standards, and creates a responsive environment for adopting emerging technologies and industry best practices. Additionally, the TVET Act will promote equitable access to high-quality vocational training, support lifelong learning, and enhance employability. Ultimately, it will act as a national catalyst for Malaysia's economic competitiveness and sustainable workforce development.

### 3A.2: Establishing polytechnics and community colleges as a single entity with flexible management through the formulation of the Malaysia Polytechnic Act

The Ministry will institutionalise polytechnics and community colleges as a single multi-campus statutory body with expanded autonomy through a dedicated legislative framework for both institutions. This restructuring allows polytechnics and community colleges to assume greater decision-making authority, enabling them to adapt swiftly to market demands and implement innovative educational solutions. With more flexible governance and operations, the Ministry can focus on strategic policy development and comprehensive sector regulation, addressing core policy issues and aligning education with national priorities. This organisational transformation ensures more effective resource allocation, sharper policy focus, and a more agile system that drives relevance and excellence in TVET.

### 3A.3: Expanding TVET MOHE framework to Levels 7 and 8

Expanding the TVET MOHE framework to include Master's (Level 7) and Doctorate (Level 8) degrees is essential for bridging advanced research, specialised competencies, and industry needs. The Ministry will provide strategic direction, develop policies, and secure funding to support this expansion, ensuring alignment with national priorities and global standards. TVET institutions will implement these programmes by designing research-driven curricula, fostering innovation, and collaborating with industries to address real-world challenges. This integration enables the production of a highly skilled, research-oriented and innovative workforce while broadening career pathways, enhancing global employability, and fostering lifelong learning. Additionally, it strengthens Malaysia's capacity to generate cutting-edge research and applied solutions, driving economic growth and sustainable development. Advanced TVET offerings ensure education remains future-ready, inclusive, and globally competitive.

### 3A.4: Establishing joint credential recognition and credit transfer programme between Ministries

A joint credential recognition and credit transfer programme between ministries is essential for fostering synergy and ensuring seamless transitions for learners across technical and vocational programmes under various government bodies. As a part of MTVET, MOHE plays a leading role in this initiative, supported by MBOT, to bridge ministries and recognise TVET qualifications up to Level 8. This effort eliminates redundancies, reduces programme repetition, and promotes continuous professional development. By streamlining pathways, the programme optimises resource allocation and equips learners with the flexibility to pursue diverse educational trajectories, aligning with industry needs and enhancing workforce readiness nationwide.

## Strategy 3B

### Enhancing TVET programmes and curriculum

Strengthening TVET programmes and curriculum is essential for equipping learners with future-ready skills, addressing the skills gap, and supporting sustainable economic growth. Aligning learning objectives with industry demands, fostering innovation, and incorporating emerging technologies ensure that learners are adaptable, competent, and prepared for the modern labour market. Collaborative partnerships among educational institutions, employers, and policymakers drive continuous improvement and maintain programme relevance. A well-developed TVET system empowers learners, contributes to national development goals, and fosters inclusive progress across dynamic and evolving industries.

## Initiatives

### 3B.1: Developing 'high technology and high-value' programmes

Developing 'high technology and high-value' programmes ensures that TVET aligns with emerging industry trends and high-growth sectors. The Ministry will play a central role in setting strategic national priorities and direction while HLIs will focus on fostering collaborations with industries, and embedding cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, data analytics, Fintech, digital media, cybersecurity, advanced manufacturing, and urban solutions into their training courses. By offering targeted training in high-growth areas, these programmes will enhance workforce competitiveness, support economic transformation, and meet the demands of a rapidly evolving job market.

### 3B.2: Aligning HLI TVET programmes with the COPTPA framework

The Code of Practice for TVET Programme Accreditation (COPTPA) is a framework aimed at enhancing the quality and relevance of technical and vocational education through standardised and reliable assessments aligned with industry needs. HLIs play a crucial role by offering new TVET programmes or converting existing ones to comply with COPTPA requirements. By embracing the COPTPA framework, HLIs drive the credibility, quality, and competitiveness of Malaysia's TVET ecosystem.

### 3B.3: Strengthening the quality and industrial experience of educators

The Ministry will strengthen the quality and industry experience of TVET educators by making COPTPA's requirements mandatory for all MOHE TVET programme accreditations. COPTPA requires HLIs to provide professional development opportunities, foster industry collaborations, and integrate best practices to maintain high teaching standards for industrial experience educators. This will ensure HLIs align with emerging technologies and industry standards.

Educators will be mandated to undertake a two-year industrial internship or a one-year sabbatical during their tenure and obtain a minimum number of skilled and soft skills certifications. HLIs must ensure that at least 50% of their educators have prior relevant industry experience and are required to involve industrial practitioners as part of their teaching workforce to further enhance the quality and relevance of programme delivery. These measures will standardise and elevate the quality of TVET educators, ensuring students are prepared for the demands of a competitive and evolving job market.

### 3B.4: Enhancing technological integration in programme delivery

This initiative focuses on integrating cutting-edge technologies, including artificial intelligence, cyber security, automation, and digital tools, into TVET programmes to equip students with competencies for future workplaces. The Ministry will formulate relevant policies to upgrade infrastructures and infostructures for modern teaching methods. HLIs will operationalise these efforts by managing resources and implementing technology-driven curricula, state-of-the-art and industrial teaching and learning (T&L) equipment and laboratories.

For continuity in offering up-to-date technologies in TVET curricula, HLIs must upgrade the equipment from time to time according to the programme standard. These measures ensure that students receive industry-aligned training and remain competitive in evolving job markets.

*“Enhancing skills and achieving professional recognition empowers the TVET workforce, unlocking access to employment opportunities and greater career advancement.”*

**Datuk Prof. Dr. Ts. Siti Hamisah Tapsir, FASc**  
President, MBOT,  
Group CEO, UCSI Group and Vice-Chancellor,  
UCSI University



## Strategy 3C

### Nurturing symbiotic relationship between industry and TVET institutions

An industry-recognised TVET Chamber of Commerce (CoC) and Craftsmanship Chamber (CC) foster a mutually beneficial relationship between industry and TVET institutions. This collaboration ensures curriculum relevance, promotes skills recognition, and strengthens partnerships, driving workforce development and aligning education with industry needs for economic growth. The CoC and CC bridge the gap by enabling the industry to influence training delivery, mentor students, and champion excellence. This partnership creates a cycle of innovation, employment, and competitiveness, significantly enhancing educational outcomes while bolstering industrial capacity and national productivity.

## Initiatives

### 3C.1: Establishing the Chamber of Commerce and Craftsmanship Chamber

The establishment of a CoC and CC will ensure the legitimacy and recognition of certification programmes, enhancing the value of certified skills in services and craftsmanship across various sectors.<sup>21</sup> MOHE together with other relevant ministries, will lead policy development and provide government endorsement, while industry endorsement strengthens the credibility and relevance of these certifications. The Ministry responsible for CoC and CC will be determined accordingly, as in the establishment of MBOT by MOHE, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) and *Kementerian Sumber Manusia* (KESUMA) previously. Regional CoCs and CCs will cater to unique industry demands, tailoring certifications and skills development accordingly. Incorporating non-technical programmes into the TVET framework complements technical offerings, fostering a holistic workforce strategy and supporting national economic goals.

<sup>21</sup> The German Crafts and Trades Regulation Code [Handwerksordnung (HwO)] forms the legal framework for the development of the German TVET system.

### 3C.2: Public awareness campaigns and recognition of services and craftsmanship trades

Public awareness campaigns will elevate the status of services and craftsmanship trades, encouraging broader participation in TVET programmes, including among persons with disabilities, indigenous communities such as the Orang Asli, and natives of Sabah and Sarawak, and other marginalised groups. The identified Ministry to lead CoC and CC will lead these campaigns, ensuring inclusivity and alignment with national goals, while HLIs play a vital role in designing accessible and high-quality TVET programmes. Recognition of technical talent by MBOT will be complemented by the CoC and CC, ensuring services and craftsmanship skills are valued, standardised, and in demand across various sectors. HLIs will actively participate by integrating CoC and CC endorsed standards into their programmes, while industries are encouraged to engage with the CoC and CC to co-design training pathways, mentorship opportunities, and certification frameworks, ensuring mutual benefits and alignment with national economic goals.

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*A skilled workforce is the backbone of any economy. TVET provides the bridge between education and employment.*

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## Strategy 3D

### Improving salary structures for TVET graduates

Enhancing salary structures for TVET graduates is essential to attract talent, elevate the sector's appeal, and recognise the value of skilled professionals. Fair compensation acknowledges their specialised technical expertise, fosters motivation, and encourages continuous innovation. Competitive wages not only improve workforce retention but also promote lifelong learning and strengthen the reputation of TVET careers in the dynamic job market. Establishing a TVET Act and a Craftsmanship Chamber could transform salary frameworks, ensuring fair wages that reflect graduates' skills while creating opportunities for growth and recognition within skilled trades.

## Initiatives

### 3D.1: Industry-aligned certification and skill standardisation

Industry-recognised certifications will bridge the gap between TVET programmes and industry demands by introducing structured credentials that validate practical skills and knowledge. These certifications enhance the credibility of graduates, boosting employability and improving entry-level earnings. As individuals advance through certification tiers, their expertise expands, unlocking higher wage opportunities and career progression. The Ministry will facilitate the establishment of certification frameworks, while HLIs work closely with employers to maintain alignment with evolving industry standards. This structured approach reduces skill mismatches, and fosters continuous collaboration, and builds a responsive, competitive, and innovative workforce that meets national and global economic demands.

### 3D.2: Public-Private Partnership for employment incentives

Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) will provide financial and non-financial incentives to encourage employers to offer higher starting salaries to TVET graduates, enhancing the appeal of technical and vocational careers. MOHE will play a strategic role in policy formulation, coordination, and integration of these initiatives into the proposed TVET Act. HLIs will collaborate with industry partners to facilitate student placements, internships, and skill development programmes.

The CoC and CC will be empowered to set sector-specific minimum wages, ensuring fair compensation. The Human Resource Development Corporation (HRDC) could expand its policy framework to make TVET student placements and internships eligible for claims, thereby supporting industries in leveraging their levy commitments. These collaborative efforts will create a supportive ecosystem that enhances employability and equitable opportunities for TVET graduates.

### 3D.3: Expanding the technologist scheme by the Public Service Department

This initiative aims to expand the Public Service Department's (JPA) recognition to include the remaining 374 TVET schemes, increasing the total recognised programmes to 411 by 2030. Currently, only 37 schemes (9%) are recognised. MOHE will provide strategic oversight and policy direction, ensuring alignment with national priorities and facilitating collaboration between JPA, HLIs, and industry.

HLIs will play a critical role in aligning their programmes with JPA's requirements, ensuring curricula meet professional standards and address public sector needs. Comprehensive recognition strengthens the national workforce by validating TVET graduates, and enhancing their employability and career progression within the public sector. By fostering collaboration among government bodies, institutions, and industry, the expanded technologist scheme drives innovation, boosts competitiveness, and supports Malaysia's long-term socioeconomic development.

### 3D.4: Establishment of dual or multiple apprenticeship programmes for TVET students

The establishment of dual or multiple apprenticeship programmes highlights the significance of hands-on training and cross-sector collaboration in preparing students for evolving workforce demands. This initiative allows TVET students to specialise in two or more disciplines, equipping them with diverse and adaptable skill sets. MOHE will play a central role in formulating policies, fostering partnerships, and providing partial funding to support programme implementation.

HLIs will be responsible for designing curricula that integrate rigorous academic coursework with structured workplace immersion, ensuring alignment with industry needs. Strong partnerships between institutions and employers will enrich the apprenticeship experience by sharing resources, expertise, and insights into industry trends. This approach enhances graduates' employability and creates a collaborative ecosystem committed to producing dynamic, future-ready professionals capable of thriving in rapidly changing job markets.

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*TVET transforms  
potential into expertise,  
and expertise into  
opportunities.*

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## Strategy 3E

### Enhancing flexible learning pathways

Flexible learning pathways in TVET education empower learners to customise their skills development, supporting lifelong learning and career adaptability. Through stackable credentials, competency-based education, and accessible, personalised learning options, TVET institutions enable individuals to acquire relevant expertise at their own pace. This approach fosters continuous professional growth, facilitates career progression, and ensures learners remain competitive in the face of evolving economic and technological changes. By aligning with industry demands, flexible pathways prepare individuals for success in a dynamic workforce while promoting resilience and adaptability in their professional journeys.

## Initiatives

### 3E.1: Offering short-term, focused training programmes

This initiative delivers short-term, specialised training programmes aimed at efficiently addressing specific skills or knowledge gaps. These programmes lead to micro-credentials, which serve as tangible certifications of skill mastery. Learners can accumulate these micro-credentials through a course credit bank, enabling them to progress incrementally toward full qualifications.

MOHE will play a strategic role in establishing the framework for micro-credentials, developing policies, and ensuring alignment with national priorities and industry standards. HLIs will implement these programmes by designing flexible, modular pathways tailored to learner needs, focusing on accessibility and quality. This approach is particularly beneficial for working professionals and individuals managing multiple responsibilities and accommodating diverse schedules while fostering lifelong learning opportunities. It equips learners with the adaptability to remain competitive in a rapidly changing job market while supporting national economic transformation.

### 3E.2: Establishing of TVET Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) or Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for skills

The establishment of TVET APEL for a skills-based system (APEL.S) focuses on evidence-based assessments rather than traditional report-based evaluations. It recognises and validates skills and knowledge gained through informal learning, work experience, or personal endeavours. This system eliminates redundant training, enabling individuals to transition into TVET programmes or the workforce more efficiently.

MOHE, through the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), will oversee the policy framework, ensure quality assurance, and provide strategic direction for implementing APEL.S. A dedicated TVET APEL Centre will be set up to provide a structured framework for assessing experiential learning and supporting its integration into the broader TVET ecosystem. HLIs will implement these assessments, ensuring alignment with national standards and industry needs. By moving beyond report-based evaluations, this initiative promotes inclusivity, flexibility, and lifelong learning, creating new opportunities for skilled professionals to advance their careers.

### 3E.3: Extended apprenticeship programme under the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265)

The implementation of an extended apprenticeship programme, spanning 12 to 24 months and compliant with the Employment Act 1955 (Act 265), ensures that industries hosting apprentices adhere to legal standards, safeguarding the rights and welfare of students during their training. MOHE, in collaboration with the relevant Ministries, will formulate relevant policies to ensure apprenticeship/internship programmes are practised across industries nationwide.

TVET institutions will coordinate placements, provide preparatory training, and establishing partnerships with industries to ensure the quality of apprenticeship experiences. By offering apprentices a longer period for hands-on industry exposure, this programme equips students with practical skills, enhances their employability, and fosters collaboration between industries and future professionals while maintaining a secure and supportive environment.

## Strategy 3F

### Implementing an automated data management and tracking system for MOHE TVET

Implementing an automated data management and tracking system for MOHE TVET enhances administrative efficiency, supports informed decision-making, and strengthens performance monitoring and transparency. By integrating data on student enrolment, performance, retention, and employability into a centralised and decentralised platforms, the system fosters accountability and continuous improvement. Real-time monitoring, advanced analytics, and evidence-based policy-making enable TVET to adapt to evolving industry demands, align with national development goals, and enhance learners' workforce readiness. Integration with the MTVET system ensures a cohesive approach to managing and optimising the TVET ecosystem.

## Initiatives

### 3F.1: Expanding MyMoheS data platform for MOHE TVET

The enhanced Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education Systems (MyMoheS) data platform will integrate data on student enrolment, performance, retention, and employability, providing a comprehensive view of the student journey from enrolment to employment. MOHE will lead its expansion to include both public and private higher learning institutions, fostering collaboration across Malaysia's TVET ecosystem. This platform will enable data-driven decision-making, improving accountability and alignment with workforce demands. TVET institutions will play a critical role in contributing accurate data and ensuring continuous improvement. MyMoheS strengthens the link between education and the workforce, supporting a more agile, future-ready TVET framework.

“The country needs more local skilled workers and technicians to cope with fast-growing business needs.”

**Datuk Keith Li**  
President of the China Entrepreneurs  
Association in Malaysia

### 3F.2: Blockchain-enabled credential tracking and AI-driven student management

The integration of blockchain technology for credential tracking and AI-driven student management systems will revolutionise how TVET aligns with labour market needs. Blockchain ensures secure, transparent, and tamper-proof verification of qualifications, enabling employers and educational institutions to validate credentials effortlessly. AI-driven systems, overseen by MOHE, will provide real-time insights into employment trends and skill demands. HLIs will use these insights to update curriculum design and institutional capacity, ensuring training programmes remain relevant. Automated reporting will highlight supply-demand mismatches, allowing policymakers to make agile adjustments. This system complements MyMoheS by focusing on granular insights into labour market dynamics and graduate outcomes, further strengthening workforce development and ensuring graduates are equipped with the most sought-after skills in a rapidly changing job market.

## Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Skills gaps and labour market alignment.
- Graduate earnings and wage growth.
- Learner enrolment and completion numbers.
- Graduate employment rates.

## Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 3-2.

**Exhibit 3-2: Initiative implementation roadmap**

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Propel
<b>Strategy A:</b> Creating integrated and coordinated governance structures for TVET HLIs	Establish a multi-stakeholder MTVET-led task force, align stakeholders, consolidate polytechnics and community colleges, expand the TVET MOHE Framework to Levels 7–8, and standardise credential recognition with inter-ministerial collaboration.	Roll out the TVET Act, enact the Malaysian Polytechnic Act, launch advanced TVET programmes at Levels 7–8, and pilot credential recognition with an integrated digital management platform.	Regularly update the TVET Act, achieve full polytechnic-college integration, expand TVET Levels 7–8 to more HLIs, and position Malaysia as a regional leader in credential portability through international partnerships and ASEAN collaboration.
<b>Strategy B:</b> Enhancing TVET programmes and curriculum	Conduct labour market analysis, pilot high-tech TVET programmes, train HLIs on COPTPA, align pedagogy through industry immersion, and integrate advanced tools like Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality (VR/AR) with blended learning models and educator training.	Expand high-tech TVET programmes nationally, integrate COPTPA into programmes, institutionalise industry exposure and advanced pedagogy, and enhance accessibility through AI-driven personalised learning, virtual programmes, and global certification development aligned with the industry innovation.	Position Malaysia as a Southeast Asia TVET hub through global marketing, dual certifications, COPTPA alignment, a national educator accreditation framework, AI-driven adaptive learning, VR/AR environments, and international collaboration to showcase advancements.

	Wave 1 (2026–2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Thrive
<b>Strategy C</b> Nurturing symbiotic relationship between industry and TVET institutions	Establish a national task force for the CoC and CC model, launch sector-specific pilots, develop governance for TVET collaboration, and promote craftsmanship through a nationwide campaign with media partnerships, awards, and community engagement.	Expand CoC and CC to all sectors with regional branches, advisory boards, and apprenticeship platforms; scale awareness campaigns, organise National Craftsmanship Day, enhance recognition programmes, and integrate TVET career awareness in schools.	Institutionalise CoC and CC governance, strengthen international partnerships, track performance, foster industry-policy dialogue, and position Malaysia as a regional craftsmanship leader through expositions, global campaigns, and a digital showcase of trades and success stories.
<b>Strategy D</b> Improving salary structures for TVET graduates	Create an industry-led task force to define skill standards and develop a National Skills Certification Framework, formulate PPP frameworks with employment subsidies, launch awareness campaigns, pilot certifications in TVET institutions, and co-design dual apprenticeships in key sectors.	Roll out standardised certification programmes with global recognition, regularly update skill standards, scale up PPP incentives for industries and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), integrate the technologist scheme into public service salaries, and expand dual apprenticeships aligned with the National Skills Certification Framework.	Institutionalise the National Skills Certification Framework as an ASEAN model with international mobility agreements, transition PPP incentives into sustainable policies, expand global partnerships and alumni networks, and institutionalise apprenticeship programmes to showcase Malaysia's TVET model worldwide.
<b>Strategy E</b> Enhancing flexible learning pathways	Conduct a labour market analysis, co-develop competency-based modular programmes with industry, create flexible online platforms, establish a national APEL.S framework with pilot centres and trained assessors, and align apprenticeship programmes with the Employment Act 1955 through employer incentives.	Scale short-term training programmes with micro-credentials and a centralised portal, establish nationwide APEL.S centres with AI-driven assessments, and expand apprenticeships under Act 265 compliance with modular academic programmes, a tracking system, and Multinational Corporation (MNC) collaborations.	Institutionalise short-term training with global accreditation, integrate APEL.S by using VR and authentic assessments, institutionalise apprenticeships as a core pathway, expand international partnerships, and position Malaysia's dual model as a regional benchmark.
<b>Strategy F</b> Implementing an automated data management and tracking system for MOHE TVET	Establish a task force to design a secure blockchain framework for TVET institutions and industries, ensure data protection compliance, and develop a national AI platform to monitor student progress, match opportunities, and train educators on AI-driven insights.	Scale the blockchain system across TVET institutions and industries, enable industry credential verification with international standards, support emerging technologies, and expand the AI platform for real-time data sharing, predictive analytics, personalised learning, and the global job market collaboration.	Institutionalise blockchain tracking for all Malaysian TVET certifications with global recognition and enhanced security and integrate the AI platform into the workforce policies for data-driven curriculum redesign, worldwide promotion, and international partnerships.

## Conclusion

The Ministry's commitment to developing a robust TVET ecosystem is pivotal for aligning education with the dynamic demands of industry and a rapidly changing workforce. However, challenges such as the absence of a comprehensive TVET Act, fragmented governance, curriculum misalignment with industry needs, and perceptions of insufficient soft skills among TVET graduates continue to impede progress. These issues restrict effective partnerships with industry and limit opportunities for work-based learning.

To overcome these barriers, optimising regulatory processes and fostering stronger collaboration among stakeholders are critical. Prioritising investments in infrastructure, modernising training facilities, and designing demand-driven curricula will significantly enhance educational quality and graduate readiness. Furthermore, ongoing professional development for educators is essential to ensure they can deliver relevant, adaptive training.

By addressing these gaps, the Ministry can establish a resilient and responsive advanced TVET competency framework. This will equip individuals with the skills to excel in a competitive, technology-driven global landscape, while simultaneously driving national economic growth and enhancing workforce competitiveness.

Shift



# Financial Sustainability

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## Introduction

Malaysia aspires to create a higher education ecosystem that is both financially sustainable and strategically adaptive. It focuses on empowering institutions to diversify income streams, optimise resource allocation, and build resilience against economic uncertainties. By emphasising innovative funding mechanisms and fostering greater collaboration with industry and community stakeholders, this initiative ensures long-term stability while preserving the accessibility and quality of education for all learners.

This shift addresses the need for robust governance, accountability, and transparency in financial management across institutions through a balanced approach. It underscores the importance of aligning institutional priorities with national and global trends, promoting entrepreneurial ventures, and leveraging strategic partnerships. By embracing sustainable financial practices, Malaysia's higher education system can drive impactful outcomes, ensuring the higher education sector remains a key driver of Malaysia's socio-economic and environmental goals.

## Why it matters

Financial sustainability is crucial for Malaysia's higher education system as it ensures the consistent delivery of quality education, reduces reliance on government funding, enhances resilience to future challenges, and promotes inclusivity.

### Stronger emphasis on efficiency and quality

With limited resources, institutions must focus on optimising operations, reducing waste, and ensuring funds are directed toward impactful initiatives. A financially sustainable system prioritises high-quality teaching, research, and facilities that benefit learners and faculty alike. It encourages innovative practices, such as cost-effective technology integration and strategic resource allocation, which drive excellence. By embedding financial sustainability, institutions can uphold rigorous academic standards and cultivate talent excellence through a culture of continuous improvement. This ensures that graduates are well-equipped to drive socio-economic development and enhance Malaysia's global competitiveness.

### Fostering engagement with donors and philanthropists

A financially sustainable higher education system attracts donors and philanthropists by showcasing responsible financial management and clear societal impact. Transparent governance and measurable outcomes assure donors that their contributions are making a difference. Active engagement with philanthropists can help diversify funding sources, supporting scholarships, research, and community programmes. Financial sustainability also fosters partnerships that go beyond monetary contributions, involving expertise and networking opportunities. Encouraging philanthropic participation ensures the long-term growth of institutions and enables initiatives that align with national development goals, ultimately strengthening the role of higher education as a driver of progress for Malaysia.

### Funding uncertainty and rising cost of higher education

Malaysia's higher education system faces growing funding uncertainties and rising operational costs due to inflation, expanding student populations, and evolving technological demands. Financial sustainability helps institutions navigate these challenges by diversifying income streams, such as industry collaborations and entrepreneurial ventures. Without sustainable financial strategies, rising costs risk compromising the accessibility and quality of education. Addressing funding uncertainties ensures institutions can plan long-term, safeguard essential programmes, and invest in innovations that meet the needs of learners and society. Financial sustainability is crucial for maintaining the system's stability, ensuring its capacity to adapt to economic fluctuations and global trends.

### Accessible higher education for every qualified Malaysian learner

Financial sustainability is critical to ensuring that every qualified Malaysian learner has access to higher education. A well-funded system can provide sufficient scholarships, affordable tuition, and targeted financial aid to support diverse student needs. Accessibility promotes social equity by empowering individuals from all socio-economic backgrounds to pursue education and contribute to national progress. Sustainable funding also allows institutions to maintain and expand facilities, hire quality educators, and invest in student support services. By prioritising access for all qualified learners, Malaysia ensures a continuous pipeline of skilled talent, fostering economic growth and strengthening social cohesion.

## Where we are

The Malaysian government has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to higher education by allocating a substantial portion of the national budget to its development. Beyond the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), funding for higher education is also channelled through other ministries and agencies to support scholarships, research, and other expenditure. The availability of student loans through the National Higher Education Fund Corporation or *Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional* (PTPTN) has further widened access to higher learning institutions (HLIs). Over time, strategic adjustments in funding have driven significant advancements in the higher education system. Nonetheless, a forward-looking and innovative funding approach is now crucial to boost participation, optimise resource allocation for HLIs, and enhance the system's overall effectiveness.

### Significant and consistent investment in higher education

The government remains committed to higher education, with expenditure increasing from RM13.7 billion in 2013 to RM15.3 billion in 2023. With a two percent growth in student enrolment, per-student expenditure declined slightly from RM20,700 to RM19,000 (Exhibit 4-1). In 2022, higher education spending by the Ministry accounted for approximately 3.5% of the national budget. This percentage is comparable to that of developed Asian economies such

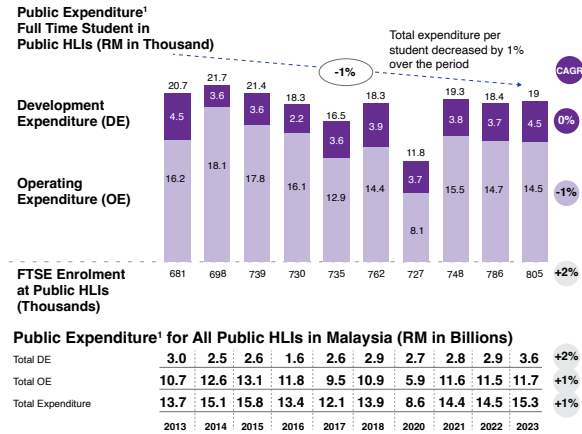
“Achieving financial sustainability requires strategic planning, disciplined execution, and continuous adaptation to changing environments.”

**Dato' Seri Ir. Dr. Zaini Ujang**  
Former Secretary General,  
Ministry of Higher Education

as Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan, with the exception of South Korea (Exhibit 4-2). However, it is notably lower than the higher education spending observed in countries with comparable GDP per capita, such as Chile and Mexico. PTPTN has played a pivotal role in enabling access to higher education, disbursing RM72.95 billion in loans to about four million students as of July 2024.<sup>1</sup> Ensuring PTPTN's sustainability remains crucial for the future of Malaysia's higher education system.

<sup>1</sup> Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional (PTPTN). (2020). *Pelan Strategik 2021-2025 PTPTN*

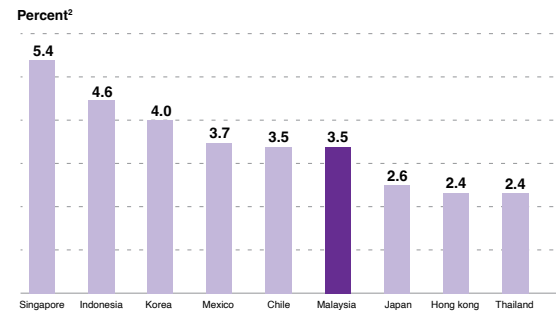
**Exhibit 4-1: Public expenditure on higher education in Malaysia**



<sup>1</sup> Excludes public university expenditure covered by non-government sources, e.g., tuition fees, investment income, and rental. Includes operating expenses at the Ministry level e.g., teaching hospitals, MQA, Divisions under Ministry.  
<sup>2</sup> Full-Time Student Equivalent (FTSE) numbers include students from public universities, polytechnics and community colleges.

Source: Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE)

**Exhibit 4-2: Higher education expenditure as a percentage of annual national budget 2022<sup>1</sup>**



<sup>1</sup> Peers comparison based on the following categorisation: Developed Asian economies (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Japan); SEA neighbours (Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore) and comparable GDP per capita (Chile, Mexico).  
<sup>2</sup> Latest data available: Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Hong Kong (2022); Japan, Chile (2021); Mexico (2020).

Source: UNESCO, 2024.

Spending on infrastructure maintenance and digital upgrades for public HLIs has risen alongside stable development expenditure. From 2005 to 2009, university maintenance spending grew by nearly 40 percent,<sup>2</sup> and the 2024 Budget allocated RM300 million for infrastructure repair and outdated equipment replacement. However, public universities continue to advocate for additional funding in the 2025 Budget to address critical maintenance needs and facility upgrades, citing deteriorating conditions in several buildings.<sup>3</sup>

While public HLIs have documented maintenance spending and are actively seeking increased funding, data on private HLIs remains scarce.<sup>4</sup> This underscores the need for improved transparency and strategic planning to ensure the long-term sustainability and quality of Malaysia's higher education infrastructure, supporting both public and private institutions effectively.



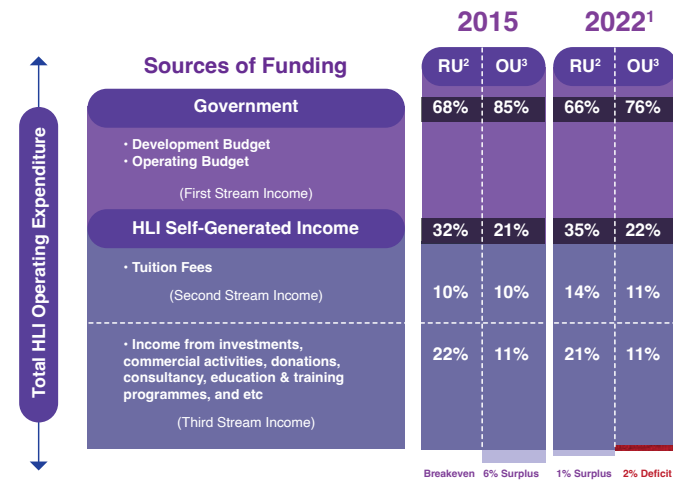
<sup>2</sup> Olanrewaju, A. L., & Abdul-Aziz, A. R. (2015). *Building maintenance management in a Malaysian university campus: A case study*  
<sup>3</sup> Bernama. (2024, October 11). *Budget 2025: Public universities call for increased funding for building maintenance*  
<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. (2022). *Higher Education Report*

### HLIs have experienced challenges in financial sustainability

The primary income sources for public HLIs are government funding (Stream 1), tuition fees (Stream 2), and revenue from investments, commercial activities, donations, and consultancy (Stream 3). Streams 2 and 3 represent income generated by HLIs themselves. Exhibit 4-3 shows that while income generation improved slightly, rising from 32% in 2015 to 35% in 2022 for research universities, and from 21% to 22% for other universities, it has not compensated for declining government support. Government contributions to other universities dropped from 85% in 2015 to 76% in 2022, resulting in persistent deficits. Furthermore, in 2021, 60% of public HLIs reported a combined deficit exceeding RM700 million, and in 2022, seven institutions faced a total deficit of over RM170 million, underscoring the urgent need for more sustainable financial strategies..

The financial status of private HLIs in Malaysia presents a complex landscape characterised by both challenges and opportunities. A study analysing financial statements from 2013 revealed that 46% of private HLIs reported post-tax losses, indicating significant financial vulnerabilities within the sector. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges, disrupting traditional educational delivery models and intensifying financial and operational pressures on private HLIs. Institutions have been compelled to adapt swiftly, embracing innovative delivery methods and seeking alternative revenue streams to ensure sustainability.<sup>5</sup>

Exhibit 4-3: Sources of funding for public HLIs



<sup>1</sup> Average actual data from 2022 audited financial statements.  
<sup>2</sup> RU = Research Universities.  
<sup>3</sup> OU = Other Universities (Public).

Source: Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia (MOHE) (2022). *Laporan tahunan penyata kewangan universiti awam Malaysia 2022*

### Cost per student varies across public HLIs in Malaysia

The per student costs are funded by government grants, tuition fees, and income generated by HLIs. Operating costs per student vary based on factors such as university size, programme offerings, and operational productivity and efficiency. For undergraduate programmes, the cost per student ranges from RM6,000 to RM21,000 for social sciences, RM11,000 to RM33,000 for science and technology, and RM45,000 to RM99,000 for medical and dental programmes.<sup>6</sup> These wide cost variations highlight the need for public HLIs to address disparities in operating costs and optimise the return on investment in higher education to ensure sustainability and efficiency.

<sup>5</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers. (2021). *Private Higher Education in Malaysia: Charting the path ahead*. <https://www.pwc.com/my/en/publications/2021/private-higher-education-in-malaysia-charting-the-path-ahead.html>

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2022). *Laporan tahunan penyata kewangan universiti awam Malaysia 2022*

## ● Objectives

The Ministry aims to establish a sustainable, outcome-focused funding system for Malaysia's higher education, engaging stakeholders across public, private, and social sectors. This initiative addresses the need for a proactive and innovative ecosystem to fund higher education sustainably. Key changes include enhancing income-generation initiatives linked to higher education, developing impactful programmes to support institutions in upgrading their infrastructure and digital capabilities, and implementing targeted PTPN support based on needs, quality standards, and improved collection strategies. Additionally, cost efficiency will be enhanced by addressing key cost drivers. The ultimate objective is to create a robust financial ecosystem that ensures accessible, equitable, and high-quality education aligned with international standards.

## ● Principles

The transformation of the higher education financing system is guided by several interrelated principles:

- Prioritising students as the central focus of the education system;
- Ensuring affordability and accessibility for all eligible candidates;
- Transitioning from a supply-side funding model to an input and performance-based approach; and
- Addressing donor fatigue through robust financial governance and the delivery of impactful outcomes.



## ● Strategies and initiatives

**Strategy 4A** Enhancing funding sources for development expenditure

**Strategy 4B** Enhancing revenue streams to support operating expenditure

**Strategy 4C** Optimising cost efficiency and resource allocation

**Strategy 4D** Enhancing the sustainability of the student loan model

### Strategy 4A

#### Enhancing funding sources for development expenditure

It is essential for HLIs to continue investing in the development and refurbishment of assets to meet the evolving educational needs of post-normal times. These assets include academic buildings, teaching hospitals, laboratories, studios, equipment, digital infrastructure, residential colleges, and renewable energy initiatives. This strategy provides alternative funding sources through innovative business models and partnerships, offering financing options that may come at lower rates than those available in the market. This approach not only enhances the infrastructure but also supports financial sustainability by diversifying income streams and reducing long-term operational costs.

“A strong focus on financial sustainability helps build resilience against economic uncertainties and fosters trust among stakeholders.”

**Datuk Mohamad Azhan Md. Amir**  
Deputy Secretary General  
(Management and Development)  
Ministry of Higher Education

### Initiatives

#### 4A.1: Reviewing the sustainability of development financing

A comprehensive study will be undertaken to assess potential funding sources and development financing models, encompassing the construction and upgrading of infrastructure across HLIs in Malaysia. This approach aims to strengthen university financial sustainability through more robust and forward looking financing mechanisms, without increasing fiscal pressure on the Ministry. In this regard, the proposed model will take into account the need for sound governance as well as professional and accountable fund management to ensure effective long term implementation.

#### 4A.2: Enhancing investment in capital expenditure through tax incentives

Investing in capital expenditures is crucial for HLIs to enhance teaching, learning, research, services, and student experiences. Quality infrastructure ensures competitiveness and supports evolving academic and industry needs. The government will encourage private HLIs to reinvest profits through tax incentives, such as double deductions for asset depreciation and expanded tax-deductible expenses for educational costs. These measures alleviate financial burdens and promote operational sustainability, enabling private HLIs to upgrade facilities and infrastructure. Targeted financial support further encourages reinvestment, fostering innovation, academic excellence, and long-term institutional growth while ensuring the higher education sector remains globally competitive.

### Strategy 4B

#### Enhancing revenue streams to support operating expenditures

Amid global economic challenges and rising education costs in this post-normal time, HLIs will focus on income generation. This demands strategic, visionary leadership with an entrepreneurial mindset, financial expertise, and change-driven commitment. Leaders should excel in collaboration, adaptability, change management, data-driven decision-making, and digital transformation, with a global outlook and strong communication skills. A capable income-generating team will build trust with policymakers, securing greater autonomy in financial decisions. This autonomy empowers HLIs to navigate economic uncertainties and achieve long-term financial sustainability and global competitiveness.

### Initiatives

#### 4B.1: Strengthening financial governance at HLIs to enhance endowment and Waqf funds

HLIs must first accumulate a substantial cash reserve from donations to establish endowment and Waqf funds, enabling impactful investments. Robust financial governance is essential to building trust among stakeholders, including students, donors, and the government, by ensuring transparency and accountability. It also ensures compliance with regulatory requirements, such as those set by the Inland Revenue Board of Malaysia. For Waqf funds, HLIs must also adhere to the requirements of various State Religious Islamic Councils. Compliance with these standards not only enhances institutional credibility but also strengthens the institution's reputation and global competitiveness, attracting donors and fostering sustainable partnerships. Strong governance frameworks further mitigate financial risks, ensuring institutional resilience against economic uncertainties.

To ensure the effective accumulation and management of endowment and Waqf funds, HLIs should establish the following:

- **Independent governance:** A Board of Trustees dedicated to the fund, with clearly defined fiduciary responsibilities.
- **Clear operational separation:** A distinct division between the investment activities of the fund and the operational or administrative functions of the HLI.
- **Professional fund management:** Appointed professionals to manage the investment and allocation of funds and assets.
- **Comprehensive policies:** A robust investment policy and a clear spending policy to guide the use of annual investment income effectively.

While building this reserve requires time, implementing specific policies can support the process. The Ministry has demonstrated support for HLIs by developing guidance and best practices through the University Transformation Programme (UniTP)  
Purple Book: *Enhancing University Income Generation*,

*Endowment, and Waqf*, published in 2016. This playbook outlines the establishment process, governance structures, professional management of investments, operating model, and fundraising approaches for enhancing endowment and Waqf funds.

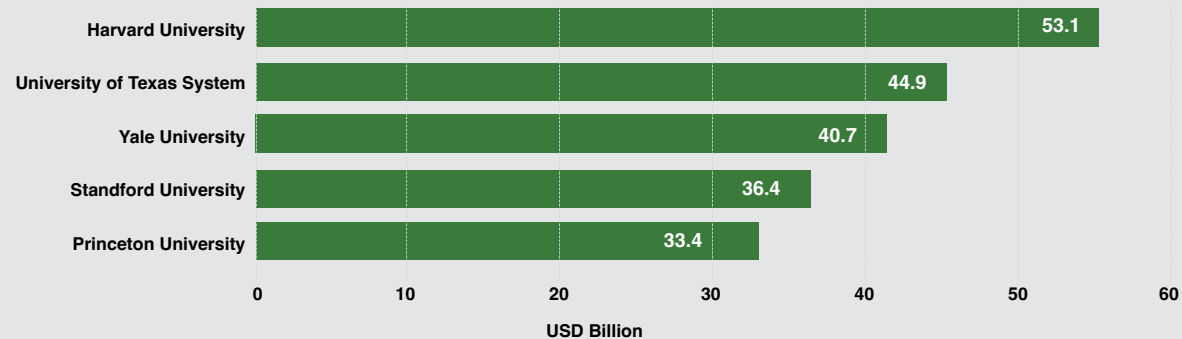
The Ministry will continue its support by:

- **Introducing matching grants for HLIs** during the initial fundraising and establishment period of the endowment fund;
- **Reviewing tax incentives** for individuals and corporations to encourage contributions and charitable giving to endowment funds for public and private HLIs, including implementing double tax deductions (subject to limits) to cultivate a culture of philanthropy;
- **Reviewing the tax requirement** of 50 percent usage of collections to accelerate the accumulation of a significant cash reserve from donations; and
- **Instituting KPIs for public universities** linked to the establishment of endowment funds and the diversification of funding sources.



### Box 4-1: Top five largest university endowments

As of fiscal year 2023, the top five universities worldwide by endowment size are:



Source: Investopedia.com. Access on 5th December 2024. <https://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/081616/top-5-largest-university-endowments.asp>

Typical sources of endowment funds for prestigious universities and other well-established institutions.

#### 1. Donations and gifts

Many institutions receive substantial donations from alumni, foundations, corporations, and other supporters. These contributions often come through fundraising initiatives or as regular donations, many of which are designated for specific purposes, such as scholarships, faculty chairs, or research initiatives.

#### 2. Investment income

University endowments are usually invested across diversified portfolios managed by specialised teams. Investments typically include equities, bonds, real estate, private equity, hedge funds, and other asset classes. Investment income is one of the largest contributors to the endowment's growth and long-term sustainability.

#### 3. Planned giving

Planned giving programmes, including bequests and charitable trusts, are common among well-funded institutions. These programmes offer donors various options for long-term contributions, which often become substantial assets over time.

#### 4. Annual fund contributions

Annual funds provide consistent financial support from alumni, parents, and friends. They often supplement the university's operational costs, funding academic programmes, facilities, and financial aid.

#### 5. Royalties and intellectual property income

Some universities generate revenue from intellectual property developed through faculty research. These royalties, often from patents, licenses, and spin-off companies, help support the endowment, especially in research-intensive institutions.

#### 4B.2: Enhancing the collection of zakat, Waqf, endowments, crowdfunding, and asset monetisation

HLLs will strengthen relationships with potential donors, including alumni, staff, students, ex-staff, and industry players, to create a more robust support network. Effective promotion and management of crowdfunding platforms will aid in the collection of donations, Waqf and endowment funds, making fundraising efforts more efficient and impactful. Educating staff on the benefits of tax breaks for Waqf and endowment, alongside targeted promotion to encourage zakat payments through HLLs, is essential for increasing financial contributions. HLLs should also explore innovative monetisation of assets, facilitated through collaborations with Yayasan Waqf Malaysia, University Holding Companies or other strategic partners, to generate sustainable income. Additionally, sharing best practices for innovative income-generating and cost-efficient initiatives among HLLs is crucial. Such collaboration can enhance the probability of successful implementation, fostering a culture of continuous improvement, innovation and financial sustainability.

#### 4B.3: Offering flexible education pathways and rationalising tuition fees

HLLs will broaden their academic offerings to address the needs of non-traditional students, focusing on life-wide and lifelong learning opportunities. These learners include school leavers and individuals seeking career mobility or skill enhancement. By unbundling academic programmes through innovative approaches like micro-credentials, Open and Distance Learning (ODL), stackable credential courses, jukebox courses, and specialised certifications, HLLs can adopt flexible, personalised learning models to meet diverse learner demands. Such initiatives are vital for driving adaptive and even transformative changes in the education landscape. To extend their reach further, HLLs can establish off-shore programmes, targeting international and non-traditional learners.

To sustain these efforts, HLLs will manage operating expenditures efficiently. Calculating the cost per full-time student equivalent (FTSE) enables institutions to strategically price services and optimise income generation. The cost per FTSE also plays a key role in rationalising tuition fee subsidies for traditional academic programmes. By using this data, HLLs can allocate subsidies equitably, based on government-approved criteria, ensuring that financial support reaches students who need it most. This approach promotes fair access to education while maintaining institutional sustainability.

#### 4B.4: Establishing a sustainable funding commitment for higher education from government

Higher education encompasses aspects of both public and private goods. It benefits society by creating an informed and skilled workforce, driving economic growth, and fostering civic engagement, aligning with the concept of a public good. However, it also provides individual advantages, such as higher earnings and personal advancement, making it excludable (since access often requires payment) and rivalrous in terms of resource use.

To strengthen the public good dimension of higher education, the government should maintain its funding commitment. Although HLLs strive for financial sustainability and aim to reduce reliance on government support, consistent funding is essential to mitigate unexpected fluctuations, particularly in block grants for public HLLs. Therefore, the Ministry should advocate allocating a specific percentage of the annual budget or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to higher education.

## Strategy 4C

### Optimising cost efficiency and resource allocation

The Ministry and HLIs will ensure effective resource allocation and cost management per student. Aligning funding with student demand and adopting performance-based funding models allows HLIs to allocate resources more efficiently, prioritising high-demand programmes and areas that yield strong academic and economic outcomes. This strategy promotes cost efficiency, reduces unnecessary expenses, and optimises returns on investment. By adopting this approach, HLIs can improve financial health while maintaining educational quality, supporting student success, and enhancing overall institutional performance.

## Initiatives

### 4C.1: Implementing the New Funding Formula or per-student funding model

Under the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education), the new funding formula (NFF) was introduced to integrate input-based and performance-based funding, strengthening the financial sustainability and accountability of higher learning institutions (HLIs) while aligning with national priorities.

Building on this approach, the per-student funding initiative, which mirrors the NFF, aims to further enhance efficiency and equity in Malaysia's higher education funding system. The Ministry and HLIs will collaborate to establish a mechanism for determining the per-student funding, ensuring a balanced distribution of government funding. Under the NFF, this allocation is determined based on both input and performance, reinforcing a more strategic and equitable funding model.

### Input-based funding: ensuring operational stability

Input-based funding ensures that public universities receive adequate resources to cover essential operational costs, particularly fixed expenses such as emoluments. By focusing on cost-per-student metrics across disciplines, this approach promotes transparency and equitable allocation of funds. The Ministry ensures consistent application of management accounting principles to account for core activities like teaching and research. HLIs, in turn, are responsible for managing these funds efficiently, addressing imbalances like administrative-to-academic staff ratios, and ensuring resources align with institutional focus areas and outreach goals.

### Performance-based funding: driving results and accountability

Performance-based funding allocates a portion of the budget based on measurable outcomes such as graduate employability, research output, and societal impact. The Ministry sets clear performance criteria to align institutional strategies with national higher education goals, while HLIs are expected to innovate and optimise performance to compete for these funds.

### Ministry-HLI collaboration for balanced funding

By combining input-based and performance-based funding, the Ministry provides operational stability while incentivising results. HLIs must demonstrate accountability and align efforts with the national vision, creating a system that fosters efficiency, equity, and progress.

### 4C.2: Revising the playbook for cost efficiency and academic productivity

The University Transformation Programme Silver Playbook: Enhancing Cost Efficiency and Academic Productivity (UniTP Silver Book) emphasises a framework where academic productivity is measured using cost per graduate, a globally recognised university productivity metric. This metric comprises two key indicators: the annual cost per full-time student equivalent (FTSE) and the on-time graduation rate. The Ministry has consistently refined the cost per FTSE calculation across all public universities, enabling them to monitor instructional versus non-instructional costs and academic versus administrative costs, ultimately driving improved cost efficiency.

*“Financial sustainability is not about having endless resources, but about managing resources wisely to create lasting impact.”*

**Datuk Prof. Dr. Azlinda Azman**  
Director General of Higher Education

The primary data source for calculating the cost per FTSE is the HLI's annual financial report. However, variations in the level of financial disclosure among public HLIs pose significant challenges. To address this, continuous enhancement of the cost allocation framework and annual reporting practices is essential. The UniTP Silver Book will be revised to include a comprehensive cost allocation framework for calculating cost per FTSE, improved financial reporting disclosure, and initiatives to boost cost efficiency among HLIs.

HLIs can enhance cost efficiency through various initiatives, such as resource and service sharing, developing consortiums for bulk procurement of consumables, and optimising facility utilisation. Additionally, leveraging digitalisation to streamline administrative processes and increasing collaboration with industry partners can further reduce costs without compromising quality. Encouraging benchmarking with other institutions, both locally and globally could also help identify best practices for cost management and operational efficiency.

Additionally, facilitating group purchasing schemes for shared resources among public and private HLIs can reduce costs through economies of scale, enabling these institutions to channel savings into quality improvements. These strategies aim to empower private HLIs to strengthen their financial position, fostering long-term growth and contributions to Malaysia's higher education goals.



## Strategy 4D

### Enhancing the sustainability of the student loan model

PTPTN must continue to strengthen its financial resilience through focused adjustments to loan disbursement and repayment mechanisms, including aligning repayment commitments with graduates' income capacity. Shared responsibility among students, the government and stakeholders remains a key foundation in reducing pressure on public financing. The implementation of innovative repayment schemes and the strengthening of financial literacy among borrowers can increase collection rates, support more equitable access to higher education and ensure the continuity of PTPTN's role in the near term while building a strong foundation towards a sustainable and future ready model.

## Initiatives

### 4D.1: Improving PTPTN repayment rates

PTPTN is to introduce and enhance strategic measures aimed at improving loan repayment rates. The effort includes a reconsideration of the Income-Contingent Loan Repayment (ICLR) model, which aligns repayment amounts with borrowers' income levels. PTPTN is to strengthen data-sharing collaborations with *Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri* (LHDN) and the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) to enhance repayment tracking and collections. Legislative adjustments can be explored to allow high-income earners to partially use EPF savings for loan settlement. Salary deductions may also be considered as a mechanism for repayment. Additionally, greater engagement with HLIs or higher learning institutions is necessary, linking repayment performance with institutional accountability to drive better outcomes.

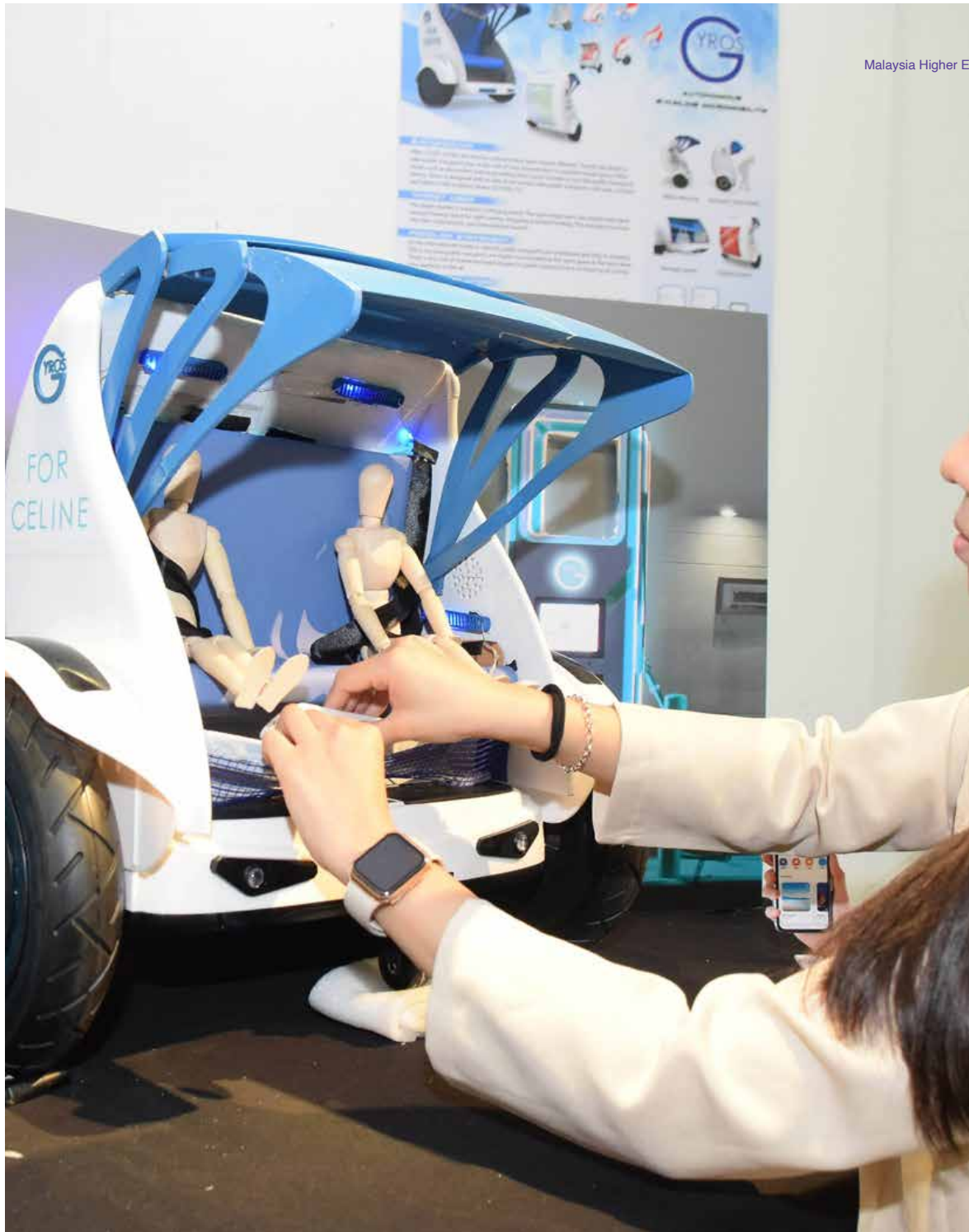
Stricter enforcement measures should be reintroduced, including travel restrictions for defaulters in partnership with the Immigration Department, as well as the listing of severe defaulters in credit systems to encourage compliance. These initiatives aim to create a balanced, effective system that ensures timely repayments while fostering accountability and collaboration among stakeholders, ultimately benefiting both borrowers and society.

### 4D.2: Enhancing equitable distribution of loans and strategic promotion of savings scheme

PTPTN is transitioning to a needs-based lending model to better support students from low-income families and those eligible for government aid schemes. While loans will remain accessible to all eligible students, additional assistance will target those facing greater financial challenges. The government will also regularly review subsidised interest rates on these loans. Loan allocation will be guided by both financial needs and course relevance. To ensure equitable funding, PTPTN will prioritise loans for students enrolled in high-performing institutions and courses with strong employability and repayment outcomes. PTPTN will also introduce incentives to promote financial discipline and encourage recipients to meet the National Education Savings Scheme or *Skim Simpanan Pendidikan Nasional* (SSPN) account savings threshold. By balancing access to education with financial responsibility, PTPTN aims to ensure equitable opportunities, improve repayment rates, enhance employability, and elevate the performance of HLIs.

### 4D.3: Transforming the PTPTN business model for sustainable student loan financing

The Ministry will undertake a feasibility study to assess the potential transformation of the PTPTN business model. The study will examine various forward looking approaches to strengthen PTPTN's sustainability, encompassing funding sources, collection mechanisms, and repayment efficiency. The proposed new model aims to reinforce PTPTN's financial position, improve loan collection effectiveness, and provide more responsive financial flexibility to meet the evolving needs of higher education financing.



## Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Total Waqf and endowment fund size and its annual growth rate (%)
- Percentage of total income generated in relation to operating expenditure
- Proportion of academic staff relative to administrative staff
- Percentage of PTPTN repayment rates
- The amount of deposit received in SSPN accounts against the set target

## Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 4-4.

**Exhibit 4-4:** Initiative implementation roadmap

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Propel
<b>Strategy A</b> Establishing funding sources for development expenditures	Conduct a comprehensive study to assess funding sources and development financing models for HLI infrastructure.	Finalise and secure approval for an advanced infrastructure financing model grounded in sound governance.	Evaluate and refine the implementation of the model to ensure the long term financial sustainability of universities.
	Propose tax deductions for asset depreciation and allowances for private HLIs business expenses.	Seek approval, establish implementation guidelines, and perform impact assessments.	Refine policies, expand initiatives and monitor compliance.

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Propel
<b>Strategy B</b> Enhancing revenue streams to support operating expenditures	Seek approval from the Ministry of Finance (MOF) to obtain government matching funds for endowments.	Develop and implement comprehensive guidelines to facilitate endowment matching initiatives.	Assess income streams from endowment initiatives.
	Set targets for HLIs to secure funding from zakat, endowment, and Waqf. Share best practices among HLIs to enhance efficiency and collaboration.	Improve promotion and collection efforts to maximise income from endowment and Waqf sources.	Assess income streams from endowment and Waqf initiatives.
	Set targets for HLIs to introduce courses under the unbundling of programmes and the amount of income generated.	HLIs develop related programmes and start offering them.	Assess income streams generated from unbundling of programmes.
	Analyse and compare tuition fees with the actual cost per student across HLIs.	Submit the rationalisation plan for approval by the government.	Monitor and evaluate the impact of tuition fee rationalisation.
	Prepare a proposal to determine the government’s commitment to the operating budget, presented as a percentage of GDP or the annual budget.	Seek approval, pilot the framework, and monitor its impact.	Institutionalise, evaluate, and refine the model.
	<b>Strategy C</b> Optimising cost efficiency and resource allocation		
	Simulate the first allocation of the budget under the NFF or per-student funding.	Conduct the final simulation and initiate the allocation of the budget using the NFF or per-student funding.	Continuously enhance and evaluate the impact of implementing the NFF or per-student funding.
	Launch the Playbook on cost efficiency and financial reporting.	Oversee its implementation through training, monitoring, and iterative refinements.	Strengthen the initiative by conducting periodic reviews.

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Propel
<b>Strategy D</b> Enhancing the sustainability of the student loan model	PTPTN will identify, implement, or reintroduce measures to enhance the repayment rate.	Assess the effectiveness of collection initiatives based on improvements in repayment rates.	Continuously refine and monitor collection initiatives to sustain and increase repayment performance.
	Implement need-based distribution of loans and strengthen efforts to incentivise and improve education savings.	Measure success by tracking the increase in savings under SSPN.	Introduce and refine initiatives to encourage education savings, ensuring continuous growth in SSPN savings.
	Conduct a feasibility study on transforming the PTPTN business model, encompassing funding, collections, and repayment mechanisms.	Finalise and implement the approved PTPTN business model to strengthen financial sustainability and improve collection efficiency.	Evaluate and enhance the implementation of the model to ensure long term flexibility in higher education financing.

## Conclusion

Malaysia’s higher education system must achieve financial sustainability to remain future-ready in post-normal times marked by technological advancements and fiscal challenges. The Ministry is committed to building a funding ecosystem that is outcomes-driven, efficient, and inclusive of contributions from public, private, and social sectors. Key measures include linking government funding to performance, reforming student financing mechanisms, and encouraging higher learning institutions to diversify revenue through innovative approaches such as donor support for Waqf and endowment funds. Cost efficiency will be prioritised to ensure that the system maintains continuous quality improvements without compromising access. By fostering resilience, embracing emerging technologies, and promoting collaborative funding efforts, Malaysia can sustain a high-quality higher education system. These strategies will ensure that the nation’s learners are equipped to excel in a rapidly evolving global landscape while contributing to a progressive and sustainable future.



Shift



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# Agile and Resilient Governance

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## Introduction

Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) are vital for nurturing humanity-centric talents equipped with the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for nation-building. In a complex global landscape, fostering individuals who think critically, act compassionately, and innovate responsibly is crucial. To achieve this, HLIs rely on three core processes: disseminating knowledge through teaching and learning, advancing knowledge via research and innovation, and translating knowledge into societal benefits. These interconnected processes empower individuals to contribute meaningfully to social, economic, and cultural development.

Effective higher education governance plays a critical role in supporting these efforts by ensuring collaborative decision-making among faculty, administrators, students, and community partners. It aligns institutional values and missions with shared goals, enhancing accountability, transparency, and adaptability. By fostering strong relationships and open communication, governance enables HLIs to remain responsive to societal needs while driving innovation and progress. Governance is not merely an operational framework but a powerful enabler of transformation. It enhances institutional efficiency, aligns goals with community and national priorities, and supports the long-term sustainability of HLIs, solidifying their role as drivers of change and progress.

## ● Why it matters

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Strengthening the governance of HLIs is crucial in addressing the challenges arising from political changes and the COVID-19 pandemic. These events exposed vulnerabilities in current governance structures, highlighting the need for resilience, adaptability, and alignment with societal needs. Frequent leadership changes within the Ministry disrupted continuity and clarity, hindering the implementation of strategic plans. However, these changes also created opportunities for innovation, fresh perspectives, and the potential to realign priorities. A robust and flexible governance framework is essential to harness these opportunities, ensuring HLIs maintain stability and effectively adapt to evolving demands. Having separate acts for public and private HLIs creates governance and equity disparities, as public institutions face stricter government control, while private ones prioritise autonomy and revenue. This duality leads to variations in student rights, inconsistent practices, and divergent priorities. A unified legal framework could address these gaps, promoting fairness, collaboration, and alignment with Malaysia's higher education goals.

### **Strategic and adaptive governance framework for HLIs to align with national development goals**

Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) require a governance framework that provides clear strategic direction. This framework enables them to navigate an ever-changing environment while maintaining alignment with national development goals. This framework must prioritise adaptability, allowing HLIs to respond effectively to emerging challenges without compromising core values related to academic excellence, innovation, and societal impact.

A focus on strategic direction ensures HLIs are equipped to contribute meaningfully to national priorities, particularly in workforce development, research, and innovation, areas essential for post-pandemic recovery and long-term growth. By fostering resilience and agility, the framework can help HLIs remain relevant, impactful, and capable of driving progress within a dynamic global and national context.

### Balancing autonomy and accountability for effective governance

A cornerstone of the new governance framework is the empowerment of HLIs through greater autonomy and independence from the Ministry and government. Enhanced autonomy enables HLIs to respond more effectively to modern challenges by making agile decisions, customising curricula, and aligning research agendas with emerging societal needs. This flexibility fosters innovation and supports improved educational outcomes.

However, autonomy must be balanced with clear accountability mechanisms. HLIs must remain responsible for their performance, ensuring they uphold academic integrity and address the needs of students, staff, and the broader community. Transparent accountability systems reinforce trust and promote responsible decision-making.

Striking this balance between autonomy and accountability is critical for developing a governance model that is both flexible and responsible governance model. Such a model enables HLIs to innovate and adapt while maintaining alignment with their mission and societal expectations, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and effective higher education system.

### Innovation in higher education governance to address evolving global challenges

The proposed governance framework must prioritise innovation as a cornerstone of higher education. In a rapidly changing world, HLIs must not only adapt to technological advancements but also lead in creating solutions to societal challenges. Encouraging innovation in teaching, research, and administration innovation is essential to achieving this goal.

The framework should promote environments that facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration, encourage investment in digital infrastructure and cultivate a culture of continuous improvement. By embedding innovation into governance structures, HLIs can become more agile and better equipped to address current and future challenges. This approach ensures that HLIs remain relevant and impactful in an increasingly complex global landscape.

“The duty of a leader is to serve the people, not to rule over them.”

Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra al-Haj  
First Prime Minister of Malaysia

### Adaptive and purpose-driven governance for resilient HLIs

The governance framework must ensure that HLIs operate in ways that are both adaptive and purpose-driven ways. This requires institutions to adjust their strategies and operations in response to evolving economic, political, and social circumstances. An adaptive framework equips HLIs to remain flexible and responsive in a dynamic environment.

A purpose-driven approach reinforces the central mission of higher education: Fostering the holistic development of students and generating knowledge that benefits society. By combining adaptability with a clear sense of purpose, HLIs can move beyond merely surviving disruptions to thriving in a rapidly changing world. This governance model will create stronger, more resilient institutions capable of shaping a better future. It ensures that HLIs continue to fulfil their critical role in advancing societal progress, even amidst uncertainty and change.

## Where we are

During the period 2015–2025, the government has made significant strides in enhancing governance practices in HLIs. One of the most notable efforts has been the granting of greater autonomy to all public universities.<sup>1</sup> This shift aims to empower these institutions to make independent decisions regarding their academic and administrative functions, thereby fostering innovation and responsiveness to the needs of students and the job market. Despite existing achievements, possibilities for progress remain a crucial aspect of any successful organisation or institution. This idea emphasises that even when milestones have been reached, there is always room for further development and innovation.

### Malaysian higher education acts

Malaysia has established a framework of 11 acts related to higher education that regulate all HLIs in the country, encompassing both public and private institutions. Each act corresponds to specific types of institutions and addresses various aspects of governance, quality assurance, and academic standards. These legislative measures ensure accountability and uniformity across the higher education sector. As illustrated in Exhibit 5-1, these acts collectively shape the operational, administrative, and academic functions of HLIs, providing comprehensive guidelines that facilitate their governance and development.

#### Exhibit 5-1: Key legislative acts governing Malaysian higher education

1. University of Malaya Act 1961 (Act 682)
2. Ungku Omar Polytechnic Act 1974 (Act 1450)
3. Private Higher Educational Institutions Act 1996 (Act 555)
4. National Higher Education Fund Corporation Act 1997 (Act 566)
5. Malaysian Qualifications Agency Act 2007 (Act 679)
6. Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 (AUKU) (Act 30)
7. Educational Institutions (Discipline) Act 1976 (Act 174)
8. National Council on Higher Education or *Majlis Pendidikan Tinggi Negara (MPTN)* Act 1996 (Act 546)
9. Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 1976 (Act 173)
10. Constitution of the International Islamic University Malaysia (Companies Act 2016)
11. Statutory Bodies Act (Act 605)

### Vision and goals

Aligning their vision, goals, and strategic priorities with the national agenda is essential for HLIs. However, many face systemic challenges in achieving this alignment. While their efforts are often driven by output-focused Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), there is a growing need to prioritise values and meaningful impacts that reflect their educational mission.

Legislative frameworks, such as the Universities and University Colleges Act (AUKU) and Act 605, often limit flexibility and hinder innovation. At the same time, insufficient attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) weakens efforts to create a vibrant and equitable educational environment. Overcoming these challenges is essential to developing a higher education landscape that aligns with national priorities while fostering inclusion and innovation.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2018). *The Malaysian education report 2018*.



### Leadership, organisational structure and processes

The appointment process for boards and university management is critical in shaping institutional governance, particularly for university hospitals, holdings, and subsidiary companies, including startups and spin-offs. Clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of these boards and management teams is essential for ensuring effective oversight and strategic direction. However, challenges often stem from autocratic leadership styles that emphasise full autonomy, which can conflict with the need for empowered leaders who foster collaboration and innovation. Inconsistent procedures and excessive bureaucratic controls further limit operational efficiency, preventing institutions from adopting best practices demonstrated in the University Transformation Programme (UniTP), Green Book. A lack of adaptability and agility also hinders these institutions from responding to rapidly changing global trends and sustainability practices, affecting their long-term viability and impact. Addressing these challenges is vital for creating a more dynamic, innovative, and responsive higher education environment.

### Autonomy and accountability

The concept of autonomy in higher education often suffers from inconsistent interpretations, resulting in unclear devolution of decision-making rights and a gap between expectations and implementation. Overlapping jurisdiction between the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) further complicates governance, particularly for polytechnics and community colleges governed by the MPTN Act. Additionally, the relationship between Act 555 and the operational requirements of private HLI highlights significant compliance challenges. Similarly, the lack of clarity in Act 605 exacerbates governance issues, highlighting the urgent need for a comprehensive review to ensure coherence, efficiency, and alignment with the evolving needs of higher education institutions.

The absence of a clear mechanism for checks and balances in higher education governance undermines institutional effectiveness. Performance evaluations and contractual frameworks for leadership roles are often overlooked, leading to insufficient accountability. Funding models are inconsistently applied, creating challenges in financial management. Furthermore, the effectiveness of boards and management is rarely assessed, while governance audits are not integrated into oversight processes, leaving inefficiencies unresolved. The lack of structured mechanisms to address staff welfare and grievances further aggravates these issues. Addressing these gaps is critical to establishing a higher education system that is both accountable and responsive to evolving needs.

### Inclusion

Limited engagement in policy development often results in a disconnect between leadership and stakeholders, making it difficult to address pressing challenges in higher education. Issues such as declining mental health among learners and talents, inadequate information structures, and the lack of democratisation and equity in knowledge-sharing further exacerbate this disconnect. Additionally, insufficient attention to DEI hinders meaningful progress in developing both learners and talents. Addressing these challenges holistically is essential to fostering a supportive and inclusive educational environment, one that promotes collaboration, innovation, and overall well-being.

## ● Objectives

To establish a robust governance framework that aligns visions and strategic initiatives through collaborative transformative leadership, empowering stakeholders with autonomy while ensuring accountability and valuing diverse voices in decision-making.

## ● Principles

The strategies and initiatives aimed at achieving agile and resilient governance have been developed around five interconnected principles:

- **Integrated and collaborative vision, mission and strategic planning**  
A cohesive framework that aligns HLI's visions and missions with national aspirations is essential for ensuring educational relevance and effectiveness. This alignment enhances graduate employability, supports strategic national development, and optimises resource allocation.
- **Transformational leadership**  
Transformational leadership inspires individuals to reach their full potential and embrace change. By fostering collaboration and innovation, such leaders empower team members to take ownership and contribute to a shared vision.
- **Comprehensive autonomy**  
Comprehensive autonomy empowers HLI's to make independent decisions regarding governance, curriculum, and resources. This independence fosters innovation and adaptability, enabling institutions to respond effectively to student and job market needs.
- **Balancing accountability**  
Balancing accountability holds HLI's responsible for their actions while fostering trust and innovation. It ensures transparency and effective resource utilisation while allowing the flexibility needed for experimentation and adaptation.
- **Inclusive governance**  
Inclusive governance ensures that diverse perspectives are represented in decision-making within HLI's. This approach fosters belonging and engagement among stakeholders, leading to more equitable policies and enhanced problem-solving.

## ● Strategies and initiatives

Four strategies have been defined to achieve the objectives of this Shift. Each strategy is accompanied by corresponding initiatives that will guide the higher education system toward greater agile and resilient governance.

<b>Strategy 5A</b>	Harmonising governance across the higher education ecosystem
<b>Strategy 5B</b>	Empowering transformational leaders to align institutional goals with national priorities
<b>Strategy 5C</b>	Strengthening accountability and trust for sustainable growth
<b>Strategy 5D</b>	Establishing an inclusive governance framework to represent diverse stakeholders

“Good governance is not just about laws and regulations; it’s about values, ethics, and the commitment to serve the people.”

Tun Abdul Razak Hussein  
Second Prime Minister of Malaysia

### Strategy 5A

#### Harmonising governance across the higher education ecosystem

This strategy focuses on harmonising governance across the higher education ecosystem to foster collaboration among HLIs, government agencies, and key stakeholders. The existence of 11 separate Acts regulating higher education in Malaysia can create complexities and inefficiencies, leading to overlapping or inconsistent standards across institutions. This fragmentation may result in administrative burdens for HLIs and challenges in ensuring equitable governance and quality assurance. Furthermore, reforming or aligning policies with global trends could be hindered by the need to amend multiple acts simultaneously. Streamlining the 11 acts into a unified, comprehensive, and overarching act can reduce complexity, promote consistency, and ease the administrative burden for HLIs. Establishing a central regulatory body to oversee and harmonise governance, quality assurance, and academic standards across all institutions can further ensure equity and efficiency.

## Initiatives

### 5A.1: Establishing National Education Council

The National Education Council or *Majlis Pendidikan Negara* (MPN) will be chaired by the Prime Minister. The primary purpose of the MPN is to serve as a unifying entity that ensures alignment of policies, strategies, and initiatives across the whole education landscape. Among its key roles is streamlining decision-making and strengthening policy coordination across ministries that affect education in Malaysia. The council will monitor and evaluate the performance of the MOE, MOHE, and HLIs, initiate intervention measures, evaluate proposals for strategic initiatives, and action plans.



### 5A.2: Proposing the One Higher Education Act

The proposed One Higher Education Act (OHEA) seeks to unify and harmonise the Universities and University Colleges Act (AUKU) and the Private Higher Education Institutions Act (Act 555) into a cohesive framework. This legislation will enhance governance, quality assurance, and accessibility across public and private higher education institutions. It strengthens the role of the MPN in policy implementation, safeguards academic freedom and student rights, and reinforces the existing accreditation framework led by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to ensure consistent quality standards. The Act also promotes equitable funding mechanisms, fosters research collaboration, and encourages international partnerships. By addressing diverse student needs and institutional priorities, the Act aims to create a balanced and inclusive higher education landscape in Malaysia.

### 5A.3: Reviewing the Statutory Bodies (Discipline and Surcharge) Act 2000 (Act 605) for HLIs

This Act enforces standardised disciplinary and surcharge provisions for statutory bodies, creating challenges for HLIs due to their unique needs for academic integrity, innovation, and autonomy. Proposed enhancements include exemptions allowing HLIs to implement tailored disciplinary frameworks and waiving surcharge obligations when quality standards are met. These changes would empower HLIs with greater flexibility to innovate, align governance with global practices, and foster accountability without stifling progress. Balancing autonomy and responsibility, these amendments aim to enhance HLIs' ability to navigate the complex higher education landscape, ensuring a governance model that supports both academic excellence and institutional integrity.

#### 5A.4: Revising governance and organisational structure in the ministry

This initiative aims to restructure the governance framework of HLIs in Malaysia by consolidating oversight under a single, unified entity, aligning with the principles of the one higher education initiative. Currently, governance responsibilities are distributed among multiple divisions: the Public HLI Governance Division or *Bahagian Governan IPTA*, the Private HLI Governance Division or *Bahagian Governan IPTS*, and the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education or *Jabatan Pendidikan Politeknik dan Kolej Komuniti*. This arrangement results in fragmented standards, duplicated efforts, and inefficiencies. The proposed restructuring will create a cohesive governance framework, streamlining decision-making and promoting synergy in policy implementation. This unified approach will foster resource sharing, equitable access, and consistent quality standards, empowering HLIs to address shared challenges, drive innovation, and better serve students, society, and the economy.

#### 5A.5: Establishing an ombudsman for HLIs

This initiative introduces an independent Ombudsman at the ministry level to strengthen accountability and governance in HLIs. Guided by international standards from the International Ombudsman Association (IOA), the Ombudsman will mediate and resolve disputes and grievances from stakeholders involving the university's board of directors and top management. Its primary role is to ensure fair practices, foster trust, and uphold governance standards. The Ombudsman's authority and responsibilities will be clearly defined in a new legislative framework, ensuring impartiality and effectiveness.

#### 5A.6: Developing policy to support the new funding formula based on input and performance

The Ministry will develop clear policies and guidelines to implement the New Funding Formula for public HLIs. This formula integrates input- and performance-based funding to ensure fair and effective resource allocation. Institutions will be required to meet specific criteria outlined in the formula, including tracking and reporting relevant performance metrics, optimising resource allocation using per-student cost calculations, and aligning operational budgets and programme outcomes with funding objectives.

Block grants will be allocated transparently based on per-student costs, providing stable, input-based funding for essential operations. Performance-based funding will further reward demonstrated achievements in performance, competency, and productivity, serving as a strategic tool to align institutional efforts with national priorities and enhance contributions to Malaysia's economic, social, and technological goals.

#### 5A.7: Establishing acts related to TVET

The initiative to establish a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act is to strengthen Malaysia's technical education ecosystem. This legislation will provide a comprehensive framework to standardise and regulate TVET programmes, ensuring high-quality, industry-relevant curricula that address current and future workforce demands. It will promote equitable access to technical education and training, empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds to contribute to economic growth and innovation.

In parallel, a new legislative framework will be introduced to provide polytechnics and community colleges with a clearer and more flexible governance structure. This structural reform will make institutions more competitive, reduce routine oversight, and enhance institutional decision making authority, allowing them to be more agile and responsive to evolving market demands. With a refined governance model, polytechnics and community colleges will be better positioned to implement innovative educational strategies, strengthen industry partnerships, and drive TVET related research and development.

## Strategy 5B

### Empowering transformational leaders to align institutional goals with national priorities

To foster transformational leadership in higher education, rigorous and criteria-driven processes will be established for appointing Chairman, Board Members, and Presidents or Vice-Chancellors across institutions. These processes will ensure the selection of leaders capable of driving institutional change and aligning their institutions with national development goals.

Structured leadership development programmes will cultivate Chairman, Board Members, and institutional leaders who can navigate complex challenges and advance educational progress. These programmes will emphasise strategic decision-making, innovation, and collaborative approaches that empower leaders to address societal demands, embrace technological advancements, and respond effectively to global challenges.

Regular evaluations of the effectiveness of the Chairman, Board Members, and Presidents or Vice-Chancellors will ensure alignment between HLIs and evolving national priorities. Such evaluations will reinforce accountability while fostering a culture of continuous improvement in leadership practices.

## Initiatives

### 5B.1: Empowering board of directors

This initiative aims to strengthen the governance of HLIs by enhancing the role of their Boards of Directors. The appointment process for board members will prioritise individuals with the necessary expertise, diverse backgrounds, and relevant skill sets to ensure effective oversight and strategic decision-making.

The Ministry is considering granting boards greater authority, including the responsibility to appoint key leadership positions such as the President, Chief Executive Officer, Vice-Chancellor, and Deputy Vice-Chancellor. Leadership appointments will be guided

by robust and transparent criteria to ensure that only the most qualified individuals are selected. By empowering boards to take a more active role in governance and leadership, this initiative seeks to elevate institutional performance, accountability, and strategic alignment with national higher education goals.

### 5B.2: Strengthening the Higher Education Leadership Academy

This initiative will prioritise evidence-based leadership practices that address evolving HLI leadership challenges. Strengthening the Higher Education Leadership Academy or *Akademi Kepimpinan Pendidikan Tinggi's* (AKEPT) capability and demonstrating its impact within the sector will attract more participants, partners, and stakeholders. Clear success metrics and regular evaluations will be implemented to assess the effectiveness of AKEPT's programmes and ensure continuous improvement. By fostering leadership excellence and innovation, AKEPT will play a pivotal role in preparing capable leaders to guide HLIs towards achieving national and global higher education aspirations.

### 5B.3: Implementing HLIs leadership assessment

AKEPT will lead the establishment of structured methods and the implementation of the HLIs leadership assessment. This initiative aims to evaluate and enhance leadership competencies on both the Board of Directors and top management of HLIs. Comprehensive assessments can be conducted, incorporating input from multiple stakeholders, including peers, subordinates, and self-assessments, to provide a holistic view of leadership effectiveness.

Regular follow-up evaluations will be essential to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement, and refine action plans as needed. This initiative aims to foster a culture of continuous improvement in leadership development, ensuring institutional leaders are well-equipped to address evolving challenges and drive strategic goals. By prioritising effective leadership, the initiative will strengthen governance and advance the overall performance of HLIs.

## Strategy 5C

### Strengthening accountability and trust for sustainable growth

This strategy empowers leaders with well-defined autonomy, enabling them to make timely, data-driven decisions that address the evolving needs of higher education. Clear and measurable accountability frameworks will be established to track and evaluate leadership actions, ensuring responsibility while fostering trust and transparency among stakeholders, including faculty, students, and the broader community.

These frameworks will include regular performance reviews, stakeholder feedback mechanisms, and outcome-based metrics to align leadership with institutional goals and societal expectations. Flexibility will also be maintained to support long-term, sustainable growth, enabling institutions to adapt to challenges while upholding academic integrity and operational excellence.



## Initiatives

### 5C.1: Implementing check-and-balance ecosystem

Autonomy is vital for fostering innovation and empowering HLLs to make tailored decisions, while accountability ensures these decisions align with ethical standards and community needs. Striking this balance is key to driving progress without compromising integrity. To support this, the Ministry needs to develop a robust check-and-balance mechanism. Balancing autonomy and accountability is essential to empower HLLs while ensuring ethical and community-aligned decisions. This can be achieved by implementing a transparent governance framework that includes performance-based evaluations and periodic audits.

### 5C.2: Leveraging data and technology for accountability

This initiative focuses on utilising data and technology to enhance accountability within HLLs. By enabling real-time performance tracking and facilitating transparent information sharing with stakeholders, institutions can support informed decision-making and build trust through open communication. Key components include a robust data sharing and transparency framework, automated reporting systems, and effective feedback mechanisms, all of which contribute to fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

These tools streamline processes and empower institutions to respond proactively to challenges and stakeholder needs. By integrating data-driven insights with transparent practices, this approach creates a more responsive, responsible, and forward-thinking organisational environment.

## Strategy 5D

### Establishing an inclusive governance framework to represent diverse stakeholders

Inclusive governance is essential for ensuring that higher education institutions reflect their stakeholders' diverse needs and aspirations. By incorporating a wide range of perspectives into decision-making processes, institutions can achieve outcomes that are more equitable, balanced, and reflective of societal priorities. Structured channels such as forums, surveys, and advisory panels will enable stakeholders to contribute meaningfully, with participation rates and feedback quality monitored to gauge effectiveness.

Active stakeholder engagement builds trust and transparency, fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration. Regular surveys will measure trust levels and assess the perceived influence of stakeholder contributions on decision-making. Leadership accountability will also be evaluated by examining how well stakeholder input is considered in decision outcomes. This approach ensures that governance remains inclusive, representative, and responsive to evolving societal needs.

“*A leader must be honest and sincere in serving the people. Only then can trust be built between the government and the citizens.*”

**Tun Hussein Dato' Onn**  
Third Prime Minister of Malaysia

## Initiatives

### 5D.1: Establishing inclusive governance structures

This initiative aims to promote equity and social justice by embedding diverse perspectives into the governance structures of HLLs. Inclusive governance enhances decision-making legitimacy, fosters accountability, and empowers institutions to address complex challenges while meeting community needs effectively. By encouraging collaboration and innovation, this approach builds trust and strengthens institutional resilience.

Key elements include actively involving diverse stakeholders in governance, ensuring diversity in leadership positions, conducting regular community consultations and town halls, fostering a culture of inclusivity, and implementing open feedback mechanisms. Together, these components create a responsive, transparent, and trustworthy educational environment, driving progress while upholding the values of equity and social justice.

### 5D.2: Leveraging technology for broader engagement

This initiative harnesses technology to enhance communication, information sharing, and resource accessibility within the higher education community. By promoting interactive and inclusive engagement, individuals are empowered to participate actively in decision-making processes. Key strategies include conducting technological accessibility assessments to ensure equitable access and leveraging Learning Management Systems (LMS) to facilitate meaningful interactions.

These measures foster increased civic engagement, enabling governance structures to become more informed, responsive, and aligned with the needs of diverse stakeholders. Ensuring that all voices are heard and considered in shaping policies and initiatives, this approach strengthens trust, transparency, and collaboration, contributing to more effective and inclusive governance.

## ● Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Establishment and implementation of the MPN.
- Development of OHEA.
- Implementation of performance and accountability measurements for HLI leaders.
- Implementation of inclusion measures in HLIs.



## Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to prevent overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 5-2.

**Exhibit 5-2: Initiative implementation roadmap**

	Wave 1 (2026–2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 Elevate
<b>Strategy A</b> Harmonising governance across the higher education ecosystem	Draft framework for the ONE Higher Education Act (OHEA).	The draft legislation is refined and passed through consultations.	Implement the Act.
	Formation of MPN and its secretariat. The first MPN meeting.	Monitoring the performance of the MOE and MOHE.	Review the effectiveness of the MPN role.
	Revise the governance and organisational structure at the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE).	Obtain approval and implement the new structure at MOHE.	Monitor the impact.
	Review Act 605 to exempt academia in Public HLIs from <i>Peraturan 17, 18, dan 19, Jadwal Kedua Bahagian II</i> .	Obtain approval and implement.	Monitor the impact of the exemption.
	Establish a Higher Education Ombudsman at the Ministry and HLI levels.	Implement, monitor and evaluate the impact of the Ombudsman.	Feedback and intervention.
	Assess the current situation, engage stakeholders, and draft the new funding formula.	Approval and implementation of the funding formula.	Monitor the impact of the new funding formula.
	Draft framework for Acts related to TVET.	The draft legislation is refined and passed through consultations.	Implement the Act.
<b>Strategy B</b> Empowering transformational leaders to align institutional goals with national priorities	Appoint the BODs with the right skills and composition based on the University Transformation Programme (UniTP) Greenbook.	Appointments of transformational leaders by BODs.	Monitor and intervene.
	Foster the development of future leaders in HLIs. Create a talent pool of future HLI leaders.	Monitor and evaluate talent pools for HLI Leadership.	Monitor and intervene.
	Enhance assessment instruments for HLI leaders.	Implement the assessment.	Measuring impacts of the Transformational Leadership Programme.

	Wave 1 (2026–2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 Elevate
<b>Strategy C</b> Strengthening accountability and trust for sustainable growth	Update and implement the Board Effectiveness Assessment Playbook.	Monitor the implementation of Board Effectiveness Assessment (BEA).	Performance evaluation.
	Create a platform/dashboard for real-time performance tracking, actively sharing insights with stakeholders and enabling data-driven decision-making.	Implement and monitor.	Assess the impact and intervene.
<b>Strategy D</b> Establishing an inclusive governance framework to represent diverse stakeholders	Develop Inclusive Governance Framework (IGF).	Implement and monitor the inclusivity of the IGF.	To continue implementing the best practices of IGF.
	Establish the infrastructure and infostructure requirements.	Initiate the engagement process with the stakeholders via the new platform.	Evaluate the impact and intervene.

## Conclusion

Agile and resilient governance is essential for transforming HLIs into adaptable and impactful entities capable of addressing national and global challenges. Achieving this requires a strategic balance between autonomy and accountability, fostering transformational leadership, and integrating diverse stakeholder perspectives into decision-making processes. Legislative reforms, such as unifying existing laws into a cohesive framework and leveraging technology for transparency and real-time governance, are critical to ensuring flexibility and responsiveness. Through a phased roadmap extending to 2035, HLIs can align their strategies with societal priorities, advancing innovation, inclusivity, and equity. This approach will enable the development of future-ready leaders and significantly enhance the role of HLIs in nation-building and global progress.

Shift



# Responsible Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation and Economy (RDICE)

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## Introduction

The national research agenda under the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) encompasses the coordination of research grants and centres of excellence, assessment of research excellence, and facilitation of academia-industry collaborations. However, there is an imperative to transition towards a responsible Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation and Economy (RDICE) ecosystem to address socio-economic and planetary health challenges through mission-oriented approaches.

A unified RDICE framework integrates the principles of planetary health, sustainability and the circular economy to drive responsible and ethical progress. This Shift aims to advance Malaysia's position as a global leader in innovation and as a high-income nation through strategic initiatives that drive Responsible RDICE.

## Why it matters

Responsible RDICE plays a pivotal role in shaping Malaysia's future as a resilient and competitive economy while addressing global and local challenges. By fostering sustainability, inclusivity, and innovation, RDICE ensures long-term socio-economic growth aligned with national and global aspirations.

### Advancing economic sovereignty and global competitiveness

Responsible RDICE is crucial for Malaysia to achieve sustainable economic growth and secure its position in the global knowledge-based economy. By fostering a robust, Responsible RDICE ecosystem, the nation can achieve technology sovereignty, hence, reducing reliance on foreign solutions and ensuring control over critical technologies. This empowers Malaysia to safeguard sensitive data, enhance innovation capacity, and transcend the middle-income trap, paving way for a resilient and globally competitive economy.

### Aligning innovation with sustainability and human development

Incorporating sustainability into RDICE ensures that advancements in knowledge align with environmental and social goals, supporting a more equitable future and contributing to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This approach drives the creation of high-quality jobs, enhances skilled talent development, and improves Malaysia's standing in the Global Innovation Index (GII). Furthermore, Responsible RDICE enables innovation to address societal challenges, offering solutions that enhance the quality of life for Malaysians and promote inclusive socio-economic progress.

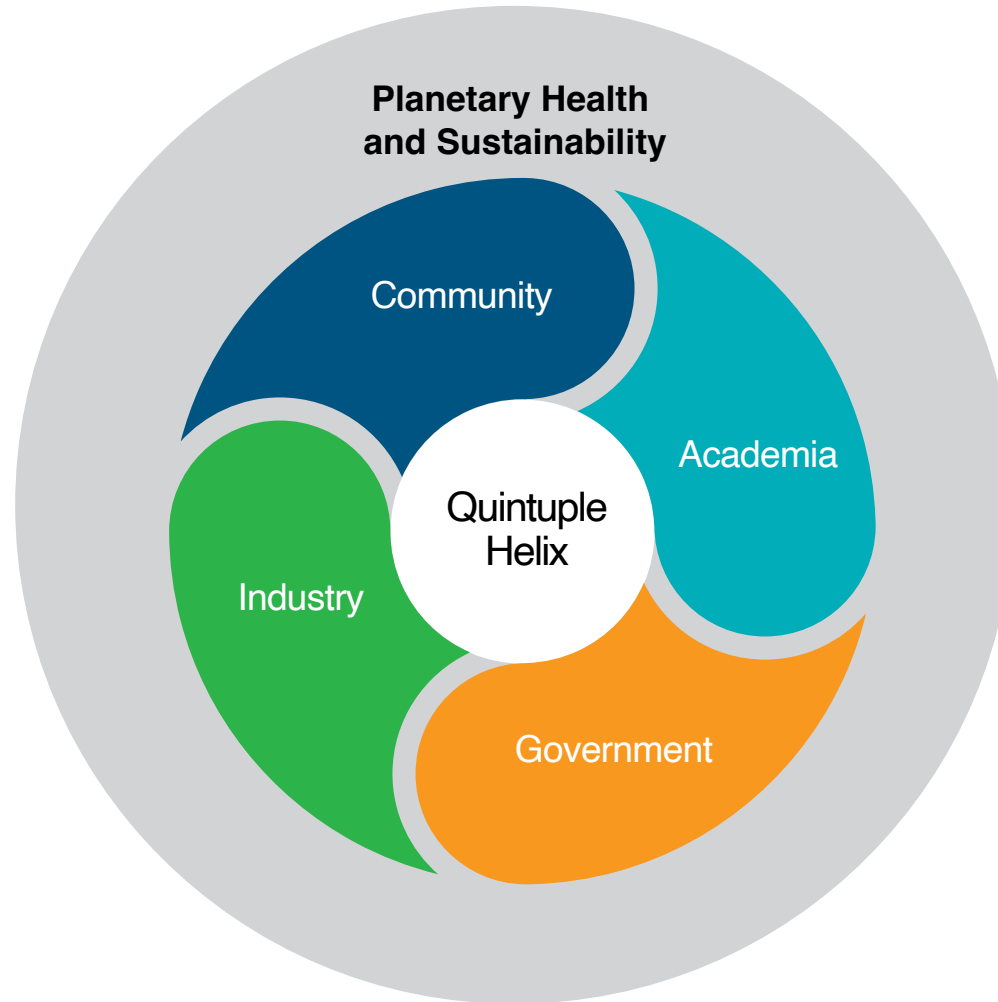
### Building a synergistic and inclusive innovation ecosystem

Strengthening an inclusive innovation ecosystem requires addressing disparities within the quintuple helix framework, which encompasses academia, government, industry, society, and planetary health and sustainability. As depicted in Exhibit 6-1, the Quintuple Helix illustrates the synergy among these stakeholders, driving sustainable development and fostering innovation. Inclusive innovation involves the development of societal enterprise, where communities generate ideas, and academia helps transform these ideas into opportunities and value creation. By enhancing collaboration among stakeholders and promoting the adoption of domestic technologies, Malaysia can bridge gaps within the ecosystem, drive indigenous innovation, and attract private and corporate investment to fuel growth.

### Fostering responsible research in the era of AI and big data

The rapid rise of generative AI and exponential data growth necessitates responsible research practices. Adherence to ethical guidelines and sustainability standards is imperative to ensure quality and trust in RDICE activities. Encouraging Open Science and Open Innovation ecosystems enhances collaboration, transparency, and accessibility, enabling impactful research. Transitioning from traditional KPI-driven approaches to impact-focused, mission-oriented strategies ensures that research outcomes effectively address socio-economic and environmental challenges.

Exhibit 6-1: Synergy within the Quintuple Helix framework



## Where we are

Malaysia's RDICE ecosystem has made notable progress in areas such as research outputs and income generation. However, critical challenges persist, including stagnation in talent development, limited industry collaboration, and gaps in ethical practices. Addressing these challenges is essential to building a more cohesive, impactful, and inclusive RDICE ecosystem that meets national and global innovation needs.

### Current RDICE trends and performance

Under the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education),<sup>1</sup> steady improvements have been recorded in publication outputs and income generation under the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education). However, other key indicators, such as PhD graduates and student enrolments, plateaued after 2017. In 2018, PhD holders represented only 0.18%<sup>2</sup> of Malaysia's population, significantly below the 1.1% average for middle-income countries.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, full-time equivalent (FTE) researchers declined by 66.05% between 2018 and 2020, as reported in the Global Innovation Index 2024.<sup>4</sup>

Malaysia's Gross Expenditure on R&D (GERD) was 0.95% in 2020, falling short of both the global average (1.93%) and the upper-middle-income countries' average (1.73%).<sup>5</sup> These figures indicate significant gaps in meeting the country's GERD targets of 2.5% by 2025<sup>6</sup> and 3.5% by 2030.<sup>7</sup> While Malaysia improved its innovation input ranking globally (from 34<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>), its innovation output ranking dropped from 36<sup>th</sup> to 41<sup>st</sup> position.<sup>4</sup> These trends highlight the pressing need for a more robust and impactful RDICE ecosystem to address current challenges and achieve sustainable innovation outcomes.

### Collaborative mechanisms in RDICE activities

The current RDICE pipeline, from basic research to commercialisation, is managed by various ministries and agencies, often operating in silos. The key funds in Malaysia's RDICE innovation pipeline is shown in Exhibit 6-2. Insufficient coordination among these entities hampers seamless activity flow, resulting in inefficiencies in resource allocation and data tracking. Additionally, the allocation of funding across the RDICE pipeline remains fragmented, with insufficient strategic planning to ensure a seamless flow from ideation to societal impact.

Communication gaps and inconsistent mechanisms lead to a lack of accountability and undermine efforts to document reference data for continuous improvement. The prevalent emphasis on quantity-based KPIs rather than outcome-based KPIs in HLIs further restricts impactful RDICE initiatives. This fosters siloed working environments, limiting the optimal utilisation of resources, facilities, and expertise. Strengthening collaboration between ministries, agencies, and HLIs, while focusing on quality-driven RDICE outcomes, is essential to address these challenges and realise the potential of the Responsible RDICE ecosystem.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2015). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education)*

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. (2021). *Kajian keberkesanan tadbir urus dan impak pelaksanaan dua program biasiswa KPT* (Unpublished report)

<sup>3</sup> OECD. (2019). *An OECD Learning Framework 2030: The future of education and labor* (pp. 23–35). <https://doi.org/10.1787/1f8d7880d-en>

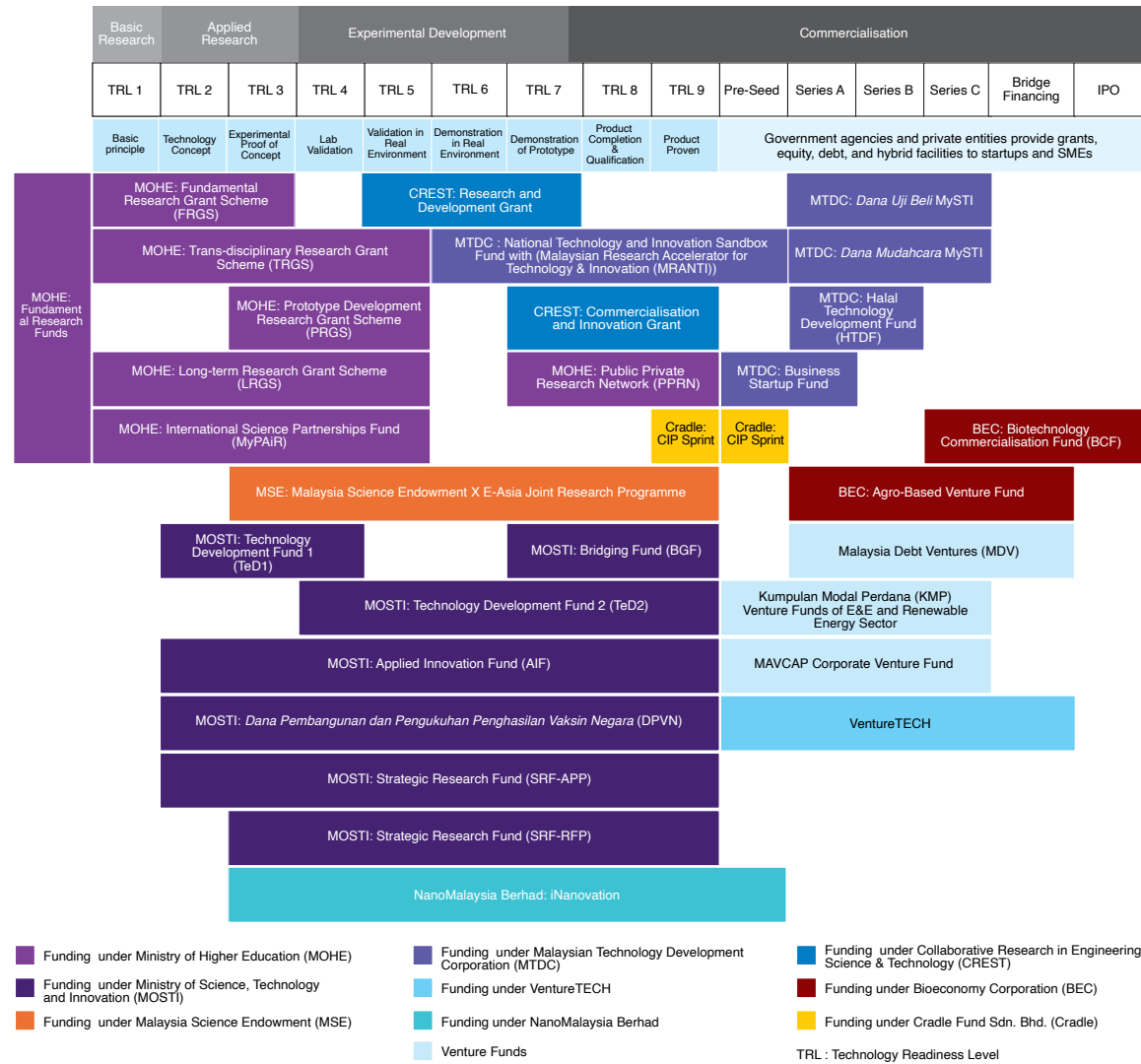
<sup>4</sup> World Intellectual Property Organization. (2024). *Global Innovation Index 2024: Unlocking the Promise of Social Entrepreneurship*. Geneva: WIPO

<sup>5</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2024). *UIS database*. [http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT\\_DS&popupcustomisetrue&lang=en](http://data.uis.unesco.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=EDULIT_DS&popupcustomisetrue&lang=en)

<sup>6</sup> Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister's Department. (2021). *The Twelfth Malaysia Plan 2021–2025*. <https://rmeke12.ekonomi.gov.my/en>

<sup>7</sup> The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia. (2021). *National Policy on Science, Technology & Innovation (NPSTI) 2021–2030*. <https://www.mosti.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/National-Science-Technology-and-Innovation-Policy-2021-2030.pdf>

**Exhibit 6-2: Key Funds in Malaysia’s RDICE Innovation Pipeline<sup>1</sup>**



Adapted from:  
<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI). (2023). *Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation and Economy (RDICE) Roadmap for Malaysia*.

### Synergy between academia and industry

Malaysia's industry-academia collaboration is hindered by the limited involvement of industries in RDICE. As most industries are manufacturing and service-based, RDICE activities are often conducted abroad, resulting in low participation at the local level. This reduces opportunities for meaningful collaboration between industries and HLIs.

Furthermore, the adoption of indigenous technologies remains low, limiting the translation of local innovations into impactful market solutions. With inadequate investment from industries in collaborative research, the current ecosystem struggles to support Malaysia's innovation potential. Establishing targeted policies and incentives to increase industry involvement in RDICE, while encouraging the uptake of local technologies, can significantly enhance the ecosystem's capacity to address national and global challenges.

### Optimisation and inclusion of RDICE talents

RDICE talent development in Malaysia faces significant challenges, including a limited diversity of career paths for PhD graduates. The majority of these graduates are employed within HLIs and research institutes, with minimal opportunities in industry-led research roles. Additionally, HLIs lack sufficient initiatives to cultivate unipreneurship skills among graduate students, which are vital for transforming academic knowledge into viable commercial outcomes.

Inclusive practices in RDICE remain underdeveloped, with limited infrastructure and opportunities for people with disabilities, preventing their meaningful participation. Addressing these issues requires a focus on fostering diverse talent pathways, enhancing unipreneurial ecosystems, and implementing measures to promote inclusivity. By leveraging diverse talent pools and equipping researchers with entrepreneurial skills, Malaysia can strengthen its RDICE capacity and innovation impact.

### Ethical and sustainable considerations in RDICE

While ethical guidelines exist for RDICE activities, enforcement and implementation are inconsistent. The rise of research tools with dual-use potential, such as generative AI, introduces new challenges in defining acceptable practices. In a KPI-driven culture, these gaps may lead to unregulated research practices, raising concerns about ethical integrity and academic validity.

A robust framework for enforcing ethical guidelines, coupled with continuous training, is necessary to address these challenges. By integrating sustainability into RDICE practices and fostering accountability, Malaysia can ensure that its Responsible RDICE ecosystem operates responsibly while contributing to societal and planetary health.



## Objectives

A well-structured, integrated, and consolidated Responsible RDICE ecosystem will provide a solid foundation to support mission-oriented research and foster cross-sector collaboration. This ecosystem will enable a seamless progression from ideation to innovation, effectively addressing market and community needs. A broad, diverse, and inclusive talent pool will be nurtured, empowered, and retained to drive innovation and growth.

The responsible component in Responsible RDICE will emphasise the enforcement of ethical practices among stakeholders, promoting the sustainable and responsible utilisation of resources in mission-oriented R&D for the prosperity of people and the planet. The ecosystem will strengthen cross-sector partnerships, technology transfer, resource sharing, intellectual property protection, and market accessibility, and ultimately contribute to economic growth.

## Principles

The core principles of Responsible RDICE are designed to create a balanced and impactful ecosystem that advances research and innovation while addressing societal, environmental, and economic priorities. These principles serve as a foundation to guide stakeholders in fostering responsible and sustainable practices for long-term prosperity.

- **Mission-oriented research and development**

The principle of mission-oriented research and development (R&D) focuses on aligning research efforts with societal and environmental priorities. This approach seeks to address critical challenges by producing impactful knowledge and solutions that contribute to the well-being of communities. It ensures that research outcomes have meaningful applications while advancing national and global priorities.

- **Sustainable and responsible resource utilisation**

Sustainable and responsible use of resources underpins Responsible RDICE, emphasising practices that minimise environmental impact and optimise resource efficiency. This principle ensures that research activities balance innovation with ecological stewardship, promoting long-term sustainability while enhancing the capacity for high impact research and innovation.

- **Diversification of economic revenues**

Responsible RDICE aims to contribute to a diversified and resilient economy by leveraging innovative solutions and advanced knowledge. This principle emphasises translating research outputs into commercially viable ideas and services, fostering sustainable economic growth and positioning Malaysia as a leading contender for high income nation status.

## Strategies and initiatives

Five key strategies and their initiatives have been identified to align with the core principles and aspirations of mission-oriented research, ethical research practices, socioeconomic growth, and fostering connections among stakeholders within the quintuple helix. These strategies adopt a strategic approach to drive impactful outcomes and position Malaysia's Responsible RDICE ecosystem for global competitiveness.

<b>Strategy 6A</b>	Building an ecosystem that aligns with mission-oriented RDICE
<b>Strategy 6B</b>	Advancing global RDICE partnerships
<b>Strategy 6C</b>	Establishing incentive and support systems that drive industry-energised RDICE
<b>Strategy 6D</b>	Maximising RDICE talents and leaders
<b>Strategy 6E</b>	Creating Responsible RDICE ecosystem and prioritising ethical conduct of research

### Strategy 6A

#### Building an ecosystem that aligns with mission-oriented RDICE

In a volatile and complex global landscape, fostering mission-oriented research, development, innovation, commercialisation, and economy, RDICE becomes critical in addressing socio-economic and planetary health challenges. The Ministry, through its management innovation perspective, seeks to establish an integrated innovation ecosystem framework. This framework emphasises a unified and extended funding mechanism with durations of 5 to 10 years to maximise research impact. It also includes interlinked policies, convergence of expertise across higher learning institutions (HLIs), Higher Institution Centres of Excellence (HICoE), and Centres of Excellence (COE), as well as an open data-sharing platform and impact-based assessments. Together, these elements aim to ensure national and global relevance while advancing emerging fields.

## Initiatives

### 6A.1: Championing academic research in critical technology areas for national sovereignty

The Ministry will drive the national academic research agenda through strategic funding allocations under the Academia Research Fund (AReF). AReF streamlines RDICE funding into a single, structured budget that supports the entire research lifecycle, from ideation to knowledge assimilation or technology exchange. AReF also allocates grants for community engagement, fostering collaborative ideation processes. MOHE will oversee budget allocation while also integrating commercialisation and startup development through relevant agencies.

This initiative adopts a mission-oriented, knowledge-driven approach, prioritising interdisciplinary collaboration, resource optimisation, and industry-driven innovation to address societal and economic challenges. HLIs will play a pivotal role in leading mission-oriented academic research, with a focus on emerging technologies critical to national sovereignty. Through collaborative foresight planning, research will be aligned with national priorities to maximize relevance and long-term impact.

### 6A.2: Consolidating efforts and funding from relevant ministries and agencies

The Ministry will coordinate research priorities and funding by aligning socio-economic strengths and national challenges across ministries and agencies. This will involve streamlining policies through a strategic handshake mechanism that ensures effective resource allocation and unified direction for mission-oriented RDICE. HLIs will contribute expertise, facilitate collaborative partnerships, and implement aligned research initiatives. These coordinated efforts will enhance the nation's ability to address complex issues through synergistic and impactful research.

### 6A.3: Establishing innovation hubs and the convergence of HICoE expertise

The Ministry will establish innovation hubs by converging resources and expertise from HICoEs to address socio-economic challenges. HLIs will serve as drivers of mission-oriented solutions, utilising their specialised knowledge to develop impactful research and innovations. These hubs will be elevated to regional and international levels, fostering global collaborations and positioning Malaysia as a leader in innovation and solution-driven research excellence.

### 6A.4: Extending the duration of mission-oriented grants

To maximise the impact of mission-oriented research, funding durations will be extended to 5–10 years, allowing for in-depth exploration and comprehensive evaluations. The Ministry will administer these grants through a handshake mechanism that ensures alignment with national priorities and accountability. HLIs will leverage the extended timeframe to deliver both impactful mission-oriented research and fundamental studies in emerging fields, adhering to structured progress monitoring and reporting frameworks.

### 6A.5: Enhancing integrated data platforms and promoting open science and open innovation

The Ministry will develop an integrated data platform to ensure RDICE data is accessible to relevant ministries and agencies for informed decision-making. HLIs will play a key role in contributing research data and fostering a culture of open science and open innovation. By sharing findings on these platforms, researchers will promote transparency, encourage collaboration, and ensure that research outcomes benefit the public, advancing national and global socio-economic progress.

### 6A.6: Implementing impact-based research assessment

An impact-based research assessment framework will be introduced to measure the outcomes of mission-oriented RDICE in solving socio-economic challenges. The Ministry will lead the implementation of this framework, which will incorporate metrics such as return on value (ROV) to evaluate tangible benefits. HLIs will champion these assessments by demonstrating research impact, aligning efforts with national priorities, and ensuring that RDICE initiatives deliver meaningful, measurable results for society.

## Strategy 6B

### Advancing global RDICE partnerships

Mission-oriented RDICE initiatives should transcend national boundaries to achieve global impact. Expanding these efforts internationally allows for greater knowledge sharing, technology exchange, and participation in global research ecosystems. International collaborations will strengthen capacity building and drive wealth and value creation through innovation and investment opportunities. The Ministry will play a pivotal role in facilitating international partnerships, leveraging matching and collaborative funds, while HLIs engage actively in global networks and expert consortia to deliver transformative outcomes.

## Initiatives

### 6B.1: Enhancing global research collaboration, knowledge, and technology exchange

The Ministry will lead the coordination of impactful international research collaborations through bilateral and multilateral agreements supported by matching grants and collaborative funds. HLIs will actively engage in these collaborations by contributing expertise and fostering the exchange of knowledge and technologies. This approach aims to strengthen Malaysia's RDICE ecosystem globally and promote mutual benefits through shared research and innovation goals.

“Create an impact by adjusting your research focus to what is relevant to the country, not what is relevant to you.”

Academician Prof. Emerita Datuk Dr. Asma Ismail, FASc  
Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer, IMU University

### 6B.2: Championing international research networks and expert consortia

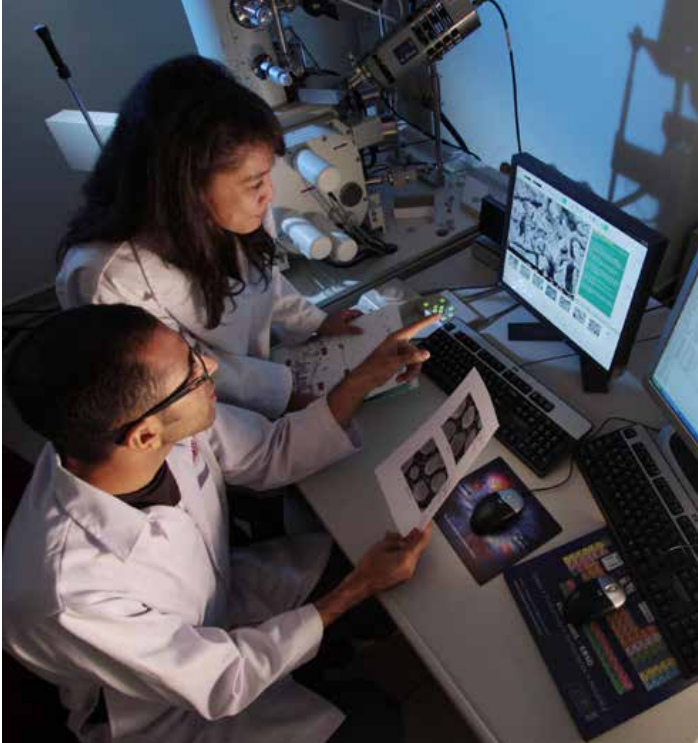
HLIs will spearhead and actively participate in international research networks and expert consortia focused on addressing shared issues and achieving common goals. The Ministry will support these efforts by facilitating access to global platforms, fostering collaborations, and ensuring alignment with high-impact research objectives. These initiatives aim to elevate Malaysia's international standing while creating opportunities for impactful research that addresses global challenges.



## Strategy 6C

### Establishing incentive and support systems that drive industry-energised RDICE

An effective RDICE ecosystem relies on strong partnerships between industry and academia to deliver innovative and impactful solutions. While industry involvement in RDICE has grown, deeper engagement with HLIs, university startups, and unipreneurs is vital for achieving ambitious goals and greater impact. The Ministry will create platforms for industries to invest in RDICE, nurture unipreneurs through partnerships, and provide incentives to strengthen collaboration. These efforts will generate measurable benefits, including economic growth, job creation, and technological advancement.



## Initiatives

### 6C.1: Forming strategic consortia with corporations to propel university startups

The Ministry will forge partnerships with large corporations and relevant ministries through effective handshake mechanisms, empowering university startups and unipreneurs. Unipreneurs, often academics, researchers, or students, apply entrepreneurial approaches to commercialise innovative ideas and research. These partnerships will provide crucial resources such as venture capital, mentorship, and market access, accelerating technology transfer between academia and industry. HLIs will play a key role in nurturing startups, driving innovation, and fostering impactful commercialisation.

### 6C.2: Enabling industry collaboration within the Responsible RDICE ecosystem

The Ministry will develop national guidelines and foster opportunities for industry investment in RDICE by collaborating with ministries and agencies. Industries will be encouraged to utilise university resources, including training programmes, state-of-the-art facilities, and specialised services. HLIs will act as enablers of these collaborations, aligning academic outputs with industry needs. This initiative aims to deepen industry-academia engagement, ensuring that research outputs deliver practical solutions and create value for the nation's economy.

### 6C.3: Delivering attractive incentives to strengthen industry partnerships

To encourage and sustain industry collaboration, the Ministry will introduce strategic incentives such as double tax deductions and first right of refusal on HLI-led innovations. Bureaucratic processes will be streamlined to simplify collaborations and foster trust. HLIs will actively involve industry stakeholders by offering equity opportunities in university startups for founders, co-founders, and investors. These incentives will ensure long-term, mutually beneficial partnerships that promote innovation, support commercialisation, and enhance Malaysia's Responsible RDICE ecosystem.

## Strategy 6D

### Maximising RDICE talents and leaders

Dynamic and visionary talents are critical to sustaining a high-performing RDICE ecosystem. To nurture such capabilities, the Ministry will foster a culture of innovation through comprehensive talent development programmes that cultivate unipreneurial mindsets, and systems and design thinking. By promoting intellectual autonomy among emerging researchers and implementing flexible funding models, the Ministry will empower the next generation of RDICE leaders. Inclusivity through accessible infrastructure will ensure that the national talent pool contributes meaningfully to innovation capacity and socio-economic advancement.

## Initiatives

### 6D.1: Cultivating a culture of innovation and unipreneurship

The Ministry will drive the development of a vibrant innovation culture within HLIs by integrating project-based learning, extracurricular programmes, and competitions. These initiatives will hone critical thinking, problem-solving, and research skills, empowering participants to apply academic knowledge to entrepreneurial ventures. HLIs will play a central role in fostering environments where talents can innovate and create job opportunities through unipreneurship. By embedding entrepreneurship into academic and extracurricular activities, this initiative strengthens Malaysia's Responsible RDICE ecosystem while enhancing national innovation capabilities.

### 6D.2: Building a robust innovation ecosystem for systems and design thinkers

The Ministry will nurture innovators with expertise in systems and design thinking through targeted mentorship programmes, leadership development initiatives, and Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) enabled learning. HLIs will embed interdisciplinary competencies into academic frameworks, preparing young researchers and leaders to tackle complex global challenges. These efforts will cultivate forward-thinking individuals capable of driving transformative research and innovation, ensuring that Malaysia's Responsible RDICE ecosystem remains adaptable and competitive while addressing critical socio-economic and planetary health issues.

### 6D.3: Providing greater intellectual autonomy and flexible funding

The Ministry will introduce flexible funding mechanisms, including crowdfunding, matching grants, and partnerships with international organisations, to support emerging researchers. HLIs will facilitate these funding opportunities while ensuring rigorous oversight and accountability. By granting research officers (ROs) and postdoctoral scholars the autonomy to lead as principal investigators (PIs), this initiative removes traditional barriers of seniority, enabling groundbreaking research and fostering independent thought leadership. Empowered researchers will contribute innovative solutions to national and global challenges, enhancing the RDICE ecosystem's impact.

#### 6D.4: Translating research into socio-economic and planetary health impact

The Ministry and HLIs will strengthen technology transfer offices, incubators, and research management units to streamline the innovation-to-commercialisation pathway. These structures will provide expert support from research managers and technology transfer professionals. This initiative ensures that research creates tangible benefits for society, driving impactful innovation and contributing to Malaysia's global leadership in RDICE.

#### 6D.5: Promoting inclusivity in RDICE through accessible infrastructure and support

The Ministry will promote inclusivity within the Responsible RDICE ecosystem by ensuring accessible infrastructure and comprehensive support systems for individuals of all abilities. Collaborations with industries and civil society organisations will provide the necessary resources, such as adaptive tools and facilities, to empower diverse talents. HLIs will play a key role in implementing these measures, fostering an inclusive environment where everyone can contribute to research and innovation. This initiative maximises the contributions of a diverse talent pool, enhancing the nation's overall innovation capacity.



## Strategy 6E

### Creating a Responsible RDICE ecosystem and prioritising ethical conduct of research

The growth of RDICE activities in Malaysia's HLIs must be aligned with a strong foundation of ethical practices. The Ministry will mandate ethical conduct through the implementation and accreditation of guidelines, such as the Malaysian Code of Responsible Conduct in Research (MCRCR), ensuring the integrity and credibility of all RDICE activities. HLIs will adopt training programmes and establish robust systems to monitor, address, and refine ethical standards. These measures safeguard the legality, validity, and reputation of Malaysia's Responsible RDICE ecosystem at both national and global levels.

## Initiatives

### 6E.1: Upholding ethical standards with the Malaysian Code of Responsible Conduct in Research

The Ministry will enforce the MCRCR as a cornerstone of ethical practices across the RDICE ecosystem. All grant applicants and review panels will adhere to the MCRCR, fostering transparency and accountability at every stage of research. HLIs will implement compliance mechanisms and establish ethics review boards to evaluate research proposals. By embedding ethics into decision-making processes, this initiative ensures integrity, builds public trust, and enhances Malaysia's standing as a hub for responsible research and innovation.

“For Science, Technology and Innovation to become a tool for socio-economic transformation, the scientific method must become a way of life, an attitude of mind, and a means to enriching the nation's welfare.”

Academician Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Datuk Dr.  
Omar Abdul Rahman, FASc

### 6E.2: Embedding ethical research training in higher learning institutions

The Ministry will develop structured training programmes to instil ethical research practices among researchers, faculty, and students in HLIs. These programmes will align with the MCRCR and cover key topics such as plagiarism prevention, data integrity, and responsible use of resources. HLIs will be responsible for embedding these training modules into curricula and professional development initiatives. By cultivating a culture of ethical research, this initiative ensures that future RDICE activities uphold the highest standards of integrity and contribute responsibly to national and global challenges.

## Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Percentage of mission-oriented research grants addressing socio-economic and planetary health issues while aligning with the SDGs.
- Percentage of international and industrial grants led by HLI talents.
- Total knowledge exchange income streams and commercialisation initiatives, including consultations, collaborative research, contract research, revenue from intellectual properties, facilities and equipment-based services, and continuous professional development or educational programmes.
- Number of certified RDICE professional managers, such as technology transfer professionals and research managers, within HLIs.
- Number of grant applicants and panel evaluators who are MCRCR-certified.
- Impact of the RDICE ecosystem as measured through the Malaysia Research Impact Assessment.



## Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 6-3.

**Exhibit 6-3:** Initiative implementation roadmap

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 E
<b>Strategy A</b> Building an ecosystem that aligns with mission-oriented RDICE	Create a unified funding mechanism across various ministries and agencies. Establish mission-oriented alliances to utilise HICoE and CoE expertise.	Evaluate the effectiveness of the consolidated funding mechanism based on resource allocation and impact of the alliances.	Assess the impact of the overall ecosystem in addressing socio-economic and planetary health challenges.
<b>Strategy B</b> Advancing global RDICE partnerships	Initiate international collaborations and participation in expert consortia.	Strengthen international collaborations.	Analyse the impact of international collaborations.
<b>Strategy C</b> Establishing incentive and support systems that drive industry-energised RDICE	Develop industry incentive programmes with supportive policies for industry-academia collaboration, transparency and accountability.	Expand industry incentive programmes, establish collaborative platforms to foster interaction and showcase successful projects.	Measure the return on investment in industry partnerships from economic benefits to the country to job creation.
<b>Strategy D</b> Maximising RDICE talents and leaders	Implement a talent development programme focusing on unipreneurship skills.	Evaluate and refine talent development programmes.	Assess the long-term impact of the talent development programme on the national innovation capacity.
<b>Strategy E</b> Creating Responsible RDICE ecosystem and prioritising ethical conduct of research	Establish a system for monitoring and addressing ethical concerns, refine existing guidelines, implement MCRCR training programmes.	Enhance the ethical framework and compliance mechanisms through enforcement, continuous review of ethical guidelines and provision of a robust system for reporting and addressing violations.	Analyse the effectiveness of the ethical framework in promoting responsible research practices.

## Conclusion

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A Responsible RDICE ecosystem is crucial to advancing Malaysia's innovation capacity, addressing socio-economic challenges, and contributing meaningfully to global priorities such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By fostering mission-oriented research, promoting ethical practices, and strengthening collaborations within the quintuple helix, Malaysia's higher learning institutions (HLIs) can deliver impactful outcomes that drive sustainable growth and societal well-being.

This chapter highlights the importance of coordinated efforts among stakeholders, including academia, government, industry, civil society, and the environment, to optimise RDICE activities. Establishing clear frameworks for ethical conduct, nurturing diverse and inclusive talent, and enabling effective partnerships are pivotal steps toward achieving a robust ecosystem. Addressing gaps in industry-academia collaboration, resource allocation, and talent development will further elevate Malaysia's research and innovation standing globally.

A focus on measurable impacts, such as societal wealth creation and planetary health improvements, is necessary to ensure long-term sustainability. By leveraging unipreneurship, enhancing global partnerships, and embedding responsible practices into the RDICE pipeline, Malaysia can position itself as a leader in innovation and knowledge creation. The journey toward a Responsible RDICE ecosystem not only strengthens national development but also ensures Malaysia remains competitive and relevant in the global research landscape.

**Shift**



# Global Prominence

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## Introduction

Malaysia aims to consolidate its position as a highly trusted global education hub by achieving excellence, upholding inclusivity, and establishing international recognition. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) is committed to enhancing global prominence through transparent quality metrics, building strategic international partnerships, and creating inclusive, learner-centred environments to attract diverse talent. These efforts are supported by initiatives such as the adoption of global benchmarking standards, the expansion of flagship scholarship programmes, and the establishment of transnational education frameworks. This chapter outlines key strategies to elevate Malaysia's higher education landscape, focusing on strengthening institutional credibility, fostering high-impact collaborations, and advancing academic programmes that address critical global challenges. By implementing these transformative measures, Malaysia aims to solidify its reputation as a competitive and trusted leader in the global higher education ecosystem.

## Why it matters

The global higher education landscape is rapidly evolving, driven by talent mobility, technological advancements, and intensifying competition. For Malaysia, achieving global prominence in higher education is not just a strategic goal but a necessity to remain competitive in the global knowledge economy. By attracting top-tier talent, contributing to global academic and research excellence, and fostering educational diplomacy, Malaysia can position itself as a trusted and influential education hub. These efforts align with the United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture (UNESCO) Recommendation on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Sustainable Development, which emphasises the role of education in fostering international understanding, cooperation, and addressing global challenges. Ensuring that Malaysian institutions meet international standards, provide enriching experiences for both local and international students, and contribute to solving pressing global issues will solidify the nation's role as a leader in higher education.

### Global competition and talent mobility

The global higher education landscape is increasingly competitive, driven by rising talent mobility and the demand for high-quality education. By 2030, global migration rates are projected to reach 4% of the world's population, highlighting the urgency for nations to attract and retain top-tier talent.<sup>1</sup> For Malaysia, this means positioning itself as a globally trusted higher education brand. To achieve this, Malaysia must strengthen its institutional credibility by aligning with international accreditation standards such as the Washington Accord and the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and implementing robust governance frameworks. These measures will ensure that Malaysian qualifications are recognised and respected globally, making the country a destination of choice for students and academics. By fostering seamless student services and transparent quality metrics, Malaysia can build trust and solidify its reputation as a reliable and high-quality education provider in the global market.

### Global academic and research influence

Malaysia's aspiration for global prominence builds on its ability to contribute significantly to global academic and research excellence. Currently, Malaysia has established 13 mutual recognition agreements (MRA) across key regions, including Asia and the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> By addressing global challenges such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Malaysian institutions can elevate their academic influence and showcase their commitment to solving pressing global issues. Active participation in diversified global rankings such as the QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education (THE) World University Ranking, THE Impact Rankings, Shanghai Academic Ranking of World University (ARWU), and UI GreenMetric demonstrates Malaysia's commitment to excellence. These achievements are complemented by local rating systems such as MyRA, SETARA, MyQUEST, PolyRate, which ensure institutions align with national educational goals. This dual focus on global and local benchmarks ensures Malaysian institutions remain globally competitive while addressing national priorities.

<sup>1</sup> CBRE. (2024). *Global talent migration: The 'new mobility' paradigm*. CBRE Insights

<sup>2</sup> Malaysian Qualification Agency. (2024)

<sup>3</sup> QS Best Student Cities Ranking 2025

### Enhancing cultural diplomacy and global citizenship

Malaysia's unique blend of cultural diversity and affordability positions it as a premier education destination. Ranked 23rd in affordability and employer engagement in the QS Best Student Cities 2025, Kuala Lumpur offers international students a cost-effective yet enriching academic experience.<sup>3</sup> However, a low score in student diversity underscores the need for more inclusive policies and multicultural initiatives to enhance international engagement. To strengthen Malaysia's global education footprint, key strategies include fostering cross-cultural engagement,

streamlining credit-transfer pathways, and expanding multicultural learning environments. These initiatives not only attract a wider pool of international students but also support internationalisation at home, equipping local students with global competencies through meaningful interactions with international peers and participation in multicultural activities. By creating inclusive campuses that celebrate diversity, Malaysia can cultivate a generation of graduates who are globally competent, culturally aware, and ready to lead in an interconnected world.



<sup>3</sup> QS Quacquarelli Symonds. (2025). *QS Best Student Cities Ranking 2025*

## Where we are

Malaysia's journey in higher education has been marked by consistent efforts to expand its global reach and reputation. From initially building higher learning institutions (HLIs) for local needs, Malaysia has evolved into an internationally connected education hub. Policies and initiatives supporting internationalisation have played a crucial role in this transformation, reflecting the country's ambition to strengthen its global presence and competitiveness in the higher education sector.

### Internationalisation of higher education

The internationalisation of Malaysia's higher education system has been strategically driven by key policy frameworks, particularly the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)<sup>4</sup> and the *Pelan Tindakan Pendidikan Tinggi Malaysia 2022-2025*.<sup>5</sup> Through strategic focus on student mobility, staff recruitment, transnational education partnerships, and institutional collaborations, these initiatives have positioned Malaysia as an emerging destination for international education in the region. While Malaysia has established itself as an attractive choice for its welcoming environment and affordability, the nation is now advancing beyond these strengths to develop as a globally trusted higher education brand.

### International students and academics

Malaysia has made significant progress in international education, hosting 137,000 international students in 2024, accounting for 10% of the total higher education population in the country. There is a need to accelerate efforts towards the 500,000-student target by 2035. Malaysia leads Southeast Asia in attracting international students, consistently recording the highest numbers in the South-East Asia region. While Malaysia currently attracts 1.45% of the world's international students,<sup>6</sup> this figure reflects a solid foundation and a promising position for growth. Compared to regional leaders such as China (3.5%), Japan (3.4%), and South Korea (1.86%), Malaysia's share is competitive, especially considering the size and scale of these countries' higher education systems. These nations benefit from their larger number of universities, long-established

global reputations, and strong economic influence, which naturally attract more international students. Despite this, Malaysia's multicultural environment, affordability, and strategic location position it as an attractive alternative for students seeking quality education in a diverse and welcoming setting.

Recruitment of international staff has also shown encouraging growth, increasing by 26% from 2021 to 2024 to reach 1,534 members.<sup>7</sup> These professionals contribute to institutional diversity, the quality of education, and research output. However, challenges remain in onboarding, community integration, and retention, necessitating targeted strategies to maximise their impact and expertise.

### Exhibit 7-1: Number of inbound internationally mobile students in selected Southeast East Asia country (2019–2023)

Country	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Malaysia	81,950	69,193	92,519	109,427	109,036
Singapore	53,090	54,682	59,289	60,368	n/a
Thailand	n/a	20,496	n/a	21,110	29,900
Vietnam	7,230	8,696	8,370	7,740	n/a
Indonesia	7,174 (2018)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2024). Inbound internationally mobile students by continent of origin. *UIS Statistics*. <https://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=3804>

Note: "n/a" indicates that data is not available for the specified year and country.

Exhibit 7-1 presents the number of inbound internationally mobile students in Southeast Asian countries from 2019 to 2023. Malaysia consistently records the highest number of international students in the region, with over 100,000 students in 2022 and 2023.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Education. (2015). *Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education)*

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2022). *Pelan Tindakan Pendidikan Tinggi Malaysia 2022-2025*

<sup>6</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics. (2024). *Inbound internationally mobile students by continent of origin*. *UIS Statistics*. <https://data.uis.unesco.org/index.aspx?queryid=3804>

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2024). *Statistics of Higher Education 2023*

## Student and staff mobility

Student and staff mobility remains a critical aspect of Malaysia's higher education strategy, with 14,624 inbound and 10,448 outbound students recorded in 2024.<sup>8</sup> These exchanges highlight Malaysia's efforts in fostering global academic collaborations and enhancing cultural integration. Expanding outbound mobility is particularly crucial for equipping Malaysian graduates with the global competencies needed to navigate international challenges. The global education market, projected to reach USD 433 billion by 2030,<sup>9</sup> presents further opportunities for Malaysia to increase its share of international student enrolment, strengthening its reputation as a global education hub while generating substantial economic benefits.

## International student experiences

Efforts to improve visa processing efficiency have shown positive results, with complete visa applications processed in nine days and renewals taking just three days. However, incomplete applications can take significantly longer, up to 23 days for new submissions, highlighting the need for further streamlining to ensure a seamless experience for international students. Beyond visa processing, there is an opportunity to enhance the overall student experience by addressing key areas such as housing, career support, and post-graduation pathways.

## Enhancing global visibility and positioning

Malaysia's higher education institutions are steadily gaining global recognition, reflecting the country's commitment to academic excellence and internationalisation. Leading the way, Universiti Malaya (UM) has secured its position among the world's elite universities with a top 60 placement in the QS World University Rankings 2025. Other public universities have also demonstrated remarkable progress, with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), and Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) consistently ranking within the top 200 globally in QS rankings.<sup>10</sup> Private institutions have likewise excelled, with universities such as Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS (UTP), Sunway University and Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN) achieving notable positions in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.<sup>11</sup> Malaysia's commitment to sustainability is further evidenced by 13 Malaysian universities placing in the top 400 of the THE Impact Rankings for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>12</sup>. To build on these achievements, Malaysia is establishing unified quality benchmarks and providing incentives for universities to improve their global rankings, which will enhance graduate employability and international appeal. Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's capital, has also emerged as a premier student city, ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> globally in the QS Best Student Cities 2025<sup>13</sup>. The city scores highly for affordability and employer activity, making it an attractive destination for international students. However, there is room for improvement in student diversity, highlighting the need for more inclusive policies to enhance Malaysia's global appeal. These achievements underscore Malaysia's growing visibility and recognition as a trusted higher education hub.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2024). *Statistics of Higher Education 2023*

<sup>9</sup> HoloniQ. (2022). *196B international education market set to reach \$433B by 2030*.

<https://www.holoniq.com/notes/196b-international-education-market-set-to-reach-433b-by-2030>

<sup>10</sup> QS World University Rankings 2025

<sup>11</sup> Times Higher Education (2024). *World University Rankings 2024*

<sup>12</sup> Times Higher Education (2024). *University Impact Rankings 2024*

<sup>13</sup> QS Best Student Cities Ranking 2025

“Amid challenges, Malaysia stands as a global gateway, thriving on unity in diversity and poised to play a pivotal role in global education leadership”

Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir  
Minister of Higher Education

### Industry-academia collaboration and graduate employability

Malaysia's higher education system has made significant progress in fostering industry-academia collaboration. The focus now is to further increase its graduates' presence in the global workforce, targeting a higher proportion of placements in multinational corporations beyond the current 15.8%.<sup>14</sup> To achieve this expanded global footprint, Malaysia has implemented strategic initiatives to strengthen international industry linkages and create pathways for global collaboration opportunities. Malaysia's efforts to bridge this gap are evident in the growth of transnational education (TNE) initiatives, such as foreign branch campuses and offshore programmes of Malaysian universities. For example, UCSI University has established its offshore campus in Bangladesh, while other institutions have developed offshore programmes such as the USM-KLE International Medical Programme in Belgaum, India and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's (UKM) offshore programme in Doha, Qatar. Simultaneously, Malaysia has become an attractive destination for prestigious international institutions, with establishments like Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, Xiamen University Malaysia, Monash University Malaysia, and University of Nottingham Malaysia (Exhibit 7-2). These international branch campuses have enriched Malaysia's higher education landscape through globally recognised academic standards and industry-aligned programmes.

<sup>14</sup> Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2024). *Laporan Kajian Pengesanan Graduan 2023*

**Exhibit 7-2: International branch campuses in Malaysia (2024)**

No.	University Name	Location
1	Curtin University Malaysia	Sarawak
2	Monash University Malaysia	Selangor
3	Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus	Sarawak
4	University of Nottingham Malaysia	Selangor
5	Heriot-Watt University Malaysia	Putrajaya
6	Newcastle University of Medicine Malaysia	Johor
7	University of Southampton Malaysia	Johor
8	University of Reading Malaysia	Johor
9	Xiamen University Malaysia	Selangor
10	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and University College Dublin Malaysia Campus	Penang
11	University of Tsukuba, Malaysia	Kuala Lumpur

Source: Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi (JPT). (2024). *Senarai daftar Institusi Pendidikan Tinggi Swasta (Kemaskini sehingga 30 November 2024) (Universiti/ Kampus Cawangan Luar Negeri/ Kolej Universiti/ Kolej)*. Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). <https://jpt.mohe.gov.my/portal/index.php/ms/ipt/swasta/25-senarai-daftar-dan-statistik-ipt-swasta>

### Box 7-1: Education Diplomacy

Education Diplomacy is the strategic use of education as a tool to build international relationships and foster mutual understanding through systematic engagement in educational partnerships, programmes, and collaborations. It encompasses the intentional development of cross-border educational initiatives that advance shared interests, promote cultural exchange, strengthen institutional ties, and contribute to global knowledge development, while simultaneously enhancing a country's soft power and international influence.

## Objectives

The Ministry aims to position Malaysia as a global education hub by emphasising academic excellence, impactful research, and international collaborations. Strategic initiatives will focus on strengthening institutional governance, aligning academic standards with global benchmarks, and expanding partnerships with leading global institutions. Efforts will also include developing inclusive and multicultural learning environments, fostering talent mobility, and prioritising research in critical global areas such as sustainability and digital innovation. By attracting top talent and preparing graduates for global leadership roles, Malaysia seeks to solidify its reputation as a trusted and internationally respected education destination.

## Principles

The transformation of Malaysia's higher education system is guided by several interrelated principles:

- Elevating academic quality and research to align with global standards.
- Enhancing student experiences through learner-centric policies.
- Strengthening international partnerships for impactful collaboration.
- Promoting inclusivity and multicultural integration.
- Embedding leadership and innovation to develop globally competitive graduates.



## Strategies and initiatives

<b>Strategy 7A</b>	Enhancing governance and global recognition
<b>Strategy 7B</b>	Building global leadership and academic partnerships
<b>Strategy 7C</b>	Advancing global academic impact
<b>Strategy 7D</b>	Delivering a World-class Learner Experience

### Strategy 7A

#### Enhancing governance and global recognition

To strengthen Malaysia's credibility as a global education destination, the Ministry will enhance governance frameworks, implement robust quality assurance mechanisms, and align with international accreditation standards. Efforts will focus on developing clear accountability metrics while fostering collaboration with local and international stakeholders to ensure Malaysian HLIs meet and exceed global benchmarks. Regular performance audits, active participation in international education surveys, and strategic partnerships will collectively elevate Malaysia's visibility, reputation, and trustworthiness on the global stage.

### Initiatives

#### 7A.1: Developing the Integrated Quality and Accountability Metrics

The Ministry will establish Integrated Quality and Accountability Metrics (IQAM), a clear, transparent, and comprehensive metrics to assess institutional quality and accountability, incorporating specific timelines, measurable indicators, and regular performance audits to drive continuous improvement across Malaysian higher learning institutions (HLIs). These metrics will align with international best practices in quality assurance, fostering a cohesive framework that ensures consistency, reliability, and global relevance. To enhance transparency, regular reporting mechanisms will be introduced, enabling stakeholders to make informed, strategic decisions. These efforts will position Malaysia's HLIs to effectively address both national and global priorities, ensuring their credibility and competitiveness on the international stage.

#### 7A.2: Establishing the National Learner Experience and Engagement Survey

The Ministry will introduce the National Learner Experience and Engagement Survey (NLEES) as a systematic tool to assess and enhance the academic and engagement experiences of students across Malaysian HLIs. This initiative will provide comprehensive insights into learner satisfaction, academic quality, and campus engagement, enabling institutions to address gaps and implement targeted, data-driven strategies. By fostering a supportive and inclusive academic environment, NLEES will enhance student outcomes and strengthen Malaysia's global reputation for delivering quality education. Findings from the survey will guide policy decisions, institutional development, and ensure alignment with international benchmarks for learner engagement and satisfaction.

### 7A.3: Strengthening global recognition through strategic benchmarking

The Ministry will emphasise active engagement in global education benchmarking initiatives to position Malaysia's HLIs on par with international standards. Benchmarking outcomes will be thoroughly reviewed to identify institutional strengths and address areas requiring improvement, thereby enhancing global visibility and credibility. By showcasing notable achievements and implementing strategic enhancements, the Ministry seeks to establish Malaysia as a trusted and internationally respected education hub. Additionally, capacity-building programmes will be introduced to support HLIs in achieving global benchmarks, excelling in international education assessments, and reinforcing Malaysia's standing as a leader in the global arena.

“*International scientific collaboration is very much needed in solving today's global challenges, be it climate change, food security or poverty alleviation. No one country will be able to solve these problems on its own.*”

**Academician Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Zakri Abdul Hamid, FASc**  
 Founding Director, International Institute of Science Diplomacy and Sustainability, UCSI University



## Strategy 7B

### Building global leadership and strategic academic partnerships

The Ministry aims to attract, develop, and retain world-class talent by positioning Malaysia as a quality education hub with global relevance. This will involve cultivating a diverse portfolio of strategic and sustainable partnerships with universities worldwide, selected primarily for their alignment with Malaysia's development priorities and potential for meaningful knowledge exchange rather than international rankings alone. These purposeful partnerships will enhance academic mobility and exchange opportunities for students and staff. Leveraging alumni networks and leadership programs, the Ministry seeks to cultivate graduates equipped for leadership roles in global organisations. Flagship scholarship programs will also be launched to attract high-caliber international students in strategic disciplines, reinforcing Malaysia's position as a global education hub that ensures high-quality and sustainable partnerships.

### Initiatives

#### 7B.1: Promoting global graduate leadership and alumni branding

The Ministry will develop targeted programmes that equip students with the leadership skills required to excel in global contexts. These programmes will include international leadership modules, cross-cultural training, and mentorship opportunities in collaboration with industry leaders and global organisations. Alumni networks will be leveraged to act as brand ambassadors for Malaysia, showcasing the quality of its education system on the international stage. A strategic alumni engagement platform will be established to connect graduates with leadership placement opportunities in multinational corporations, international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and governmental bodies worldwide.

#### 7B.2: Expanding strategic academic partnerships and mobility

To foster academic collaboration and cultural exchange, the Ministry will strengthen partnerships strategically with universities globally based on their potential to create mutual value, contribute to Malaysia's development goals, and establish sustainable long-term relationships. This initiative will include creating dual-degree programs, faculty exchange opportunities, and collaborative research projects in strategic fields. Cross-border mobility for students and staff will be streamlined through simplified processes and support services, enabling seamless participation in international academic programs. These efforts will not only enhance Malaysia's global academic presence but also prepare graduates for the demands of an interconnected workforce.

#### 7B.3: Establishing prestigious global scholarship programmes

The Ministry will launch flagship scholarship programmes designed to attract exceptional international students in priority areas such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), climate change, and sustainability. These scholarships will provide comprehensive financial support, leadership development opportunities, and networking platforms to nurture global talent. In addition to bolstering Malaysia's global educational influence, these programmes will serve as a talent pipeline for addressing critical global challenges and enhancing the country's reputation as a leader in higher education.

## Strategy 7C

### Advancing global academic impact

To establish Malaysia's academic prominence, the Ministry will focus on expanding the country's influence through internationally recognised academic programmes and impactful research addressing global challenges like sustainability and climate change. This strategy will be supported by increased investment in research and blue-sky thinking across both public and private HLIs, fostering innovation that drives national development. Collaborations with international accreditation bodies will ensure that Malaysian qualifications are globally respected. Institutional excellence will be highlighted through initiatives to improve research output, global rankings, and the quality of academic programmes. Research excellence will be showcased through high-impact publications, conferences, and forums, reinforcing Malaysia's role as a key contributor to global academic discourse.

### Initiatives

#### 7C.1: Advancing accreditation standards internationally

The Ministry will actively collaborate with renowned international accreditation bodies to ensure Malaysian qualifications gain global recognition. Accreditation standards will be regularly reviewed and updated to reflect international best practices, ensuring Malaysian HLIs remain competitive. Additionally, efforts will be focused on strengthening the integration of these standards into institutional practices, ensuring that graduates are equipped with qualifications that are not only highly respected but also universally accepted across diverse professional and academic fields. These initiatives will further position Malaysia as a trusted and influential player in the global academic and professional arena.

#### 7C.2: Expanding Malaysia's academic footprint through global programmes

To enhance its academic reach, the Ministry will establish quality-assured transnational education programmes in collaboration with international institutions. These programmes will serve international students seeking Malaysian education while also creating opportunities for Malaysian students to access global academic experiences. Through strategic partnerships with universities worldwide, Malaysia will ensure academic rigour and innovation, strengthening the country's position as a preferred destination for international academic pursuits while extending the influence of Malaysian higher education across borders.

#### 7C.3: Showcasing research excellence with global solutions

The Ministry will prioritise funding for research that addresses pressing global challenges, such as climate change, sustainability, and public health. Outcomes from these initiatives will be showcased through high-impact journals, global conferences, and international forums to amplify Malaysia's academic influence. Strategic collaborations with global research entities will also be pursued to strengthen Malaysia's reputation as a hub for innovative, solutions-driven research.

#### 7C.4: Fostering education diplomacy through global exchange

The Ministry will advance education diplomacy, which is the strategic use of education as a tool to build international relationships and foster mutual understanding, by facilitating meaningful global exchanges. Through expanded student mobility programmes, intercultural collaborations, and targeted alumni networks, Malaysia will position itself as a hub for cross-cultural engagement. By bridging diverse cultural perspectives, these initiatives will enhance Malaysia's visibility on the global stage, promote goodwill, and enrich the educational journey of both local and international learners, reinforcing the nation's role as a trusted leader in global education.

## Strategy 7D

### Delivering a world-class learner experience

The Ministry is committed to fostering a supportive and inclusive learning environment that meets the needs of both local and international learners. This involves cultivating multicultural campuses that celebrate diversity, promoting cross-cultural projects to enhance global competence, and simplifying administrative processes through streamlined and efficient services. Efforts will also focus on expanding programmes for credit-transfer learners, enabling Malaysia to emerge as a hub for high-quality cross-border education. These initiatives aim to ensure learners experience seamless, enriching, and globally relevant academic journeys while strengthening Malaysia's international educational appeal.

## Initiatives

### 7D.1: Creating inclusive and multicultural learning environments

The Ministry will collaborate with HLIs to create inclusive campuses that celebrate cultural diversity and foster a vibrant, harmonious learning environment. Efforts will focus on promoting mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation among learners from diverse cultural, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds. By encouraging intercultural dialogue and collaboration, the initiative aims to cultivate a sense of belonging and inclusivity for both local and international learners. Additionally, supportive campus environments will be prioritised to ensure learners thrive academically, socially, and personally. These efforts will reinforce Malaysia's position as a welcoming and globally connected hub for education, attracting talent from around the world.

### 7D.2: Enhancing global perspectives in learner experiences

The Ministry will collaborate with HLIs to implement structured programmes aimed at enriching learners' global perspectives. These initiatives will include cross-cultural exchange programmes and global interaction projects designed to foster learners' global competence, intercultural understanding, and adaptability in international settings. By promoting collaborative partnerships, the Ministry will support the design of events that unite diverse groups, enabling shared learning experiences and mutual respect. These efforts will not only enhance students' readiness for global challenges but also position Malaysian HLIs as hubs for cultivating internationally minded and culturally adaptable graduates, reinforcing Malaysia's reputation in the global academic community.

### 7D.3: Unlocking administrative barriers for international learners

The Ministry, in collaboration with HLIs, will streamline administrative processes to significantly enhance the experience of international learners in Malaysia. Key initiatives will include fast-tracking visa applications to minimise delays, simplify housing arrangements for a smoother transition, and improve career services to expand access to internships and job placements. By reducing bureaucratic hurdles, these measures aim to establish a more efficient and supportive system for international learners. Such efforts will bolster Malaysia's reputation as a welcoming and accessible global education hub, attracting diverse talent and enhancing its international academic standing.

## ● Tracking measures

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The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Number of institutions adopting Integrated Quality and Accountability Metrics.
- Growth in international student enrolment.
- Growth in global university rankings, with more Malaysian universities entering the top 200 globally and top 50 in Asia across diversified global rankings (for example, QS, THE, THE SDG Impact, UI GreenMetric).
- Growth in graduate employability in multinational corporations.
- Recognition of Malaysian research on global platforms.
- Growth in international accreditation and transnational education programmes.
- Participation and diversity of recipients in flagship scholarship programmes by field and nationality.
- Student satisfaction levels with multicultural and inclusive environments.

## ● Initiative implementation roadmap

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The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 7-3.

**Exhibit 7-3: Initiative implementation roadmap**

	<b>Wave 1 (2026-2028)</b> Ignite	<b>Wave 2 (2029–2031)</b> Propel	<b>Wave 3 (2032–2035)</b> Elevate
<b>Strategy A</b> Enhancing governance and global recognition	Develop the Integrated Quality and Accountability Metrics (IQAM) framework.	Implement IQAM across all Malaysian higher education institutions (HLIs).	Refine and align IQAM with evolving global standards.
	Engage stakeholders to establish evaluation metrics and align with global standards.	Conduct regular audits and progress reports on IQAM metrics.	Achieve top global rankings for a significant percentage of institutions.
	Encourage institutions to begin participation in international education benchmarking surveys.	Increase the number of international accreditation recognitions secured by Malaysian HLIs.	Enhance participation and positioning in international benchmarking initiatives.
<b>Strategy B</b> Building global leadership and academic partnerships	Launch flagship scholarship programmes targeting international and underrepresented regions.	Diversify scholarship recipients by nationality and field.	Institutionalise partnerships with leading global universities.
	Initiate leadership programmes to equip Malaysian graduates for global roles.	Expand partnerships to include dual-degree programmes and faculty exchanges.	Position Malaysia as a hub for global graduate leadership programmes.
	Establish initial partnerships with top-tier global universities.	Increase the number of Malaysian graduates employed in multinational corporations.	Track the percentage of scholarship recipients in leadership positions globally.
<b>Strategy C</b> Advancing global academic impact	Identify key areas for impactful research, such as climate change and sustainability.	Showcase research output through high-impact publications and conferences.	Establish Malaysian institutions as leaders in impactful research addressing global challenges.
	Establish pilot transnational education (TNE) programmes in target regions.	Expand the number of TNE programmes and partnerships.	Expand the global education footprint through TNE in new regions.
	Collaborate with international accreditation bodies for recognition of Malaysian qualifications.	Boost participation rates in cultural exchange and education diplomacy initiatives.	Enhance visibility in global research platforms and forums.
<b>Strategy D</b> Delivering a world-class learner experience	Develop frameworks for inclusive and multicultural learning environments.	Improve student satisfaction levels with multicultural and inclusive environments.	Integrate multicultural principles across all campuses.
	Streamline visa and administrative services for international students.	Roll out integrated support services, such as career development for international students.	Increase the number of international students enrolled in Malaysian HLIs.
	Launch pilot credit-transfer pathways with key global universities.	Expand structured exchange programmes to foster global perspectives.	Optimise systems to facilitate seamless global learner mobility.

## Conclusion

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Malaysia has made remarkable strides in its journey to establish itself as a globally recognised education hub, driven by its commitment to excellence, inclusivity, and innovation. Through enhanced governance, strategic international partnerships, and impactful academic initiatives, Malaysia is positioning its higher education system to meet global benchmarks and address critical challenges such as sustainability and digital transformation. By focusing on strengthening institutional credibility, fostering cultural diplomacy, and developing globally competitive graduates, Malaysia is building a foundation for a resilient and influential higher education system. These efforts reflect the nation's ambition to contribute meaningfully to the global knowledge economy and establish itself as a trusted and respected provider of quality education. As these initiatives evolve, Malaysia is well-equipped to expand its influence on the global stage and solidify its position as a leader in higher education.

Shift



# Flexible Education and Lifelong Learning

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## Introduction

Emerging technologies are continually reshaping the landscape of education, driving the demand for new skills and competencies that go beyond traditional academic disciplines. Simultaneously, unpredictable disruptions, such as pandemics, are transforming how education is delivered and how learning occurs. As industries and workplaces evolve due to technological and societal shifts, the imperative for Flexible Education and Lifelong Learning (LLL) becomes increasingly evident.

Flexible education responds to individual needs and resources, while LLL, focused on upskilling and reskilling, ensures continuous skill development. This adaptability is crucial for addressing emerging challenges and navigating an uncertain future. The Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint (MHEB) 2026-2035 recognises that learners now seek more than

formal qualifications as they pursue diverse opportunities for personal and professional growth through alternative learning pathways.

This paradigm shift acknowledges the necessity of moving beyond traditional academic settings to embrace alternative credentials, micro qualifications, and non-formal education. Such inclusivity empowers individuals to curate personalised learning journeys. This chapter highlights the critical role of Malaysia's higher learning institutions (HLIs) in fostering an inclusive, flexible, and sustainable LLL ecosystem. Central to this vision is the integration of emerging technologies to personalise learning experiences and align them with the evolving workforce landscape.

## Why it matters

Flexibility is essential for ensuring education remains agile in the face of disruption and emergent change. Advancing a nation of lifelong learners is a critical national priority. Malaysia's economic progress depends on cultivating a workforce equipped with advanced skills and adaptability. In an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing world, the continuous upskilling and reskilling of individuals across all sectors is imperative. Flexible education and LLL initiatives provide vital pathways to ensure all Malaysians have access to ongoing learning opportunities, enabling them to address emerging challenges and contribute to sustainable national growth.

### Flexibility in times of unpredictable disruptions

Flexibility is crucial for adapting to disruptions and unforeseen challenges. On 18 March 2020, the Malaysian government implemented the Movement Control Order to curb the spread of COVID-19. This necessitated the closure of HLIs and a rapid shift to online learning. Flexibility in education is vital to ensuring continuity during such unpredictable disruptions, minimising significant learning loss and maintaining educational quality.<sup>1</sup>

### Upskilling and reskilling are no longer optional

The evolution of disruptive technologies and emerging trends underscores the growing importance of mastering core subjects alongside acquiring new, essential competencies. As life expectancy increases, individuals are expected to work an additional 20 to 40 years.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, Malaysia's demographic transition to an ageing nation amplifies the urgency for LLL, including for those in the third age, a stage of active retirement and personal growth. Upskilling and reskilling are no longer optional but mandatory to remain relevant in a changing world. A 2024 Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad study estimated that 620,000 jobs in Malaysia will be significantly impacted by AI, digital, and green economy trends within three to five years.<sup>3</sup> LLL will play a pivotal role in preparing the workforce to navigate these transformations effectively.

### Changing expectations of learners

Today's learners, particularly those from Gen Z and Gen Alpha, prioritise personalised and meaningful learning experiences. These generations value individual identity, purpose-driven education, and authenticity.<sup>4</sup> Personalised learning that aligns with learners interests and goals is becoming increasingly important. A recent study found that over 82% of respondents emphasised the significance of flexible learning in HLIs.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, another report revealed that 87% of education leaders believe learners with micro-credentials are more prepared for employment.<sup>6</sup> The unbundling of education is gaining momentum, reflecting the shift towards modular and flexible approaches to learning.

<sup>1</sup> UNESCO. (2024). *What you need to know about digital learning and transformation of education*. <https://www.unesco.org>

<sup>2</sup> World Economic Forum. (2024). *Why we must plan lifelong learning for a generation that will live past 100*. <https://www.weforum.org>

<sup>3</sup> Talent Corporation Malaysia Berhad, & Ministry of Human Resources. (2024). *Impact study of artificial intelligence, digital, and green economy on the Malaysian workforce: Volume 1*

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO. (2024). *Global Education Monitoring Report*. <https://www.unesco.org>

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Higher Education. (2025). *National Survey for Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026-2035*

<sup>6</sup> Coursera. (2024). *Micro-Credentials Impact Report 2024: Insights from Higher Education Leaders*. <https://www.coursera.org>

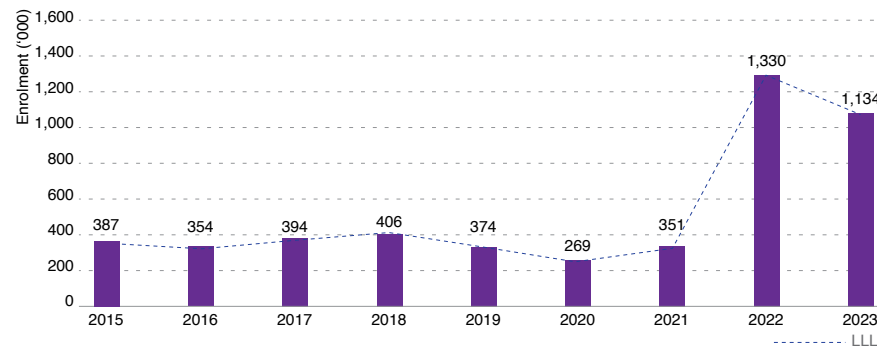
## • Where we are

Malaysia has made significant progress in advancing flexible education and LLL through various initiatives and achievements driven by HLIs. Despite these advancements, certain challenges persist, limiting the scalability and broader impact of these programmes. The discussion highlights notable accomplishments while addressing ongoing challenges.

### Enrolment growth in lifelong learning programmes

LLL programmes in public and private HLIs have experienced substantial growth over the past five years. Enrolment rates have consistently exceeded the 10 per cent annual growth target, with over one million learners participating in these programmes in 2022 and 2023. By mid-2024, more than 608,000 learners had enrolled in innovative offerings such as executive education, work-based learning, and module-based pathways, reflecting the growing demand for diverse and flexible learning opportunities.

**Exhibit 8-1: Enrolment in LLL programmes offered by public HLIs 2009–2013**



Source: Ministry of Higher Education. (2024). *National-level lifelong learning program implementation report*

### Recognition of flexible education

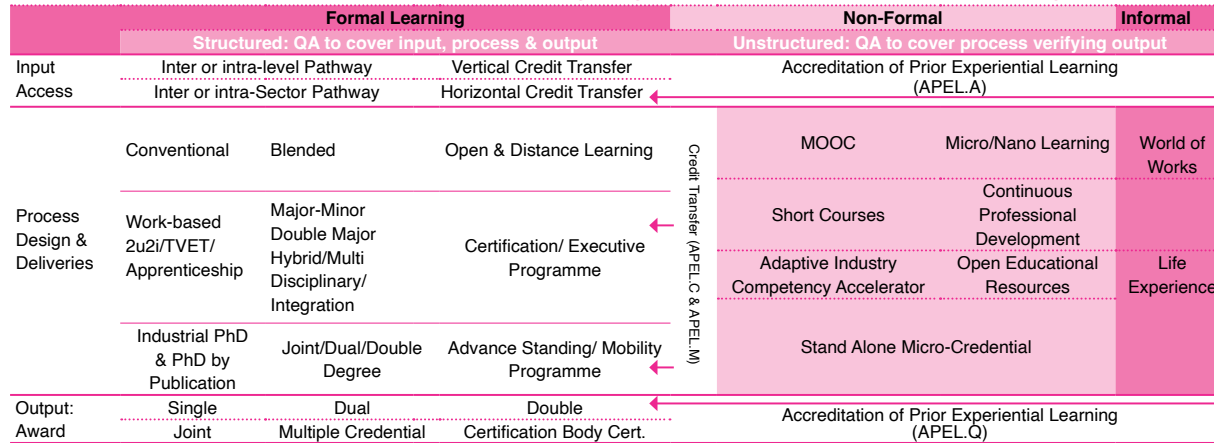
From 2015 to June 2024, 771,598 candidates obtained formal qualifications through LLL programmes, with 2024 data already surpassing previous records. The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) initiatives have also achieved notable milestones. As of June 2024:<sup>7</sup>

- APEL.A (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Access): 12,722 passed candidates.
- APEL.C (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Credit Award): 16,005 passed credits.
- APEL.Q (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Academic Qualifications): 20 passed qualifications.

- APEL.M: Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Micro-credentials

Malaysia's higher education sector has actively embraced flexible education, promoting diverse pathways for learners to obtain formal qualifications through LLL programmes and APEL initiatives. A multi-entry system, as illustrated in Exhibit 8-2, integrates formal, non-formal, and informal learning pathways. Additionally, Box 8-1 highlights the various APEL frameworks developed to systematically identify, document, and assess prior experiential learning, embedding LLL as a core element of Malaysian higher education.

**Exhibit 8-2: Malaysia embraces multi-entry system integrating formal, non-formal, and informal learning**



**Notes:**

- Formal Learning: Structured learning is conducted in formal institutions like universities, polytechnics, or community colleges. It leads to recognised academic qualifications, such as certificates, diplomas, executive diplomas, undergraduate, and postgraduate degrees. Programmes are highly organised, with clear objectives and outcomes.
- Non-Formal Learning: Learning that occurs outside formal institutions, often systematic and well-designed, primarily for professional development. Non-formal LLL includes programmes like MOOCs, short courses, certification or executive programmes, and competency accelerators. While these programmes do not usually confer academic qualifications, they enhance skills for in-service professionals.
- Informal Learning: The least structured form of learning, aimed at personal growth and improving quality of life. Informal LLL includes community-based initiatives and life experiences without resulting in formal qualifications. Examples include community workshops, life experience learning, and self-driven skills acquisition.
- While non-formal and informal learnings can retain their unique characteristics without necessarily leading to formal degrees or programmes, they still offer opportunities for upskilling and reskilling, there are options for transitioning into formal learning systems if needed via Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL).

Source: Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2024). *Alternative credentials playbook for adaptive industry competency accelerator (AICA)*

<sup>7</sup> Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). (2023). *Guideline to good practices: Accreditation of prior experiential learning for access (APEL.A) and accreditation of prior experiential learning for micro-credentials (APEL.M)* (1st ed.)

### Box 8-1: Accreditation of prior experiential learning

The Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL) establishes pathways to recognise achievements gained through experiential learning. Developed by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) under the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), APEL employs a systematic process to identify, document, and assess prior learning covering knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This initiative supports the flexible integration of diverse learning experiences into formal qualifications through the following pathways:

- **APEL.A:** Recognises prior experiential learning for admission into programmes of study at various Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF) levels.
- **APEL.C:** Grants academic credits within a programme by accrediting prior experiential learning.
- **APEL.M:** Awards qualifications through unbundled or stand-alone micro-credentials based on prior experiential learning.
- **APEL.Q:** Provides full academic qualifications by accrediting prior experiential learning under MQF levels.

APEL ensures an inclusive and accessible approach to lifelong learning, allowing individuals to formalise their experiential knowledge and skills within Malaysia's higher education ecosystem.

Source: Malaysian Qualifications Agency. (2020). *Guidelines to good practices: Accreditation of prior experiential learning for award of academic qualifications* (1st ed.).

### Flexible education initiatives and future challenges

While Malaysia's higher education system has made notable progress in flexible education and LLL, several challenges persist that could hinder the full realisation of their potential.

- **Efficiency in quality assurance and accreditation:** Quality assurance and accreditation processes for non-traditional learning pathways, such as micro-credentials and modular degrees, face difficulties in adapting swiftly to emerging educational models. Bureaucratic complexities may limit the scalability and timely implementation of innovative learning approaches.
- **Institutional barriers to support and recognition:** Institutional reliance on traditional performance metrics may constrain the advancement of flexible education. Limited incentives and recognition for faculty contributions to innovative teaching methods can reduce engagement and slow the adoption of LLL initiatives.
- **Constraints on curiosity-driven learning:** Rigid educational structures may limit the ability to cultivate curiosity-driven learning and personal growth. A lack of support for learners to explore new skills and personalised interests could diminish the broader impact of lifelong education on both personal and professional development.
- **Limited recognition of lifelong learning:** Local and global recognition of LLL programmes remains a significant hurdle. Insufficient formal acknowledgement by educational entities, funding bodies, industries, and society at large may restrict opportunities for learners and undermine the inclusivity and value of LLL in Malaysia.

## ● Objectives

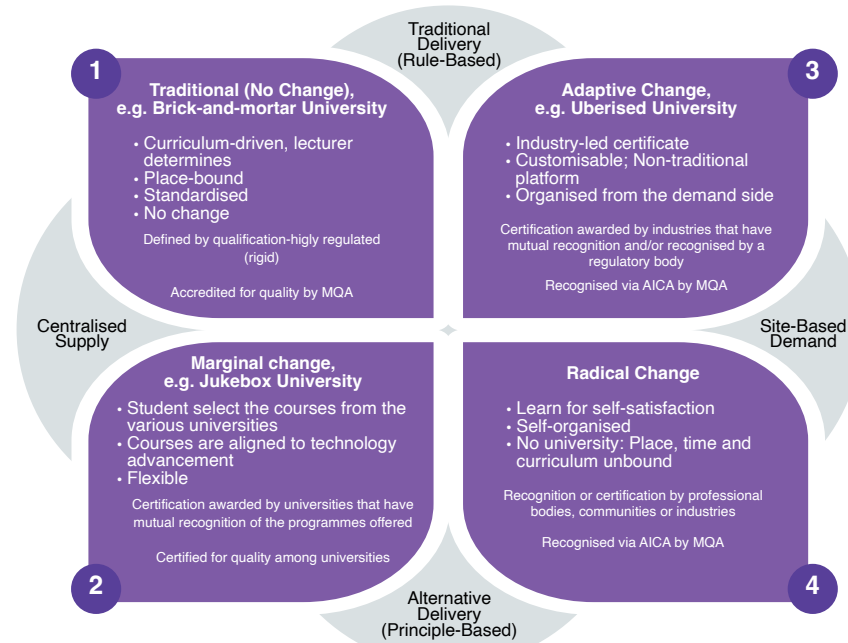
The Ministry aims to establish a flexible education system that is inclusive, resilient, and adaptable. This system will provide personalised learning pathways with multiple entry and exit points, ensuring LLL is accessible to all, including non-traditional learners. Efforts will centre on advancing LLL through flexible mechanisms such as micro-credentials and industry-recognised certifications, enabling skill development aligned with the workforce demands. The system will also validate diverse forms of learning, encompassing formal, non-formal, and informal education, empowering learners to integrate various credentials for a comprehensive and flexible LLL experience.

## ● Principles

The strategies and initiatives for this shift are guided by the following principles:

- **Learner-centred flexibility:**  
Personalised learning pathways with multiple entry and exit points will ensure seamless transitions between formal and informal learning, prioritising the needs of learners.
- **Integration across learning quadrants:**  
HLIs will play an active role across all learning quadrants, embracing and recognising each quadrant to maximise flexibility for learners (Refer to Exhibit 8-3).
- **Collaboration over competition:**  
Partnerships between academia, industry, government, society, the environment, HLIs, and international entities will ensure education remains resilient and relevant. Resource mobilisation and prioritising collaboration will address the evolving needs of learners and society.
- **Emerging and disruptive modes:**  
Anticipating unknown disruptions and emerging technologies framed as “Edtech X” will enable HLIs to transform Malaysia into a ‘Learning Nation.’ By fostering agility, curiosity, and commitment to LLL, HLIs will empower learners and educators to embrace innovation and adapt to evolving educational landscapes.

**Exhibit 8-3: Four Quadrants of University Model**



Source: Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE). (2023). *A new horizon for science, technology, and innovation: A strategy to enhance higher education in Malaysia.*



## Strategies and initiatives

The Ministry is committed to advancing Flexible Education and Lifelong Learning (LLL) by prioritising personalisation, accessibility, and quality. This shift aims to equip learners with future-ready skills through inclusive and adaptable education pathways that address diverse needs. By embracing emerging technologies, the education system will remain relevant and adaptive to evolving challenges.

<b>Strategy 8A</b>	Acknowledging the quality of flexible education through mutual recognition
<b>Strategy 8B</b>	Empowering HLIs as anchors of the learning nation and lifelong learning ecosystem
<b>Strategy 8C</b>	Embracing emerging and disruptive education models

### Strategy 8A

#### Acknowledging the quality of flexible education through mutual recognition

The Ministry will strengthen accreditation systems by granting HLIs greater autonomy to adapt and deliver flexible education tailored to diverse learner needs. Emphasising mutual recognition and unbundling, the strategy promotes formalising diverse learning pathways and fostering collaboration through a consortium of public and private HLIs. Accreditation processes will align with workforce demands and global standards, enabling learners to stack and combine credentials into globally recognised and locally relevant qualifications.

“Science is ever-changing. To contribute meaningfully, we must embrace lifelong learning and remain curious.”

Prof. Emerita Tan Sri Dato' Seri Dr. Mazlan Othman

### Initiatives

#### 8A.1: Empowering efficient accreditation for unbundling

The Ministry will empower HLIs to independently accredit flexible education programmes, allowing them to respond to evolving learner demands. By promoting unbundling, the Ministry encourages collaboration through a consortium of public and private HLIs, supporting shared standards of excellence and quality certification.

A new framework, Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Skills (APEL.S), will recognise skills-based learning and competencies through evidence such as practical demonstrations, portfolios, or verified industry credentials. This framework supports workforce learners in skill-intensive industries, enhancing professional mobility without reliance on traditional academic documentation.

The Ministry will champion initiatives from Quadrant 3, such as Forward College, and Quadrant 4, such as 42KL, within the Four Quadrants of University Model under the Adaptive Industry Competency Accelerator (AICA). These programmes will undergo rigorous mapping to ensure alignment with university requirements, facilitating their integration into formal academic pathways. HLIs will play a pivotal role in streamlining accreditation processes and driving innovation in programme development, strengthening Malaysia's education system to meet national workforce demands and align with global standards.

### 8A.2: Elevating quality for local enculturation and global recognition of alternative credentials

The Ministry, in partnership with HLIs, will enhance the global recognition of Malaysia's alternative credentials, ensuring they meet international quality standards. Rigorous benchmarks will position these credentials as credible and valuable worldwide, enabling learners to stack and combine them into formal qualifications. The Ministry will provide policy direction and establish frameworks for ensuring international recognition, while HLIs will focus on delivering high-quality alternative credentials and engaging in global networks. By fostering mobility and LLL on a global scale, this initiative enhances Malaysia's position as a provider of world-class flexible education.



## Strategy 8B

### Empowering HLIs as anchors of the learning nation and lifelong learning ecosystem

HLIs will play a pivotal role in delivering flexible learning programmes across all quadrants of the Four Quadrants of University Model, with an emphasis on regional relevance, global collaboration, and the preservation of local culture. Through robust partnerships and enhanced infrastructure, HLIs will promote a national culture of LLL. Dedicated LLL portals, synchronised metadata standards, and enhanced collaboration among institutions will ensure accessibility and better meet the diverse needs of learners.

## Initiatives

### 8B.1: Leading the 4-Quad lifelong learning ecosystem

HLIs will lead the LLL ecosystem by offering a diverse range of learning opportunities, including traditional degrees, executive diplomas, professional certifications, nano-certifications, micro-credentials, digital badges, stackable credentials, and skills-based programmes. They will innovate programme delivery, adopt emerging technologies, and ensure flexibility to meet evolving learner and industry needs. The Ministry will provide policy direction and facilitate resources to support these advancements. HLIs will align learning pathways with workforce demands, ensuring learners acquire relevant skills for personal and professional growth. This approach fosters lifelong and life-wide learning through formal, non-formal, and informal education pathways.

### 8B.2: Forming partnerships for lifelong learning

HLIs, with the Ministry's guidance, will collaborate with local and international organisations to expand LLL opportunities, particularly in underserved regions. Initiatives such as *Kampung Angkat*, SULAM, UNESCO's Learning Cities and knowledge cities will enable HLIs to serve as regional hubs for equitable education access through LLL. HLIs will co-create culturally relevant learning materials with indigenous communities, integrating local knowledge into their programmes. The Ministry will support the development of digital literacy, work-based learning, and cultural preservation efforts, ensuring these programmes enhance workforce readiness and provide a holistic LLL environment for diverse communities.

### 8B.3: Establishing dedicated lifelong learning portals

HLIs will create dedicated sections on their institutional websites to provide detailed information about unbundled education and LLL opportunities. These portals will showcase programmes, alternative credentials, and flexible pathways, ensuring accessibility for all learners, including non-traditional audiences. The Ministry will provide and oversee the standardisation of these efforts to ensure inclusivity and effectiveness. HLIs will enhance visibility and global access, positioning themselves as inclusive hubs of learning excellence that cater to diverse disciplines, career stages, and aspirations.

### 8B.4: Synchronising metadata

HLIs will collaborate to harmonise metadata standards and tagging frameworks for LLL programmes, enabling seamless discovery and integration across institutions. This effort will improve programme accessibility and compatibility, fostering an interconnected learning ecosystem. The Ministry will support the alignment of tagging frameworks and implement national monitoring mechanisms for enrolment, credentialing, and learner progression. HLIs will ensure transparency and collaboration by contributing to this synchronisation, strengthening the LLL ecosystem and promoting accountability.

## Strategy 8C

### Embracing emerging and disruptive education models

HLLs will adopt emerging technologies and innovative education models, such as HyFlex learning, cyber-physical learning and metaverse, to drive flexible learning while fostering a culture of curiosity and a drive for lifelong knowledge acquisition. By recognising alternative credentials as scholarly contributions and incentivising educators, this strategy empowers them to innovate and adapt to future challenges. Training and support will ensure educators are equipped to utilise advanced technologies like Edtech X, solidifying Malaysia's role as a leader in LLL and positioning HLLs as central drivers of the 4-Quad Lifelong Learning Ecosystem.

## Initiatives

### 8C.1: Recognising and incentivising lifelong learning resources as scholarly work

HLLs will formally recognise the creation of LLL resources, such as nano or micro-certifications and inclusive open educational resources (iOERs),<sup>8</sup> as equivalent to traditional scholarly publications. Educators who develop these resources will be incentivised through support mechanisms, including formal acknowledgement in career advancement and promotions. The Ministry will establish policies to ensure LLL contributions are valued within academic frameworks, while HLLs will implement systems to assess and reward these contributions. This initiative diversifies learning opportunities for personal growth and career advancement, enabling the development of high-quality, flexible educational content that aligns with learner and workforce demands.

<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Higher Education. (2022). *National inclusive open educational resources policy*

### 8C.2: Training educators on disruptive technologies and immersive learning tools

HLLs will equip educators with comprehensive training on advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and the metaverse to enhance teaching practices and delivery methods. Institutional task forces will collaborate with industry to promote ethical technology adoption, integrate these tools into educational practices, and prepare educators to adapt to evolving technological landscapes. The Ministry will provide strategic guidance and funding to support this training, while HLLs will establish task forces to facilitate collaboration and innovation. This initiative ensures educators are prepared for disruptive advancements and future technology like Edtech X, fostering an education system that remains innovative, immersive, and future-ready while nurturing curiosity and a lifelong pursuit of knowledge.



## ● Tracking measures

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The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Growth in the number of stackable programmes offered.
- Growth in the number of learners completing stackable programmes.
- Number of partnerships established with local, regional, and international organisations to promote LLL.
- Recognition of LLL resources (for example, alternative credentials, iOERs) as scholarly outputs by HLIs, and the use of these resources as criteria for promotions and career advancement.

## ● Initiative implementation roadmap

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The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 8-4.

**Exhibit 8-4: Initiative implementation roadmap**

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Elevate
<p><b>Strategy A</b> Acknowledging the quality of flexible education through mutual recognition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a comprehensive playbook for flexible education, guiding HLIs in implementing diverse educational pathways, aligning with national and global standards, and addressing the evolving needs of learners effectively.</li> <li>• Initiate collaboration among public and private HLIs to establish shared quality standards for flexible education programmes.</li> <li>• Facilitate the creation of a consortium to align and implement consistent benchmarks for diverse learning pathways, including modular learning and alternative credentials.</li> <li>• Begin mapping existing micro-credentials and skills-based achievements for alignment with formal academic qualifications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand the adoption of quality assurance frameworks for flexible education across HLIs, focusing on scalability and efficiency in recognition processes.</li> <li>• Develop mechanisms to ensure mutual recognition of diverse learning credentials between HLIs and industries.</li> <li>• Strengthen infrastructure to support the integration of alternative credentials into LLL pathways, fostering accessibility and alignment with workforce needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve global recognition of Malaysia’s flexible education ecosystem by aligning quality standards with international benchmarks.</li> <li>• Consolidate collaborative frameworks to position Malaysia’s HLIs as leaders in delivering credible, innovative learning opportunities.</li> <li>• Promote the global mobility of learners and professionals by enhancing the credibility and portability of Malaysian flexible education credentials.</li> </ul>

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Elevate
<b>Strategy B</b> Empowering HLIs as Anchors of the LLL nation and LLL ecosystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure every HLI has a dedicated LLL Portal integrated into their institutional websites, showcasing unbundled education and LLL opportunities.</li> <li>• Initiate the standardisation of metadata and tagging frameworks for LLL programmes to streamline discoverability, compatibility, and integration across institutions. Begin regional partnerships for culturally relevant learning materials.</li> <li>• Strengthen regional partnerships with initiatives like <i>Kampung Angkat</i>, SULAM, and UNESCO Learning Cities to expand accessibility and inclusivity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a dedicated gateway on the Ministry’s website to function as both a landing page and directory, offering comprehensive information and seamless redirection to the respective HLIs’ LLL portals, supported by synchronised metadata for efficient navigation.</li> <li>• Strengthen HLI’s capacity to align with regional and global workforce needs.</li> <li>• Incentivise HLIs for co-created programmes with industries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish HLIs as global hubs of LLL, promoting regional and international partnerships to attract diverse learners.</li> <li>• Maintain and expand the role of LLL portals as dynamic hubs for LLL ecosystems.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy C</b> Embracing emerging and disruptive education models	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish task forces for upskilling educators in emerging technologies such as AI, VR, and AR.</li> <li>• Start incentivising the development of unbundled educational resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scale training modules for emerging technologies in education delivery.</li> <li>• Implement Edtech innovation incentives for educators to drive impactful content creation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalise recognition of LLL resources as scholarly contributions.</li> <li>• Foster readiness for future Edtech X innovations.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

The Ministry is dedicated to creating a flexible, inclusive, and resilient higher education system that addresses evolving societal, technological, and economic demands. Shift 8 underscores the significance of Flexible Education and Lifelong Learning in enabling learners to adapt and thrive in changing environments. This shift supports upskilling, reskilling, and embedding LLL into Malaysian society by integrating diverse and personalised educational pathways to better meet individual needs, fostering adaptability and accessibility. Granting HLIs greater autonomy in skill recognition and accreditation, reducing bureaucratic barriers, and upholding high standards are vital for promoting flexibility. Strengthening credentialing systems, centralising digital platforms, and leveraging emerging technologies will equip the education ecosystem to overcome future challenges and empower learners to achieve their full potential.

**Shift**



# Planetary Health and Sustainability

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## Introduction

Sustainability focuses on meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own. It balances environmental, social, and economic dimensions to promote long-term health and prosperity. Central to this concept are the conservation of ecosystems, the promotion of equity, and the assurance of sustainable economic growth. The United Nations' (UN) 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Exhibit 9-1) address critical global challenges such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, with the aim of achieving these goals by 2030. In parallel, the emerging framework of Planetary Health emphasise the interdependence between human health and the health of natural systems. It highlights the need to safeguard Earth's life-supporting ecosystems as a precondition for sustainable development and societal well-being. HLIs that align sustainable agenda in their mission, values and core business, will remain resilient, harmonious, prosperous, values-centric, adaptive and agile.

**Exhibit 9-1: Seventeen Sustainability Development Goals by United Nations (2015)**

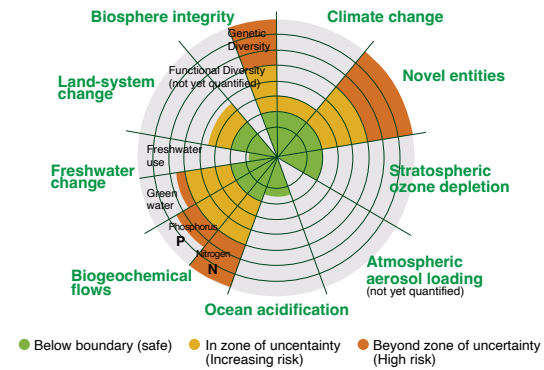


Source: United Nations. (2015). *Seventeen Sustainable Development Goals*. <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

Planetary Health, introduced by the Lancet-Rockefeller Foundation, underscores the interconnectedness of human and the ecological systems. One of the measures of planetary health is through the measurements of the nine planetary boundaries (Exhibit 9.2). These boundaries represent critical thresholds that, if crossed, could destabilise Earth’s ecosystems and risking human health. Maintaining the nine planetary boundaries are critical to ensure that the planet remains hospitable for future generations.

The relationship between planetary health and sustainability is deeply intertwined, as both aim to secure the long-term human health, planet, and prosperity (Exhibit 9.3). As depicted in the relationship framework, the biosphere is at the core of the SDGs, interconnecting with human health, societal well-being, and economic prosperity. Without a stable biosphere, the upper layers of the SDG framework, social equity, economic growth, and overall human development cannot be sustained. If the nine planetary boundaries are transgressed, the stability of the Earth’s systems is compromised, leading to irreversible impact to human health and environmental degradation that directly impacts human societies and economies. Understanding the Anthropocene, the current epoch defined by significant human impact on Earth’s geology and ecosystems, is critical to planetary health, as it frames the urgency of mitigating anthropogenic pressures on the environment and highlights the interdependence between ecological integrity and human health. Therefore, respecting planetary boundaries is not just an environmental necessity but a fundamental prerequisite for long-term sustainability and global resilience. At the heart of planetary health are equity, systems shifts, and transdisciplinary approaches, all of which are essential to achieving meaningful and lasting outcomes.

**Exhibit 9-2: The Nine Planetary Boundaries (Stockholm Resilience Centre)**



Source: Stockholm Resilience Centre. (2018). *Achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals within 9 Planetary Boundaries*. <https://shorturl.at/9rJR6>

**Exhibit 9-3: Relationship between SDGs and planetary health**



Source: Stockholm Resilience Centre. (2018). *Achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals within 9 Planetary Boundaries*. <https://shorturl.at/9rJR6>

## Why it matters

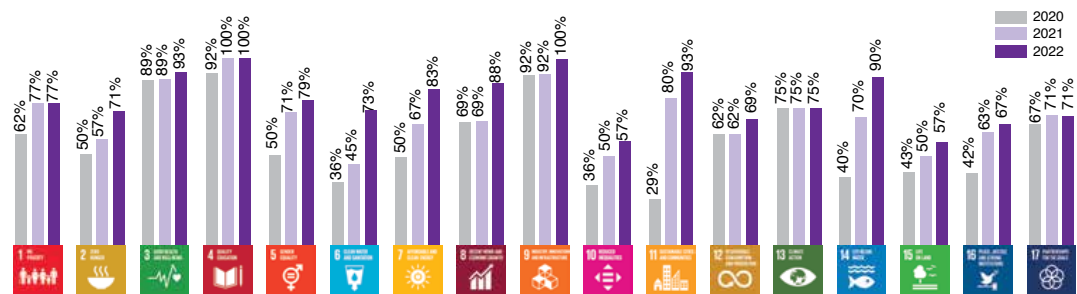
Malaysia has experienced significant economic growth over the past two decades. However, its Environmental Performance Index (EPI) has declined from 62.6 in 2012 to 35.0 in 2022<sup>1</sup>, indicating a continued deterioration in social and environmental aspects as a consequence of economic development. This decline reflects not only ecological degradation but also poses serious risks to public health, which is increasingly recognised as a direct outcome of planetary health deterioration

Aligned with global efforts, Malaysia has demonstrated its commitment to sustainability through policies such as the National Environmental Policy and the Renewable Energy Act, while integrating the UN SDGs into its development agenda since 2015. However the challenges persist, exacerbated by crises including COVID-19, climate extremes, and geopolitical shifts. The 2023 UN assessment<sup>2</sup> highlights that more than 50% of global SDG targets are lagging. Neglecting planetary health and sustainability could accelerate climate change, ecosystem collapse, food and water insecurity, public health crises, economic instability, and social inequality. Overcoming these interconnected challenges requires STI-enabled solutions, nature-based approaches, innovative strategies, and strengthened commitment at all levels, guided by the planetary health framework which emphasises the interdependence between human health and the integrity of natural systems.

### Malaysia's progress in SDGs

Malaysia led the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) progress in 2022, achieving 43% of targets, significantly surpassing the global average of 17% (Exhibit 9.4). Notably, between 2020 and 2022, Malaysia demonstrated significant improvements in SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and SDG 14 (Life Below Water).

Exhibit 9-4: Status of Malaysia's SDG components, 2020–2022



Source: Department of Statistic Malaysia (2022).

<sup>1</sup> Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM). (2021). Science Outlook 2020; OECD Statistics. *Global welfare cost of premature deaths due to environmental-related risks.*

<sup>2</sup> United Nations. (2023). *Warning over half of world is being left behind, Secretary-General tells General Assembly, stressing need for immediate action to rescue Sustainable Development Goals.* United Nations Press Release. <https://press.un.org/en/2023/sgsm21776.doc.htm>

Progress in biosphere-related SDGs (SDG 6, 13, 14, and 15) shows a positive trajectory. SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) improved from 36% in 2020 to 79% in 2022. SDG 13 (Climate Action) remained stable at 62% in 2020 and 2021 before rising to 69% in 2022. SDG 14 (Life Below Water) advanced from 40% in 2020 to 70% in 2022, while SDG 15 (Life on Land) increased from 42% in 2020 to 77% in 2022.

Despite these achievements, challenges persist in tracking holistic SDG progress. To align with the 2030 SDGs Agenda, Malaysia must bridge existing gaps through targeted strategies, innovation, and strengthened multi-stakeholder collaboration.

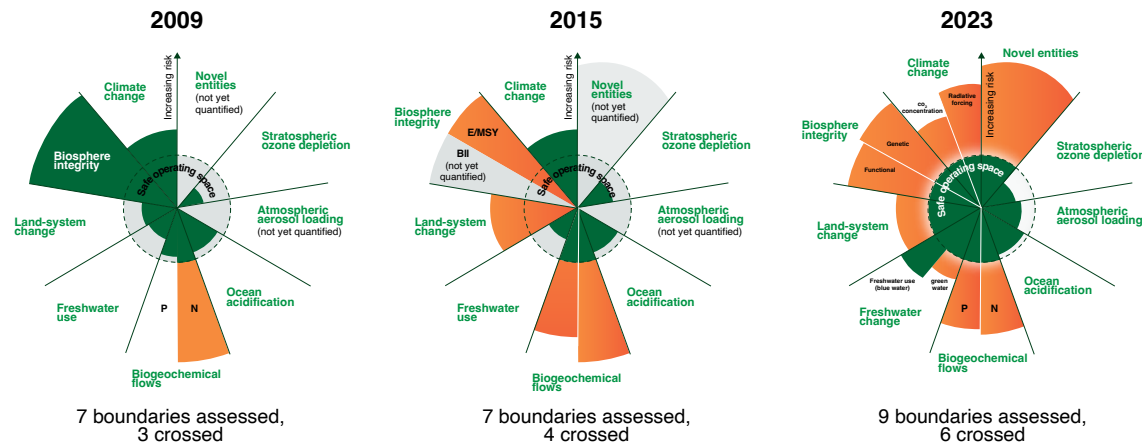
### Planetary boundaries and sustainability risks

In 2009, Johan Rockström, Director of the Stockholm Resilience Centre, with a team of 28 scientists identified key processes regulating the stability and resilience of the Earth system. Their work established a framework for monitoring planetary boundaries transgressions, which highlight the critical thresholds that, if exceeded, could destabilise Earth's systems. The trend in planetary boundaries transgressions (Exhibit 9-5) reveals a global increase in breaching boundaries from 2015 to 2023.

A study by Kallis, G. et al. (2025) found that Malaysia exceeded six out of nine planetary boundaries while achieving only five out of eleven social thresholds in 2023 (Exhibit 9-6). This highlights the critical challenge of balancing economic growth with social well-being and environmental sustainability. Malaysia cannot afford to pursue socio-economic development at the expense of planetary health. These findings underscore the urgent need for a more integrated governance approach to ensure sustainable and equitable progress.

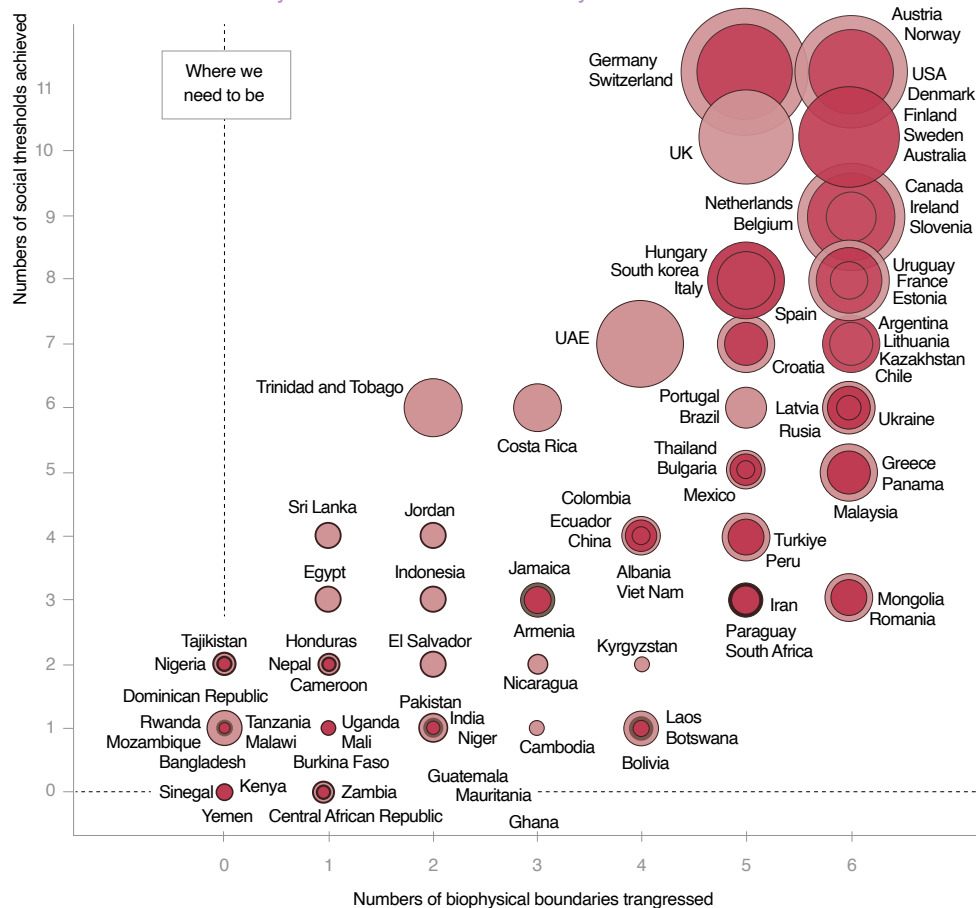
Malaysia faces significant sustainability challenges as 6 out of 9 planetary boundaries have been transgressed, threatening long-term ecological balance. Key issues include deforestation, carbon emissions, and biodiversity

Exhibit 9-5: Trend of planetary boundaries by planetary health check.



Source: Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research. (2024). *Planetary Health Check Report 2024*. <https://www.pik-potsdam.de/en/news/latest-news/earth-exceed-safe-limits-first-planetary-health-check-issues-red-alert>

Exhibit 9-6: Status of Malaysia in the context of Planetary Health



Source: Kallis, G., Hickel, J., O'Neill, D. W., Jackson, T., Victor, P. A., Raworth, K., Schor, J. B. & Ürge-Vorsatz, D. (2025). *Post-growth: the science of wellbeing within planetary boundaries*. *The Lancet Planetary Health*, 9(1), e62-e78

loss driven by rapid urbanisation and industrial activities. The rising threat of microplastic pollution further endangers marine ecosystems and human health. While economic and social progress continues, unsustainable resource use undermines future stability.

Globally, we are approaching critical tipping point, such as Arctic ice melt, which can disrupt weather and ocean pattern triggering cascading effects that threaten ecosystem, food security and consequently human health. Urgent action is needed to integrate sustainability into policies, curb pollution, and enhance conservation efforts for a resilient future.

### Box 9-1: Microplastic issues in Malaysia



Microplastic is a particle not more than 5mm in length. An article from Environmental Science and Technology (2024) reported that Malaysians consume an average of 502.3mg microplastics daily per capita and 50% of the consumption come from the seafoods. Malaysians were also found to inhale an estimated 494,000 particles of microplastic daily, in which the particles came from abrasion of plastic materials used in tyres and aquatic plastic particulates. The situation placed Malaysia among Top 10 countries with the most microplastic consumption and inhalation.

Source: New Strait Times (2024, September). <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2024/09/1100609/microplastics-malaysias-silent-killer-linked-over-48000-cancer-cases>

Microplastics are found abundance in our marine environment and later eaten by the marine creatures before they are consumed by human beings. The situation is alarming because seafoods contaminated with microplastics were found to be among the cause for cancer and decrease fertility rate. Global Cancer Observatory (Globocan) reported in *The New Straits Time* (September 3, 2024) that new cases of cancer in Malaysia by 2040 is estimated to be at 100,000 but this number may double. In addition, fertility rate is declining from 6.7 children per woman in 1957 to 2.1 in 2010 and 1.6 in 2022. The alarming rate called for better waste management and environmental laws in Malaysia, but it must also accompany with effective planetary health and sustainable education in the schools and HLLs to create early awareness plan and coordinated actions.

Exhibit 9-7: Top 10 countries with the most microplastic consumption



## Where we are

Malaysian HLLs are advancing the planetary health and sustainability agenda. However, fragmented practices limit their full potential to deliver meaningful impact. A transdisciplinary approach is essential to overcoming barriers and driving progress as it fosters integrated thinking, bridges disciplinary silos, and aligns diverse expertise to address the complex, interconnected challenges at the nexus of human and planetary well-being.

### Box 9-2: Sunway University Planetary Health Centre

Efforts such as those by the Sunway University Planetary Health Centre exemplify how HLLs are addressing global planetary health and sustainability challenges through impactful research, partnerships, and educational initiatives, positioning Malaysia as a leader in sustainability innovation.



“Education is the cornerstone of how we rise to address the planetary crisis. I want Malaysia to show the way.”

Prof. Tan Sri Dr. Jemilah Mahmood

### Embedding planetary health and sustainability in academic programmes

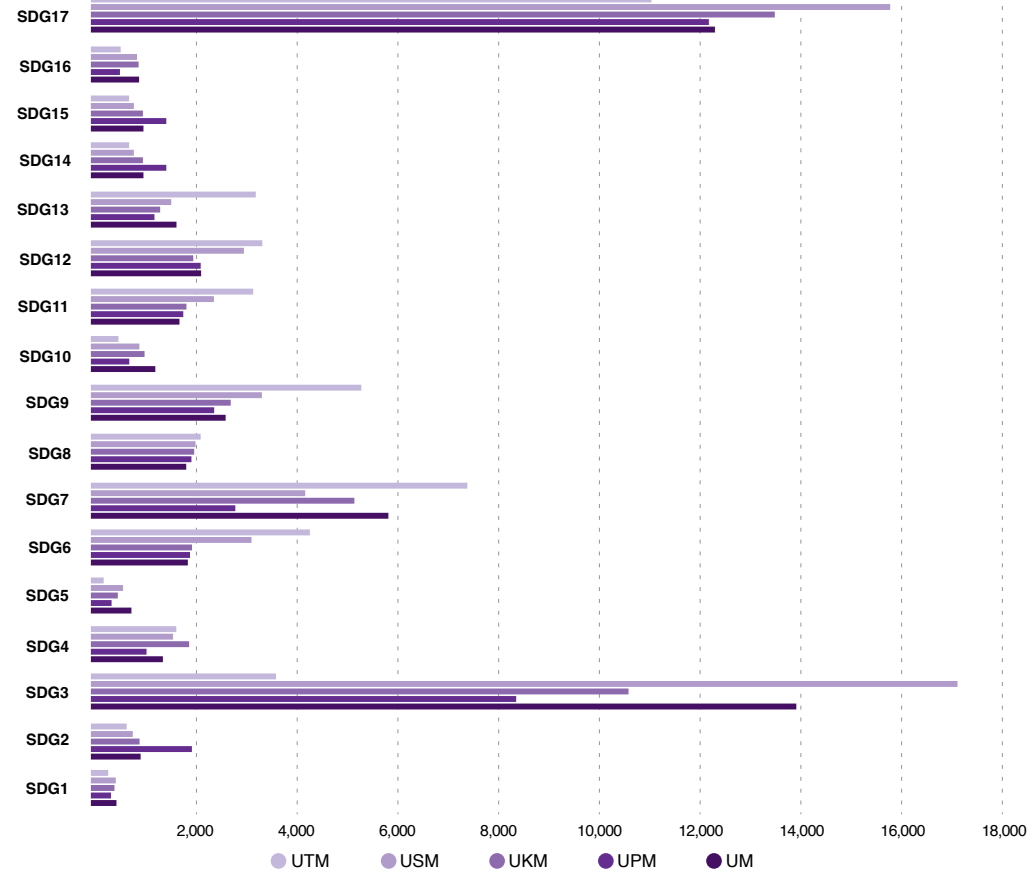
Malaysian HLLs offer a diverse range of academic programmes in environmental science, management, and economics across various academic levels. Many HLLs offer sustainable related subjects under the General Education Courses (MPU) such as in Sunway University emphasising on planetary health while USM offers courses that are related to sustainability. Additionally, professional programmes such as engineering, architecture, and town planning incorporate environmental knowledge as a fundamental component. This foundation supports the broader efforts of HLLs in integrating planetary health and sustainability principles into education, research, and public service to address pressing environmental challenges. Research initiatives in environmental science, public health, and sustainable development strengthen learners' understanding of the interconnectedness between human health and ecosystems, focusing on critical issues such as climate change, air and water quality, and food security.

### Research and global recognition

Research efforts in Malaysian HLLs are increasingly centred on sustainability, with Malaysian Research Universities contributing a growing number of publications aligned with the SDGs (Exhibit 9-8). This reflects a strong commitment to advancing knowledge that supports the global sustainability goals. Interdisciplinary research across fields such as economics, sociology, and ecology is gaining momentum, fostering holistic approaches that equip learners to address complex sustainability challenges effectively. Nonetheless, there remains a critical need to strengthen planetary health research across Asia, where rapid urbanisation, environmental degradation, and emerging public health threats demand context-specific, integrated solutions.

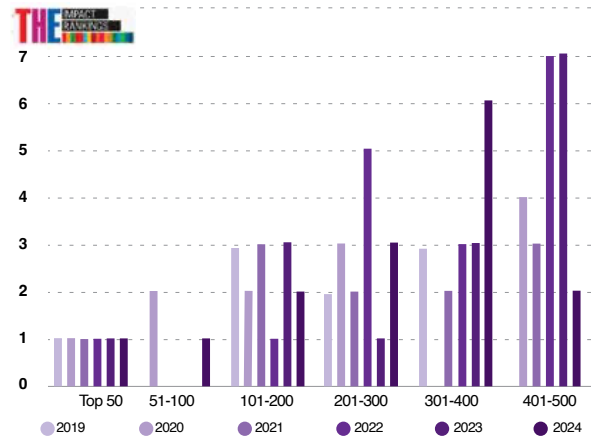
Significant achievements are evident in SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals, which underscores the importance of global collaboration in achieving sustainable development. Malaysian HLLs have actively engaged in strategic partnerships with international institutions, industries, and policymakers, demonstrating strong commitments to collaborative sustainability initiatives. These efforts have contributed to their growing recognition in global sustainability rankings.

**Exhibit 9-8: Publications from Malaysian Research Universities in relation to the SDGs**



Source: SCOPUS. (2024). Data on SDGs-related publications. www.scopus.com

**Exhibit 9-9: Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings for Malaysian universities, 2019–2024**



Notably, Malaysian HLIs have made remarkable strides in sustainability efforts. Exhibit 9-9 illustrates the Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings for Malaysian universities from 2019 to 2024, categorised into different ranking tiers. The data reflects the growing recognition of Malaysian universities for their contributions to the SDGs, with an increasing number achieving higher rankings over the years. Their presence in these rankings underscores the effectiveness of their education, research, and public engagement in driving meaningful global impact.

Overall, HLIs in Malaysia are nurturing a generation of leaders and learners equipped with the knowledge and skills to address planetary health and sustainability challenges. These efforts aim to cultivate informed decision-making and proactive engagement with pressing global issues, reinforcing Malaysia’s role in shaping a more sustainable future.

**Barriers and the need for holistic integration**

An analysis of the integration of global knowledge in planetary health and sustainability within Malaysia’s higher education system reveals a mixed performance, marked by various challenges and gaps. While progress has been made, obstacles remain hindering the holistic adoption of planetary health and sustainability principles. Bridging knowledge and awareness gap requires concerted efforts to integrate global expertise and best practices into education, research, and institutional frameworks, creating a pathway for more comprehensive and impactful progress. Addressing planetary health and sustainability necessitates a shift in mindset, which can be achieved through education and effective communication strategies that drive behavioural change.

Key barriers towards planetary health and sustainability include limited political will, gaps in curriculum integration, inadequate funding, weak collaboration, and insufficient awareness. Embedding sustainability into the core educational and operational framework offers a clearer direction for overcoming these challenges. This vision transforms obstacles into actionable strategies, equipping HLIs to foster eco-conscious graduates capable of addressing global sustainability challenges. By aligning with this objective, HLIs can overcome fragmentation, create a cohesive ecosystem, and drive sustainable development at institutional, societal, and global levels, ensuring a lasting impact on planetary health and resilience.

**Box 9-3: Sustainable practices at Universiti Sains Malaysia**

With its green campus environment and strong commitment to sustainable practices, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in Minden, Pulau Pinang has consistently ranked among the Top 20 in THE Impact Rankings for six consecutive years.



Source: Universiti Sains Malaysia. (2023). *Leading for Sustainability: USM Maintains #4 Position in the World*. <https://news.usm.my/index.php/english-news/9000-leading-for-sustainability-usm-maintains-4-position-in-the-world>

**Box 9-4: Malaysian academics and graduates excellence in sustainability efforts**

Wen Shin Chia, an alumna of Universiti Putra Malaysia, was honoured with the Queen's Young Leaders Award in 2018 (Environment) for her exemplary contributions to sustainability and environmental conservation.



Dr Ng Chuck Chuan of Xiamen University Malaysia received the MERDEKA Award 2023 (Outstanding Contribution to Environment and Planetary Health), honouring his impactful work in advancing environmental sustainability.



Prof Dr Joy Jacqueline Pareira from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia is the recipient of the MERDEKA Award 2024 (Outstanding Contribution to Environment and Planetary Health), underscoring her leadership in bridging policy and global climate science.



Dr Kong Xin Ying, a 2019 PhD graduate from Monash University Malaysia, was the recipient of the MERDEKA Award 2023 (Outstanding Contribution to Science, Technology & Innovation) for turning plastic waste into a sustainable energy alternative. She later won the MIT Grand Challenge Award in 2024 for her work.

## Objective

Over the next decade, HLIs in Malaysia aim to embed planetary health and sustainability agenda as core components in their educational and training frameworks. This transformative approach seeks to nurture planet-friendly individuals and a workforce dedicated to safeguarding the nation's khazanah. Aligned with the SDGs, the framework addresses complex environmental, social, and economic challenges through a holistic integration of knowledge, awareness, and action within the HLI ecosystem. The proposed framework emphasises interdisciplinary learning to equip future generations with the competencies to tackle planetary health and sustainability challenges. It aims to cultivate environmental stewardship, promote sustainable practices, and instil planet-friendly behaviours. By addressing urgent environmental concerns, this framework ensures long-term socio-economic development and nurtures a generation committed to planetary health and sustainability.

## Principles

The transformation of higher education to achieve planetary health and sustainability is underpinned by several interrelated principles, which collectively shape a comprehensive approach to fostering environmental stewardship and societal resilience:

- Interdisciplinary and experiential learning:** HLIs must integrate sustainability knowledge across disciplines and prioritise experiential learning, equipping learners with practical skills and fostering connections between ecological and human health aligned with the SDGs.
- Eco-conscious practices and leadership:** HLIs should implement sustainable campus practices and embed sustainability into decision-making, inspiring eco-conscious behaviours and serving as role models for broader societal change through integrated governance, operations, and campus culture.
- Knowledge and community engagement:** HLIs must empower learners and communities to address sustainability challenges through partnerships, education, and outreach, driving collaborative solutions and inspiring environmental and social responsibility at local, national, and global levels.
- Long-term accountability and impact:** Sustainability efforts in HLIs require robust tracking, adaptive policies, and alignment with global goals, ensuring lasting positive impacts on campuses and society while fostering resilience and meeting future generations' needs.

## Strategies and initiatives

<b>Strategy 9A</b>	Transforming HLI leadership for planetary health and sustainability
<b>Strategy 9B</b>	Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability into the national agenda for higher education
<b>Strategy 9C</b>	Mainstream planetary health and sustainability in curriculum
<b>Strategy 9D</b>	Creating a planet-friendly environment and ecosystem

### Strategy 9A

#### Transforming HLI leadership for planetary health and sustainability

This strategy focuses on cultivating leaders that integrates planetary health, system thinking and sustainability principles across HLIs. It aims to embed sustainability competencies into leadership roles and decision-making frameworks, aligning governance practices with environmental and societal priorities. By developing sustainable leadership capabilities and fostering a culture of environmental stewardship, this strategy positions HLIs as role models in sustainability, ensuring they address global challenges effectively and embed sustainability within their institutional operations.

### Initiatives

#### 9A.1: Incorporating planetary health and sustainability competency criteria for leadership appointments

This initiative establishes planetary health and sustainability principles as core criteria for appointing university boards, vice-chancellors and top IHL's managers. The Ministry will oversee the recruitment, selection, and evaluation processes; integrating sustainability competencies into leadership appointments. By assessing candidates based on their demonstrated commitment to sustainability and strategies for advancing planetary health, the Ministry ensures alignment with national and institutional sustainability objectives. HLIs will support the implementation (of the planetary health agenda) by fostering a sustainability-focused culture and enabling the leadership to embed eco-conscious and socially responsible practices into institutional governance and operations. This initiative strengthens leadership's role in driving transformative change for sustainable outcomes.

#### 9A.2: Implementing planetary health and sustainability competency framework for the academic fraternity

This initiative establishes a comprehensive framework for academic staff that prioritises planetary health and sustainability principles. The Ministry will provide policy guidance and the framework's structural foundation, while HLIs will tailor and implement mandatory induction programmes. These programmes will equip academics to integrate sustainability into their teaching, research, and community engagement practices. By fostering environmental and social awareness across the academic community, this initiative aligns institutional goals with global sustainability challenges and enhances HLIs' contributions to addressing planetary health issues.

## Strategy 9B

### Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability into the national agenda for higher education

Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability principles into Malaysia's higher education national agenda ensures alignment with sustainable development priorities. The approach integrates policies, frameworks, and institutional goals to promote sustainability across curricula, research, and operations. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, providing specialised funding, and institutionalising sustainability practices, this strategy equips graduates with the knowledge and values needed to tackle socio-economic and environmental challenges while advancing Malaysia's global sustainability commitments.

## Initiatives

### 9B.1: Developing a planetary health and sustainability higher education framework

A comprehensive framework will serve as a guiding blueprint for integrating planetary health and sustainability into higher education. The Ministry will establish the framework, offering policy direction, standards, and resources to align institutional strategies with sustainability goals. HLIs will implement the framework by reshaping curricula, prioritising sustainability-focused research, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration. The initiative ensures higher education contributes meaningfully to global sustainability efforts while preparing eco-conscious graduates to address pressing environmental challenges.

### 9B.2: Institutionalising experiential learning to foster planet friendly values, culture, and behavioural changes

Experiential learning programmes immerse learners in sustainability practices, creating opportunities for hands-on involvement in community projects, environmental stewardship, and practical applications. The Ministry will provide national-level guidance and support to develop these programmes, while HLIs will design and implement activities that reflect local and global sustainability needs. These programmes instil eco-conscious values and behaviours, ensuring learners graduate with the skills and mindset needed for responsible planetary stewardship and societal contribution.

### 9B.3: Prioritising planetary health and sustainability in research and development (R&D) with special grants for nature-based solutions

Research and development efforts will focus on planetary health and sustainability, with a strong emphasis on nature-based solutions. The Ministry will allocate targeted grants to support innovative research addressing ecological challenges and fostering environmental resilience. HLIs will spearhead these research initiatives, ensuring collaboration across disciplines, industry, and communities to deliver impactful outcomes. By prioritising R&D in these areas, this initiative will strengthen Malaysia's leadership in sustainability innovation and enhances contributions to addressing global environmental challenges.

## Strategy 9C

### Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability in curriculum

Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability principles across all academic programmes ensures learners develop a comprehensive understanding of global environmental challenges. Aligning curricula with the SDGs and incorporating experiential learning such as internships and community-based projects enable learners to gain practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge. By fostering environmental stewardship and sustainable practices, this strategy nurtures a generation of environmentally conscious graduates capable of driving sustainable socio-economic development while maintaining ecological balance.

## Initiatives

### 9C.1: Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability into all accredited programmes, including professional programmes

Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability principles into all accredited programmes ensures learners across disciplines are equipped with the knowledge, understanding and skills to address pressing environmental and societal issues. The Ministry will mandate the inclusion of sustainability components within accreditation standards, while HLIs will implement these changes through curriculum updates, ensuring alignment with SDGs and national priorities. By fostering a culture of environmental stewardship and socio-economic responsibility, this initiative prepares learners to apply sustainability concepts in their respective fields and professional practices.

### 9C.2: Establishing planetary health and sustainability certification

A dedicated certification programme recognising expertise in sustainability equips graduates to implement eco-friendly practices in their careers and strengthens their professional impact. The Ministry will oversee the development of the certification framework, ensuring alignment with national and global sustainability goals. HLIs will administer the programme, offering certification through targeted courses, workshops, and assessments. By enhancing employability and professional capabilities, this initiative encourages graduates to become catalysts for sustainability in various industries and sectors.

### 9C.3: Developing a planetary health and sustainability higher education playbook

A comprehensive playbook will serve as a practical guide for integrating sustainability into operations, governance, and curricula within HLIs. The Ministry will lead the development of the playbook, ensuring it aligns with national strategic goals and frameworks. HLIs will adapt and implement the guidelines to suit their institutional contexts, promoting consistency and impact across the higher education ecosystem. This initiative empowers institutions to embed sustainability into their core functions, producing environmentally conscious graduates ready to address global challenges and drive sustainable development.

## Strategy 9D

### Creating a planet-friendly environment and ecosystem

By focusing on green technologies, resource efficiency, and biodiversity conservation, this strategy aims to transform HLI into exemplary models of planetary stewardship. By integrating sustainable practices into the institution's infrastructure and operations, HLIs can reduce detrimental environmental impact while fostering an eco-conscious culture among learners and staff. Environmental impact audits and sustainability rankings encourage continuous progress, motivating institutions to adopt innovative approaches. Through these efforts, HLIs contribute to long-term socio-economic and environmental well-being and planetary health, demonstrating leadership in sustainability and resilience.

## Initiatives

### 9D.1: Transitioning infrastructure, practices, and culture to foster planetary health and sustainability values

Modernising HLI infrastructure and operations will align them with sustainability goals. The Ministry will provide policy guidance and resources to support the adoption of green technologies, renewable energy systems, sustainable transport, and waste reduction strategies. HLIs are tasked with implementing these changes and to embed sustainability values into their daily operations and campus culture. This initiative fosters an eco-conscious community, ensuring sustainability as a core aspect of institutional practices and behaviours.

### 9D.2: Demonstrating sustainability stewardship in HLIs

Positioning HLIs as leaders in sustainability showcases their visible commitment to environmental and social responsibility. The Ministry will set sustainability benchmarks and recognise institutions for exemplary practices, fostering accountability and motivation. HLIs will implement eco-friendly initiatives such as green campus projects, biodiversity conservation efforts, and community engagement activities. These actions inspire learners, staff, and the wider community to follow sustainable practices and contribute to ecological resilience, creating a ripple effect that extends beyond the campus and reinforces the importance of environmental stewardship.

### 9D.3: Establishing a platform for planetary health and sustainability data repository

A centralised data repository allows HLIs to track, evaluate, and report on their planetary boundary and sustainability performance. The Ministry will develop the platform and provide the necessary infrastructure for its implementation. HLIs will contribute data on their environmental impact initiatives, resource consumption, and sustainability initiatives, enabling benchmarking and continuous improvement. By leveraging on data-driven insights, institutions can identify areas for enhancement, ensuring accountability and measurable progress in their sustainability efforts. Malaysia should also play a role in coordinating a regional planetary health and sustainability data repository; and share best practices among HLIs in member countries.

## Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Percentages of HLIs mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability values across all their policies.
- Numbers of planetary health and sustainability R&D outputs applied to the community and society.
- Percentages of HLIs embedding planetary health and sustainability values into programmes, courses and experiential learning.
- Reduction in carbon footprint on HLIs' campuses.

## Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 9-10.

**Exhibit 9-10: Initiatives implementation roadmap**

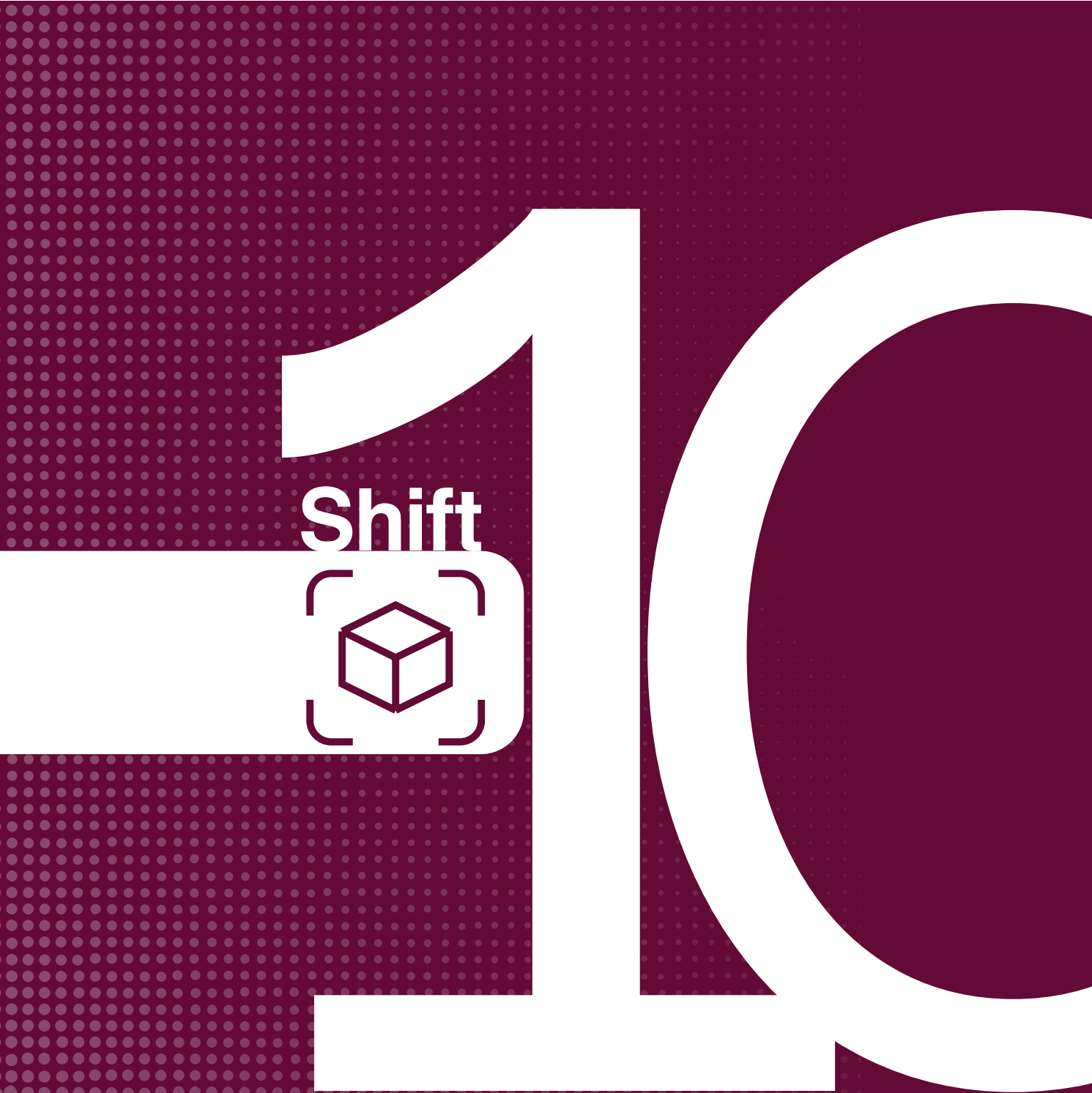
	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Elevate
<b>Strategy A</b> Transforming HLI leadership for planetary health and sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop planetary health and sustainability training module for HLIs leaders.</li> <li>• Introduce sustainability competency criteria for leadership roles.</li> <li>• The training module jointly developed with industry, community and policy-makers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver training on planetary health and sustainability oriented decision making for senior leaders across society and the economy, strengthening collaboration within the quadruple helix.</li> <li>• Implement leadership evaluation for planetary health and sustainability outcomes that advance nation-building, measured through return on values across economic, societal, environmental and political capability, will and empowerment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand leadership development frameworks for planetary health and sustainability programmes across the region—Malaysia becomes an education and research hub in the region for planetary health and sustainability.</li> <li>• Conduct sustainable leadership global training programme on planetary health and sustainability for emerging economies (Malaysia' Soft Power in planetary health and sustainability).</li> <li>• Establish a global leadership benchmarking system for sustainability.</li> </ul>

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Elevate
<p><b>Strategy B</b> Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability into the national agenda for higher education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and launch a playbook for HLI on planetary health and sustainability.</li> <li>• Allocate special grants for planetary health and sustainability R&amp;D.</li> <li>• Develop and advocate planetary health and sustainability policy for HLI by MOHE.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutionalise planetary health and sustainability principles into all national higher education policies.</li> <li>• Increase allocation for R&amp;D grants in planetary health and sustainability focused initiatives.</li> <li>• Develop a network of interdisciplinary planetary health and sustainability research and education hubs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate and monitor planetary health and sustainability practices in HLIs.</li> <li>• Review the playbook for HLI on planetary health and sustainability and incorporate new global dynamics that impact the higher education sector and the nation’s future talent development.</li> <li>• Continuous allocation for R&amp;D grants in planetary health and sustainability focused initiatives.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy C</b> Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability in curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct evaluations of existing curricula to identify gaps in planetary health and sustainability in HLI content.</li> <li>• Develop interdisciplinary planetary health and sustainability courses in HLIs.</li> <li>• The curriculum framework must include strong industry and community collaboration and impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrate and institutionalise planetary health and sustainability values into relevant programmes and courses.</li> <li>• Incorporate multiple learning pedagogies, modes and locations</li> <li>• Continue enhancing pedagogical approaches and processes for credential certification in planetary health and sustainability programmes and courses through experiential learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the integration of sustainability and planetary health values into relevant programmes and courses.</li> <li>• Monitor experiential learning for planetary health and sustainability programmes.</li> <li>• Incorporate new national, regional and global dynamics into curriculum development and design to ensure the education and training is fit for purpose.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategy D</b> Creating a planet-friendly environment and ecosystem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct baseline environmental impact assessment and audits for HLI campus.</li> <li>• Develop a planet and environmental friendly campus roadmap</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure performance on all metrics that impact the planetary health boundaries and ESG.</li> <li>• Implement action plan of the planet and environmental friendly campus roadmap.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HLIs’ performance are also measured based on robust planetary-friendly and sustainability ranking.</li> <li>• Put in place incentive systems to reward good planet-friendly and sustainability performance and ranking.</li> <li>• Institutionalise planet and environmentally friendly campus in HLIs.</li> <li>• Establish fully digital sustainability monitoring systems.</li> </ul>

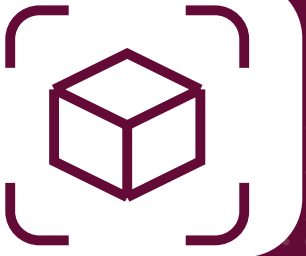
## Conclusion

Mainstreaming planetary health and sustainability in Malaysian HLIs is essential for addressing pressing environmental and human health challenges. By enhancing curricula, promoting sustainable leadership, and adopting eco-conscious campus practices, HLIs are preparing a generation who are SDG aware and ready to tackle global sustainability issues. Initiatives such as interdisciplinary research hubs, upgraded infrastructure, and community partnerships enable real-world applications and strengthen HLIs' contributions to sustainable development. With growing global recognition, these efforts position HLIs as leaders in advancing sustainability locally and globally. This enduring commitment will nurture a resilient, environmentally conscious academic community, equipped to navigate future challenges and drive impactful change.





Shift





# Responsive and Dynamic Delivery

## Introduction

Malaysia's higher education system will thrive in an ever-evolving global landscape through responsive and dynamic delivery. This approach ensures adaptability to changing needs, prioritises stakeholder engagement, and employs flexible methods to remain relevant and effective. It emphasises proactive adjustments, learner-centric strategies, and innovative practices to foster engagement and achieve desired outcomes. Services and solutions are thus consistently aligned with evolving demands and expectations.

The cornerstone of this transformation is a robust, data-driven framework encompassing the Ministry and Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs). This framework facilitates real-time feedback, continuous assessment, and timely interventions, enabling a proactive and adaptive response to change. Modernising processes, integrating advanced digital technologies, and implementing comprehensive monitoring systems are pivotal to this approach.

This chapter details the Ministry's efforts to cultivate a dynamic higher education ecosystem. It underscores the importance of collaboration among stakeholders including industry, academia, government, and society in driving the successful implementation of the Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2025–2035 (MHEB).

## Why it matters

Achieving the ambitious objectives set forth in the MHEB requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach.

### **Delivery capacities for resilient and relevant education**

A responsive and dynamic approach to education delivery is crucial for navigating both global and local challenges, ensuring the system remains relevant, resilient, and adaptable to evolving needs. During the public consultation for the MHEB, stakeholders from various sectors emphasised the importance of enhancing delivery capacities within the education ecosystem. While robust planning is essential, translating policies into impactful outcomes requires an equal focus on execution. Strengthening the Ministry's capacity to implement initiatives effectively fosters trust, collaboration, and meaningful progress, ensuring the education system meets its promises.

### **Governance and strategic alignment for effective implementation**

Strategic oversight and governance are pivotal in achieving the MHEB goals. Strengthening inter-ministerial coordination fosters unified decision-making and greater accountability, while data-driven systems enhance monitoring and agility, enabling informed adjustments to address changing needs. Aligning ministry objectives with institutional goals ensures policies are translated into actionable strategies, promoting a flexible, cohesive, and adaptive system.

### **Stability, inclusivity and collaboration for a unified higher education system**

Addressing frequent ministerial transitions requires balancing new leadership priorities with long-term objectives to maintain stability and continuity. Equitable access for marginalised groups, supported by targeted initiatives and inclusivity, ensures all individuals can thrive academically. Finally, harmonising regulatory frameworks and fostering public-private collaboration can drive innovation, resource sharing, and a unified educational ecosystem. Together, these efforts are vital for building a resilient, inclusive, and future-ready higher education system aligned with national aspirations.

## Where we are

The Malaysian higher education system must adapt more swiftly to align with global trends and prepare for future disruptions. Accordingly, the 10 shifts outlined in the MHEB are set to drive significant transformations in the system's operations.

### Strategic oversight and structured implementation governance

Effective implementation of the MHEB requires robust strategic oversight and structured governance mechanisms to ensure cohesive and goal-oriented decision-making. The absence of formalised monitoring and reporting systems directed toward a high-level inter-ministerial committee poses a significant barrier to achieving alignment across the diverse sectors involved. Strengthening coordination among ministries is crucial for breaking down operational silos, facilitating a collaborative approach to shared national priorities, and ensuring that Malaysia's educational vision remains consistent and unified across sectors. By fostering this strategic alignment, the government can advance the objectives of the blueprint with greater coherence, accountability, and impact, reinforcing a governance structure that drives sustainable progress.

### Data-driven decision making and monitoring

A comprehensive data warehouse is instrumental in fostering data-driven decision-making and effective monitoring within Malaysia's higher education system. Currently, gaps in data integration and accessibility hinder seamless adaptive delivery and limit the system's capacity for real-time insights. By further developing and integrating data systems, the Ministry can support more seamless adaptive delivery, enabling real-time insights that inform timely and strategic adjustments. This data infrastructure would empower stakeholders to respond to emerging trends proactively, assess the impact of implemented strategies, and make evidence-based decisions that enhance institutional agility.

### Alignment of ministry and institutional goals

The alignment between ministry-level objectives and institutional goals is crucial for ensuring the responsive and dynamic delivery of the MHEB. This alignment enables national policies to be effectively translated into actionable strategies within HLIs, fostering a unified approach to addressing national priorities and global challenges. Insights from the evaluation of the previous university transformation programme highlight the need to improve the alignment between the Ministry's regulatory objectives and the operational goals of academic institutions. Bridging this gap is essential to achieving a transformation initiative that is both responsive and agile. Greater synergy between the Ministry and HLIs will facilitate the adoption of dynamic delivery models, enabling institutions to leverage their unique strengths and adapt to evolving demands.

### Navigating ministerial transitions in higher education strategy

Frequent ministerial transitions pose significant challenges to the continuity of Malaysia's higher education initiatives, as changes in leadership can lead to shifts in focus that may not align with previously established plans. Such disruptions can hinder the steady implementation of long-term strategies outlined in the MHEB, impeding progress toward overarching educational goals. To ensure stability and continuity, it is essential to balance the priorities of incoming leadership with the original objectives of the blueprint. This requires careful management and fostering a culture of resilience and adaptability within the Ministry to maintain momentum on long-term goals while navigating evolving political landscapes.



### Harmonisation and regulatory support in higher education

Achieving greater harmonisation between private and public HLIs in Malaysia can create a more integrated and dynamic higher education ecosystem, fostering collaboration and shared innovation. By evolving the role of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) to better support flexible, modular learning pathways, the higher education system can adapt to diverse student needs, promoting innovation in course offerings and delivery methods. Enhanced regulatory support, including clear guidelines for resource sharing, as well as strengthened accountability and responsibility within HLIs, is crucial for aligning institutional efforts with the goals of the MHEB.

### Expanding equitable access to higher education for marginalised groups

Despite progress in promoting inclusivity within the higher education system, significant gaps remain in expanding equitable access for marginalised groups, particularly Persons with Disabilities (PWD) and Indigenous communities such as the Orang Asli and natives of Sabah and Sarawak. Barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, lack of tailored support services, and cultural insensitivity continue to hinder the academic pursuits of these populations. Many HLIs still struggle to implement Universal Design principles effectively, leaving students with disabilities at a disadvantage when it comes to engaging fully in the learning environment. Additionally, Indigenous students often face systemic challenges, including financial constraints and limited awareness of available educational opportunities. These obstacles create disparities in enrolment, retention, and completion rates, ultimately perpetuating cycles of inequality.

## Objectives

The Ministry aims to build a responsive and flexible higher education system that evolves with global and local changes. It will drive performance, foster collaboration, and empower HLIs to implement best practices through data-driven decision-making and continuous monitoring.

## Principles

Four principles will guide the Ministry in the transformation of the overall delivery system for higher education in Malaysia:

- Adopting agility and responsiveness to changing educational landscapes to ensure relevance and adaptability to emerging challenges and opportunities;
- Utilising data-driven decision-making to refine strategies and achieve the desired outcomes of higher education transformation;
- Promoting harmonisation across higher education sectors; and
- Fostering collaborative engagement with stakeholders to ensure inclusive participation.

## Strategies and initiatives

<b>Strategy 10A</b>	Enhancing evaluation, implementation and delivery of MHEB
<b>Strategy 10B</b>	Strengthening institutional excellence and performance
<b>Strategy 10C</b>	Embracing technology to improve service delivery
<b>Strategy 10D</b>	Harmonising the higher education system
<b>Strategy 10E</b>	Enhancing accessibility through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies

### Strategy 10A

#### Enhancing evaluation, implementation and delivery of MHEB

The Ministry will establish the Malaysia Education Council, chaired by the Prime Minister, to provide strategic direction and policy guidance. This initiative aims to ensure that the MHEB implementation programmes and targets are both ambitious and achievable, while remaining adaptable to the evolving needs of Malaysia's higher education landscape. The Higher Education Performance and Delivery Management Unit (HEAD) will also be strengthened, as it is essential for driving the on-ground execution of initiatives, coordinating resources, addressing implementation challenges, and ensuring HLIs align with the Blueprint's key objectives. Additionally, a strategic reporting mechanism for Blueprint achievements will be implemented, offering a transparent framework for evaluating progress, identifying gaps, and making data-driven adjustments.

“Strengthen delivery, monitoring, and facilitation will enhance Ministry's and HLIs' capacity for efficient and sustainable outcome”

Dato' Dr. Haji Megat Sany Megat Ahmad Supian,  
Deputy Secretary General (Policy)  
Ministry of Higher Education

### Initiatives

#### 10A.1: Strengthening delivery with the establishment of the National Education Council

The Ministry will establish the National Education Council or *Majlis Pendidikan Negara* (MPN), chaired by the Prime Minister, to ensure seamless continuity and cohesion between the Education and Higher Education sectors while enabling a whole-of-nation approach for the effective implementation of the Education and Higher Education Blueprints. The council will include members from relevant ministries and agencies, experienced academics, industry leaders, as well as representatives from international organisations.

Serving as a centralised platform, the council will foster collaboration among key ministries, including the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Ministry of Home Affairs, and Ministry of Health, among others. By consolidating input from these various sectors, the council will address inter-ministerial challenges affecting higher education, such as funding allocation, workforce readiness, research innovation, and technological advancements. The secretariat of the council will work closely with the Higher Education Performance and Delivery Management Unit (HEAD) at MOHE.

### **10A.2:** Enhancing delivery units to drive MHEB implementation

The delivery unit at the Ministry (HEAD) will be strengthened by increasing its personnel and elevating the grade of its positions. HEAD will have direct access to senior Ministry leadership and the Minister, enabling timely updates, rapid issue resolution, and alignment of efforts across institutions. It will work closely with delivery units at HLIs to effectively drive and implement MHEB initiatives.

HLI delivery units will monitor the implementation of MHEB initiatives within their respective institutions and provide regular progress reports to HEAD. This integrated coordination structure will enhance accountability, streamline progress tracking, and ensure cohesive and impactful implementation of the MHEB across Malaysia's higher education landscape.

### **10A.3:** Establishing strategic reporting of MHEB achievements to enhance visibility

The Ministry will implement a strategic communication initiative through regular, structured reporting to stakeholders, including policymakers, HLI leaders, faculty, students, and the general public. These reports will provide clear insights into the outcomes, challenges, and milestones of the blueprint's implementation.

By consistently publishing updates, the Ministry aims to build trust and foster engagement, enabling stakeholders to track developments and understand the impact of policies and initiatives on the education system. Through data-driven evaluation for strategic adjustments, clear communication, and strong collaboration among implementers at the Ministry and HLIs, the Ministry will ensure public accountability and promote continuous improvement.

### **Box 10-1:** The roles of the ministry delivery unit in driving the implementation of MHEB initiatives.

The central Delivery Unit will be instrumental in ensuring the successful execution of MHEB initiatives, focusing on four key responsibilities:

#### **Overseeing all MHEB initiatives.**

This involves ensuring that detailed action plans are developed at both the Ministry and HLI levels, with the necessary personnel and budgets secured to support the initiatives outlined in the MHEB. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be established for all initiatives, with progress on priority initiatives closely monitored and regularly reported to Ministry leadership. To support data-driven decision-making, the Delivery Unit will collaborate with relevant departments in the Ministry to enhance available databases, ensuring they effectively support the tracking of initiative outcomes and KPIs at both the Ministry and HLI levels.

#### **Coordinating and guiding cross-disciplinary, multi-agency teams to execute key initiatives.**

The Ministry Delivery Unit will oversee and track the implementation process, continuously refining the design based on real-time insights and outcomes. It will also facilitate in-depth analysis and resolution of arising obstacles and issues, escalating them to the

Ministry-level Steering Committee as needed. Regular updates will be provided to Ministry leadership and other key stakeholders ensuring seamless execution and alignment with strategic objectives.

For issues involving other agencies or Ministries, escalation will be directed to the MPN to ensure holistic management and resolution. It is imperative that reporting and evaluation to the Steering Committee and MPN are conducted on a scheduled basis.

**Facilitating engagement initiatives with the public and other stakeholders.**

Effective transformation relies on sustained public engagement through regular consultations, interactions, and discussions. The Ministry is committed to providing stakeholders with timely updates on the rationale for change, key priorities, challenges encountered, and progress made on MHEB initiatives. These updates will be shared via multiple platforms, including the Ministry's website, press releases, and social media. In addition, the Ministry will establish two-way communication channels to encourage dialogue on the implementation of the MHEB and to facilitate adjustments based on stakeholder feedback.

**Publishing clear targets and comprehensive performance reports on a regular basis.**

The Delivery Unit will conduct mid-year and end-of-year progress assessments to provide data-driven insights for informed decision-making by Ministry leadership. Impacts and outcomes at both the Ministry and HLI levels will be reported through close consultations and engagements with HLIs. Furthermore, the Ministry will enhance transparency and accountability by publishing an annual performance report, enabling the public to monitor the implementation progress of the MHEB.



## Strategy 10B

### Strengthening institutional excellence and performance

Advancing the quality and impact of higher education on the nation, communities, and individuals is essential for sustainable development. The Ministry will enhance existing rating systems, including the Malaysia Research Assessment Instrument (MyRA), the Integrated Rating of Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (SETARA), the Malaysian Quality Evaluation System for Private Colleges (MyQUEST), the Polytechnic Rating System (Polyrate), and the Community College Rating System (MySpeKK).

These enhancements aim to foster a culture of excellence and accountability, ensuring that institutions continuously strive for improved performance and global competitiveness. Additionally, the University Transformation Programme will be redesigned and rebranded to Institution Transformation Programme (ITP) to serve as a strategic approach in enhancing the performance of HLIs through benchmarking, sharing of best practices, and resources.

### Initiatives

#### 10B.1: Empowering the existing rating systems

The Ministry aims to enhance the effectiveness and impact of established rating systems such as MyRA, SETARA, MyQUEST, Polyrate, and MySpeKK, ensuring they serve as robust indicators of institutional excellence in higher education. By refining these systems, the initiative seeks to improve their capacity to accurately assess and reflect the performance of HLIs across key areas, including academic quality, research output, student satisfaction, and institutional governance. Strengthening these rating systems will foster greater accountability and transparency, enabling institutions to better identify areas for improvement and align with national and global standards. This initiative also promotes a culture of continuous improvement within institutions, supporting their efforts toward sustainable growth, innovation, and global competitiveness.

#### 10B.2: Redesigning and strategically implementing the Institution Transformation Programme (ITP)

In the higher education sector, transformation is driven by HLIs rather than directly by the Ministry. Under the University Transformation Programme (UniTP) of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015–2025 (Higher Education) or MEB 2015-2015 (HE), the Ministry, in collaboration with HLIs, identified and codified best practices and tools based on specific initiatives in the MEB 2015-2015 (HE). These were compiled into “playbooks” on critical topics, enabling HLIs to adopt elements best suited to their context and implement them at their own pace.

Under the Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026–2035 (MHEB), the Ministry will redesign UniTP into the Institution Transformation Programme (ITP) and launch several additional playbooks to support HLIs in implementing the transformation framework effectively. With the same objective of providing tailored guidance and resources, these playbooks will help institutions operationalise the Blueprint through ITP, ensuring a balanced integration of innovative practices and sustainable growth strategies.

Involving HLIs in the redesign process is essential, as their feedback and insights will shape the playbook content to reflect real-world challenges and opportunities, fostering a sense of ownership and commitment to the initiative. To monitor progress and effectiveness, robust evaluation methods will be established, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess the impact of the implemented strategies on institutional performance.

Box 10-2 lists the playbooks under the UniTP and the additional playbooks under the ITP.

## Box 10-2: Playbooks to enhance implementation

### Part A: List of playbooks under the UniTP

**Playbook 1:** Enhancing University Board Governance and Effectiveness (UniTP Green Book)

The UniTP Green Book aims to define best practices for university Board governance by clarifying roles and responsibilities and providing guidelines for structuring high-performing Boards. It also emphasises regularly assessing Board performance to enhance overall effectiveness.

**Playbook 2:** Strengthening Academic Career Pathways and Leadership Development (UniTP Orange Book)

The UniTP Orange Book aims to foster understanding and support for the implementation of the Differentiated Career Pathways framework, aligning it with the unique missions of HLIs. It also provides guidance on leadership development strategies to ensure effective planning and execution of the framework within institutions.

**Playbook 3:** Enhancing Academic Productivity and Cost Efficiency (UniTP Silver Book)

The objective of the UniTP Silver Book is to guide Malaysian universities in improving their academic productivity by optimising resources and reducing costs per graduate without compromising quality.

**Playbook 4:** Enhancing University Income Generation, Endowment and Waqf (UniTP Purple Book)

The objective of the UniTP Purple Book is to strengthen HLI's financial resilience by expanding funding sources through income-generating initiatives, establishing robust endowments, and advancing the Waqf model as a sustainable financial strategy.

### Part B: List of additional playbooks proposed under the ITP

- Humanity-centric, Entrepreneurial and Adaptive Learners
- Next-Gen TVET: Competencies for Tomorrow's Workforce
- Planetary Health and Sustainability in Higher Education
- Leading Change in HLIs
- Educating Persons with Disabilities
- Unbundling Excellence: A Playbook for Flexible Education and Lifelong Learning
- Building Globally Trusted Higher Education
- Financial Reporting for the New Funding Formula and Cost Efficiency
- Enhancing University Board Governance and Effectiveness, Volume 2
- The Purpose-Driven Talent Playbook: Shaping the Future of Higher Education

## Strategy 10C

### Embracing technology to improve service delivery

Improving the Ministry's digital facilities is a critical first step, enabling a modernised infrastructure that can support the need of the Ministry and the HLIs. The Ministry will strengthen digital services through current technologies, such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, to optimise processes, provide personalised services, and proactively address user needs. Furthermore, the Ministry will establish a comprehensive data warehouse to centralise, integrate, and analyse critical information, enabling more effective tracking of performance metrics and supporting evidence-based decision-making.

## Initiatives

### 10C.1: Improving MOHE and HLI digital facilities

The Ministry will enhance digital facilities at both the Ministry and HLIs by improving high-speed internet, strengthening cybersecurity, and integrating cloud-based solutions for efficient data storage and sharing. A centralised academic journal database at the Ministry will optimise costs and ensure equitable access to resources across HLIs. Digital platforms will be upgraded to streamline services, improve communication, and reduce administrative burdens for students, educators, and administrators. MOHE will drive HLIs' efforts to strengthen digital literacy and competencies in emerging technologies, such as AI and data analytics, to enable staff talent to fully harness the full potential of these tools. These efforts will create a digitally advanced higher education ecosystem, improving research capabilities, teaching quality, and administrative efficiency.

### 10C.2: Strengthening digital services through emerging technologies

Strengthening digital services through emerging technologies within the Ministry will be achieved through a multifaceted approach that emphasises innovation and efficiency. The Ministry will integrate artificial intelligence (AI) into various service delivery processes to enhance the user experience significantly. For instance, AI-powered chatbots will be implemented on the MOHE website and mobile applications to provide instant support and guidance to students and faculty, addressing enquiries related to admissions, course offerings, and financial aid. Furthermore, the Ministry will utilise machine learning algorithms to analyse user data, enabling personalised services and tailored recommendations for courses or resources based on individual needs and preferences.

### 10C.3: Enhancing data-driven decision-making

The Ministry will establish a comprehensive data warehouse, which will serve as a centralised repository integrating data from various sources within MOHE, such as student records, financial information, faculty performance metrics, and institutional research outcomes. The Ministry will also invest in advanced data analytics tools and software, enabling the performance of complex data analyses to generate actionable insights that inform policy decisions and strategic planning. Additionally, the Ministry will implement dashboards and reporting systems to provide real-time access to key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics. These visual tools will help decision-makers quickly assess institutional performance and identify areas for improvement. Regular reports generated from the data warehouse will support transparency and accountability, enabling stakeholders to monitor progress toward strategic goals. Finally, the Ministry will foster a data-driven culture by encouraging collaboration among departments and promoting the use of data in decision-making processes. To ensure sustainability, a governance framework for data management and usage will be established, maintaining data integrity and security while embedding data-driven approaches into the institution's operations.

## Strategy 10D

### Harmonising the higher education system

A unified higher education system, integrating both public and private HLIs, is essential for ensuring coherence, inclusivity, and efficiency in delivering quality education. This integration enables streamlined governance, aligning policies and practices across sectors to achieve shared national and institutional goals. By harmonising efforts, the system promotes equitable access, simplifies pathways for learners, and fosters collaboration across institutions. Leveraging shared resources and expertise across public and private HLIs enhances operational efficiency, drives innovation, and supports the creation of adaptive, engaging learning environments that address the evolving needs of individuals, communities, and the nation.

## Initiatives

### 10D.1: Restructuring MOHE to improve synergy towards One Higher Education

The Ministry will transform its structure to establish unified governance that enhances alignment across institutions and bridges public and private higher education. This restructuring will streamline decision-making, enabling cohesive policy implementation and fostering collaboration between sectors. By harmonising governance under the One Higher Education initiative, the Ministry will promote resource sharing, equitable access, and consistent standards, benefiting both MOHE and HLIs. A more integrated framework will support institutions in addressing shared challenges, driving innovation, and responding effectively to the needs of students, society, and the economy. This effort underscores the Ministry's commitment to a cohesive, efficient, and globally competitive higher education ecosystem.

### 10D.2: Enhancing harmonisation of delivery processes

The Ministry will lead efforts to monitor and standardise delivery processes across its departments, agencies, and HLIs to ensure cohesive and efficient governance. At the Department of Higher Education, priority will be given to refining processes within critical divisions, including expanding research funding opportunities to benefit private universities. By fostering collaboration in niche research areas such as planetary health, highlighted by successful initiatives at select institutions, this effort aims to enhance national innovation. Additionally, the Department will adopt a more inclusive approach, striking a balance in support for public and private universities to promote equitable development of curricula and programmes. This unified strategy aspires to nurture national talent and elevate Malaysia's academic and research excellence.

### 10D.3: Establishing a centralised student admission platform

The Ministry will expand the UPUOnline platform to include private universities and international student admissions, creating a unified system for public and private institutions. Private HLIs may choose to participate in the centralised admission platform, benefiting from the system's unified processes and technological advancements. This optional inclusion ensures flexibility for private institutions while promoting collaboration within Malaysia's higher education ecosystem. Leveraging advancements in technology, the Ministry will develop a comprehensive database consolidating each local student's educational history, and enabling the input of international applicants, to enhance admissions and placement decisions.

An AI-driven admission platform will integrate data from the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), addressing current system gaps. This platform will analyse students' academic backgrounds, co-curricular activities, personality, and career aspirations to suggest suitable universities and programmes, promoting equitable access to higher education. By centralising admissions, the system will ensure seamless navigation for students from diverse backgrounds. The Ministry will oversee the platform to enable efficient data management, align national admission standards, and enhance transparency, ensuring that international student admissions follow the same streamlined process.

## Strategy 10E

### Enhancing accessibility through diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies

Creating an equitable higher education system that serves all members of society, including marginalised communities, is essential. To this end, the Ministry and HLIs will prioritise empowering PWD by providing comprehensive support systems. These systems will include adaptive learning technologies, accessible infrastructure, and tailored academic assistance, ensuring individuals with diverse abilities can fully participate in educational opportunities.

The Ministry will also establish and develop Centres of Excellence for Disability Support within HLIs. These centres will act as hubs for research, innovation, and the dissemination of best practices in inclusive education, fostering a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all. Equally important is improving access for Orang Asli and native communities in Sabah and Sarawak. To address their unique needs and bridge gaps in educational attainment, the Ministry will implement culturally sensitive programmes, provide targeted scholarships, and launch outreach initiatives designed to support their educational aspirations.

## Initiatives

### 10E.1: Empowering Persons with Disabilities

The Ministry and HLIs will lead efforts to empower PWD by integrating adaptive learning technologies, accessible infrastructure, and tailored learning resources, such as materials in alternative formats, including Braille, audio, and large print, in alignment with the National Policy on Inclusive Open Educational Resources (iOER). Together, the Ministry and HLIs will embed the principles of Universal Design, ensuring that infrastructure, learning materials, and educational spaces are accessible and usable by all students, regardless of their abilities. To further enhance inclusion, HLIs will provide specialised academic support, including dedicated tutors, assistive devices, and counselling services, fostering a supportive and equitable learning environment. Furthermore, the Ministry will establish seven Centres of Excellence, each dedicated to a specific area of disability: Hearing Disability, Visual Disability, Physical Disability, Learning Disorder, Speech Disorder, Mental Disorder, and Various Disabilities. These centres will be inspired by notable examples such as the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, USA (for hearing disability), the Special Needs Education School for the Visually Impaired, Tsukuba University, Japan (for visual disability), and Adelphi University, USA (for learning disorders). These Centres of Excellence will serve as hubs for learning and research, addressing unique challenges, fostering innovation, and promoting collaboration among academia, industry, and policymakers.



### 10E.2: Improving accessibility and completion rate for Orang Asli and natives of Sabah and Sarawak

The Ministry will establish special admission routes for marginalised groups to ensure equitable access to competitive programmes and promote diversity in education. This initiative seeks to create an inclusive environment that recognises and values the unique contributions of these communities. Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) will design programmes that actively engage students by incorporating local knowledge and practices into the curriculum, fostering a sense of belonging and relevance throughout their educational journey.

HLIs will also develop culturally sensitive programmes that honour and integrate the distinctive traditions, languages, and perspectives of these communities. To reduce financial barriers, the Ministry and HLIs will introduce and manage dedicated scholarships and other financial aid schemes, encouraging higher enrolment rates and ensuring students have the necessary resources to pursue their academic goals without economic constraints.

The Ministry and HLIs will focus their efforts on improving completion rates for these learners by providing ongoing academic and personal support to help them overcome challenges encountered during their studies. Additionally, the Ministry and HLIs will lead targeted outreach initiatives in collaboration with community leaders and organisations to raise awareness about available educational resources and support systems. These partnerships will help bridge the gap between Indigenous communities and the higher education system.

Through these comprehensive efforts, the initiative aims to empower students to realise their potential and contribute meaningfully to society while preserving their cultural identities. By fostering equity and social cohesion, these measures will not only benefit individuals but also strengthen the broader communities they represent.



## Tracking measures

The Ministry will track the progress and impact of this Shift based on outcome-based measures. These measures are not limited to the list provided and may be further refined over time. Annual targets will be established.

- Percentage of MHEB initiatives completed annually within planned timelines and achieving defined performance targets.
- National percentage improvement in institutional excellence, based on aggregated key metrics such as SETARA ratings, research outputs, and global ranking scores.
- Percentage improvement in service efficiency, user satisfaction, and stakeholder collaboration effectiveness.
- Establishment and operationalisation milestones of the PWD Learning Centre of Excellence.
- Percentage increase in enrolment and graduation rates of students with disabilities and other underrepresented groups.



## ● Initiative implementation roadmap

The strategies and initiatives within this Shift have been carefully sequenced across three waves to avoid overtaxing the system, and to ensure that each successive wave builds on the foundations laid previously. The planning, execution and monitoring of the implementation process will be conducted according to the proposed roadmap shown in Exhibit 10-1.

**Exhibit 10-1: Initiatives implementation roadmap**

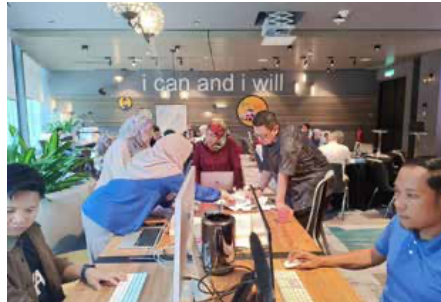
	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Elevate
<b>Strategy A</b> Enhancing evaluation and implementation of MHEB delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of MPN.</li> <li>Strengthening HEAD &amp; establishing delivery units at HLIs.</li> <li>Leverage the Strategic Planning Council as a platform to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the MHEB.</li> <li>Develop National Dashboard for Effective Monitoring of MHEB achievements.</li> <li>Prepare annual report on MHEB progress and outcome.</li> <li>Strategic communication to create awareness of MHEB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Solving interministerial issues through MPN.</li> <li>HEAD to carry out the necessary interventions to ensure smooth implementation.</li> <li>Review the effectiveness of delivery units in implementing and monitoring of MHEB.</li> <li>Midterm review of MHEB.</li> <li>Prepare annual report on MHEB progress and outcome.</li> <li>Strategic communication of MHEB achievement to enhance the visibility of institutions and the Ministry.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HEAD to carry out the necessary interventions to ensure smooth implementation.</li> <li>Final review of MHEB.</li> <li>Prepare annual reports on MHEB progress and outcome.</li> <li>Strategic communication of MHEB achievement to enhance the visibility of institutions and the ministry.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy B</b> Strengthening institutional excellence and performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and enhance existing institutional rating systems.</li> <li>Review and upgrade the existing playbooks.</li> <li>Develop and launch new playbooks.</li> <li>HLIs launch the redesigned Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the achievement of the rating system.</li> <li>HLIs to deliver results from the ITP.</li> <li>Track the usage of playbooks as the guideline by HLIs in the implementation of MHEB.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor the achievement of the rating system.</li> <li>Track the usage of playbooks as the guideline by HLIs in the implementation of MHEB.</li> <li>Ensure ongoing improvement and refinement of quality assurance and institutional rating systems and framework.</li> <li>Review the achievements of HLIs in implementing the ITP.</li> </ul>

	Wave 1 (2026-2028) Ignite	Wave 2 (2029–2031) Propel	Wave 3 (2032–2035) Elevate
<b>Strategy C</b> Embracing technology to improve service delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete review of existing digital facilities for MOHE and HLIs.</li> <li>• Review existing data availability and develop a new data warehouse to facilitate data-driven decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve digital facilities for MOHE and HLIs.</li> <li>• Strengthening digital services using AI and other emerging technologies.</li> <li>• Extensive use of emerging technologies and data warehouse to improve service delivery and formulate new policies and strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous upgrading of MOHE and HLI digital facilities.</li> <li>• Continuous usage of emerging technologies and data warehouses in enhancing service delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy D</b> Harmonising MOHE structure and processes to support one higher education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete review of MOHE structure to improve synergy toward One Higher Education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance overall MOHE processes to improve service delivery.</li> <li>• Enhance the current student admission platform to include all HLIs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous assessment of MOHE structure effectiveness in achieving One Higher Education.</li> <li>• Streamline regulations and policies for all HLIs.</li> <li>• Achieve full harmonisation in the HE system across HLIs on regulations, standards, and expectations.</li> </ul>
<b>Strategy E</b> Enhancing accessibility through diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the readiness of all HLIs to provide excellent education for PWD.</li> <li>• Review existing situations on accessibility and completion rates for marginalised communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve HLI facilities for PWD.</li> <li>• Establish three PWD Centres of Excellence from seven categories of disabilities to advance learning and research.</li> <li>• Improve accessibility and completion rates for marginalised communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous upgrading of PWD facilities in HLIs.</li> <li>• Establish four new PWD Centres of Excellence from seven categories of disabilities to advance learning and research.</li> <li>• Complete integration of marginalised communities into the HE system.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

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The shifts outlined in the MHEB are bold and strategically designed to drive a comprehensive transformation of the higher education landscape. The Ministry must lead by example, embodying the principles of this transformation within its operations. By taking a proactive and exemplary role, the Ministry can serve as a powerful catalyst for change, inspiring private and public HLLs and setting a precedent for innovation and excellence across the broader Malaysian civil service. These transformative initiatives, structured across three progressive waves, are carefully sequenced to build momentum and sustainability as the system's capacity, institutional capabilities, and readiness levels of HLLs evolve over time. The first wave will prioritise laying a strong foundation by establishing the critical building blocks necessary for a successful transformation. Building on this groundwork, the second wave will focus on implementing strategic structural enhancements designed to accelerate progress and drive meaningful, systemic change. The third wave will centre on a thorough and comprehensive evaluation of the blueprint, assessing its impact, outcomes, and effectiveness in achieving the intended transformational goals. The transformation of the higher education system aspires to equip Malaysians for the challenges and opportunities of an ever-evolving world that can only be achieved through the united efforts and unwavering commitment of all stakeholders. Collaborative action and shared responsibility are essential to shaping a dynamic and resilient education system that meets the demands of the future.



# Appendices





# Abbreviations

AACSB	Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business	COT	Centres of Technology
AI	Artificial intelligence	CSO	Civil Society Organisations
AICA	Adaptive Industry Competency Accelerator	DCP	Differentiated Career Pathways
AKEPT	<i>Akademi Kepimpinan Pendidikan Tinggi</i>	DEI	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning	DKM	<i>Diploma Kemahiran Malaysia</i>
APEL.s	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning for Skills	DLKM	<i>Diploma Lanjutan Kemahiran Malaysia</i>
AR	Augmented Reality	DVM	<i>Diploma Vokasional Malaysia</i>
AReF	Academia Research Fund	EIE	Entrepreneurship Integrated Education
ARWU	Academic Ranking of World University	EPF	Employees Provident Fund
AUKU	Universities and University Colleges (Act 30) or <i>Akta Universiti dan Kolej Universiti</i>	EPI	Environmental Performance Index
BEA	Board Effectiveness Assessment	ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate	EXCEL	Experiential Learning and Competency Based Education Landscape
CC	Craftsmanship Chamber	FGD	Focus Group Discussions
CEO	Chief Executive Officer	FPK	National Education Philosophy (Falsafah Pendidikan Kebangsaan)
CFP	CEO@Faculty Programme	FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
CLBG	Company Limited by Guarantee	FTSE	Full-Time Student Equivalent
CoC	Chamber of Commerce	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
COE	Centres of Excellence	GE	General Election
COPTPA	Code of Practice for TVET Programme Accreditation	GERD	Gross Expenditure on Research and Development

GII	Global Innovation Index	LPU	<i>Lembaga Pengarah Universiti</i>
GRSI	Graduate Readiness and Satisfaction Index	MBOT	Malaysia Board of Technologists
HEAD	Higher Education Performance and Delivery Management Unit	MCRCR	Malaysian Code of Responsible Conduct in Research
HICoE	Higher Institution Centres of Excellence	MHEB	Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026-2035
HLIs	Higher Learning Institutions	MNC	Multinational Corporation
HR	Human Resource	MOE	Ministry of Education
HRDC	Human Resource Development Corporation	MOF	Ministry of Finance
HSDI	Holistic Student's Development Index	MOHE	Ministry of Higher Education
iCGPA	Integrated Cumulative Grade Point Average	MOSTI	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
ICLR	Income-Contingent Loan Repayment	MPGIA	<i>Modul Pengukuhan Governan, Integriti dan Antirasuah</i>
IEM	Institute of Engineers Malaysia	MPN	<i>Majlis Pendidikan Negara</i>
IGF	Inclusive Governance Framework	MPTN	<i>Majlis Pendidikan Tinggi Negara</i>
IOA	International Ombudsman Association	MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
iOER	Inclusive Open Educational Resources	MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
IoT	Internet of Things	MRAs	Mutual Recognition Agreements
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	MRUs	Malaysian Research Universities
iPPN	Patriotism and National Unity Index	MTUN	Malaysian Technical University Network
IQAM	Integrated Quality and Accountability Metrics	MTUN+	MTUN, Universiti Kuala Lumpur and Universiti Selangor
ITP	Institution Transformation Programme	MTVET	<i>Majlis TVET Negara</i>
JPA	<i>Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam</i>	MyMoheS	Malaysia Ministry of Higher Education System
JPK	<i>Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran</i>	MyQUEST	Malaysian Quality Evaluation System for Private Colleges
KESUMA	<i>Kementerian Sumber Manusia</i>	MyRA	Malaysian Research Assessment Instrument
KPI	Key Performance Indicators	MySpeKK	Community College Rating System
LHDN	<i>Lembaga Hasil Dalam Negeri</i>	NFF	New Funding Formula
LLL	Lifelong learning		
LMS	Learning Management Systems		

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation	STI	Science, Technology, and Innovation
NLEES	National Learner Experience and Engagement Survey	SULAM	Service Learning Malaysia, University for Society
NOSS	National Occupational Skills Standard	THE	Times Higher Education
NSTIE	National Science, Technology, Innovation and Economy Framework	T&L	Teaching and Learning
ODL	Open and Distance Learning	TNE	Transnational education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	TRL	Technology Readiness Level
OHEA	One Higher Education Act	TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
OKU	<i>Orang Kurang Upaya</i>	UDL	Universal Design Learning
PI	Principal Investigator	UI	Universitas Indonesia
POLYCC	Polytechnics and Community Colleges	UITM	Universiti Teknologi MARA
Polyrate	Polytechnic Rating System	UKM	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
PPP	Public-Private Partnership	UM	Universiti Malaya
PSPTN	<i>Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara</i>	UMK	Universiti Malaysia Kelantan
PTPTN	<i>Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional</i>	UMP	Universiti Malaysia Pahang
PWD	Persons With Disabilities	UMT	Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
QS	Quacquarelli Symonds	UN	United Nations
RDICE	Research, Development, Innovation, Commercialisation and Economy	UNESCO	United Nations Organisation for Education, Science and Culture
R&D	Research and Development	UniTP	University Transformation Programme
RO	Research Officer	UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
ROV	Return of Value	UPU	<i>Unit Pengambilan Universiti</i>
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning	USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals	USM-KLE	USM-Karnataka Lingayat Education
SETARA	Integrated Rating of Malaysian Higher Education Institutions	UTM	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises	UTP	Universiti Teknologi PETRONAS
SSPN	<i>Skim Simpanan Pendidikan Nasional</i>	VR	Virtual Reality
STEAM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics		
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics		

## MHEB 2026–2035 Governance Structure

The MHEB 2026–2035 is developed in phases through a collaborative and consultative process, incorporating stakeholder engagement via public hearings, dialogue sessions, and online consultations.

MOHE coordinates the development process by managing key resources and engaging stakeholders at multiple levels. The UPM Working Committee and the project management team report to and receive guidance from the Advisory Committee, chaired by the Minister, and the Steering Committee, chaired by the Secretary-General, alongside the Ministry's leadership throughout the blueprint's formulation. The MHEB 2026–2035 has benefitted from insights from past ministers, industry leaders, academics, policymakers, and representatives from societies and associations.

### Governance Structure for Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2026–2035



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**The Ministry of Higher Education**

On behalf of the team of experts and writers, we extend our deepest gratitude to the Ministry of Higher Education for entrusting us with the profound responsibility of shaping the Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint (MHEB) 2026-2035. The opportunity to chart a visionary course for the next decade of higher education in Malaysia is both an honor and a privilege we hold with the utmost reverence.

This blueprint stands as a testament to collective wisdom, forged through the unwavering dedication of a diverse coalition of thought leaders. We are profoundly indebted to the vice-chancellors, industry pioneers, policymakers, academics, and administrative professionals who lent their expertise, insights, and passion to this endeavor. Your visionary perspectives have anchored this blueprint in practicality, innovation, and inclusivity.

Central to this effort was the exceptional writing team from Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), whose tireless commitment transformed abstract ideas into actionable strategies. Their meticulous research, analytical rigor, and creative synthesis ensured the blueprint’s alignment with national aspirations while remaining grounded in operational realities.

We take immense pride in fostering intergenerational collaboration, bridging the wisdom of seasoned experts with the dynamism of emerging leaders. This blueprint is not merely a document, it is a legacy crafted in Malaysia, for Malaysia, by Malaysians, reflecting our shared resolve to elevate the nation’s higher education ecosystem as a beacon of excellence and equity.

May this collective effort inspire transformative progress, and may Allah s.w.t. bless and guide us as we unite to safeguard the future of Malaysia’s higher education landscape.

Thank you.

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### Contributions of Divisions, Agencies, and Organisations (Focus Group Discussions and Validation Sessions)

- AccelSkill Academy Sdn. Bhd.
- AFS Intercultural Programmes
- Akademi Profesor Malaysia (APM)
- Akademi TVET UNIRAZAK
- Alumni Associations
- American Malaysian Chamber of Commerce (AMCHAM)
- American Universities Alumni Malaysia
- Apa Kata Wanita Orang Asli
- APT Hair & Beauty College
- Arus Academy
- ASIA eUniversity
- ASIA Pacific University of Technology and Innovation (APU)
- Assistance to Blind Children (ABC)
- Association for Mentally Retarded Children - Butterworth
- Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia (ACEM)
- Association of Malaysian Medical Industries (AMMI)
- Association of Private Hospitals of Malaysia (APHM)
- Autism Inclusiveness Direct Action Group (AIDA)
- Berjaya TVET College
- Binary University of Management and Entrepreneurship (BUME)
- Board of Inspectors of Sarawak
- Branding Associations of Malaysia
- British Council Malaysia
- British Malaysian Chamber of Commerce Berhad (BMCC)
- Budi Penyayang Malaysia Foundation
- Bursar Council of Public University
- Business Ethics Institute of Malaysia
- CADS Enhancement Centre - Cerebral Palsy, Autism-ADHD, Down Syndrome - Dyslexia & Slow Learners
- Center for Counselling and Disability Empowerment (CCDE, Universiti Malaya)
- Central Welfare Council, Peninsular Malaysia (CWC)
- Centre of Orang Asli Concerns (COAC)
- Chambers of Commerce and International Relations
- City University
- ClosingTheGap powered by YayasanTAR

- Collaborative Research in Engineering, Science & Technology Center (CREST)
- College MCS
- Companies Commission of Malaysia
- Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services (CUEPACS)
- Consortium of Public University Hospitals of Malaysia
- Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) Sabah State
- Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB)
- Council of Administrative and Professional Public University Officers (MASTI)
- CQ-TEC TVET College
- Curtin University
- D Sew Club
- Deaf Advocacy and Well-Being National Organisation Malaysia (DAWN)
- Department of Accountancy And Business,
- Department of Agriculture, Sabah
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and Lecturer (Research)
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro-Chancellor, Vice-President, Deputy President of Private Higher Education Institutions.
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) MTUN (DVCA MTUN)
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- Disability Services Unit, International Islamic University Malaysia
- Dr Dog Malaysia
- DRB-HICOM University of Automotive Malaysia
- Dyslexia Association of Sarawak
- Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM)
- Fourier TVET Center Sdn. Bhd.
- Future in Our hands Society, Malaysia
- Geomatika Skill Institute
- Gerimis Art
- German-Malaysian Institute (GMI)
- Go STEM
- Grad Malaysia
- Harina Skills Training Centre
- HEYA Inc
- Higher Learning Institutions (Academics, Administrative Staff, Students and Alumni)
- Hospital Al-Sultan Abdullah (HASA) UiTM
- Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz (HCTM) UKM
- Hospital Pengajar dan Pusat Perubatan UNIMAS
- Hospital Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah (HSAAS) UPM
- Hospital Sultan Zainal Abidin UniSZA
- Hospital UMS
- Hospital USM
- Hua Ming Autism Society
- Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (SUHAKAM)
- IDEAS Academy
- Ikon Mahasiswa Orang Asli PMOA 2024
- INCEIF University
- Industry Associations
- Information Department of Malaysia Sabah
- Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur (UNIKL)
- Institut Delta Semarang
- Institut Kemahiran Langkasuka
- Institut KT Skill
- Institut Latihan Teknikal Putra (HEXA PRO)
- Institut Megatech Sdn Bhd
- Institut Penyelidikan Pendidikan Tinggi Negara (IPPTN)
- Institut Teknikal Tan Chong
- Institut Wawasan
- Integrity Officers Council of Public Universities
- International Counseling Association of Malaysia (PERKAMA International)
- International Educational and Scientific Cultural Organization (IESCO)
- International Medical University (IMU)
- International Steering Committee (ISC)
- INTI International University and College
- Intra International College
- ITPA Penang
- Jabatan Kemajuan Orang Asli (JAKOA)
- Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli Kelantan (JKOAK)
- Jaringan Kampung Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia
- Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia (JOAS)
- Jaringan Perkampungan Orang Asli Johor
- Jawatankuasa Pengarah Anatarabangsa (JKPA)

- Kedah Industrial Skill and Management Development Centre (KISMEC)
- Kelas Kaseh Malaysia
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- Kiwanis Careheart Centre (Persatuan Prihatin Orang Kurang Cerdas Johor Bahru)
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- Kolej Universiti Penerbangan Malaysia
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- Majlis Kaunseling Universiti Awam (MAKUMA)
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- Majlis Penasihat Undang-undang (MPUU)
- Majlis Pendidikan Tinggi Negara (MPTN)
- Majlis Pengarah-Pengarah ICT IPTA (MAPITA)
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- Malaysia Cable Manufacturers Association (MCMA)
- Malaysia Qualifications Agency (MQA)
- Malaysia Software Testing Board (MSTB)
- Malaysia Technology Transformation & Creativity (MTTC) College
- Malaysia University of Science and Technology (MUST)
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- Malaysian Association of Private Colleges and Universities (MAPCU)
- Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW)
- Malaysian Automotive Association
- Malaysian Biotechnology Information Centre (MABIC)
- Malaysian Board of Counselors
- Malaysian Disabled Youth Council
- Malaysian Higher Education Teaching and Learning Council (MAGNETIC)
- Malaysian Industrial Standards and Research Institute (SIRIM), Sabah
- Malaysian International Chamber Of Commerce and Industry (MICCI)
- Malaysian Oil & Gas Services Council (MOGSC)
- Malaysian Palm Oil Council
- Malaysian Photovoltaic Industry Association (MPIA)
- Malaysian Plastics Manufacturers Association (MPMA)
- Malaysian Public Universities Counseling and Career Council
- Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)
- Malaysian Red Crescent Society (MRCS)
- Malaysian Sign Language and Deaf Studies Association
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- Malaysian Textile Manufacturers Association (MTMA)
- Malaysian-American Commission on Educational Exchange (MACEE)
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- Management and Science University (MSU)
- Management Science Institute Tawau, Sabah
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- Manusia Selangor (SHRDC)
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- Mastura International College
- MEMSA Charitable Society (MEMSA Berhad)
- Mercy Malaysia
- MILA University
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- Ministry of Domestic Trade and Cost of Living
- Ministry of Human Resources
- Monash University Malaysia
- Montfort Youth Training Centre (MYTC)

- Multimedia University (MMU)
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- National Early Childhood Intervention Council & National Family Support Group for Children and People with Special Needs
- National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN)
- Netherlands Maritime University College (NMUC)
- Nilai University
- Noble School of Engineering
- North Borneo University College (NBUC)
- NPR Skill Academy
- Oasis Place Sdn. Bhd.
- OKU Central Association
- OKU Education & Welfare Advocacy Organization (Advo OKU Sejahtera)
- Open University
- Outsourcing Malaysia
- PACOS Trust
- Pegawai Integriti Universiti Awam
- Penang Skill Development Centre (PSDC)
- Pengarah Pejabat Antarabangsa Universiti Swasta
- Pengurusan Islam Orang Asli Selangor - PKPIOA
- Pentadbir dan Kumpulan Pelaksana Kolej Komuniti
- Pentadbir dan Kumpulan Pelaksana Politeknik
- Pentadbir dan Kumpulan Pelaksana Universiti Awam
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- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UKM
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UM (PKAUM)
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UMK
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UMPSA (PAKAD)
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UMS (PSAUMS)
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UNIMAP
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UNISZA
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UPM
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- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik UPSI (PEKA)
- Persatuan Kakitangan Akademik USIM
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- Persatuan Mahasiswa Orang Asli (PMOA)
- Persatuan Orang Asli
- Persatuan Orang Asli Perak (POAP)
- Persatuan Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia (POASM)
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- Persatuan Pegawai Akademik UTeM (UTeMASA)
- Persatuan Pembangunan Orang Asli Malaysia (MOADA)
- Persatuan Pemulihan dalam Komuniti Buntong (PPDK)
- Persatuan Siswazah India Negeri Sembilan (PSINS)
- Persatuan Siswazah Orang Asli Semenanjung Malaysia (PSOA)
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- Pertubuhan Himpunan Lulusan Institusi Pendidikan Malaysia (HALUAN)
- Pertubuhan Pembangunan Bakat Malaysia (Talent Development Society)
- Pertubuhan Pembangunan Penyelidikan dan Dasar Pendidikan Tinggi (PenDaPat)
- PINTAR Foundation
- Polaris Maritime Training Academy Sdn. Bhd
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- Private Higher Education Lecturers
- Private Higher Education Institutions Students
- Private University Teaching Hospital
- Profesional Mutawwif Development (PMDIC)
- Pusat Harian Kanak-kanak Spastik Ipoh (PHKKS)

- Pusat Kemahiran IT Base
- Pusat Kemahiran Teknologi Maju
- Pusat Latihan Kemahiran E-Access Sdn Bhd
- Pusat Pembangunan Tenaga
- Pusat Perubatan Universiti Malaya (PPUM) UM
- QUEST International University, Perak
- Rare Disease Association of Malaysia
- Ray of Hope (ROH)
- Registrars Council of Public Universities
- Rimba Ilmu
- Sabah Economic Development and Investment Authority (SEDIA)
- Sabah Environmental Protection Association
- Saito University College
- Sarawak Matriculation College
- Sarawak Regional Skills Development Department
- Sarawak State Education Department
- SEGI University and Colleges
- Sekolah Sinar Harapan
- Selangor Technical Skills
- Selecta Education Group Sdn. Bhd.
- SG Education Group
- Sinui Pai Nanuk Sngik (SPNS)
- SMI Association of Malaysia (SMIAM)
- Social Security Organisation (SOCISO) Sabah
- Society for the Severely Mentally Handicapped Selangor and Federal Territory
- SOLS Foundation
- Special Children Society of Ampang
- Stradford College
- Sultan Ahmad Shah Medical Centre (SASMEC) IIUM
- Sunrise International College
- Sunway University
- Synergy College
- Taylor's University
- Teach For Malaysia
- Technopreneurs Association of Malaysia (TeAM)
- Tech Terrain College
- The Association Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM)
- The Association Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Sarawak (ACCCIS)
- The Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Kuala Lumpur & Selangor
- The Community Chest
- The Educational, Welfare & Research Foundation Malaysia (EWRF)
- The Electrical and Electronics Association of Malaysia (TEEAM)
- The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM)
- The Jungle School IIUM
- The National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia
- The National ICT Association of Malaysia (PIKOM)
- TOC Automotive College
- Tunku Abdul Rahman Management and Technology University
- UCSI University
- UiTM Pahang Branch
- UNITAR Academy (TVET)
- Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA)
- Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)
- Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UNISZA)
- Universiti Geomatika Malaysia
- Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIA)
- Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS)
- Universiti Islam Malaysia (UIM)
- Universiti Islam Melaka (UNIMEL)
- Universiti Islam Selangor (UIS)
- Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)
- Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UNIKL)
- Universiti Malaya (UM)
- Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK)
- Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UMP)
- Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)
- Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)
- Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI)
- Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia (UPNM)
- Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)
- Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)
- Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)
- Universiti Selangor (UNISEL)
- Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah (USAS)
- Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM)
- Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)

- Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)
- Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)
- Universiti Teknologi Sarawak (UTS)
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- Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UNIRAZAK)
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- Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)
- University College Bestari
- University College TATI
- University Legislative Council
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- University of Cyberjaya
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- UrbanR Recycle+
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