Universiti Teknologi MARA

The **MARA Technological University** (Malay: *Universiti Teknologi MARA*; Jawi: اونيۏرسيتي تيکنولوݢي مارا; abbr. **UiTM**)[9] is a public university based primarily in Shah Alam, Selangor. It was established to help rural Malays in 1956 as the **RIDA (Rural & Industrial Development Authority) Training Centre** (Malay: *Dewan Latihan RIDA*), and opened with around 50 students.[10] It has since grown into the largest institution of higher education in Malaysia as measured by physical infrastructure, faculty and staff, and student enrollment.[*citation needed*]

The university comprises one main campus and 34 satellite campuses. It offers over 500 programmes taught in English that range from undergraduate to the postgraduate level. The school is home to some 170,514 full-time and part-time bumiputera and international students. Postgraduate programme is open for international students and bumiputera but not for non-bumiputera.[11][12]

In 2019, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) proposed its corporate name change to **Arshad Ayub University** (Malay: *Universiti Tun Arshad Ayub*) to honour the country's education icon and its founding father, Arshad Ayub, which subject to regulatory approval.[13] The proposed name is still pending for approval from the Ministry of Education. Another proposed name is **Universiti DiRaja Malaysia** (English: Royal University of Malaysia).[14][15]

History

Founding

Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) began as the RIDA (Rural & Industrial Development Authority) Training Centre (Malay: *Dewan Latehan RIDA*), and was inspired by Onn Jaafar, the founder and former president of United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). The idea was conceived as a result of his study visit to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) in 1951 to look into its rural development programme. A paper outlined the establishment of RIDA and its objectives of rebuilding rural society, as well as improving the economy of rural Malays.[9] A bill, Paper No. 10/1951, was passed by the Federal Legislative Council in the same year that led to its establishment. Section 5 of the bill outlines the justification and the necessity of establishing RIDA. The word *kampong* (lit. 'village'), which is synonymous with the Malays, is also used in Section 8.[16]

Training centre

The RIDA Training Centre began operations in Petaling Jaya, Selangor (currently Jalan Othman satellite campus) under its first principal, Syed Alwi Syed Sheikh Alhadi in November 1956. It was officially opened by Ismail Abdul Rahman, the Minister for Trade and Industry on 14 February 1957. The training centre conducted pre-university courses, business skills training, and several external professional courses offered by established international bodies, such as the London Chamber of Commerce, the Australian Chartered Secretaryship, the Australian Society of Accountants, and the British Institute of Management. After the Federation of Malaysia was created in 1963, the training centre began to admit native students from Sabah and Sarawak, and more academic programmes were offered. In 1964, the RIDA Training Centre held its first convocation and 50 graduates were awarded certificates by Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia.[9]

The training centre later became known as MARA College (Malay: *Maktab MARA*) in 1965. The name change meant that the college no longer operated under RIDA and instead became the most important unit of the MARA Training Division. MARA stands for *Majlis Amanah Rakyat* (transl. Council of Trust for the Indigenous People), which was founded under the leadership of Tan Sri Arshad Ayub, took over and strengthened the role and responsibilities of RIDA. When the British Institute of Management ceased conducting external examinations in 1966, MARA College began running its own Diploma in Business Studies. International recognition for the course came from Ealing Technical College in London, which also became its external examiner.[9]

Expansion and growth

In 1967, the college was upgraded to Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM). It was established in response to a need in Malaysia for trained professionals, especially among *bumiputera*. This shortage was identified through a manpower survey conducted by the government in collaboration with the United Nations in 1965. Acknowledging the fact that education holds the key to positive social engineering processes, ITM made education easily accessible primarily to the *bumiputera* Malays and indigenous *bumiputera* of the Malay peninsula (such as Jakun, Senoi) and East Malaysia (such as the Kadazan-Dusun, Melanau, and Dayak).[17] It mainly catered to semi-professional courses predominantly in the science and technology in fields such

as engineering, applied sciences and architecture, building, and planning. However, realising the importance of other complementary nation-building fields, it also included a repertoire of other salient "management and humanities-based" fields such as business studies, hotel and catering management, mass communications, public administration, law, secretarial science, and art and design.[18] By 1973, branch campuses had been set up in Perlis, Sabah, and Sarawak. The development of ITM occurred in three stages: the first phase (1967–1976) came with the declaration of the institute as an autonomous body with its own 300-acre campus in Shah Alam, and was placed under the Ministry of Rural Development; and the second phase (1976–1996) involved ITM rapidly harnessing its potential as an institution of higher learning, which led to the ITM Act of 1976 that placed the institute directly under the Ministry of Education's jurisdiction.[9]

University status

The third phase (1996–1999) occurred as a result of an amendment to the ITM Act of 1976, which granted the institution all the powers of a university on par with all the universities in the country, despite retaining its name. Among the significant changes was a creation of board of directors and Senate. Many principal officers of ITM were re-designated, such as the Branch Director being renamed Rector, the Head of Campus became Provost, and Principal and Senior Lecturers were re-designated as professors and Malay Associate Professors respectively. Each School was redesignated as a Faculty. ITM was also given the power to confer degrees up to Doctor of Philosophy level, the unique power to establish courses and campuses abroad with permission from the Minister of Education, and to conduct business, invest in shares, set up companies and engage in commercial research. Disciplinary powers over staff were transferred from the Minister to the board of directors. To improve staff accountability, the institute was allowed to impose a surcharge, and the procedural rights of students in disciplinary proceedings were strengthened.[9]

In August 1999, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad announced the change in name of ITM to Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM).[19] With such acknowledgement from the government, the institution was heavily restructured to consolidate the university's resources for optimum productivity. Universiti Teknologi MARA Act 173 was drafted in conjunction with the establishment of UiTM. It is deemed essential as the Act provides guidelines for maintenance, smooth administration, and other

pertinent matters. The Act also serves as an acknowledgement of the institution's transition from an institute to a university, and the authority bestowed upon it to function like any other university, including the offering of courses and the conferment of degrees at all levels.[9]

Campuses and the university system

UiTM is Malaysia's largest institution of higher learning in terms of size and population and the largest university system in the country. Besides the main campus in Shah Alam, the university has expanded nationwide with 34 branch campuses, which collectively offers more than 500 academic programmes. UiTM established a system called 1 University Multi System (1UiTM), which designates an anchor university and 13 branch campuses.[20] To qualify as a university system, accredited certification of the quality management systems for each UiTM campus must be done separately, which means that any certification granted to the flagship campus does not extend to the state campuses, and each state campus has to apply for its own certification.

Flagship campus

UiTM is headed by a Vice-Chancellor. The system's flagship campus is situated in a designated area known formerly as Section 1 in Shah Alam. This campus houses the Chancellery and Registrar's Office and assumes the role of the administrative centre. The flagship campus (and its satellite campuses) only offer programmes in foundation, degree, and post-graduate levels. The anchor university consists of the main campus in Shah Alam and the Selangor Branch Campus (Puncak Alam, Selayang, Sungai Buloh, Puncak Perdana, Jalan Othman and Dengkil).

Satellite campuses

Satellite campuses relieve the flagship campus by accepting student overflow, which involves moving out some faculties from the flagship campus. Each satellite campus is led by an Assistant Vice-Chancellor or head of study centre.

State campuses (branch campuses)

Branch campuses are headed by Rectors, who are directly accountable to the Vice-Chancellor. UiTM has campuses in every state in Malaysia, except the Federal Territories. Each state may contain more than one campus. The flagship state

campuses are led by the Rector and smaller campuses (called city campuses) are led by Assistant Rectors.

State campuses mainly offer pre-diploma and diploma-level programmes in themes or niches set by the flagship campus. Some degree and post-graduate programmes are also offered through a franchise agreement with the flagship campus.

Autonomous campuses

As of June 2014, there are seven branch campuses which have been granted autonomous status—the Perlis, Perak, Terengganu, Sarawak, Melaka, Pulau Pinang, and Pahang campuses.[21] This is in line with the vision that all state campuses will eventually be given autonomous administration, giving each campus its own degree of creativity and to increase achievements in various aspects of the campus and its students. A significant feature of these autonomous campuses is the ability to hold their own convocation ceremonies and most executive decisions would not depend on the administration of the flagship campus.