

"Purposes and Objectives of Law Schools- Beyond Educating Students (Research, Capacity Building, Community Service and Outreach)"

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Introduction

In Malaysia, law school was established mainly for the purpose of producing law graduates to fill the job vacancies in the area of law. Malaysia became independent in 1957 and prior to this date all lawyers, judges and law teachers were trained in England or Australia. There was a huge gap between the majority Malay Muslims community and the Chinese and Indian communities in relation to professional training particularly in the area of law. Legal education still is look upon as a very important professional course. At least 3 of Malaysian Prime Minister were lawyers trained in England. Most of the Malay Sultans are also trained as lawyers in England. The present Sultan of Perak was a former Lord President of Malaysia.

Public and Private Law Schools in Malaysia

The first law school established was the University of Malaya in Singapore in 1961. It's a public law school, i.e. its Later when Singapore left the Federation and became an independent nation and Federation of Malaya became 'Malaysia' in 1963, University of Malaya was moved from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur in 1972. The Faculty of Law of the University of Malaya is the oldest and the foremost law school in the country. It offers both undergraduate programmes leading to the Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.) (Honours) and Bachelor of Jurisprudence (B.Jur) degrees, and postgraduate programmes leading to the Master of Laws (LLM), Master of Comparative Law (MCL), Master of Criminal Justice (MCJ), Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) and Doctor of Laws (LL.D.) degrees. The Bachelor of Jurisprudence (External) programme is another programme offered by the Faculty. To date, the Faculty has produced more than 3,000 graduates, who are spread throughout the country and beyond its shores, contributing not only to their profession but also to every facet of society. Among its alumni are the current Attorney-General, several High Court judges, and senior partners in major law firms, academics and senior corporate persons. Apart from its degree programmes, the Faculty also provides through its Legal Education Extension Programme (LEEP), a series of short courses on specific areas of the law to meet the needs of both legal professionals and other interested individuals. The Faculty also has an active series of public lectures including the prestigious Sultan Azlan Shah Law Lecture, the Tun Abdul Razak Memorial Lecture and the Tun Mohamed Suffian Memorial Lecture. The Faculty publishes two journals, namely, the *Journal of Malaysian and Comparative Law* and the *Survey of Malaysian Law*.

The Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah (Faculty) of Laws is part of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), which was founded in 1983 by the Government of Malaysia and co-sponsored initially by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) and several Muslim countries. The University uses English as the medium of instruction and draws students from

more than 90 countries around the world. Among IIUM's objectives is the goal to become a leading international centre of educational excellence which revitalizes the intellectual dynamism of Islam and the Muslim Ummah. Named after the renowned Singapore-born legal scholar, the Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws plays an integral role in promoting the study of Islamic Law while emphasizing the comparative aspects of the major legal systems in the world.

Faculty of Law UKM was established on 1st February 1984 with the intake of 36 students; all being enrolled to the Law Matriculation programme. In 1986/87 session, the faculty started its undergraduate academic year when all those 36 students were admitted to Year 1 of the LL.B (Hons) programme. In 1989, the faculty received the official recognition from the Qualifying Board established under the Legal Profession Act 1976. The first batch of students graduated in 1990. Since then, intakes of students to the faculty have kept on increasing each year, and in 2005/2006 session, the number of intake reached 120 students.

In 1996, the Faculty obtained the approval from the Ministry of Education to initiate its Master of Law and PhD programmes. The first batch of postgraduate students was admitted in first semester of the 1997/98 academic session.

The Faculty of Law has taken the initiative to offer executive programme with the corporation of the Centre for Educational Advancement. These efforts came into effect with the inception of the Masters Executive Programme in Intellectual Property in the second semester of the 2004/2005 session and the Masters Executive Programme in Business Law in the 2006/2007 session.

For University Technology MARA (UiTM) it's Faculty of Administration and Law (formerly known as the School of Administration and Law) was founded in 1968. It began as a center offering British external programmes, namely the LL.B (London-External) and the Chartered Institute of Secretaries (now Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators). The only internal programme offered then was the Diploma in public Administration and Local Government.

In 1978 the LL.B (London-External) programme was discontinued and replaced by the current LL.B programme. The LL.B programme is a three-year academic degree course based on the structure of British Universities undergraduate law programmes. Unlike most of the British programmes however, the LL.B programme at the faculty is conducted on a semester system. The LL.B programme, however, has been replaced with the Bachelor of Legal Studies (Hons), which was introduced in 2002. In 1982 the Faculty introduced a one-year LL.B (Hons) programme whereby graduates of the LL.B programme could advance their studies. The LL.B (Hons) programme is a stimulatory programmes designed to provide professional training for students in preparation for their career in the legal practice as Advocates and Solicitors.

The delivery of the curriculum for this course adopts the method and strategy of simulated or experiential learning. The unique experience it provides to students in their legal training has led this programme to be widely recognized and accepted among the Malaysian legal fraternity.

In 1995, the Faculty introduced the degree of Bachelor in Corporate Administration (Hons) (to train young and bright Bumiputras to hold office as Company Secretaries) and Bachelor of Administrative Science (Hons) in December 2002. In the pipeline are some new courses, namely, Bachelor of Law and Management (Hons) and Bachelor of Shariah and Law. As of 14 January 2004, the Faculty of Administration and Law have been restructured to constitute two faculties namely the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies.

The Faculty of Law enjoys strong affiliations with the legal fraternity, namely, the Malaysian Bar, the Attorney Generals Chambers and the Judicial and Legal Service. It takes pride in continuously developing pioneer options in its degree programmes, both at the academic and professional levels. The Faculty currently comprises some 69 academic staff. It has about 1144 students reading for the Pre-Law, BLS (Hons), LL.B and LLB (Hons) and Postgraduate programmes (PhD. and LL.M Programmes)

Apart from the four main public universities (government funded) three other faculties of law were established at University Utara Malaysia (UUM), Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) and University Darul Naim (UDM). UUM first badge of students graduated in 2008 but USIM and UDM's students are still in the third years. All of these universities run a four years programme and almost alike with the other four main ones.

There are many private universities and colleges that run the LLB program either as external or twinning programme. The most popular LLB external is the LLB external of the University of London. In fact many of these privates institution now hosted a number of foreign students who find it very expensive to stay in England to do the LLB. These programmes are recognized by Malaysian Government where it's being accredited by the Malaysian Quality Agency (MQA). These private institutions have to abide by certain requirements and conditions before it can receive its accreditation. They also have to apply for reaccreditation every 5 years.

Purpose of Law Schools – Producing Lawyers or beyond?

Law school in Malaysia started merely because there were no law school locally and there was an urgent need to train lawyers. Demand was too great compared to supply. Being a lawyer was very lucrative job because they were too few to run around. University of Malaya being the oldest university in Malaysia has recently been announced as number 31 in the Top 100 Top University in Asia and UKM came number 51. University Malaya, University Kebangsaan Malaysia, University Science Malaysia and University Putra Malaysia are the Research Universities. As such they are involved in many researches and had won gold medals abroad and locally in various research exhibitions and competition. Since UKM became a research university, the Faculty of Law has developed itself beyond educating law and training lawyers. The law Faculty members have been involved in various researches both locally an internationally. Their researches are also multi-disciplinary and cross cultural. These have helped the faculty to improve their curriculum and the number of foreign students.

The area of researches are:

Areas of Research (1984 - 1994)

Constitutional and Administrative Law
Malaysian Legal System
Public International Law
Child Law
Equity and Trust
Law of Evidence
Law of Contract
Criminal Law

Areas of Research (1995 - 2004)

Law of Labour and Industry
Islamic Law
Law of Company, Security, Insolvency and Corporate Finance
Information Technology Law
Commercial Law
Media Law
Maritime Law
Space Law
Consumer Law
Medico-Legal
Administrative Law

Apart from researches, faculty members have been invited from time to time to head committees at government and non-governmental organizations in Malaysia. They have contributed in the development of laws, law making processes and pressure group activities. Many have been invited to speak on current issues on local television or radio and in news papers. All these have vast contributions to nation building. Law schools should move on beyond educating students to nation building.