



CENTRE FOR CORPORATE STRATEGY AND RELATIONS
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PRESS STATEMENT

Press Statement in relation to the Number of Ph.D. Graduates conferred at the 44th Convocation Ceremony of Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)

1. This press statement is a response to an article published in a local news portal site that questions the number of Ph.D. graduates conferred by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) at the university's 44th Convocation Ceremony. UPM would like to emphasise that the statement made in the article is **misleading and inaccurate**.
2. The criteria set for a Ph.D. programme at UPM are higher than those set by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). This is to ensure that the quality of graduates produced by UPM is kept high.
3. The duration for a Doctor of Philosophy programme ranges between 3 to 5 years, and students enrolled in the programme are required to conduct research and complete a minimum of 12 credit hours of study. Students are also required to present research proposals and pass the Comprehensive Examination which is assessed by a panel before the third year of their studies. Otherwise, they will be considered unqualified to continue their studies.
4. Students are also required to produce a thesis which is a mandatory passing condition before being awarded a Ph.D. Each thesis is assessed by a minimum of three examiners, consisting of an external examiner from a university abroad such as the US, UK, Australia and two other internal examiners. In addition, students must pass a viva voce examination.
5. The UPM Senate also requires the publication of two Citation Indexed Journal as a graduation requirement in order to ensure the high-quality of research conducted by Ph.D. graduates.

6. UPM has a strong pool of academic staff with a total of 1649 academics who possess Ph.Ds and are entirely qualified to supervise Ph.D. candidates. This reflects the university's ability to produce Ph.D. graduates that meet international best practices.
7. The number of Ph.D. graduates conferred by UPM is a usual number produced by research universities. This is in line with the best practices of the world's leading universities, where the enrollment of Ph.D. students is an indicator of a university's excellence. UPM, as one of the Research Universities in Malaysia, continues to strive for excellence in improving research and producing knowledgeable and high-quality human capital.
8. In response to the author's statement that the world's leading universities only produce fewer than 20 graduates a year, this claim is found to be inaccurate. Information obtained from the official website of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) indicated that the university produced 563 Ph.D. graduates in 2020, while Harvard University produced 572 Ph.D. graduates. In terms of world rankings, MIT is ranked first, while Harvard University is ranked fifth in the QS World University Ranking 2022.

Reference:

<https://registrar.mit.edu/stats-reports/degrees-awarded/all>

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2021/05/harvard-awards-7640-degrees-certificates-over-2020-21-academic-year/>

9. We would like to reiterate that the number of Ph.D. graduates conferred by UPM in the 44th convocation for the 2020 student cohort is the result of high-quality teaching and learning and research that have been assessed at the national and international levels as evidence of quality and that higher education in Malaysia is recognised and is on a par with international practice.

10. Any official statement on this matter will only be issued through the Centre for Corporate Strategy and Relations, Universiti Putra Malaysia.

**Director,
Centre for Corporate Strategy and Relations
Universiti Putra Malaysia
Serdang, Selangor.**

19 January 2022

Universiti Putra Malaysia is an internationally recognised university with 88 years of excellence in higher education. It is also recognised as one of the best research universities in the region and ranked 143rd and 2nd best nationally in the QS World University 2022. As one of the largest and leading universities in Malaysia with a reputation for sustainable excellence in teaching and research, UPM has always been a top choice for students from around the world.

As a world-class learning centre, Universiti Putra Malaysia offers a broad academic discipline portfolio to more than 28,000 students in various academic programmes that have contributed significantly to the knowledge and development of quality human capital since 1931.

*UPM Strategic Plan 2021-2025 places 5 goals, namely **Goal 1** To Produce Resilient Graduates to Face Future Challenges; **Goal 2** To Create a Research and Innovation Hub that Generates Value based on a Sustainable Ecosystem; **Goal 3** To Preserve the Industry and Community Network Ecosystem; **Goal 4** To Strengthen Agriculture and Food Security Resilience; **Goal 5** To Strengthen Institutional Governance, Financial Sustainability and Green Sustainability Practices.*

*UPM Strategic Plan 2021-2025 focusses on the theme, "**Menggema Seruan AI Falah dari Menara Ilmu**" as the pillar that reflects the university's commitment in upholding knowledge for the progress of the country and the well-being of the people, in line with its slogan "**With Knowledge We Serve**".*