

Private varsities to lend a hand

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Education Ministry has identified several private higher learning institutions to assist the ministry in training English teachers.

The move, which will produce primary school English teachers, was decided in response to the increase in hours of lessons in vernacular schools under the Upholding the Malay Language, Strengthening Command of English (MBMMBI) policy implemented this year.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Dr Wee Ka Siong said the increase in hours, from 60 minutes to 150 minutes a week, meant that the country needed to produce more English teachers, to the tune of thousands.

He said the pioneer batch of 25 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia students recruited by the ministry were now undergoing training provided by Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR).

When asked to name the other institutions which had been identified for the programme, Wee declined comment.

However, sources said participating institutions included UCSI University, Segi College and Kirkby International College, apart from UTAR.

"This course is one of the options after SPM. It is called *Kursus Perguruan Lepas SPM* where individuals can opt to teach English, Science, Mathematics or other subjects.

"Some of the trainees will be sent to Institut Pendidikan Guru Malaysia and some will be sent to the handful

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of private (institutions) we have selected as trainer (institutions)," said Wee after signing an agreement for promotion of English courses between UTAR and Coree Corp Sdn Bhd yesterday.

Upon completion of the five-year course, followed by a six-month attachment, the graduates will be conferred a Bachelor of English Education degree and become qualified English teachers in primary schools, he added.

Wee said, compared to sending trainees to Australia and the United Kingdom previously, training future English teachers in local private institutions would save the country 70 to 80 per cent of the cost.

"A new batch of trainees will be recruited after this year's SPM results are revealed."