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Students to sign contract

Varsities to draw up campus do's and don'ts

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PUTRAJAYA: When the new semester begins in September, all public university students will have to sign contracts that will include the do's and don'ts on campus.

"The contract will be drawn up by the individual universities but the ministry will ensure there is general uniformity," Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin said yesterday.

He was speaking to reporters after a briefing at the ministry on the amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) and life-long learning.

He said each public university would also set up a students' complaints committee to listen and act on grouses.

"This is the first time such a channel has been created. The committee will be chaired by the university's vice-chancellor and will meet whenever there are complaints by students," he added.

On the involvement of students at the recent Bersih rally, Mohamed Khaled said: "It is up to the authorities to take action against the students if they are caught for rioting or taking part in illegal rallies. They are like other individuals."

He added that the universities could decide if action should be taken against their students based on whether their (the universities') image had been tarnished.

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>
> — DATUK SERI MOHAMED KHALED NORDIN

During the briefing, a ministry official said the contract would help universities monitor the activities of students on campus.

"Students should not fear this contract as it is a mechanism to monitor the activities of students as well as the universities.

"The breach of contract can go both ways. So, the interest of both sides will be safeguarded," he said.

In an immediate response, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Zaini Ujang said the UTM's legal adviser was drawing up its contract.

"It should be finalised once the Act is gazetted," he said, adding that all vice-chancellors were briefed on the amended UUCA.

In the past, there had been clashes between student affairs divisions of the universities and the students over rigid adherence to outdated campus regulations.

The amendment to allow students to take part in political activities, passed by the Dewan Rakyat last month, was one of several pledges of reforms made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.