

KERATAN AKHBAR

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Penang TVET initiative calling for participants

IN facing the many challenges of, as well as in welcoming the many opportunities resulting from, Industrial Revolution (IR) 4.0 and the digital transformation, nations – particularly developing ones like Malaysia – are facing a critical lack of technical talents.

Penang, having registered a record-breaking influx of foreign and local investments, has been greatly impacted with companies upping their ante to attract employees as the local talent pool continues to shrink due to brain-drain issues.

The recent reopening of borders as we enter the Covid-19 endemic phase is expected to lead to greater talent loss not only to our neighbouring countries, but also to other developed nations due to perceived greener pastures abroad, a press release from Penang STEM read.

Penang STEM, a platform that brings together various independent STEM learning organisations to create a synergistic ecosystem in the state, recently embarked on a technical and vocational education and training (TVET) talent development initiative to help address the critical lack of manpower.

The pilot programme is targeted at non-academically inclined Form

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Four students to undergo two years of basic TVET skills learning in selected schools to cultivate early awareness and build foundation for future technical education and careers.

The first year modules cover basic learning on electrical and electronics to provide students with foundation learning to pursue certificate and diploma courses and future technical careers in mechatronics (or automation) and precision machining.

The second year includes holiday boot camps at learning institutions to enhance their basic skills learning and soft skills development, and plant visits to familiarise students with the working environment in industry.

As this is an extracurricular programme, participating students will still pursue their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) qualification under the formal education system.

The initiative, conducted by Penang Skills Development Centre (PSDC) and Fourier TVET (FTC) with recognition by City & Guilds,

United Kingdom, and endorsed by the Penang education department, has been offered to selected secondary schools and is jointly funded by the state, industry and corporate sponsors.

Some 380 students from 13 secondary schools in the state are undergoing the pilot programme, which will end next year.

Equipped with skills from the initiative, at least 70% of them are expected to join the industry.

Under this initiative, participants would not only be gainfully employed upon finishing school, but they would also have opportunities for career advancement if they choose to pursue part-time certificate or diploma courses with support and encouragement from employers.

Penang STEM, along with Penang Science Cluster and PSDC, is recruiting schools and sponsors for next year's intake.

For details, email corporate@penangstem.com.