

'Get a travel pass to study abroad'

Immigration: New students need to apply via dept's MyTravelPass system

PETALING JAYA: From this year, students who receive an offer to study abroad must apply for a travel pass from the Immigration Department.

This requirement, which took effect on May 17, was updated in a department directive that was later shared on its website and Twitter.

Immigration Department director-general Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud said all new students travelling abroad "must apply through the department's MyTravelPass system".

"New students are required to upload their offer letter on the MyTravelPass system.

"Existing students are required to show their student card," he said yesterday, referring to students who are returning to their campuses for physical learning.

Returning students must show their student cards at Immigration counters at the point of exit.

Khairul Dzaimie was responding to a question on how would the

Immigration enforcement officers distinguish between new and existing students.

The new rules requiring new students heading overseas for studies to apply for a travel pass is a change from last year's directive that did not indicate such a need.

In a Sept 15 directive last year from the Immigration DG's office, those who did not need to apply for a travel pass included diplomats, staff and their dependents at Malaysian embassies, as well as students with new offers or those continuing to study, and their guardians (limited to two people).

Others in this category were students sitting for exams, other countries' long-term pass holders, petroleum and shipping workers who need to sign-on with foreign ships as well as those with a new job offer.

But all the categories above would still need to show relevant documents to pass the Immigration coun-

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Datuk Khairul Dzaimie Daud

ter, added the Sept 15 directive.

In the latest May 17 directive, students who are newly offered to study, students sitting for exams and those with a new job offer are now required to apply for a travel pass.

Others that require a pass included those who are attending a meeting, seminar, exhibition, business matters, sport events and training; those attending to close family members' emergencies related to death, accident or ailment and those hold-

ing spouse and engagement visas.

A private university with campuses around Malaysia said they have yet to receive a notice from the Immigration Department about this new ruling.

But a spokesperson for the university said this could be due to a delay in communication due to the movement control order.

According to the Higher Education Ministry's website, over 73,000 Malaysians travelled overseas to pursue their studies in 2019.

This number dropped to 39,882 in 2020.

July to October are usually the "peak months" for new and existing students to head to their universities or colleges.

When asked, Khairul Dzaimie assured that the department would be able to handle the surge in students at the airport Immigration clearance later.

"We have enough staff. No wor-

ries on this," he added.

Anxious parents are worried about possible problems arising from this new ruling.

A parent who wanted to remain anonymous questioned the sudden change in policy as new students last year did not have to apply for the MyTravelPass.

Her daughter would be transferring her studies abroad in July.

"There is no indication how long this entire approval process will take.

"More detailed information about this new ruling must be made available sooner because we will need a timeline to plan.

"There are air tickets that need to be purchased, the quarantine duration to take into consideration in the destination country and student accommodation to arrange.

"It is not easy and causes a lot of stress for both parents and students," she said.