

# Upholding professionalism in engineering

## LETTERS

Wednesday, 15 Jan 2020

I SHARE the sentiments of Ir. Mohd Kamal Haziq Kamaruzaman in his letter “Registering professional engineers” (The Star, Jan 7). Unlike the healthcare fraternity that went all out to protest the abolition of the critical service incentive allowance, which also affects the engineering profession, the silence from the Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM) was deafening.

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) launched an online petition to reinstate the critical service incentive allowance for all healthcare staff and managed to get more than 125,000 signatories within a week, leading to the abolition being put on hold pending a review and decision by the Cabinet. This is an exemplary show of concern by a professional body to protect those under its care.

The engineering profession is also critical and crucial for nation-building, and there is a shortage of qualified engineers in the country.

There is very low awareness in the industry that it is mandatory for an engineering graduate to register with BEM as a graduate engineer in order to practise. Currently, engineering graduates of both accredited and non-accredited engineering programmes from local and foreign universities are employed in the private sector as engineers as long as they can do the job.

This is because the Registration of Engineers Act 1967 is not strictly enforced here. Even a technician can rise through the ranks to become an engineer in the private sector because of this. There are even cases where physics graduates are employed as engineers. In short, anyone can become an engineer.

BEM needs to do more to educate the private sector on the need to adhere to the Registration of Engineers Act 1967. In my view, if the Act is enforced strictly, engineering-related industries will shut down due to shortage of qualified engineers.

Through gradual enforcement of the Act within a suitable time frame, we would be able to weed out the unqualified engineers and uphold the dignity of the engineering profession.

The Engineering Accreditation Council (EAC) requirement as per the EAC 2017 Manual has made it mandatory for all academic staff who teach in an engineering programme in both public and private universities to be registered with BEM and also have at least three full-time professional engineers

(PE) registered with BEM for each engineering programme. Failure to comply will result in the engineering programme offered not being accredited.

This has created awareness among universities to educate their engineering students on the need to register themselves as graduate engineers and obtain their PE certificate.

But even with this ruling, fresh engineering graduates might not bother to register with BEM if the Act is not enforced on industries, and we would be back to square one.

It is disheartening to see that engineering is not a career of choice anymore for students and parents alike. It is a very rewarding career with unlimited potential in improving the people's quality of life and in nation-building. Just imagine all the comforts that we enjoy today because of engineers who toil silently in the background.

I believe that with the help of professional bodies like BEM, engineers would be accorded their rightful dues and recognition through strict implementation of the relevant regulations.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR YAGASENA APPANNAH , Graduate engineer lecturer Quest International University , Perak

### What do you think of this article?

**It is insightful**

**Not in my interest**

100% readers found this article useful

Copyright © 1995-2020 Star Media Group Berhad (10894D)  
Best viewed on Chrome browsers.