

Universiti Sains Malaysia

Universiti Sains Malaysia ([Malay](#) for 'Malaysia Science University', [abbreviated as USM](#)) is a public research university in [Malaysia](#). Founded on 1 June 1969 as a statutory body with its own constitution, it is the oldest institute of higher learning in Northern Malaysia, as well as the second oldest in the country. It has six campuses: a main campus on the island of [Penang](#), a health campus in [Kelantan](#), an [engineering campus](#) in [Nibong Tebal](#), an Advanced Medical and Dental Institute in [Kepala Batas, Seberang Perai](#), a postgraduate studies campus in [Kuala Lumpur](#) and an offshore International Medical Programme Campus in [Belgaum, India](#) in collaboration with KLE University.

USM is the only Accelerated Programs for Excellence (APEX) government-funded [autonomous university](#) in [Malaysia](#).^{[4][5]} Like most of other universities in Malaysia, USM also used English as its medium of instruction.

History

Early concept and establishment

The idea of a university in Penang was first mooted by [D. S. Ramanathan](#) in 1959 in the State Assembly and later crystallised when he was nominated chairman of the Penang University Project committee.^[6] The acquisition of a piece of land in Sungai Ara was then followed by the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone by Prime Minister [Tunku Abdul Rahman](#) on 7 August 1967. ^[*citation needed*]

In June 1968, the Federal Government commissioned a committee led by Mohamed Suffian to draft a Constitution for the new university. The committee then issued a report recommended that the university be autonomous and separate from the government and supported academic freedom in relation to the society and the Government.^[7]

USM was established as a statutory body and the second university in Malaysia in 1969. It was first known as the **Penang Island University** ([Malay: *Universiti Pulau Pinang*](#)). The university operated on borrowed premises at the Malayan Teachers' Training College at Gelugor, with only 57 science-based students in the beginning. At that time, there were only three schools of Biological Sciences, Chemical Sciences and Physics and Mathematics.^[8] A year later, three non-science schools of Cultural Studies and Humanities, Educational Studies and Social Sciences were established. ^[*citation needed*]

Campus relocation and expansion

In 1971, it moved to its present 239-hectare site at Minden (formerly [Minden Barracks](#) of the [British Far East Command](#)) in [Gelugor](#), 10 kilometres from the city of Georgetown. In 1972, two new schools of Pharmaceutical Sciences (first of its kind in Malaysia) and the

Building Sciences and Architecture (a year later renamed School of Housing, Building and Planning) were established.^{[9][10]} The same year, USM's publication arm – Penerbit USM was established under its Department of Library.^[11] In 1973, the School of Applied Sciences was established (later renamed School of Engineering Sciences and Industrial Technology on 7 August 1984), followed by School of Mathematical Sciences in May 1974 (split from School of Physics and later renamed School of Mathematics and Computer Sciences in 1985) and School of Medical Sciences in 1979.^{[12][13]}

New branch campuses

In 1983, a health campus was opened in [Kubang Kerian, Kelantan](#), housing a training hospital in the beginning for fourth year medical students.^{[14][15][16]} The School of Medical Sciences moved there in stages, and became fully operational there in June 1990. Two more schools of Dental and Health Sciences were established on 1 December 1998 and 1 November 1999 respectively.^{[17][18]}

Realising the need for degree recognition by factories in the engineering field especially those in Penang and Kuala Lumpur, an [Engineering Campus](#) was established in 1986, first by occupying rental buildings in [Ipoh, Perak](#). At the same time, the School of Engineering Sciences and Industrial Technology was split into the School of Industry Technology which remain at the main campus and the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and the School of Materials and Mineral Resources Engineering which were relocated to the Engineering Campus, then also known as Perak Branch Campus (*Malay: Kampus Cawangan Perak*).^[19] Two more schools were established there in 1989 – The schools of Civil Engineering and Mechanical Engineering.^{[20][21]} December that same year, the Engineering Campus moved to its permanent site in [Teronoh](#), 30 kilometres away from the state's capital and was officially opened by [Sultan Azlan Shah](#) on 13 September 1990.^[22]

The School of Chemical Engineering was established on 1 May 1992,^[23] and the School of Aerospace Engineering was established on 1 March 1999 through upgrading the campus' Aerospace Engineering Unit.^[24] In 1997, the Ministry of Education decided to transfer the engineering campus back to Penang to help fulfill the state's growing human resources needs in its Electrical and Electronics Sector.^[25] Thus, a new location in Seri Ampangan, [Nibong Tebal](#) was identified for the campus and it began operations there in June 2001, while its former site was taken over by [Universiti Teknologi Petronas](#), a private university owned by Malaysian oil and gas multinational corporation [Petronas](#). ^[citation needed]

Meanwhile, in the main campus, the School of Management was established on 1 December 1989,^[26] while the Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS) was established in 1991 to meet the needs of rising number of candidates in higher degree

programmes.^[27] The School of Communication was established in 1993,^[28] and on 1 March 1995, the School of Computer Sciences was split from the School of Mathematical Sciences as a separate School.^[29] Towards the end of the 20th century, the School of Distance Education and the School of the Arts were established in 1998 and 1999 respectively.^{[30][31]} On 15 March 1998, USM became the second university in Malaysia to be corporatised after [University of Malaya](#).^{[32][33]} USAINS Holding Sdn Bhd, USM's corporate arm was later established on 21 October 1999 to leverage the available skills for income-generating business development, replacing its Innovation and Consultancy Centre.^{[34][35][36]}

USM's first off-campus site Centre for Marine and Coastal Studies (CEMACS) was established in August 1991 at Teluk Aling in [Penang National Park](#) for research and post-graduate training in the Marine Science and Coastal Ecosystems fields.^[37]

APEX Status and International Collaboration

On 16 February 2002, The Advanced Medical and Dental Institute ([Malay: Institut Perubatan dan Pergigian Termaju](#), AMDI or IPPT) was established in Bertam, [Kepala Batas, Seberang Perai](#), Penang as institute for advanced research and postgraduate programmes in the medical fields.^[38]

In June 2008, the Science and Arts Innovation Space (also known as [sains@USM](#)) was launched in [Bukit Jambul](#) to strengthen innovation and retain the best talents in the science and arts fields, while attracting international collaborators to boost the country's knowledge economy. It was constructed on 12.4ha plot of land located few kilometres away from the main campus that was bought from [IJM Corporation](#) in March that year for RM59 million.^[39]

On 3 September 2008, the [Ministry of Higher Education](#) under [Mohamed Khaled Nordin](#) selected USM to implement the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX), a fast-track development programme created to enable institutions of higher education to be recognised as world-class entities.^{[40][41]} School of Languages, Literacies and Translation was established on 19 November 2008 by upgrading the Language Unit of the School of Education,^[42] while the Graduate School of Business was established in 2009.^[43] In 2010, an international offshore medical campus in collaboration with [KLE University](#) was established in the college's compound in [Belgaum, India](#).^[44]

On 1 November 2013, Sains@KL (known as USM@KL since 16 November 2022) was established in [Kuala Lumpur](#) as an institute to offer high impact academic postgraduate programmes.^[45] On 9 October 2023, USM@KL moved from its original location in Wisma Sejarah, Jalan Tun Razak, to a new office at MoF Inc Tower, Platinum Park.^{[46][47]}

Coat of arms

The coat of arms of USM was first introduced in June 1972 and modernised in 2009. Its initial draft was designed by York Herald of Arms in London, before being perfected by an artist and [Penang Free School](#) (PFS) teacher, Mr. G.S. Reutens.^[48]

The arms of the university is displayed on a native shield, and contains much local symbolism, but generally conform to traditional English heraldic principles and may be [blazoned](#) as follows.^{[49][50]}

Shield: Purpure in chief two krises in saltire surmounted by an open book and in base a Bunga Raya (hibiscus flower) all proper.

Crest: On a wreath of the colours a crescent therefrom issuant a fourteen-pointed federal star Or.

Supporters: On either side a tiger holding in the interior forepaw a palm frond proper.

Motto: "Kami Memimpin" (Malay: "We Lead")

Since 25 January 2003, the USM coat of arms has been accompanied by the university's logotype designed by Anthony Tan Chee Kian, featuring the initials U, S and M attached to one another and the university's name in full written in all caps –'UNIVERSITI SAINS MALAYSIA' as seen on its corporate logo.^[51]

USM is currently one of the three public universities in Malaysia to adopt its coat of arms, the other two are the [University of Malaya \(UM\)](#) and [The National University of Malaysia \(UKM\)](#).