PETALING JAYA: Malaysian students overseas need only to inform the Election Commission (EC) that they are out of the country so that they can vote.

EC chairman Tan Sri Abdul Aziz Yusof said the students could register themselves as postal voters.

"As long as they are above 21 and are studying overseas full-time, they can vote. However, they need to inform us that they are going overseas," he said yesterday.

Abdul Aziz said students who turned 21 while overseas could register as voters with the embassies in the respective countries they are in.

The embassies would send the ballot papers to the addresses provided by the students.

The students could then return their postal votes to the embassies, who would subsequently submit them to the EC, he added.

Besides students, under the Elections (Registration of Electors) Regulations 2002, those who could vote while residing abroad included members of the armed forces and public servants.

Spouses of the three aforementioned categories are also eligible to vote.

To a question, Abdul Aziz said he did not have details about the number of overseas postal voters but said they were "negligible".

He also said many postal ballots arrived at the EC headquarters several days after a general election.

"Currently, postal votes can only be counted if they reached the polling centres by 5pm on polling day," he added.

He said that in Singapore, postal votes were valid for up to two weeks after the polling date.

"However, they announce the results on polling day as the number of postal votes are insignificant," he added.

Abdul Aziz said the EC was looking into the possibility of allowing other Malaysians overseas to vote as well, but admitted that logistical problems affecting postal voting needed to be looked into.