

GEORGE TOWN: Prisoners in Penang can now pursue their tertiary education online up to postgraduate level. The move follows the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Prisons Department and Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) yesterday. Prisons Department commissioner-general Datuk Wira Zulkifli Omar said the five-year collaboration also offered scholarships to prisoners who wanted to sign up for online courses. Currently, some of the prisoners are studying for the SPM, STPM and degree programmes. This is the first time we are helping prisoners to take postgraduate programmes under the MoU, he said after the signing of the MoU yesterday. Zulkifli said there are prisoners who committed white-collar crimes and held first-class honours degrees who are interested to pursue postgraduate studies. Prison officers could also apply for the courses, he added. USM deputy vice-chancellor (industry and community network) Prof See Ching Mey signed the MoU on behalf of the university. The ceremony was witnessed by Deputy Human Resources Minister Datuk Maznah Mazlan. USM also signed another MoU with three foreign tertiary education institutions and one local college respectively for joint research to improve human capital in the workforce. The local college is Community College Bayan Baru and the foreign institutions are University International Batam and Mercu Buana Universiti, both from Indonesia and Chartered Institute of Management Accountants of the United Kingdom