

# Director-General of Vocational Education: Strengthening Soft Skills as the Main Policy for Vocational Education

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## Dan at Senat Terbuka Sekolah Vokasi UGM

Wikan Sakarinto, S.T., M.Sc., Ph.D., as the Director-General of Vocational Education, highlighted that even though UGM Vocational School graduates recruited in employment, facts based on a national basis show that vocational graduates, in general, have received many complaints from companies. They are considered to be less resistant to pressures in the world of profession.

Besides, they are also considered to be less able to cooperate and less able to communicate well orally or in writing. In addition, not a few of the national vocational graduates lack initiative.

"So they need to be pushed, and they might get easily bored. That's the complaint from the industrial parties. Accordingly, if they have good soft skills, we are sure they will learn independently. It is necessary to modify the most profound character of vocational students as values so that it will automatically improve soft skills as well as ultimately hard skills," he said on Tuesday (27/10) as the speaker at the top of the 11th Anniversary of UGM Vocational School.

According to him, as long as the curriculum cannot strengthen soft skills, no matter how good the buildings and facilities are, they will be nothing. Therefore, 80 percent of vocational school teachers

today have to improve their mindset.

Wikan said soft skills were very valuable, especially in the current Covid-19 pandemic era. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, many companies cannot hire graduates, so entrepreneurship is the rescue.

"Concerning entrepreneurship, it means we are talking about the most relevant soft skills, namely the ability to communicate, presentation, the ability to accept differences, the ability in teamwork, foreign language skills and others, and most importantly also about honesty and integrity," he explained.

Wikan revealed that this soft skill issue is the main policy for vocational education in Indonesia. He said that the importance of soft skills would be the value of the upcoming Vocational School Permendikbud related to independent learning.

"A tracer study of almost 90 percent is very valid for UGM Vocational School graduates. Ideally, Vocational School graduates should dominate not only hard skills but also soft skills, even mastery of these soft skills is completely more important," he said.

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