



# **UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

**FACULTY OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE & POLICY STUDIES**

**TITLE OF RESEARCH:**

**AMENDMENT OF SECTION 15 AUKU 1971 AND POLITICAL  
PARTICIPATION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Introduction

Since the early age of independence, it is obvious that Malaysia government discourage political participation from the university student. The higher institutions were viewed solely as the tertiary centre of teaching and learning, with no rights given to the student towards involvement in the political agenda and government's decision making. The establishment of the University and University Colleges Act (AUKU) 1971 indicates the government determinations in prohibited the university students from participating in the politics and thus, act as a mean to control the behavior of the students.

For many years, due to the strict implementation of the Act, students do not have the rights to give comment, to suggest, or to show disagreement towards any government activities which might directly or indirectly affecting their rights as part of the society. Moreover, the student's obedience towards the Act also mainly caused by the fear of being suspended or dismissed from the university or college in which this situation may lead to difficulty in continuing their studies. Although the Act is to provide for establishment, maintenance, and administration of universities and university colleges, and has 27 sections to it, it is Section 15; related to the freedom of associations and discipline of students that has been the most contentious (New Strait Times, 2008). The Act has become the rigid guidelines of do's and don'ts in regulating and controlling the student's behavior, but little precaution has been considered by the government towards the environmental pressures that may cause disruptive reaction against the Act.



The requests for the amendment of AUKU 1971 have become interminable arguments and debates, especially among academicians and the university students. While most would be hard-pressed to detail the contents of the AUKU, it is clear that the Act curtails a student's freedom of association and expression (New Strait Times, 2008). Taking into consideration a series of unstoppable debates against the Section 15 of AUKU 1971, the government finally accepting the fact that the university students should be given the rights and equal opportunity to involve and engage themselves in the political parties of their own preference. Other than that, the amendment of AUKU 1971 also deemed as the rightful action towards achieving the good global ranking and the quality of world class universities.

There are many positive comments received towards the plan for amendment. Prime Minister, Datuk Sri Najib said the government's decision to amend AUKU 1971 showed the government had faith in the ability of undergraduates to be matured in their thinking and be responsible citizens (Bernama, 2012). Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Ahmad Shabery Cheek said the amendment to AUKU 1971 was a new leap for the national education system aimed at developing student leaders (Bernama, 2012).