

## **Lecturers in a dilemma**

**By KAREN CHAPMAN**

KUALA LUMPUR: Two groups of lecturers in polytechnics and community colleges are in a dilemma following the announcement of a new higher education service officers' scheme.

National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) secretary-general Lok Yim Pheng said one group comprises 300 lecturers who, as non-graduate teachers, had undergone distance learning to be upgraded from a non-graduate scale (DGA) to graduate scale (DG).

"This group has already applied to the Education Services Commission (SPP) and are awaiting a reply, expected in March, on whether they have been successful for the upgrade," she told reporters at the union's office.

The other group comprises senior teachers who have served at least 15 years, she said, adding that they qualify for time-based promotion after passing their Efficiency Level Assessment (PTK).

"Members of this second group are about to qualify for their promotion and are worried that by opting to join the new scheme, they will lose their seniority and have to be reassessed for promotions (under the new scheme)," she said.

If they decide not to opt for the new scheme, she said these lecturers would be sent back to serve as teachers in schools that have vacancies anywhere in the country.

Lok said that as the Feb 15 deadline to opt for the scheme looms, both groups are caught in a dilemma on what they should do.

"NUTP can only advise them to think carefully," she said.

The NUTP, she added, sent a memorandum on the matter to the Public Services Department (PSD) two weeks ago.

"We had a meeting on Tuesday between the PSD, NUTP, Higher Education Ministry and the representatives of the lecturers.

"The PSD has said it will look into the grievances brought up by this second group of senior teachers even if some do opt for the new scheme," she said.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed announced last week that there would be better career prospects for the 7,239 lecturers in community colleges and polytechnics under the new scheme as they would be promoted based on their competency rather than when there were vacancies.

