"We will get there in the end," says Osborne, seen here in front of University of Reading’s Malaysian campus that should be ready September next year.

University of Reading Malaysia, University of Southampton Malaysia Campus and Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia are set to help redefine the higher education landscape in the country. The three world-renowned British universities, part of EduCity Iskandar in Johor, are keen to set the record straight: they believe with the integrated campus concept fully in place, EduCity will succeed in achieving its goal of becoming a world-class education hub.

As with all new projects—and especially catalytic ones—teething problems are to be expected. But the three universities are confident of what’s taking shape in EduCity and are keen to announce that developments are on track.

"When we first explored opportunities to establish a branch campus, Malaysia was very high on our radar," said University of Reading Malaysia COO Peter Osborne.

"We were happy to buy into the multi-varsity idea that students can go into a variety of universities and be able to share social space—and that concept is where we will end up," he added.

"The university is genuinely excited about what EduCity will become. We are all sensible people to see that it is not going to happen overnight," said University of Southampton Malaysia Campus CEO Prof John McBride, who added that there should be a “functioning integrated campus there in two years”.

Source: https://www.thesundaily.my/archive/1066712-GRARCH255019
environment, and we were going to be the first.
"You cannot conjure buildings overnight, but I think more could be done earlier to provide soft services that support the students.
"We had students when no one else did, so we looked at our students first and foremost, and if there were things lacking or not yet present, we took it onto our own hands. We extended our own catering, recreation facilities and broadband," Jordan said.
"At the moment, do you provide a large infrastructure with lots of facilities when you don't have the students there, or do you wait till you got the students? A balance has to be struck and it hasn't been as much as we wanted, but it doesn't alter the fact that we will still get there in the end," Osborne said.
"If you create a university campus from nothing, anywhere in the world, you get teething problems. To some extent, people need to understand that it is a general thing about building something new," McBride said.
"The concept is still brilliant and Malaysia is not without challenges," Osborne said. "Some we knew before we came and some we have found more challenging than we thought, but you have to learn to work with the system and we are doing that.
"I personally haven't found any difficulty at all in getting employment passes approved via IRDA (Iskandar Regional Development Authority). They have been very obliging and helpful, particularly their staff in Danga Bay," he added.
Asked about student visas, McBride said, "It is a huge problem for Malaysia but the UK made the same mistake last year and had exactly the same problem.
"It is a serious miscalculation by the government but it has not been an issue for us so far.
"This year will be a test for us as we will have a large number of international students. We have to put our paperwork in time and make sure that we can work with the system."
All three institutions naturally have plans for expansion in terms of campus, student numbers and academic programmes.
University of Reading Malaysia's campus will be ready in September 2015 and their targeted number is 2,500 students.
Osborne said if it begins well, they have an option to expand to the site next door which will offer a larger range of disciplines, with an increase in student numbers.
University of Southampton Malaysia Campus, for their part, will be starting their aerospace engineering programme which will be unique in Malaysia. For them, it is also important to build on research and they have the highest research income per academic of any campus in Malaysia.
As for Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia, they have roughly 180 staff and 1,000 students in their campus plan. There are also longer plans for expansion in 2018 or 2019.

Source: https://www.thesundaily.my/archive/1066712-GRARCH255019