

Date : 6 April 2016  
Title : Sponsorship offers with tighter rules  
Publication : New Straits Times  
Page : 3

# Sponsorship offers with tighter rules

**FEWER PROGRAMMES:** PSD scholarships for more to study in local universities

**FAIRUZ MOHD SHAHAR**  
PUTRAJAYA  
news@nst.com.my

**T**HE Public Service Department (PSD) yesterday announced its new sponsorship model that cuts programmes to four following the recalibrated 2016 Budget.

The new model, PSD said in a statement, was to achieve the government's human capital development goals in providing opportunities for more students to further their studies in local higher-learning institutions.

"It also focuses on helping more from the low-income group to further their studies," the statement said.

The National Sponsorship Programme would be open only to 20 top students in last year's Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), compared with 50 places previously, to pursue their foundation courses locally and their first degrees in renowned universities overseas.

The Special Engineering Programme to Japan, South Korea, Germany and France, meanwhile, would be open to 200 students, down from 300 last year.

The Bursary Graduate Programme will be offered to 744 students only for local undergraduate studies.

Previously, the recipients could pursue their degrees at 20 top universities overseas.

The Local Degree Programme sponsorship recipients will be reduced to 7,000 students pursuing their first degrees in public universities and government-linked private universities, such as Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Multimedia University and Universiti Teknologi Petronas.

The statement said the new model was designed based on four key thrusts: merit and inclusivity; focus on B40 and M40 groups, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); development of Malaysia as an education hub; and, return on investment.

PSD said to ensure that the country's investments paid off and produced the best talents for public service, the sponsorship from this year onwards would be implemented in a form of "variable loans", except for the B40 Scholarship Programme.

The agreement would be subject to four conditions:

**LOANS** can be converted into full scholarships and exempted from repayment if graduates decide to serve in the public service;

**GRADUATES** are required to repay 25 per cent of the loan if they work in government-linked companies;

**GRADUATES** are required to repay 50 per cent of the loan if they work in local private companies; and,

**GRADUATES** are required to repay the entire loan if they work abroad.

"The new model allows comprehensive sponsorship (for students) which covers the aspects of merit and excellence, and the need to help low-income earners in the B40 category in TVET.

"It also focuses on sponsoring students to further their studies locally to support the government's efforts in making the country a regional education hub," the statement said.

It added that the new model would strengthen local universities

and ensure the country's long-term fiscal resilience.

PSD said the B40 Scholarship Programme, which was a new initiative, was introduced this year to sponsor 1,000 students from a household income of RM3,690 and below.

The students would be selected based on the list provided by e-Kasih (National Poverty Data Bank) and Education Ministry.

Apart from the new programme, PSD would also take over the government's Bursary Programme from the Education Ministry.

Under the programme, 250 SPM leavers who scored 9A+ from last year's examination would be offered scholarships for their foundation and degree courses in local universities.

"It is a one-off programme and will be discontinued from next year," the statement said.

Under the new model, prospective students will be screened, including sitting the Cambridge Online Test (COT) to assess their personalities and tendencies.

"This is the first time we are applying COT in the sponsorship programmes. After they undergo the test, they will have to attend an interview."

PSD said for this year, it would continue sponsoring 49,060 students, of which 41,324 were studying in local universities and 7,736 abroad, with an allocation of RM1.65 billion.

"An additional allocation of RM160 million has been approved under the 2016 Budget to finance the sponsorship of new students this year."

PSD will hold roadshows to explain the new model.

Students and parents can visit <http://esilav2.jpa.gov.my> or call 03-8885 3603/3777/3398 for information.