

Applications flood PSD

18,844 apply for 1,500 overseas degree scholarships

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PETALING JAYA: The Public Service Department's (PSD) Overseas Degree Programme received 18,844 applications last year to vie for the 1,500 scholarships offered, said the Education Minister.

The criteria for selection were based on academic achievements, involvement in extra-curricular activities, family background and interview performance, said Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

"A total of 847 places were provided for students who applied for critical courses in medicine, dentistry and pharmacy in various countries including Australia, New

Zealand, India, Czech Republic, Poland and twinning programmes at the Penang Medical College, Melaka Manipal Medical College and the International Medical University," Muhyiddin said in a statement.

For engineering, he said 410 places were provided for in France, Germany, the United States and other countries.

After the results of the Overseas Degree Programme was announced on May 21, 59 students rejected their offers while 4,298 appeals were received, said Muhyiddin, also the Deputy Prime Minister.

On June 9, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak announced that 250 more scholarships would be offered this year, making it 1,750

scholarships in total.

The Government also offered sponsorships to 100 top scorers who opt to pursue studies at local research universities namely Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Malaya.

Muhyiddin said another 1,900 places were offered to top students not selected under the Overseas Degree Programme at higher education institutions and branch campuses - including the University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus and Curtin University of Technology Sarawak Campus.

He said the Government needed an allocation of RM1.96bil to support the studies of 3,750 students.

Muhyiddin stressed that the PSD would continue sponsoring undergraduate overseas scholarships for top students in critical courses.

Areas of studies to be covered include medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, engineering, science and technology as well as social science.

Muhyiddin said the statement was meant to clarify confusion among students and parents on PSD scholarships for top students who completed their Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) last year.

Last month, Najib said such scholarships would be phased out gradually and that the Government wished to see more scholarships awarded for post-graduate studies overseas.