

# Agonising wait for students

Many worried that late scholarship news will affect tertiary applications

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**PETALING JAYA:** Students waiting for the Government's announcement on the Graduate Bursary Programme are hoping that it will come soon.

Many are concerned about missing the deadline for applications for the courses of their choice.

"An earlier announcement would allow everyone to plan their futures better," said See Pei Woei, 20.

"If students have to wait longer, there is a chance they may miss the earlier intake for certain courses or miss out on certain places.

"This is especially a concern since some courses are more limited than others," she added.

For instance, in terms of studying veterinary medicine locally, only a

handful of public and private institutions of higher learning offer the course, including Universiti Putra Malaysia and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan.

See has decided to pursue a course in medicine at Monash University so as to not waste any time, but has seen the delay affect many of her friends.

Top scorer Ng Paul Cheng, 18, scored 11A+s and one A in the 2015 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination but is in a quandary – the closing date for other scholarships is looming, but he is hoping for a government scholarship.

"Government scholarships are full scholarships, which is why I hope to get one," said Ng.

"Other scholarships are often harder to get and their deadlines are very close, so I don't really

know what to do.

"I come from a small village in Sekinchan and we are not well off, so the financial assistance would really help," said the former student of SMJK Yoke Chuan, who wants to study either chemical or physical engineering with a focus on green energy.

Sarah Tan scored 11A+s in the SPM and has been anxiously awaiting an announcement on the Public Service Department (PSD) bursaries.

"She is afraid that she will not get a place to study medicine with this delay," said her father Peter Tan.

Yesterday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Wee Ka Siong was quoted as saying that he expected Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak to announce "structural changes" to the scholarship programme before

the month's end.

Since 2012, students who received 9A+s in SPM were automatically eligible to receive the national bursary and later, a scholarship from the PSD to pursue their studies overseas.

Prior to the Budget recalibration in January, it was announced that 744 bursary recipients would have to continue their studies locally. Only the top 20 SPM scorers would be able to study at overseas institutions.

While normally available from the day SPM results are announced, the application link for the bursaries is currently still inaccessible.



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Cutting scholarships will save RM240mil