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Scholarships for scorers

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HIGH-ACHIEVING students can look into merit-based scholarships to finance their tertiary studies locally and abroad. Some scholarships also provide enriching development opportunities for students to grow holistically.

There are many education sponsorships provided by public organisations and private corporations. The Public Service Department (IPSD) offers the prestigious National Sponsorship Programme for Malaysian students who scored a minimum of 9A+ in Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM).

Students will be funded to pursue a degree at the top 10 universities in the world in the United States and the United Kingdom in selected fields.

The PSD-Mara Special Programme 2020 is open for excellent Bumiputera students to study in Japan, New Zealand, Australia, the UK and the US, or locally in selected fields.

The loans will be converted to scholarships if graduates serve in the civil services.

Excellent students can also apply for the Mara Young Talent Development Programme (YTDP) to study locally and abroad. A pathway to the world's top universities, priority is given to excellent students from the B40 and M40 groups.

Digi Telecommunications associate Amina Husna Ibrahim received the Mara scholarship in 2013, which funded her American Degree Foundation Programme, followed by an Economics degree at the Pennsylvania State University in the US.

"Mara and the US embassy hosted sharing sessions for scholars featuring top companies. During my job interviews, I realised that most applicants studied abroad, so my international education gave me an advantage," she said.

Dental officer Nur Iman Najmi Munshi, 25, received a PSD scholarship to pursue a Dental Surgery degree at the University of Jordan.

"PSD organised a development programme for us at least once a year, which improved our soft skills and were stress-relievers."

In the corporate sector, Shell has been running

the Shell Malaysia Scholarship Programme for 40 years.

Open to students interested in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, the organisation strives to develop the nation's best into becoming future leaders.

Shell Malaysia chairman Datuk Iain Lo said: "The programme aims to attract the best talent in Malaysia, give them the best education locally and overseas, and expose them to multiple facets of the energy business to help Shell provide cleaner energy."

Shell Petroleum Company offshore installation manager Lea Natasha Ribin received the scholarship in 2006 to pursue chemical engineering at the University of Sheffield in the UK.

"At the time, Shell scholars would participate in the Shell Internship Programme. This gave me an opportunity to gain an insight into the oil and gas industry," she said.

"The scholarship helped me pursue a good tertiary education and it was a significant springboard to pursue a career in Shell today."

Yayasan Khazanah offers prestigious awards, namely Khazanah Global Scholarship and Khazanah Watan Scholarship, for SPM leavers.

The former offers opportunities for talented and high-achieving Malaysians to pursue their studies at leading universities around the world, namely Harvard University and the University of Oxford. Scholars will be provided job attachments at leading organisations in Malaysia.

The latter funds undergraduate and postgraduate studies at selected top local universities.

Yayasan Khazanah scholarship head Intan Zailia Mohd Yusof said: "The scholarship aims to select, groom and nurture individuals who have the potential to become future leaders. Candidates are assessed through a very structured selection process online, and through assessments and interviews."

"Scholars are further nurtured through various development interventions, as well as high touch-point engagements and mentoring."

"The task to groom these talents is no small feat. Not only we want to develop leaders who have academic and non-academic superiority, we also want to nurture them to want to help others through



Datuk Iain Lo

Candidates are assessed through a very structured selection process online, and through assessments and interviews.

INTAN ZAILIA MOHD YUSOF
Yayasan Khazanah Scholarship head



Lea Natasha Ribin who received Shell scholarship is an offshore installation manager today.

community works."

Khazanah scholar and Universiti Tenaga Nasional Electrical and Electronics Engineering student Shaan Gom is the first Kadazan to receive the scholarship.

"Yayasan Khazanah provided development training and leadership conferences for its scholars. The scholarship changed my life as I became more confident and made new friends," Shaan said.

APPLICATION TIPS

In last year's SPM, 8,876 candidates scored excellent results with all A+, A and A-.

Competing against the best brains of the nation is no easy feat, so preparation is key.

The application process normally starts with an online submission, where you need to submit important personal and academic documents. Some scholarships also require applicants to make a personal statement or essay.

Shaan, who is passionate about volunteering, said he wrote about his experience in the essay.

"Talk about your experience and make it interesting and relevant to the course you're applying for. If you want to pursue engineering, talk more about science. You can also include any challenges that you faced in school."

Aptitude, intelligence or personality tests may also be administered online to screen applicants before they proceed to the interview stage.

Shaan said he tried to familiarise himself with sample questions he got online before the actual test.

"I tried my best to answer each question in the IQ test as precisely as possible, despite the time limit. For the personality test, it's important to be honest."

Iman, who applied for two scholarships, said: "Read the questions carefully, but don't overanalyse them."

"For the interview, speak wisely in a calm and composed manner. In the group session, be easy-going and try to stand out from the crowd."

Shaan added: "In a group interview, play an active part in the conversation and show that you can contribute to the activity or debate. You will be competing against some of the most brilliant people, so try your best, ask relevant questions and be confident. Have some questions prepared for the panel at the end of the interview to show your interest."

SCHOLARSHIPS	GENERAL REQUIREMENT	STUDY PATHWAY
Program Penajaan Nasional JPA	Healthy, aged 18 and below during SPM 2019, parents are not blacklisted by JPA, not receiving other financial assistance.	Preparatory studies at Kolej Yayasan UEM.
	9A+ in SPM (Malay, English, Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Islamic Education, Chemistry, Physics, and A in other subjects).	Degree in nanotechnology, neurotechnology, digital technology, biological sciences, computer science, economics and econometrics, geology, environmental, earth and marine sciences, aerospace engineering, physics, mathematics, biology and chemistry. Top 10 universities in the world in the United States and in the United Kingdom.
Program Khas JPA-MARA	Bumiputera, healthy, aged 18 and below during SPM, parents are not blacklisted by JPA, not receiving other financial assistance.	Preparatory studies in Malaysia.
	A and A+ in 5 subjects in SPM, and A- in other subjects according to course.	Degree in science, pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, engineering, economics, finance, accounting, certified accounting, architecture, actuarial science, computer science, animation. Universities in Malaysia or Japan, France, Germany, Spain, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States.
MARA Young Talent Development Programme	Bumiputera, at least A in 6 to 8 subjects in SPM depending on the courses, pass health exam and selection criteria.	Preparatory studies in Malaysia. Degree in science, pharmacy, medicine, dentistry, engineering, economics, finance, accounting, certified accounting, architecture, actuarial science, computer science, animation. Universities in Malaysia or Japan, France, Germany, Spain, South Korea, United Kingdom, United States.

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