

Securing study funds

WHAT sets scholarship applicants apart are their personal essays.

Students must ensure that these essays are "personal" and not "copy and paste information" for applications.

Preparation for scholarship interviews is also key, said Star Education Fund representative Reuben Chan.

"Many students don't prepare enough for interviews.

"When they are asked to speak about themselves, they should think through what they want to share and draft it out before going for the interview.

"This is to ensure they give concise answers. Interviews aren't very long. Some think of an answer only then," he said to an attentive crowd at the talk "Star Education Fund Scholarship Awards" on the first day of the Star Education Fair 2019.

"At the Star Education Fund, we want to help deserving students and invest in their lives because this is ultimately nation building," he said.

He suggested that students file their certificates chronologically, from the most recent and most important achievements.

"Remember, it is quality over quantity.

"Also be responsible and follow up on your application. It shows your interest in the application," he added.

The Star Education Fund is offering 285 scholarships worth RM15.1mil from 32 institutions this year.

Nilai University returns as a partner-in-education.

Since 1994, the fund has benefited 3,908 recipients with a total scholarship value of RM127.4mil.

To be eligible for undergraduate courses, students must be Malaysians no older than 25 years old as of Jan 1.

These scholarships cover a wide range of fields and disciplines, from entry-level courses to undergraduate education and professional studies, and are all bond-free.

Every scholarship application is vetted by representatives from *The Star* and its partner institutions.

Star Education Fund manager Susanna Kuan said 28 partners presented their scholarship pledges to Higher Education Department director-general Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hamisah Tapsir and Star Media Group chief content officer Esther Ng during the opening of the Star Education Fair 2019 last Saturday.

She said the other four partners are from the northern region and will present their pledges at the Star Education Fair in Penang in March.

The closing date for the scholarships is two weeks after the release of the SPM



and STPM results.

Applicants will be shortlisted in early April and informed via e-mail, while interviews will be held from April to June.

Giving back

Scholarship recipients Ashley Sean Lal-Foenander and Hilmy Osman volunteered at the fund's booth during the fair.

Ashley, 20, and Hilmy, 22, are currently pursuing a Bachelor's of Biotechnology in Taylor's University and Bachelor's in Quantity Surveying in Heriot-Watt University Malaysia respectively.

"I worked temporarily with the fund last year so I felt I should use my experience to help other students who want to know more about the scholarships.

"Common questions asked are whether the scholarships are full or partial, what fees are covered and the documents required for the application," said Ashley.

Hilmy said he provided advice on the application process.

"I've learnt so much, especially on communicating effectively with the visitors," he added.

The 32 partners-in-education are Brickfields Asia College; Erican College; HELP University; Heriot-Watt University Malaysia; IACT College; Infrastructure University Kuala Lumpur; KDU University College; KDU Penang University College; Kolej Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman; Limkokwing University of Creative Technology; Malaysian Institute of Art; Management & Science University; MSU College Penang; Methodist College Kuala Lumpur; Monash University Malaysia; Multimedia University; Nilai University; Oriental Nilam College of Nursing & Health Sciences; Quest International University Perak; RCSI & UCD Malaysia Campus; Saito University College; SEGI University & Colleges; Sentral College Penang; Sunway University; Sunway College; Sunway College Johor Bahru; Taylor's University; UCSI University; UCSI College; University of Nottingham Malaysia and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.

For information, email edufund@thestar.com.my or visit thestar.com.my/edufund.



Ashley (left) gives advice about the scholarships under the fund.