More informed scholars this year

More and more students are becoming aware of the requirements for scholarship applications.

JEANNETTE GOON

ALTHOUGH the usual post-Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia scholarship frenzy has begun, 264 excellent students will not have to worry about funding their tertiary studies. At the shortlisting of the Star Education Fund candidates this week, most of the college and university representatives agreed that the quality of students was improving.

“The applicants are getting better in terms of grades and extra-curricular activities. It looks like more students are aware of scholarship requirements these days,” said Methodist College Kuala Lumpur Institutional Development director Khoo Teng Sooi.

“It was very tough to shortlist the candidates because many have good results. Out of the 150 applications for A Levels, most have straight A’s,” said UCSI University Trust senior manager Shannen Choi.

“Many of the applicants are very sure of the course that they want to do. Some have even applied for the course straight to UCSI as well,” she said.

This was an important factor for teacher trainer Dr Phillips Koh when selecting candidates for the courses offered by Fairview International School. “Some just apply because of the scholarship so we look at their attitudes first then only at their results. If they want to be a teacher, they need to have the passion for it. Without passion, they won’t last,” he said. He also added that those who were poor in the English language wouldn’t be able to cope with the course as a lot of writing would be required.

KDU University College Admissions and Bursary Department senior manager Kwan Kow Cheun said the quality of the essays were especially important when selecting candidates who applied for law and business courses.

When looking at the essays, the ability of the candidates to communicate is taken into account. “We don’t want students with just good results. We want all-rounded students,” he said.

For the interviews, he encourages candidates to talk about the other skills that they have. “There are so many applicants so they have to show us why they deserve the scholarship,” he added.

While most of the applicants were excellent students, Taylor’s University Student Central and Bursary and Financial Aid manager Saw Bee Lian was forced to disqualify a large number of applicants because they had applied for programmes that they were not qualified for.

“We don’t accept post-SPM students for these programmes so these applicants had to be disqualified. They’re good students but they’re not qualified,” she said, pointing to a large stack of forms.

Dr Koh faced the same problem as well. “These students applied for a graduate course, which they can’t do because they don’t have a degree,” he said, pointing out that the applicants only had an SPM qualification.

“We’ve informed the applicants that they must make sure they apply for courses that they’re eligible for but we’re still receiving applications for the wrong courses. However the numbers of these wrong applications are decreasing every year,” said The Star’s Events and Star Education Fund manager Susanna Kuan.

There are close to 3,400 applicants competing for the awards totalling more than RM10 mil this year. This year’s partner institutions in the Fund are: Advanced Tourism International College, Brickfields Asia College, Equator Academy of Art Penang, Fairview International School, HELP University, IACT College, INTI International Universities & Colleges, KDU College Penang, KDU University College, Kolej Tunku Abdul Rahman, Kuala Lumpur Infrastructure University College, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, Management & Science University, Methodist College Kuala Lumpur, Multimedia University, Kolej PTPL Penang, Raffles College of Higher Education, Reng College of Technology & Design, Saito College, SEGi University College, SEGi College Kuala Lumpur, SEGi College Subang Jaya, Sentral Technology College Penang, Singapore Institute of Management Pte Ltd, Sunway University, Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak Campus, Taylor’s University, The One Academy of Communication Design, The Otomotif College (TOC), The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus, UCSI University Trust and Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman.
Kuan (centre) with representatives (from left) from Methodist College Kuala Lumpur, USCI University Trust and KDU University College.