

**Gov't scholarships badly managed, wasting money**  
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State scholarships for overseas education have been a contentious issue in Malaysia. Each year, the press highlights stories of people missing out on state scholarships. While lamentable, we should consider the benefits our country receives from the sponsorship of these studies.

As a student studying overseas, I have seen countless peers breaking their government bonds and working overseas, sometimes with the encouragement of their minders in the Public Services Department.

This represents a significant loss to Malaysia- not only are taxpayers (that's every one of us reading this article right now) paying for our brightest minds to migrate overseas, we incur an opportunity cost as well- the same funds could have been used in other sectors, such as in the much needed improvement of our public transport. Such projects are beneficial to all, instead of a select few.

Please do not get me wrong, I am not an elitist but I believe the government's first and foremost duty is to safeguard the public's purse and obtain the best return for the people. State scholarships should be awarded based on the government's need for labour.

Furthermore, the government should do her best to encourage scholars to return home and contribute to the nation. While we cannot stop people from leaving or breaking their bond once they are overseas, the Malaysian state should recover her losses from their guarantors.

If the state cannot or is unwilling to do that, we should consider taking the drastic step of stopping overseas scholarships altogether.

On another note, there are many wealthy students on government scholarship and many scholars who treat their time abroad as a 'holiday'. State money is wasted on such students. As such, I propose that the criteria for these scholarships be tightened, to ensure that those genuinely in need of such a scholarship will not be deprived unnecessarily.

Government officers should also reprimand those who do not perform well academically, and perhaps withdraw the monetary assistance given, should they fail to 'buck up'.

In summary, there needs to be a proper system in place to monitor government scholars and scholarships should be given based solely on merit and the state's labour requirement.