

# Students 'can postpone their return'

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Government-sponsored students are now allowed to postpone their return upon completing their studies.

Public Service Department director-general Tan Sri Ismail Adam said stiff competition in getting jobs here prompted the decision.

He said the decision to allow students to stay and seek employment after completing their studies abroad would help them acquire specialisation in their career and broaden their knowledge and perspective.

In a circular dated March 30, Ismail said the decision affected government-sponsored students awarded scholarships who had to serve the government after completing their studies, and students given study loans who did not have to join the civil service.

"However, this does not include courses where students' services are urgently needed, and those who are necessary to ensure the delivery service is not affected."

Medical, dentistry and pharmacy students either on scholarship or loan must return to do house-

manship after completing their courses.

These students, however, could apply to postpone their return for two reasons: To pursue their studies or to wait for their spouses (also on government scholarships or loans) to complete their studies.

They also have to get the approval from the Health Ministry.

Ismail said students intending to postpone their return should apply to their respective "sponsors" before completing their studies.

"There is no such thing as blanket approval as approval would be

based on case-by-case basis.

"However, they must be prepared to return any time when asked to do so.

"The government has the right to cancel any postponement and students must return," the circular said.

Once approval was given, Ismail said, the government was no longer obliged to pay for their return ticket to Malaysia or visa to stay longer in a country.

"However, students' responsibilities as stipulated in the agreement remain."