

Options for those who fail to make cut for varsity

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PUTRAJAYA: Failure to get into public universities is not the end of the road.

Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed yesterday assured students who did not make the cut in the highly competitive entrance criteria that they would have many other options, including private universities, polytechnics and community colleges.

A total of 178,757 applications — 101,806 of them from SPM 2006 students — were received as of yesterday for places in the 20 public universities. Another 20,000 applications are expected before the closing date.

Mustapa said the places, in particular, the sought-after courses like medicine, were limited to the best candidates.

“In the government’s view, there are enough places in general. Of course, for Medicine, we acknowledge that places are not enough. That’s why we have private universities and we continue to send some students overseas,” he told reporters after visiting the ministry’s Students Entrance Management Division.

For other courses, he said, there were enough places, especially taking into account the enrolment offered by new universities — Universiti Malaysia Kelantan and Universiti Pertahanan Nasional.



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The most sought-after courses, and which the ministry receives the most appeals for, are Medicine, where 2,407 applied for just 904 places last year, Pharmacy (2,607 applied for 285 spots) and Dentistry (708 applied for 205 spots).

A large number of students

failed to gain admission annually despite their good scores. There were also many complaints from those who did not get the universities or courses of their choice.

Students Entrance Management Division director Rahmah Hussan said applicants would have to fill in eight choices of their chosen subjects, and indicate (by ticking a box) whether they were willing to study another subject if they were unsuccessful with their initial choices.

Computers will sift out and select the most qualified students for entry to public universities in what the ministry calls a “solid system” which considers a candidate’s points right down to the decimal point.

All STPM applicants have been applying online since 2004, and this year, 75 per cent of SPM applicants had done the same. Next year, all applications will have to be done online.

The deadline for SPM applicants is today, while STPM applicants have until Wednesday. The results of applications will be known in the second week of May and the fourth week of June respectively.

All information related to university tests and interviews will be available online at www.mohe.gov.my.

Applicants can also call 03-88835801/5802 or the ministry’s helpline 03-88835848 for further assistance or information.