

NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

Malaysia



Policy Frameworks

Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?

- Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education): <https://www.mohe.gov.my/muat-turun/awam/penerbitan/pppm-2015-2025-pt/5-malaysia-education-blueprint-2015-2025-higher-education>
- Guideline for the Implementation of the Policy for Persons with Disabilities Inclusion in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): <https://www.moe.gov.my/pekeliling/2785-garis-panduan-pelaksanaan-dasar-inklusif-oku-di-ipt/file>

What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?

- Malaysia has long since supported education for all, where students are accepted based on merit regardless of their background. The Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) continues to provide wider access to all levels of education including lifelong learning.
- The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education) was built on the five (5) aspirations set out in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 of access, equality, equity, unity and efficiency. MOHE aims to ensure that all Malaysians have the opportunity to fulfil their potential regardless of background.
- MOHE aims to ensure equity in higher education, giving every student the opportunity to fulfil his or her full potential regardless of location, race, sex or socio-economic background. Similarly, MOHE recognizes the importance of providing equitable access to education opportunities for special need due to disabilities. According to MOHE's Quick Facts on Higher Education (2019), the enrolment for students with disabilities 2019 is at 1791 (which is equivalent to 0.14%).
- With more pressing demands for an inclusive higher education for the disabled persons, MOHE had issued an Instruction for Implementation of Action Plans to Improve Teaching and Learning for Students with Disabilities at all Public Universities in 2012. This instruction for implementation of action plans was used in determining/ deciding the best practices of inclusive education that comply with international standards, which to be implemented at the university level throughout the country. This consequently led to the formulation of a Guideline for the Implementation of the Policy for Persons with Disabilities Inclusion in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2019.
- MOHE will regularly review student outcome data on performance gaps, and is committed to improve the enrolment rate and completion rate of students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds and communities.

Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?

Yes.

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)

- Low-income or lower socio-economic background students
- Older or mature learners
- People from rural backgrounds
- Students with disability

Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?

Malaysia does not have any concrete target. However, we do have special lanes for enrolment into the public institution of higher learning dedicated for the marginalized and under-served.

Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?

- Department of Higher Education
- Department of Polytechnics and Community College Education

Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)

- Higher Education Institutions' Associations
- Civil society organizations
- Private sector organizations

Achieving Policy Targets

Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

Service Learning Malaysia - University for Society (SULAM)

MOHE has several strategies in transforming higher education system in Malaysia with the aim to give essential experiences to future talent that cover on knowledge, skills, ethics, morality and entrepreneurial attributes. Through Shift 1 of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education), HEIs are encouraged to embed required elements in academic modules to produce holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced graduates. Service Learning Malaysia - University for Society or SULAM, is a way of teaching and learning that allows students to be real-functioned at the middle of community issues. It is essential for students to have the knowledge, ethics and practical as a combination to play the role as a community nucleus centric. SULAM also allows students to innovate and creatively planning for community betterment. The network that built in SULAM such as the involvement of industries, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), corporate bodies and government agencies should be a platform for students to show their real capabilities.

Outreach Programme

MOHE created an initiative to hold a series of tours throughout the country with the participation of HEIs to reach out to the community in promoting and disseminating information on:

- 1) higher education opportunities in HEIs and other agencies related to higher education;
- 2) existing study and new programmes offered by HEIs;
- 3) provision of information to prospective students on admission to higher education nationwide as

- well as information on offering academic programmes offered by HEIs;
- 4) procedures and requirement for program admission offered by the HEIs;
- 5) implementation of application for admission to HEIs through UPUOnline (a centralized online portal that manages the application process for Public Universities, Polytechnics, Community Colleges and Institute of Public Skills Training; and
- 6) programmes intake policy by HEIs.

The outreach programme is expected to provide sufficient information to help candidates as well as parents to make the right choice of fields, courses and HEIs.

Admission to University

MOHE through the Higher Education Student Admission Division is responsible to coordinate student admission application to HEIs, Teacher Education Institute, Matriculation College and Public Skills Training Institution to continue studies for Certificate, Foundation, Matriculation and Bachelor Degree levels.

In an effort to increase access to higher education, MOHE has provided an inclusive pathway involving four (4) target groups namely B40, People with Disabilities (PwD), Orang Asli and Athletes. The inclusive pathway is an admission that does not have to compete with the mainstream group as this group will be screened in their own group to further their respective studies subject to meeting the special requirement set by the selected university.

To implement the processing of this inclusive pathway, MOHE matches data involving all categories with strategic collaboration of various parties involving e-KASIH data (a database system that was developed to assist the Government of Malaysia to be better able to plan, implement and monitor poverty eradication programmes at the national level, and thus, improve the effectiveness of such programmes) through the Implementation Coordination Unit (ICU) of the Prime Minister's Department, data from the People's Subsistence Assistance (BSH) from the Board Inland Revenue (IRB) for B40 and PwD data from the Social Welfare Department (JKM) and Athlete data from the National Registration Department for the Orang Asli and Ministry of Education (MOE)'s Sports, Co-curriculum and Arts Division (BSKK). Hence, this implementation of the inclusive pathway is one of the efforts of MOHE to increase access to higher education.

Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

As part of our commitment to ensure the objective of providing inclusive development among the society is achieved, MOHE focuses on the needs of the lower income group especially from the B40. Financial assistance for pursuing higher education is provided through programmes such as Foundation Students Financial Assistance (Bantuan Kewangan Asasi) and Community College Students Financial Assistance (Bantuan Kewangan Pelajar Kolej Komuniti). Besides the B40 group, MOHE also provides financial assistance as well to the disabled through Financial Assistance for the Disabled (Bantuan Kewangan Orang Kurang Upaya) and Special Education Program (Program Pendidikan Khas). The financial assistances provided consist of study fees and living allowance.

The details of each project/ programme are as follows:

No.	Project/ Programme	Nature of Project/ Programme	Application Requirements	Financing Element
1.	Foundation Students Financial Assistance (Bantuan Kewangan Asasi)	To provide financial assistance to students pursuing foundation programmes in Public Universities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students undergoing foundation programmes in public universities • Household income of parents less than RM10,000 after income tax deduction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Accommodation Fees • Allowance • Flight fares Sabah/Sarawak and vice versa

2.	Community College Students Financial Assistance (<i>Bantuan Kewangan Pelajar Kolej Komuniti</i>)	To provide financial assistance to students in Community Colleges to pursue education at certificate level. To improve socio-economy level of their family and self-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students undergoing programmes in Community Colleges at Certificate level on full time basis (16 to 24 months) • Household income of parents at RM3,000 and below 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allowance
3.	Financial Assistance for the Disabled (<i>Bantuan Kewangan Orang Kurang Upaya</i>)	This programme is an incentive to sponsor PwD who have registered with the Welfare Department of Malaysia to pursue higher education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with disabilities registered with Welfare Department of Malaysia • Awarded to students in public universities, private universities, polytechnics and community colleges • Other institutions not registered to MOHE is out of scope of sponsorship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition Fees • Allowance
4.	Special Education Programme (<i>Program Pendidikan Khas</i>)	This programme is an incentive to provide financial assistance to Persons with Disabilities who have registered with the Welfare Department of Malaysia to pursue Special Skills Programme (<i>Program Kemahiran Khas</i>). Assistance is specially given to those in the category of DE/ DD which are deaf (pekak) and mute (bisu).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons with disabilities registered with Welfare Department of Malaysia • Awarded to students only at the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Community College of Selayang ii) Sultan Ibrahim Polytechnic iii) Kota Kinabalu Polytechnic iv) Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Polytechnic v) Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Polytechnic vi) Ungku Omar Polytechnic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition Fees • Allowance

Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?

Department of Higher Education.

What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?

In line with encouraging HEIs to be adequately equipped to accommodate PwD and encourage equity in universities, myU-OKU is being developed. MyU-OKU is an application that the general public and HEIs can use to review the readiness of an HEI to accommodate PwD at their institutions. The application will have information that would help students and parents alike to check the suitability/ availability and readiness of infrastructure or facilities for them to utilize at the HEI.

What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?

All public universities with the exception of the National Defence University Malaysia (UPNM) have established a PwD Service Unit to accommodate and coordinate the needs of PwD students and staff members in response to be in compliant to the Guideline for implementing the Person's with Disabilities Inclusivity Policy in HEIs launched by MOHE in 2019. However, UPNM still offers PwD services for staff and students when the need arises through their Student Affairs Department.

How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)

1. Policy setting
1. Technical assistance and capacity building
1. Financial assistance (grants, loan financing, scholarships)
1. Facilitating peer learning, exchange of experience among countries

COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education

How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?

Many students are facing financial difficulties and need assistance due to this pandemic. Malaysia has to restructure the budget allocation for students' aid.

Promoting new norms of teaching and learning as a measure to overcome COVID-19 as opposed to conventional method:

- ➔ Adopting remote learning approach
- ➔ Optimizing the use of existing platforms such as Massive Open Online Learning (MOOC), Open Educational Resources (OER), Flipped Classroom online, Google Classroom, Facebook Live etc.
- ➔ Collaborating with Telco for special package of mobile data for students
- ➔ Assistance for mobile devices for selected students (B40)
- ➔ Providing wider coverage of high speed Internet to facilitate online learning

Sources

This country brief was prepared as part of the [“ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education”](#) report, a collaboration between the [Asia-Europe Foundation \(ASEF\)](#) and the [National Education Opportunities Network \(NEON\)](#). The report was launched at the [8th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education \(ARC8\)](#) on *“Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe”* on 10 September 2021.

All information in this country brief was provided by the International Relations Division of the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia, as of 23 October 2021.