



Conquering HECAS to move forward

Fadli Zaini
BRUNEI-MUARA

IT IS that time of the year again when school leavers like me have been anxiously waiting for the opening of the scholarship application which had commenced late March.

Over the two-month waiting period prior to the application, we have been busy preparing and finalising for the next chapter in our academic life.

Whether you're waiting to apply at one of the ivy league universities in the UK or someone who is simply looking to further the studies in the nation's internationally-accredited local institutions under government scholarships, we are all required to register under the Higher Education Centralised Admission System which is also known as HECAS.

Running since 2009, HECAS is an online platform which enables students to apply at ease with one of the higher learning institutions in the nation such as Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD), Islamic Universiti Islam Sultan Syarif Ali (UNISSA), Institut Teknologi Brunei (ITB), Brunei Polytechnic or a chance to study abroad under the Ministry of Education (MoE) Overseas Scholarship.

For the majority who had the chance to get first-hand valuable information on the "how tos" of applying at the HECAS Expo, held at the Brunei-Muara District Office's Muhibbah Hall, on March 27 -28, they were lucky.

But for those of you, who didn't get the chance or are still unsure, fret not! Below are the HECAS five-step guide to ensure smooth application and submission.

Step 1

Log on to the HECAS site at <http://www.hecas.edu.bn>

When you enter the site, the commencement date and deadline is clearly stated on the top of the page. This year, HECAS commenced on March 27 and will end this Tuesday, April 9, after 4.30pm.

As you scroll further down, clear instructions have been provided to guide you on the online process of filling in the application form, request for password, application tracking number and application submission.

To log in, you will need to request a password via SMS using a DST mobile line, by typing "hecas new <No. of Programmes - ><IC No.>" eg. Hecas new 4

01234567 (to select 4 programmes) to 8885555.

Once the SMS is sent, you will receive a message with a six-digit alpha-numeric password.

For example, your password is 5si7ly. You will be required to logon to the HECAS site, <http://www.hecas.edu.bn>, and at the very top of the page, select "First Time Login" to enter the provided password.

Step 2

Once the password has been keyed in and submitted, a prompt will appear on the screen to request for your "Tracking Number".

This tracking number will be obtained from an SMS instruction sent to your phone. The instruction will be in the form of a programme request confirmation by sending "hecas yes <IC no.>" to 8885555.

An SMS reply will contain the Application Tracking Number. and password to enable you to log in the HECAS site.

The login is not a one-time access. The repeated access will provide convenience to students in completing the application form before the final submission deadline.

Depending on the number of programmes you are applying for, the rates will vary. One programme costs \$5, two for \$10, three cost \$15 and a range of four to six programmes cost about \$20. Your tracking number will be sent immediately once the cost is deducted. If you are a non-DST subscriber, make your way to the nearest DST counter to request for a tracking number.

Step 3

After Step 2, you are required to select "Normal Login" (found next to the option for "First Time Login"). The site will then automatically prompt you to change your initial password (provided on the SMS) for security reasons.

A confirmation will be sent via email once the password has been changed.

Step 4

You are welcomed to make any necessary changes to the form or change selected programmes until final submission. However, please note that once it is submitted, you are not allowed to change any of the sent details including your programme choice.

Also remember, before submitting your form, they must be printed in hard copy beforehand to submit to your institution(s) of choice.

Step 5

For anyone wishing to add more programmes before the final submission, you can send an SMS request to 8885555 by typing: "hecas add <No.ofProgrammes><IC No.>".

For example, "hecas add 2 01234567" (to add two more programmes).

Addition of programmes will involve deduction of credit depending on the number of programmes.

For those without Internet access, applicants

can visit designated HECAS sites; in Brunei-Muara District, students can make their way to Duli Pg Muda Al-Muhtadee Billah College, Sultan Hassan Secondary School in the Temburong District; Sayyidina Othman Secondary School in Tutong and Sayyidina Ali Secondary School in Belait.

Other tips and reminders

Ensure your application form is complete and accurate. Any mistakes on the form would lead to dismissal from application.

Be certain of your choices.

Print a hardcopy of your HECAS form from the online site. This will also act as a checklist.

This checklist also includes all relevant academic certificates that have to be submitted to relevant institutions and the Scholarship Section at the Ministry of Education building at the Old Airport Road, Berakas before April 13.

After submission

What happens right after you finish your submission? The applications will be processed by the Scholarship Section throughout the next few months. Results will only be released before the opening of the new academic year in October/September this year.

For those students who are ending the academic year in May/June, the second round of HECAS will be opened some time after mid-year.

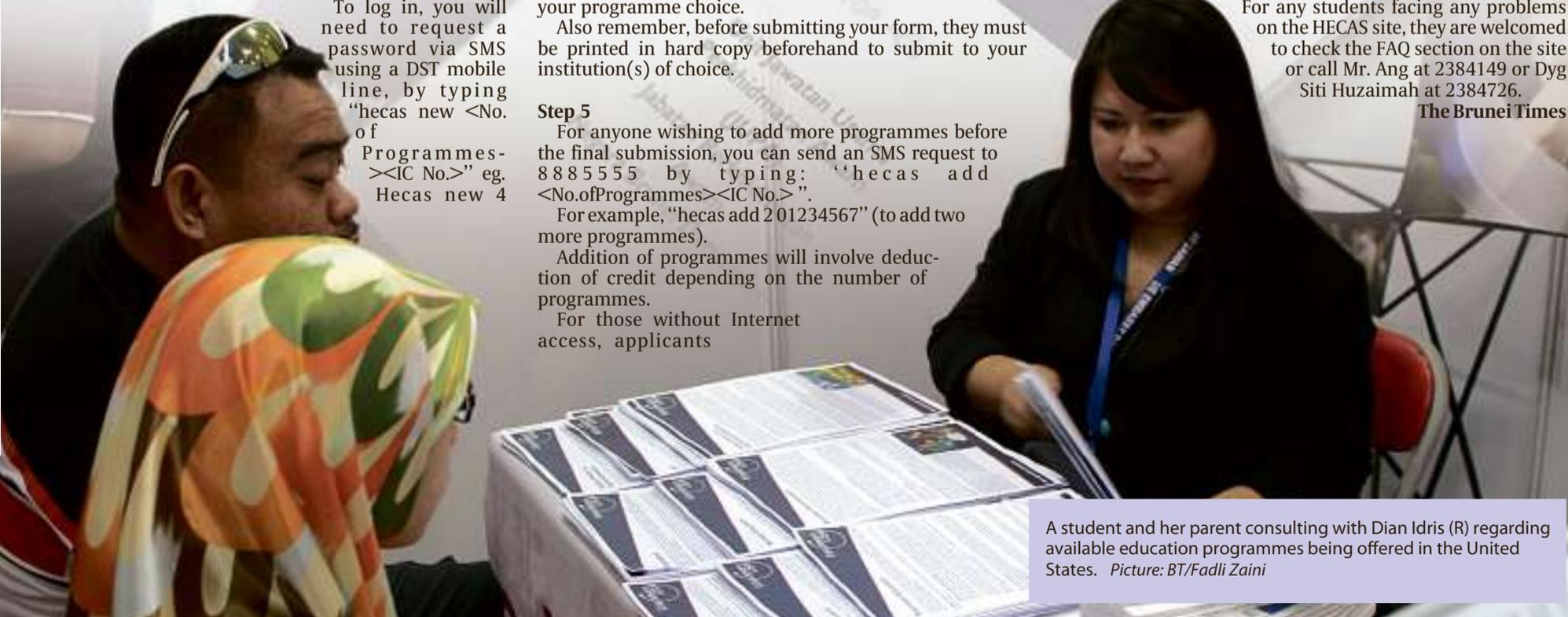
The HECAS online application is open to all valid holders of Brunei Darussalam Identity Cards (yellow, red and green). However, only Bruneian citizens (yellow IC holders) who have at least a credit in Malay Language in Brunei-Cambridge GCE 'O'-Level can apply for scholarship (local or overseas).

While HECAS does not process applications of government servants and foreign applicants, applicants should contact the admission office of respective higher education institutions.

For further information on application and procedures, members of the public can visit the MoE's site at <http://www.moe.edu.bn> or the HECAS site at <http://www.hecas.edu.bn>.

For any students facing any problems on the HECAS site, they are welcomed to check the FAQ section on the site or call Mr. Ang at 2384149 or Dyg Siti Huzaimah at 2384726.

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A student and her parent consulting with Dian Idris (R) regarding available education programmes being offered in the United States. Picture: BT/Fadli Zaini