



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

HON. ASERI RADRODRO

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

MONDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 2024

227/2024

WRITTEN QUESTION

Hon. Premila Kumar to ask the Minister for Education – Can the Minister provide detailed information on the Tertiary Scholarship and Loan Services (TSLs) for the years 2023 to 2024, specifically –

- (a) a year-wise breakdown of the number of students and the TSLs funds disbursed as loans and scholarships to each Higher Education Institute;**
 - (b) a year-wise breakdown of the number of students at each Higher Education Institute who did not complete their studies during this period and the total amount of TSLs funds disbursed that could not be effectively utilised due to student withdrawals or failures; and**
 - (c) the steps the Ministry has taken to address the issue of students not completing their studies under the TSLs programme, and the strategies in place to improve retention and completion rates.**
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(a) a year-wise breakdown of the number of students and the TSLS funds disbursed as loans and scholarships to each Higher Education Institute;

Response : Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Service (TSLS) administers government scholarships, grants and study loans. TSLS has continuously been working on strengthening the policies to ensure transparent and efficient management of tax payer funds for scholarships and study loans.

In 2023, there were 13,860 students funded by TSLS under scholarships and study loan schemes at various Tertiary Education Institutes while in 2024, there are 15,666 students currently being funded by TSLS.

The breakdown of students funded under scholarships and study loans at various Tertiary Education Institutes are:

Tertiary Education Institutes	Number of Students	
	2023	2024
Fiji National University	7,826	8,333
University of the South Pacific	4,662	4,280
University of Fiji	848	902
Sangam Institute of Technology	299	319
Fulton Adventist University College	102	142
Corpus Christi Teachers College	70	100
Advance Aviation Training (PTE) Limited	-	7
Pacific Flying School	-	13
Centre for Applied Technology Development	19	123
Keshals Business Education Institute	-	32

Montfort Boys Town	2	13
Navuso Agricultural Technical Institute	-	10
Pacific Polytechnic	-	1,192
Pivot Point	-	57
Service Pro	-	10
SPA Academy Fiji	-	14
Vishan Infotech	-	56
Overseas Universities	32	63
Total	13,860	15,666

TSLs has disbursed tuition payment to various Tertiary Education Institutes as follows:

- i. 2022-2023 Financial Year - \$56,875,980
- ii. 2023-2024 Financial Year - \$62,414,805

The breakdown of funds disbursed to Tertiary Education Institutes are:

Tertiary Education Institute	Disbursement	
	2022 – 2023	2023-2024
	\$	\$
University of the South Pacific	15,537,414	13,143,401
Fiji National University	30,565,249	30,758,717
University of Fiji	5,729,074	6,695,178
Sangam Institute of Nursing	1,905,438	1,933,200
Fulton College	661,136	485,128

Advance Aviation Training (PTE) Limited		350,000
Centre for Applied Technology Development	54,500	473,700
Corpus Christi Teachers College	492,700	420,200
Keshals Business Education Institute		53,400
Montfort Boys Town		16,835
Navuso Agricultural Technical Institute		6,080
Pacific Flying School		608,189
Pacific Polytechnics	16,000	3,926,699
Pivot Point Fiji Institute		656,952
Service Pro International Tourism & Hospitality Institute		45,500
SPA Academy Fiji		70,000
Overseas	1,914,469	2,771,626
Total Disbursement	56,875,980	62,414,805

The above do not include the allowance disbursed directly to students.

(b) a year-wise breakdown of the number of students at each Higher Education Institute who did not complete their studies during this period and the total amount of TSLs funds disbursed that could not be effectively utilised due to student withdrawals or failures;

Response : Students who were awarded scholarships and study loans in 2023 and 2024 are in still in their active bond term as they are first- and second-year students respectively.

From 2014 to date there are 21,685 students who have either absconded, are inactive or are yet to graduate and their Bond term has expired and equates to around \$160 million dollars of Investment.

Breakdown by Institution cannot be released as it will cause reputational damage to the Tertiary Education Institutions.

Trend recorded is that students who had very low marks and were provided with a Study Loan to do degree programmes prior to 2021, attracted high attrition rates from Technical Colleges, adding to the high non completion of programs of study.

(c) the steps the Ministry has taken to address the issue of students not completing their studies under the TSLS programme, and the strategies in place to improve retention and completion rates.

Response : TSLS has various strategies in place to address the issue of non-completion. TSLS provides :

- A. Learning Enrichment Services to all our sponsored students to assist in their academic pursuit to improve retention and completion rates.

- B. Students with scaffolding support to enrich their learning journeys
- C. **Weekly Learning Enrichment sessions.** These sessions are provided to students at flexible hours which includes essential topics such as Time Management, Preparing for Exams, Managing the Coursework, Allowance Management, and the importance of Mental Health amongst others.
- D. An **At-Risk Student Intervention** strategy, that has been put in place through the recent amendment to TSLS act during the 2024-2025 budget. As per amendment to the TSLS Act, it is mandatory for Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) to provide reports on “at-risk” students. This is to ensure that TEIs have learning support and remedial programmes to improve retention and completion rates. TEIs are required to identify and provide reports to TSLS on all students who are At-Risk of failing their courses by mid-term. TSLS has strengthened its policies by implementing intervention strategies for students who are at- risk of failing, and necessary assistance is provided to the students to avoid the risk of failure as a proactive measure. This is the initiative of the coalition Government.
- E. **Confidential Personal Counseling.** TSLS provides a safe space and conducive environment for all students who may be

in need of confidential one-to-one counseling. Students who are facing any issues that is affecting them academically, can reach out to TSLS, and the necessary counseling services are available to assist them.

- F. **On Campus Visits** to meet students and create awareness of the support available to students.
- G. Online **Flexible Interactive Sessions** where students are able to join in and talk about issues that may be affecting them, and at the same time begin conversations on the best solutions to face the challenges ahead. Students are able to join these sessions from the comfort of their homes, or school, as Online sessions are a lot more convenient. Session times are early mornings while they commute to school, or in the afternoons and evenings when the students are done with their classes.
- H. **Work Skill Development and Industry Mentoring** to sponsored students where TSLS connects students to professionals from the industries such as Accounting, Engineering and Teacher Education. This allows students to hear from the industry professionals on what to expect from the profession they have chosen post-graduation.
- I. **Support Sessions for Suspended students** to maintain effective communication with all suspended students throughout the term of their suspension, providing guidance

and ways on how best to improve academically and get supported on how to re-enter the TEI.

J. Learning Enrichment for Overseas Students who are studying abroad.

K. Post-Graduation Care and Employer Connect Services. Through this, TSLS provides assistance and guidance to its sponsored students post-graduation. The TSLS Post-Graduation care services equip graduates on the basics while searching for employment such as Resume writing and Preparing for Interviews.

L. Employer Connect Portal (ECP). This is an In-house developed portal that connects new graduates with potential Employers. Employers can sign up for the portal and post their vacancies, and the same will be visible to all graduates that have signed up. Graduates can upload their Resumes and interest towards positions and employers carry out shortlisting on the same portal.

The Coalition Government will work with TSLS on further strengthening the polices to ensure high completion rate and also ensure transparent and accountable management of government funding and there is maximum return from taxpayer investment in higher education.

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