



The University of Fiji

(An Entity of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji)

UniFijiStart Initiative

The University of Fiji today launched an innovative initiative which will allow Year 13 students in secondary schools in Fiji from Semester 1 2022 to undertake up to two credit-based introductory courses at the University of Fiji. The courses will be counted towards their qualifications if the students pass and continue to study at the University from 2023.

Called the **UniFijiStart Initiative**, the courses that Year 13 students will be selected for in terms of their interest areas will be fully funded by the University through its scholarship scheme. Selected Year 13 students will attend lectures which will be held at times to accommodate the secondary school timetable. The UniFijiStart students will be a normal part of the first-year programme at the University and attend lectures and tutorials with the other students.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Fiji, Professor Shaista Shameem launched the **UniFijiStart Initiative** at the opening of a collaborative course programming workshop convened by the University's Centre for iTaukei Studies and the iTaukei Trust Fund Board at the Waterfront Hotel in Lautoka on Monday 14th March.

Professor Shameem said UniFijiStart type programmes were common in universities overseas where top final year high school students were given the opportunity to start their university programme earlier as long as this was supported by their teachers, principals and parents. It allowed high school students with the academic and intellectual capacity to enter university to jump start their tertiary study and have the successful courses cross credited in year one when they entered University full-time, she said.

Professor Shameem said the selection of suitable Year 13 students would be based on their Year 12 internal and external assessments, their extra-curricular activities, and recommendations from their teachers, schools and parents/guardians. The shortlisted students would be interviewed by the University's Panel of Professors/Deans and selection made on the basis also of maturity of the students, their confidence and speaking and writing skills to be sure that the students selected would be able to undertake university as well as Year 13 studies.

Professor Shameem said that the students would be mentored by Academic Advisors and the Panel of Professors/Deans as they progressed through their first-year course. She said the programme allowed the students to have their completed courses cross-credited towards their degrees in the following year and allowed them to take part in other university activities without the pressure of having to undertake too many courses in their first year.

She said the University's next 5-year Strategic Plan 2022-2026 emphasised broad education as a journey and the UniFijiStart Initiative was an example of the holistic education that the University Council had approved for the University of Fiji's students.

Future Ready