

Over one million NSFAS bursary applications received

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has received 1,545,822 applications for the 2024 academic year as of 21 January, with additional applications expected before the application cycle closes on 31 January 2024.



Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Professor Blade Nzimande

Briefing the media on the department's state of readiness for the opening of the 2024 Post School Education and Training (PSET) academic year on Tuesday, 23 January, Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, said the scheme has provisionally funded 657,703 South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) recipients' applicants.

He urged all NSFAS applicants to submit a consent form in order to verify relevant information from third parties and ensure that NSFAS complies with all the legislative requirements.

"The information is required to verify the employment status and income level of the parents, guardians, or spouses of the applicant. It is mandatory for applicants to download and upload a completed Consent form on the NSFAS website, portal or mobile app.

"The SARS (South African Revenue Service) Consent Form requirements affects students who are in the application data category and these students should patiently wait for communication from NSFAS through SMS and email, which will

provide instructions on how to upload the form,” Nzimande said.

The minister warned that non-submission of a complete, accurate and duly signed NSFAS consent form would disqualify a student for NSFAS funding due to NSFAS's inability to evaluate and determine financial eligibility.

In a bid to improve its contacts with students, NSFAS has launched new platforms, where applicants can access their application updates at their fingertips through the downloadable NSFAS student mobile app, WhatsApp line and a USSD code.

Applicants can add NSFAS on WhatsApp 078 519 8006 or USSD *120*67327 to track their application status.

Institutions called to submit student list for accommodation

Meanwhile, Nzimande has called on all higher learning institutions to submit the list of NSFAS funded students, who have been registered, so that they apply for accommodation through the scheme's accommodation portal.

Nzimande said NSFAS is piloting the accreditation of private student accommodation in 17 universities and 23 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges for the 2024 academic year.

Through this pilot programme, Nzimande said NSFAS intends to ensure that student accommodation service providers provide student accommodation that is accessible, decent, safe and academically conducive for all students.

The purpose of the student accommodation programme is to assign students to available accommodation; accredit accommodation providers; pay accommodation fees to accommodation providers through secured platforms; and grade accommodation to create a standard and ascertain cap for accommodation, amongst others.

“Out of the total of 38 938 beds registered on NSFAS platforms in our TVET colleges, 25 989 beds have been accredited and are available for the registered students, and 12 949 beds are in the process of been accredited. For universities, of the total 67,337 beds registered, 42,965 have been accredited and available and 24 372 beds are in the process of being accredited.

“From 18 January 2024, NSFAS provided access to a portal for all institutions in order to view the available beds. Accrediting agents are continuing with the process of accreditation and the list is updated daily,” Nzimande said.

From 8 January 2024, NSFAS has been providing weekly training on the application and registration process to accommodation providers and students, and the training is expected to end in February 2024.

Nzimande added that during this year's registration period, NSFAS has developed a plan to visit hot spot areas, to ensure that students are not left stranded and without accommodation.

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