

## NSFAS beneficiaries receive R5,200 learning material allowance

The 2021 National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) guidelines make provision for beneficiaries to utilise their learning material allowances for the purchase of a digital learning device (laptop or tablet).



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This was on Wednesday confirmed by Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister Dr Blade Nzimande in a written response to a Parliamentary question.

In the response, the Minister said that all university students qualify for a learning materials allowance, set at a maximum amount of R5,200.

Nzimande said that the University of Zululand indicated that 438 students were notified that they erroneously received laptops as well as the R5,200 learning material allowances in April 2021.

“The University recovered the upfront R5,200 that students received as a once off payment. The University deducted the

amount over the remaining period of the 2021 academic year from the students' meal allowances," said the Minister.

He said that these students received a laptop and the full meal allowances and did not forfeit any meal allowances to pay for laptops.

In responding to the data provision question, Minister Nzimande said that data provision for students required for online access for teaching and learning and for assessments remained high across the system.

"The average data provision requirement across the system for all undergraduate students was 90% and 91% for NSFAS students, as reported by institutions in the September 2021 monitoring reports."

Minister Nzimande said that fourteen (14) universities reported that 100% of their students had been provided with data. The universities are: Cape Peninsula University of Technology, Mangosuthu University of Technology, Sol Plaatje University, University of Cape Town, University of the Free State, University of Johannesburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of Mpumalanga, University of Pretoria, University of South Africa, University of Zululand, University of the Western Cape, University of the Witwatersrand, and Walter Sisulu University.

Meanwhile, seven universities namely Nelson Mandela University, Sefako Makgatho Health Science University, Stellenbosch University, University of Fort Hare, University of Limpopo, Vaal University of Technology and Tshwane University of Technology reported that 90-99% of their students were provided with data.

"Durban University of Technology reported 85% of their students to have been provided with data. Cape Peninsula University of Technology reported 73%, North-West University reported that 70%, of their students to have been provided with data in the period.

University of Venda reported 45% of their students to have been provided with data in the period under review. Rhodes University reported 13% of their students to have been provided with data, said the Minister.

The Minister said that it should also be noted that students who are on campus and living in university residences have access to campus Wi-Fi, so many students do not require access to mobile data at all times.