

NSFAS opens online applications for 2020 funding

Higher Education, Science and Technology Minister Dr Blade Nzimande has urged students who qualify to be funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to submit their applications for 2020 on time.



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Nzimande made the call following the opening of the 2020 NSFAS online applications for funding on Sunday, 1 September.

The application cycle will run for a period of three months, with the closing date being 30 November 2019 at midnight.

Announcing the opening of the application during a media briefing held in Tshwane on Monday, Nzimande said NSFAS funding is key to government's support for students in higher education and training.

"We know that adequate funding and support are crucial factors in assisting students to succeed in their studies, and the support is provided specifically to ensure students have access to enable success in their studies.

"Our own studies in the Department of Higher Education and Training have shown that NSFAS students, on average, perform significantly better than students in the overall population," Nzimande said.

This year, NSFAS has funded nearly 600,000 students at Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and universities.

Nzimande said the department is committed to ensuring that student funding system is effectively managed and implemented across universities and TVET colleges, and that students are able to fully access the funding that government has made available.

Over R80 billion set aside for prospective students

The Minister announced that government has set aside more than R80 billion for the next three years to ensure that prospective students from poor and working class families, with a combined household income of R350,000 or less per annum have access to higher education and training.

“This is a massive investment in student support and an important policy of government to support and transform our higher education and training system and society,” Nzimande said.

He said the department’s bursary scheme providing fully subsidised fee-free higher education and training to students from poor and working class backgrounds started being phased in from 2018 over a period of five years.

Nzimande announced the approval of a second phase of NSFAS Administration from August 2019 to August 2020. Dr Randall Carolissen has also agreed to continue as the administrator to fulfil the responsibilities of management, governance and administration of NSFAS during this period.

“Despite a number of areas that require improvements in the management of NSFAS and the student funding system, Dr Carolissen has done a tremendous job in improving the functionality of the system,” the Minister said.

NSFAS qualifying and criteria and eligibility

Nzimande reiterated the qualifying criteria for NSFAS funding:

- Be a South African citizen;
- Intend to enrol at any of the 26 public universities or 50 TVET colleges in 2020;
- Come from a family with a combined annual household income of not more than R350,000 per annum;
- If you are a student with a disability and come from a family with an income of not more than R600,000 per annum;
and
- Agree to the terms and conditions of the NSFAS per annum.

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