More students with disabilities in higher education

The Department of Higher Education and Training says it is making headway in increasing the number of students with disabilities in the post-education and training system (PSET).

© Kasia Bialasiewicz – 123RF.com

"Through National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the department has a special allocation for students with disabilities, which accounts largely for the rising enrolments numbers," said department spokesperson Khaye Nkwanyana.

In 2012, NSFAS allocated R45.5 million in bursaries to 1,368 students with disabilities. This was increased to R69.9 million in 2014, with 1,383 students benefiting as at 12 February.

NSFAS is still processing all 2015 claims, which will be ready by 30 April 2015.

According to the information recorded in the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), the number of enrolled students with disabilities increased from 5,856 in 2011 to 7,110 in 2013.

There has also been a considerable rise of graduates in the system, from 984 graduates in 2011 and 1,294 in 2013.

Infrastructure to catering for students with disabilities

Higher Education and Training Minister Dr Blade Nzimande has directed all universities to ensure their new infrastructure projects make provisions for students with disabilities.

In the 2012/13 to 2014/15 cycle, the Minister approved R124 million for universities to undertake disability audits of their entire old infrastructure to establish the extent of changes required to ensure disability compliance.

"Analysis of these audits and plans are already underway. The department will work with the universities that need to improve their infrastructure for students with disabilities," Nkwanyana said.

On 12 December 2014, Minister Nzimande appointed a ministerial committee to develop a strategic policy framework for disability in the post-school education and training system.

The committee started its work in February 2015 and it is envisaged that a draft report will be submitted within six months.

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com