

## NSFAS Bursary Guidelines to be finalised next week

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Bursary Guidelines for university students will be finalised within the course of next week and released to institutions as soon as possible.



© Brian Jackson – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

Making the announcement at a media briefing in Tshwane on Thursday, following a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday, Higher Education and Training Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, said changes in the guidelines are being kept to a minimum, in order not to affect the administration of the Higher Education and Training Bursary Scheme in public institutions.

The guidelines for funding of students in public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges were released late last year.

The Minister emphasised that NSFAS funding is provided primarily for the funding of students completing first undergraduate qualification, unlike in the past, when funding provided for some limited second qualifications in key areas.

“Students who are already funded on these programmes will be able to continue, as long as they meet the academic criteria.

“However, there will be no funding available for new entrants on second or post-graduate qualifications, as the latter is the responsibility of the National Research Foundation.

“The only exception is that students who have completed higher certificates and gain access to a degree or diploma programme are able to receive funding, if they meet the academic and financial criteria.

“The department will continue to work with institutions and other funding agencies to expand the funding opportunities for students who do not qualify for NSFAS in particular in scarce skills areas,” Nzimande explained.

The department will also engage further with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), where support may be made available for programmes in particular areas and also to address areas of postgraduate funding, where possible.

## **Bursary scheme for 2021**

Nzimande said tuition and accommodation fees are provided for, in line with the guidelines for the department's bursary scheme for 2021. This is subject to the agreed Consumer Price Index (CPI)-linked sector-wide increases of 4.7% for tuition and 6.7% accommodation.

"Institutions must note that no funding can be provided by NSFAS in excess of these increases and neither can such costs be passed onto NSFAS bursary recipients," said Nzimande.

All NSFAS qualifying university students on the department's grant scheme, including students who registered prior to 2018, will be subject to the funding cap of R98,700.

The allowance for all students receiving the learning material allowance remains at R5,200 for the 2021 academic year. The allowance can be utilised to buy electronic devices to support their studies, in line with the applicable university policies and schemes.

The living allowance, which is provided to full-time students in contact study, remains at R15,000, as well as the incidental allowance, which remains at R2,900.

"University of South Africa and distance-learning students, who are taking an equivalent full-time course locally and qualify for NSFAS, will also be eligible for this incidental allowance.

"The travel allowance, which is provided to students who live at home or in accommodation that is not accredited, and therefore do not receive an accommodation allowance, remains at a maximum of R7,500 for the 2021 academic year," said Nzimande.