

Minister Blade Nzimande dissolves NSFAS Board



IN: NSFAS Administrator, Mr Freeman Nomvalo

OUT: Former NSFAS Board Chairperson, Mr Ernest Khosa

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

In a statement issued on 11 April 2024, the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Prof Blade Nzimande announced the resignation of the NSFAS Board Chairperson, Mr. Ernest Khosa, and subsequently the dissolution of the Board in a separate statement, placing the scheme under Administration.

Minister Nzimande has appointed Mr Freeman Nomvalo as the NSFAS Administrator; who will therefore champion the governance, management and administration of the scheme.

The appointment of the new Administrator is effective today, and will



last for a period of two years.

"The NSFAS has been embroiled in an unprecedented number of challenges over recent months. In response to these challenges, the Minister engaged the Board on several occasions on various solutions, including a turnaround strategy which has not been achieved within agreed timelines.

Despite several engagements with the Minister, the entity continues to face serious challenges in its business processes, IT systems, capacity, and policies and controls", said the gazette in the appointment of the Administrator.



NSFAS Spokesperson Ishmael Mnisi

"UJ mess damages our reputation" - Mnisi

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

Following an uproar by the University of Johannesburg (UJ) students on the partial payments of their NSFAS allowances, the NSFAS Spokesperson Ishmael Mnisi has set the record straight.

Mnisi explained during his interview with eNCA how the university submitted incorrect registration data to NSFAS, which resulted to this partial payment of allowances.

"NSFAS gives two important dates for submission of registration data, for universities is the 19th of every month and for TVETs is the 15th of every month. These are the cut of dates for all institutions. Instead of uploading the correct amount of R16500,00 for the academic year 2024, the institution accidentally uploaded R3300,00 meal allowances," Mnisi said.

Mnisi further indicated that this error by the institution has caused NSFAS serious reputational damage.

"It pains us as NSFAS that some institutions are not submitting registration data on time, and when they eventually do, they submit incorrect data; ultimately this affects our students," he added.

In a statement published on 09 April 2024, NSFAS urged the University of Johannesburg to rectify this error, investigate the issue and communicate with affected students, and further process the correction on the system.

NSFAS will then effect the adjustment following this process by UJ.

The sky is not the limit

It's IMPORTANT for NSFAS beneficiaries to **REPAY** THEIR LOANS.



Written by
Anele Ntsway

Tshifhango Nduvho Austine from Vhafamadi Secondary school Mashau Village, Vuwani in Vhembe District, has big dreams.

Nduvho faces common obstacles as she is presently raised by a single parent, her father, since her mother passed away. Despite her difficulties, she remains optimistic and motivated to further her studies to better life.

During an exhibition held at in Limpopo Masia Village recently, NSFAS established that Nduvho aspires to study Cyber security in University of Cape Town, University of Johannesburg, or University of Stellenbosch post grade 12. Nduvho emphasised the importance of getting good school grades to secure admission to a university and program of her choice. "I am obtaining good grades and they will not only pave my way in the University but for the program I want to enroll in" said Nduvho.

She understands that admissions committees are looking for students who had consistently achieved high academic grades, and she is determined to meet and exceed their standards.

The event held at Masia also aimed to encourage former NSFAS beneficiaries through the "Fundisa Abanye - Educate Others" campaign to begin making their loan re-payments. Repaying the loan will undoubtedly help "Future Tinswalos" achieve their goals through NSFAS

bursary or Loan.

Nduvho cannot wait to establish a brighter future for herself and her family. "To achieve this, I am eager to apply for NSFAS funding, which will provide me with the opportunity to pursue my educational goals and create a better future for myself and my family," she said.

"My aspirations through the role that NSFAS funding can play in assisting me achieve my dreams" concluded Nduvho.

Institutional secret recipe, a so not favourite dish for NSFAS and students

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

A smooth start to the academic year, not only tantalises the learning taste buds of students; but further indulges the cravings for academic excellence.

Latest research confirms that NSFAS funded students do better academically than non-NSFAS funded students.

This, however, is achieved when students are granted the much-required streamlined support both from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and institutions (universities and colleges). This speaks not only to data integration, or the lack thereof, but also to the availability of funds which serves as the key to unlock the doors of learning.

It is through hard lessons learnt from the past that NSFAS appreciates the importance of enabling access through funding.

This year, to support institutions and students at the commencement of the 2024 academic year, the NSFAS made upfront payments to all institutions. R2.8 billion was paid to universities in January, while R580,150,950.00 was paid to TVET colleges.

The payments were meant to enable institutions to register all NSFAS-approved students for the academic year 2024.

For the month of March, a further R2.3 billion was disbursed to universities and R511,106,120 was paid to TVET colleges.



LEFT TO STARVE: Students protest for funding at an institution.

Picture Credit: South Africa Online

However, some institutions have since decided to play "poker", keeping their cards close to the chest. This has not only caused frustrations for students, whom some have been left out in the cold without food and accommodation. This move by some institutions "not to comply" with the interim allowance administering process, has also caused massive reputational damage for NSFAS.

While students take to the streets to protest against academic exclusion or the non-payment of allowances, the name NSFAS is always, unfortunately, found in the firing line. Again, when institutions fail to provide

correct registration data, this affects the process for NSFAS to make necessary allocations for students who have ultimately "qualified" to receive funding. Equally, when institutions have made commitments to pay students, but fail to honor those commitments; the whole teaching and learning is affected, as some students get left behind; in the end compromising their academic progression.

It is therefore prudent for institutions to work together with NSFAS, find amicable solutions to challenges, and avoid a "dish of disaster" that might yield instability in the academic sector.

NSFAS OUTREACH Outreach Activities - (APRIL 09– 14 2024)

**12 April 2024 -
Minister's Handover
of the Mkuze Skills
Development Centre,
KZN**

**13 April 2024 – Good
News Community
Church, GNCC Mxenge,
Matolngwe Street,
Western Cape**

**13 April 2024 – University
of KwaZulu Natal Open
Day- Westville Campus,
KZN**

UPDATES ON UNIVERSITIES AND TVET COLLEGES PAYMENTS OF ALLOWANCES



Written by
Anele Ntswayi

On 12 April 2024 National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Management communicated an extension of period for all universities to disburse allowances to students.

NSFAS has on 12 April 2024, advanced a payment to institution, and requested universities to continue paying students allowances for the period of 4 months (April - July 2024).

This extension underscores NSFAS'

commitment to ensuring that students receive the necessary financial support to pursue their studies without interruption.

The scheme fully understands the importance of timeous and accurate disbursement of allowances in facilitating students' academic journeys and alleviating financial burdens.

It requested universities' corporations to ensure a smooth and efficient reconciliation of already paid allowances.

NSFAS also communicated to TVET colleges of the catch-up payment that is being processed for students to be paid on Monday 15 April 2024.

This payment is aimed at ensuring that all outstanding allowances and tuition for students who's valid 2024 registration data was uploaded onto the NSFAS portal by the morning of 11 April 2024 is paid up to May 2024.

This therefore means that after this payment, Trimester 1 students would have been paid in full and Semester 1 and Annual students would have received up to 4 months' worth of allowances, i.e. up to May 2024 allowances.

The catch-up payment will also include the accommodation and transport allowances which were not paid over to students with the last two payment runs.



Call to action: Former NSFAS beneficiaries

Take the First Step Today! Begin **repaying** your NSFAS loans and pave the way for future students.

Your contribution matters – let's make quality **education accessible** to all. **Start Now!**

Remember, every payment counts, no matter how small it!



Name of Account: NSFAS
Branch Code: 210554
Bank: First National Bank
Account Number: 500 600 28203
Ref Number: Must be the debtor's ID NUMBER



For any enquiries, beneficiaries are encouraged to contact the **NSFAS Contact Centre Mondays to Fridays** from **08H00 - 17H00** on telephone number **0800 067327** or email **collections@nsfas.org.za**.

Prof Blade Nzimande officially hands over the Mkuze Skills Development Centre

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme attended the official hand-over of the Mashiyinduku Skills Development Centre to the community of Mange village by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation Prof Blade Nzimande, at Mkuze in KwaZulu-Natal, on Friday, 12 April 2024.

The event which was facilitated by Services SETAS, saw many young people around the village flock to the venue to witness the auspicious occasion. Forming part of the dignitaries were Services SETA's Acting CEO Mr Andile Sipengane, Director-General Dr Nkosinathi Sishi, DDG for TVET Mr Sam Zungu (Programme Director), the DDG for Skills Development Mr Zukile Mvalo, other DDGs, Services SETA Board Members and the District Municipality officials.

"We believe that the leadership from the uMkhanyakude District Municipality and Mthashana TVET College, and the SETAs will ensure that there are training programmes that will lead to the active

participation of the Mkuze community people in the economy," the minister said.

The Minister was encouraged by having learnt that almost two learners were due to start with their training in Community House Building NQF Level 2.

He encouraged the community and learners to take advantage of opportunities given by government, for a better tomorrow.

Other upcoming programs include in the skills centre will include 4IR; Hairdressing and Beauty (including nails and make-up); Mixed Farming; Garment Construction and Food preparation.



DHET meets with NSFAS Executives



IN SESSION: NSFAS Management in talks with the DHET.

Written by
Anele Ntsway

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 - A delegation from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), led by Deputy Director General Mr Sam Zungu, visited the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to acquire an update on various challenges affecting students.

On NSFAS funded student accommodation:

Mrs Sibongile Mncwabe, NSFAS Chief Corporate Services Officer, delivered an update on the student accommodation portal's trial phase and stated that they would consult with the board on whether the pilot phase should be fully rolled-out. She also expressed that there are not enough beds for Technical and Vocational Education and Training college students, and that some students are placed too far away from their institution and that raises the issue of transport.

Would they receive both accommodation and travel allowance?

Mrs Mncwabe stated that pupils located distant from their lodgings would receive both housing and travel stipend. She also expressed that the NSFAS team is aiming to improve its procedures for communicating funding decisions and allocation of accommodation.

2023 Outstanding payments of allowances

NSFAS stated that an initial payment for outstanding 2023 payments was made in February as priority had to be transferred to 2024 payments. The next payment is due the first week of May. Payment is depending on the registration data received and loaded. Mr Zungu warned that payments in May are far too late and appealed to NSFAS to make payments earlier than May. Another responsibility is to designate a date to finalise all 2023 pending payments, and the NSFAS team must urgently communicate the set date to DHET.

NSFAS Management Workshop with SASSA



IN SESSION: NSFAS Management in talks with SASSA Management.

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

In the fulfilment of its Strategic Objective 2 which is to "increase access to higher education and improve student financial aid environment", NSFAS holds periodic engagements with its Strategic partners.

The aim of these sessions is to focus on strategic initiatives that are aligned to the NSFAS student-centric model; particularly the formulation of policy.

On Wednesday, 10 April 2024, NSFAS held a strategic workshop with the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), at the NSFAS offices.

The workshop follows an invitation by the Strategic Enablement Department to the SASSA Executive to engage with the NSFAS leadership. This is because NSFAS believes that the SASSA is best placed to support the organisation's optimisation initiatives.

Furthermore, the Department of Social

Development (DSD), SASSA and NSFAS have an active data sharing relationship.

During the workshop, the SASSA team led by Mr Fanie Sethokga: General Manager: Grants Operations, supported by Managers Ms Nondumiso Qhola and Mr Ian Bull, discussed the following points:

- SASSA - Application and Payment Process
 - SASSA Interfaces and Payment Partners
 - SASSA Grant Values and Thresholds
- The Strategic Enablement Department will continue to facilitate these engagements as additional information is still required regarding but not limited to:
- SASSA Fraud and Corruption Management Strategy
 - ICT Strategic Projects
 - SASSA Transformation Journey

NSFAS has ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY towards dishonesty, bribery, fraud and corruption!



You can report corruption by visiting www.thehotline.co.za or by calling the **Vuvuzela Fraud and Corruption** hotline at 0860 247 653



BRIBERY IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE!!!

