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2024 MATRIC EXAMS

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Minister Nobuhle Nkabane appears before SCOPA

"I intend on imposing penalties on those institutions that withhold critical data" - Minister Nkabane

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

15 October 2024 - The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane appeared before the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA) to give account to systematic and governance related issues within the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

The minister was joined by the Department of Higher Education and Training Director-General, Dr Nkosinathi Sishi, as well as the NSFAS Administrator, Mr Freeman Nomvalo.

Of great focus for SCOPA, was to establish the reasons to failure of NSFAS to complete audits and non tabling of financial statements to Parliament, performance of NSFAS and updates of the Special Investigating Unit (SIU).

Mr Freeman Nomvalo, the NSFAS Administrator, outlined the systematic challenges faced by NSFAS; which are woven to the processes of institutions in order for NSFAS to compile financial statements.

The Close- Out process, which is a process between NSFAS and institutions exchanging and agreeing on critical data; has been a nightmare for NSFAS since 2017.

"The process had not been done since 2017, and therefore the financial statements that

were prepared, the Auditor – General was unable to make a conclusive opinion because the information relating to the amounts was not be properly agreed upon between NSFAS and institutions," Mr Nomvalo said.

The Administrator said from a performance point of view, NSFAS has been having challenges with managing resources and executing some of its mandate.

In relation to the SIU investigations, Mr Nomvalo said investigations are still continuing, and regular updates are being received; with some of the monies already recovered and paid back to NSFAS by the SIU.

Responding to the challenges of the late submission of financial statements NSFAS, Minister Nkabane reported to the Committee that she was intending to write to all institutions to advise them that she intends to impose penalties on those who withhold critical data, and will put measures in place in consultation with the universities councils and Vice-Chancellors.

Click on the link below to access the SCOPA briefing: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zf_rAKGxrAk





NSFAS Student Accommodation Pilot Review



“NSFAS is not dysfunctional. If it was, somebody could have sorted it out long time ago. NSFAS functions efficiently, but for a purpose other than that of which it was established” - Mr Nomvalo

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

03 October 2024 - The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) held a Student Accommodation Pilot review meeting at the Nelson Mandela University in the Eastern Cape. The two days event, which took place from the 03 - 04 October 2024, was attended by various stakeholders which included the Department of Higher Education and Training, the student leadership movements (SATVETSA and SAUS), accommodation providers, and representatives from universities and TVET colleges, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), amongst others.

The purpose of this meeting was to review the NSFAS Student Accommodation Pilot programme designed to enhance and refine the provision of student accommodation within the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system.

Addressing stakeholders, the NSFAS Administrator, Mr Freeman Nomvalo outlined the importance of finding the root cause to NSFAS challenges, as the organisation is not dysfunctional as some claim it to be.

He said it was important to understand the dynamics behind what generates the



Serving symptomatic relief to dysfunctionality: NSFAS Administrator, Mr Freeman Nomvalo

perceived dysfunctionality, and as to who might be benefitting from the dysfunctionality of the NSFAS systems.

“NSFAS is not dysfunctional. If it was, somebody could have sorted it out a long time ago. NSFAS functions efficiently, but for a purpose other than that of which it was established,” the Administrator said.

He added that the mistake that we normally make is that of thinking about NSFAS as entity in relation to the problems read about in the papers, the delays in payment of allowances, delays in

the processing of appeals, or the non payment of accommodation providers.

“In our engagements, we mostly zoom-in to ensuring that we pay on time, and leave the most important part—which is the reason why we are not paying on time,” Mr Nomalo said.

As the meeting proceeded into different Commissions, Mr Nomvalo encouraged all stakeholders to engaged robustly and honestly in order to find solutions to the current challenges; in preparation for the

next academic year.

The following four Commissions were formed to zoom in to challenges, namely:

Commission 1: Management of relations between NSFAS, colleges, universities and landlords, **Commission 2:** 2025 accreditation and grading, **Commission 3:** Capping (Metro and Non-Metro), and **Commission 4:** Embedding holistic student experience and appropriate regulatory framework in private student accommodation

Mr Khanyiso Sonti representing the Department of Higher Education and Training said the Student Accommodation Pilot project was and still remains to be an important initiative by government.

“As we reflect on the pilot project, we should understand that the initiative was, and is still aimed at enhancing the living conditions of students - a goal that is both noble and necessary,” Mr Sonti said.

He added that the Student Accommodation Pilot project made some great strides in certain areas, but equally encountered significant challenges that needed urgent reconsideration in the approach for student accommodation.

GEARING FOR THE FUTURE: NSFAS management meets to discuss future strategic plans

By Staff Reporter

07 October 2024 - The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) management and Executive Leadership held a closed-session strategic engagement to discuss on future organisational plans and strategies. The main objective of the meeting was to formulate the 5-year Strategic Plan (2025 to 2030), Annual Performance Plan (2025 to 2026) and Operational Plan.

The strategic workshop focused on the below key areas, that seeks to reposition and realign the organisational efforts priorities:

- Recap the planning frameworks and key concepts
- Validating the strategic thrust of NSFAS i.e., Vision, Mission and Values
- Confirmation and alignment to strategic imperatives
- Identify key challenges impacting the organisation. This process will enable us to formulate targeted interventions, which will be integrated into the strategic priorities to drive the entity's turnaround
- Identify strategic priorities for NSFAS
- Mapping of the strategic priorities against the result-based framework





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