



Word From The Administrator

Progress in the payment of Landlords

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Administrator, Mr Freeman Nomvalo, has been consulting with the various stakeholders since his appointment as the Administrator. One of the critical stakeholders consulted are the landlords for private student accommodation, who amongst others, raised concerns regarding the outstanding payments of student accommodation allowances.

In response to these concerns, NSFAS is pleased to announce that, a bulk payment of accommodation allowances was processed by the end of May 2024 and beginning of June 2024. The next scheduled payment will be not later than the 18th of June 2024 to clear all legitimate claims. These interventions are intended to provide the much-needed relief to private student accommodation landlords.

The NSFAS Administrator pleads with landlords who still have outstanding payments not to evict students as NSFAS is committed to ensuring that all legitimate claims are resolved not later than the 18 June 2024. Landlords who did not submit their claims for outstanding payments still encouraged to refer their queries to our dedicated email address NSFASAccomProv@nsfas.org.za.

Furthermore, the Administrator reiterates his call to all TVET students who still do not have bank accounts to open the bank accounts with banks of their own choice and submit their bank accounts on the NSFAS established portal to avoid delays in the payment of their allowances. The banking details provided must belong to the student to enable NSFAS to verify these against the student's details on our record and minimize potential risks.

The Administrator has also become aware of what appears to be deliberate misinformation about the work of NSFAS in various social media platforms and wishes to encourage members of the public to only rely on official communication from NSFAS.

The Administrator reiterates his commitment to constructively engage with all stakeholders to find workable solutions for the stability of the PSET system and success of our students.

Taking Challenges of Students Head-on Through Stakeholder Engagements

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

On 16 and 17 May, 2024, The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Administrator Mr Freeman Nomvalo, met with various key role players to discuss issues around the NSFAS accommodation pilot project and transportation of students residing private accommodations.

In his first meeting with accommodation providers, the engagement was necessitated by numerous complaints from landlords ranging from the non-payment of private accommodation providers, transportation challenges, regulations of the Capping System and disparities of allowances, the Grading System of accommodation providers, decentralisation of the NSFAS offices, and verification of students.

Amongst stakeholders present were the South African Union of Students (SAUS), South African Technical Vocational Education and Training Student Association (SATVETSA), Universities South Africa (USAF), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and private accommodation providers (APs).

The Administrator appealed for the establishment of a Task Team which will look into speedily resolving accommodation challenges, and highted that payments to accommodation providers will be processed from 25 – 31 May 2024, and again from 01 – 15 June 2024.

The Administrator also called for the institutions and landlords to work together, to ensure that everyone is



pulling their weight to better the system, for the benefit of students.

His second engagement with the Eastern Cape taxi industry was aimed at addressing the confusion around the role of NSFAS, institutions and private accommodation providers in the transportation of students.

The Administrator has also met with the MEC for Transport in the Eastern Cape, Mr Xolile Nqatha, to outline the concerns the taxi industry raised; which has since led to the proposition of policy change in relation to transportation of off-campus funded students.

IN SESSION: NSFAS Administrator engages with various stakeholders on accommodation and transport challenges.

OUTA praises NSFAS Administrator for striking the right chords, and wishes him well

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

The Organisation Undoing Tax Abuse (OUTA) has praised and extended well wishes to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Administrator, Mr Freeman Nomvalo, after having identified several interventions to address challenges faced by the scheme

During a recent interview with the SABC, OUTA's Investigations Manager Mr Rudi Heyneke said OUTA is optimistic that NSFAS is heading towards the right direction.

This comes after the organisation noted efforts the scheme is making towards addressing its inefficiencies; particularly on non-payment of allowances, accommodation issues and poor systems.

"The intervention that took place in



OUTA's Chief Investigating Officer: Mr Rudi Heyneke



NSFAS Administrator: Mr Freeman Nomvalo

2018 to provide free education was huge, and NSFAS is too important to fail. I do believe and hope that Mr Nomvalo will be able to change the face and the working of NSFAS, and I therefore wish him well," Mr Heyneke said.

In December 2023 OUTA raised a flag of corruption and fraud against the former NSFAS Board Chairperson Mr Ernest Khosa, accusing him of receiving kickbacks from service providers. Mr Khosa has since been declared innocent on these allegations following an investigation report.

The report has however advised NSFAS to expedite the implementation of the remaining recommendations of the Werksmans report and take a decision on how it would implement the termination of the contracts of service providers without prejudice to the beneficiaries of the student's allowances.

Speaking on how NSFAS is aiming to resolve issues around the delay and nonpayment of allowances to students, the Administrator said NSFAS is moving towards paying students directly in their bank accounts. "You only need an intermediary when that intermediary adds value in the process. The attitude that is prevailing is that we need to urgently introduce direct payments, for the benefit of the students," Mr Nomvalo said.

He added that anybody who militates against paying directly to students, would be militating against NSFAS in ensuring that it serves the society better.

HIGHFLYER FRIDAY

Mr Freeman Nomvalo, NSFAS Administrator, continued with engagements and consultations to deal with issues affecting students. On Friday, **17 May 2024**, he met with the MEC for Transport in the Eastern Cape Province, Mr Xolile Nqatha to discuss the state of transportation for off-campus beneficiaries.

Halala Mr Freeman!! Continue doing the good work of **freeing** the students.

Residents of the JTG District hails for more TVET colleges and universities

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

Over 15 000 residents from the John Taolo Gaetsewe (JTG) District, Kuruman, in the Northern Cape attended the last District Development Model Presidential Imbizo held on Thursday, 09 May 2024. Leading to the discussions to welcome President Cyril Ramaphosa, the Premier of Northern Cape Dr Zamani Saul, said the people came to attend the gathering with an overflow and massive expectations that the President will listen to their unheard cries.

Amongst some of the outstanding issues raised by residents was the lack of support and opportunities for young people with skills development and education, and those in need of assistance to establish businesses.

Residents of the JTG District have then since called for the President and Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Prof Blade Nzimande to build more Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and universities.

"One of the most important projects the Premier and I are looking at, is to ensure the improvement of the educational journey for our young people. We have seen some improvements in the recent matric results, but would like to urge parents to encourage their children to stay in school, both in basic and post-school education and training," the President said.

With the last Presidential Imbizos for the 6th administration and the country heading to elections, the residents say they are hopeful that the incoming government will



IN PICTURES: The District Development Presidential Imbizo held in Kuruman.

improve their health care system, ailing school infrastructure, lack of water and provide proper roads.

Also in attendance was the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Chief Financial Officer Mr Masile

Ramorwesi and Chief Operating Officer Mr Errol Makhubela, who encouraged exhibiting NSFAS officials to ensure that all enquiries and student concerns are attended to.

I'm a NSFAS
TINTSWALO...and
this is my story:



My name is Nomfundo Sakati and I have been with the NSFAS for a period of 5 years. I am employed in the contact centre department where I interact with students on a daily basis.

As a former NSFAS funded student from the previously disadvantaged income group in society, I am to identify and empathise with most of the students that I come across with. I was able to obtain my National Diplomas in Tourism and Events Management studies from CPUT through funding which I obtained from NSFAS.

This has opened doors and exposed me to various opportunities and it is my wish that I can be able to grow still within the organisation by unlocking other potential doors through this qualification I obtained through the schemes funding.

Interacting and assisting with students with their issues and challenges gives me great joy, because during my study years there was no enough access to funding information and direct contact to NSFAS representatives. Thus whenever I am on the ground, I always ensure that I embody the NSFAS brand and I am testimony of what the funding can and will do to unlock the future of current and prospective students.

- Nomfundo Sakati

Freeman Nomvalo frees NSFAS beneficiaries

Written by
Anele Ntsway

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has devised a payment mechanism to address the ongoing allowance payment challenges with the assistance of its banker. This new approach aims to streamline the process and ensure that students receive their allowances in a more timely and efficient manner. By collaborating with their banker, NSFAS has implemented several measures to prevent delays and errors in the payment process. This includes improving communication channels, optimising the use of technology, and conducting regular assessments to identify any potential issues such as fraud.

This endeavor stems from the difficulties they had with the four service providers assigned to pay allowances to NSFAS beneficiaries. The previous service providers encountered various challenges, including delayed payments or non-payments, the disappearance of allowances in student's accounts.

The student leadership highlighted that these challenges created distress and financial hardship for students who rely on these allowances to further their



IN PICTURE: Mopani TVET College in Phalaborwa.

education. As a result, the necessity for a fresh method to allowance distribution became clear.

This is another milestone achieved by NSFAS: to ensure that students' transition into post school education and training is smooth and uncomplicated, with no hassles about financial support.

The organisation has made major efforts to simplify the process of obtaining financial help for students, recognising the importance of reducing barriers to

education. NSFAS aspires to empower students to achieve their academic ambitions without the burden of financial hardship by providing easy and quick ways to apply for and receive financial aid. This solution illustrates NSFAS's commitment to equal access to education and the advancement of South Africa's next generation.

This solution demonstrates NSFAS's commitment to equitable access to education and the advancement of South Africa's future generation.

**NSFAS #TINTSWALOS,
have you shared your
story yet?**

Be part of the ongoing conversation and share your NSFAS story with us like our published Tintswalos.

Do not forget to share your brief NSFAS journey and tell us how NSFAS has influenced your life through its funding bursary/loan or employees' contractual studies program, or how you have contributed to the organisation's transformation.

**May our own NSFAS
#Tintswalos please show
up....!**

NSFAS prepares for the 2025 student funding journey programme

Written by
NSFAS Funders and Strategic Enablement Unit

The preparation started in April, and inputs from internal staff has been collated in the form of lessons learned, regarding the challenges that we face in supporting the various processes linked to the onboarding, funding, payment and communications with students and stakeholders.

Some of the concerns are recurring and have been raised as issues in previous years, which means that we continue to repeat the same practices expecting different results.

Various engagements have been planned to address different aspects of the programme, which is intended to herald the commencement of a new way of working. Executives, Managers, and specialists who are critical to the process attended a two (2) day workshop on the 7th and 8th of May, 2024.

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES: To unpack the NSFAS Value Chain by determining activities, scoping the roadmap, appointing process owners, setting timelines and assessing requirements and resources.

The two (2) day workshop highlighted Governance challenges related to frequent funding policy amendments and processing inefficiencies regarding

confusing applications statuses, a difficult Appeals process, budget limitations, debilitating resourcing constraints and general stakeholder communication challenges.

The South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training Student Association (SATVETSA) and the South African Union of Students (SAUS) were allowed an opportunity to present their impact statements, both brought perspective on the gaps within the applications and funding confirmation processes. Both organisations have provided useful information and recommendations that will be incorporated into our remedial tasks as we built the roadmap to the 2025 student funding journey.

The reliance and use of third-party datasets i.e. SARS, SASSA, DBE and Credit Bureaus require refinement. Progress was made in the Prepare for cycle, Manage Applications and Determine Eligibility streams. The Confirm Funding, Pay student and Recover streams require more refinement. The discussions will continue, pay the student is core to the NSFAS mandate, a follow-up workshop was held on 13 May 2024 to wrap-up on the pending matters.

Next action: The project is now formally handed over to various teams within the organisation for implementation.

NSFAS is committed to changing the lives of the people — Deputy Minister Pinky Kekana



REFLECTING ON NSFAS CONTRIBUTION: Deputy Minister, Ms. Pinky Kekana.

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

The Deputy Minister in The Presidency, Ms Pinky Kekana, has reflected on the 30 years of democracy and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme' (NSFAS) contribution during a Youth Career Expo held at Mogol Golf Club in Lephalale, Limpopo province, on 13 May, 2024.

The Deputy Minister said NSFAS as a government entity, has touched many lives and has bridged the gap of poverty in the country. She however acknowledged the many challenges the scheme is still faced with, but said NSFAS is improving daily to ensure that it delivers to its mandate.

"The introduction of the new loan scheme which funds the "Missing Middle", is testament that the government is committed to ensuring that every young person has the opportunity to receive post-school education and training," the Deputy Minister said.

CPUT Open Day provides pupils with the opportunity to explore different academic and extracurricular offerings

A world of possibilities for collaborative learning, creativity, and exploration.

Written by
Anele Ntswayi

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) attended an Open day on Saturday, 11 May 2024 at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in Bellville.

Open day events for high school learners are an important opportunity for them to explore potential educational institutions and career paths.

Learners came in numbers and also had the privilege to move from CPUT to UWC vice versa on day. Students from all across the



IN PICTURES: Learner from various schools engage with exhibitors during the Career Expo.

Cape Town region were accommodated at these two nearby universities.

This event was organised by CPUT to showcase their programs, facilities, and faculty. Learners had the chance to attend informative presentations, participate in hands-on activities, and interact with current students and instructors. It aimed to provide valuable insight into the academic and extracurricular offerings of different institutions, helping learners make

informed decisions about their future education.

"The open day at Cape Peninsula University of Technology was both informative and engaging. It offered a comprehensive overview of its diverse academic offerings and state-of-the-art facilities through detailed workshops and laboratory tours", said Owam a grade 10 learner who attended the open day.

She added that interactions with

faculty and current students provided valuable insights into the university's supportive and dynamic community. "The experience significantly enriched my understanding of CPUT's educational environment, particularly in the field of engineering," she added.

The overwhelming desire of learners to pursue higher education demonstrates the vast obligation that NSFAS must ensure that these youths fulfill their potential.

The Administrator's Diary

RECENT ENGAGEMENTS

- The Taxi industry
- Private Accommodation Providers
- Student Unions and various institutions
- Eastern Cape MEC for Transport



For any news, staff engagements or workshops you would like us to cover, please do not hesitate to send us an invite through internalcomms@nsfas.org.za.

We strive to communicate effectively and efficiently, contributing towards building informed and happy personnel through communication.