

Minister Nobuhle Nkabane delivers Higher Education and Training BUDGET VOTE 2024

“We have listened attentively to the voices agitating for transformation”



Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

Two days prior to the annual International Commemoration of Nelson Mandela on 18 July, 2024, the Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Nobuhle Nkabane, delivered the department's Budget Vote.

Dr Nkabane unbolted her Budget Vote speech with a quote from former President Nelson Mandela; which puts into to perspective the importance of education.

“Education is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world.” indeed, it is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor; that the son of the mineworker can become the head of the mine; that a child of a farm worker can become the President of a great nation”, she recited.

With a budget of R137.5 billion for the 2024/25 financial year, and an annual average increase of 4.8% from R130.5

billion in 2023/24 to R150.2 billion in 2026/27, the minister says her department has attentively to the voices agitating for transformation.

Dr Nkabane said some of those voices are those that lamented for the redress of inefficiencies emanating from the National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

“We have also listened to the silent prayers of parents; for the Department of Higher Education and Training to resolve current student funding and payment challenges. We have also listened to the voices of landlords providing accommodation to students, and to those providing transportation to student,” the minister said.

With NSFAS having grown from disbursing R21.4 million in 1991 to almost R54 billion in the current financial year supporting 800, 000 students, the minister seeks to ensure that the department's goal of goal to expand access to higher education and training opportunities, and improve the quality of the provisioning, responsiveness

Department of Higher Education and Training Deputy Ministers



Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Buti Manamela



Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Mimmy Gondwe



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Or download our **Debit Order mandate form** on <https://www.nsfas.org.za/content/repayments.html> to arrange for your **debit order**.

For any enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact the **NSFAS Contact Centre** Mondays to Fridays from **08H00 - 17H00** on telephone number **0800 067327** or email us at collections@nsfas.org.za.

Dr Nkabane zooms into NSFAS

Continues from Page1

and efficiency of the post-school education and training system, is met.

"It is our commitment to root out corruption and maladministration in the NSFAS grant payment system. In this regard, we have committed funds to improve NSFAS Information Communication Technologies – inclusive of the loan system management. We acknowledge that some of the challenges have led to delays in the finalization and tabling in parliament of NSFAS annual reports," the minister said.

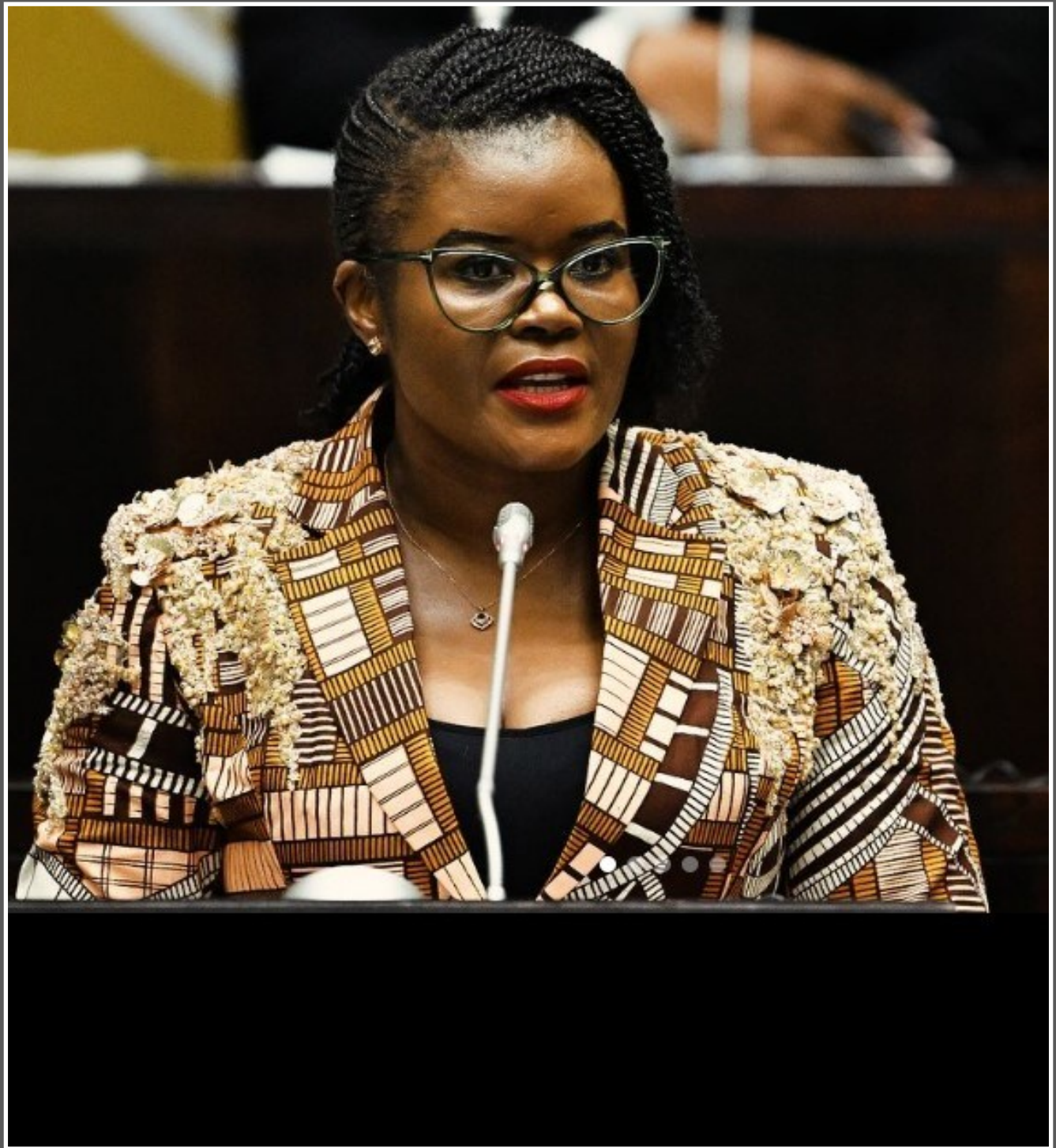
Dr Nkabane indicated that earlier this year, the department came up with a Comprehensive Student Funding Model whereby it committed R3.8 billion initial capitalisation fund to support "missing middle" students; effective this financial year.

The "missing middle" is a category of students who come from families with total income of more than R350, 000, but not more than R600, 000 per annum.

Since its inception, NSFAS has supported more than five million beneficiaries, producing hundreds of thousands of skilled professionals and the middle class, especially from within the poor and working-class sections of society.

The minister said this is definitely one of the most important achievements of this government over the past 30 years of our democracy.

"We are working overtime to ensure that NSFAS systems are ready for the commencement of the 2025 application season – which is scheduled to start in September this year. This is critically important because in this financial year, NSFAS received approximately, two million applications for a bursary. Out of this volume, 419, 447 were returning students – while 297, 809 were First Time Entry students. Given these volumes, we are doing everything possible to ensure NSFAS systems are ready," she added.



Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane during the delivery of the Higher Education and Training BUDGET VOTE 2024.

TVETs Semester 2 applications are now open

Written by
Anele Ntsway

Applicants are encouraged to apply online.

The opening and closing dates for 2024 National Student Financial Aid scheme (NSFAS) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Walk-In applications are aligned as closely as possible to the TVET academic calendar as issued by the Department of Higher Education and Training. Colleges that are participating in the Centres of Specialisation programmes, should encourage participating students to also apply during the available application window.

New applicants should also be reminded to not only create a profile and consider themselves to have

applied but should continue with the process of completing the application until the last step of submitting their application.



The 2024 second semester TVET application window opened on 09 July 2024 and will close on 26 July 2024.

Trimester 3 will also open on 02 September 2024, and close on 20 September 2024.

It is important to note that a student should apply for the relevant academic cycle which they intend to register in.

The method of application for all 2024 remaining cycles remains the same as the one which was utilised by students to apply for NSFAS funding for the 1st cycle of 2024, meaning the students will apply for themselves online through the NSFAS website.

As outlined in Circular Notice No. 6 of 2024

NSFAS Student Accommodation Task Team unpacks challenges, and identifies resolutions



FINDING SOLUTIONS: NSFAS Student Accommodation Task Team locked in discussions to find solutions to student accommodation challenges.

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Student Accommodation Task Team gathered at the Birchwood Hotel in Johannesburg for a two days session, to find solutions to student accommodation challenges.

The meeting held from 26 – 27 June 2024, was attended by various key role players in post-school education and training, including private accommodation providers, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), financial aid practitioners associations, student' union and associations representatives - the South African Public Colleges Organisation (SACPO), South African Union of Students (SAUS), the South African Technical Vocational Education and Training Student Association, as well as the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) .

Appealing to the Task Team not to hold

back anything and bring forward all challenges faced, NSFAS Administrator, Mr Freeman Nomvalo, said NSFAS has already roped two auditing firms to assist in looking into challenges of accreditation, onboarding and payments.

"Our intention is that by the 31 December 2024, all accredited facilities are already notified, so that we start the new academic year with less challenge," Mr Nomvalo said.

Mr Khanyiso Sonti from DHET said it was prudent for the task team to review sections of the NSFAS policy on student accommodation to clearly outline the whole process flow, clarify grey areas, and delineate the roles and responsibilities of all the stakeholders.

SAASSAP which was represented by Prof Sibusiso Chalufu, said that unless all stakeholders move away from silos, there will always be challenges.

Prof Chalufu delineated NSFAS' decision

to take over the accreditation of private student accommodation facilities as breeding "deleterious consequences" for the higher education sector.

During a panel discussion, SAUS President Mr Yandisa Ndzoyiya strongly recommended that NSFAS should speedily look into developing an integrated system with accommodation providers that will assist in allocation of beds for students. Ndzoyiya further added that regular monitoring and evaluation of these accommodation facilities, will assist in ascertaining that students receive value for monies paid towards their accommodation.

According to the Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa (FAPSA), the biggest challenge between stakeholders, NSFAS, Accommodation Providers and students is communication.

"We are however appreciative of the posture that NSFAS is taking of including everyone in the process. Good things are

coming" - President of FAPSA, Mr Jay Mahara said.

To ensure that all key challenges are looked into, four workstreams were commissioned namely: Accommodation Capping, Accreditation and Grading, Student Accommodation challenges for rural and semi-rural institutions, and Regulations for Private Student Accommodation.

During Day 2 of engagements, all commissions presented solutions and recommendations to be presented to the Administrator.

Advisor to the Administrator, Mr Mpho Diago said that the work of the Task Team will be delivered in the upcoming conference which is anticipated to take place in October.

However, of matters which would need immediate attention, recommendations would be presented to the Administrator.

“Together with the youth we will ensure that NSFAS is administered efficiently and effectively” - Deputy President Paul Mashatile

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

Hundreds of young people descended to the Peter Mokaba Stadium in Limpopo on 16 June 2024, to commemorate the 48th Youth Day Celebration organised by the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA).

This year, the day was celebrated under the banner of: **Actively embracing the socioeconomic gains of our Democracy.**

Various ministers, mayors, MECs leaders of political parties, and youth formations attended the celebration.

“More can and needs to be done. We should use this day to forge partnerships for the youth today and in the future. Our youth demographic dividend requires that we place young people at the forefront of the social and economic structures of the country”, said Ms Asanda Luwaca, Chairperson of the NYDA when delivering her message to young people

Deputy President Mashatile who was the keynote speaker said, because the National Development Plan places youth at the centre of the country's development, it is therefore critical for the government to include young people in discussions that



YOUTH DAY COMMEMORATION: NSFAS joins hundreds of young people in Limpopo to commemorate Youth Day.

influence their current and future growth.

He acknowledged the innumerable challenges that young face these days which includes poverty an lack of opportunities. “NSFAS remains a critical

vehicle that supports students from poor and working-class families, with over 70% of university students and more than 90% of TVET college students benefiting from NSFAS bursaries”, the Deputy President added.

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



In 1991, I enrolled at the Border Technikon (now WSU) and began my studies through TEFSA (now NSFAS).

Unexpected events forced me to drop education and enter the workforce. I began working at NSFAS as a contractual employee in 2001 and was promoted to permanent staff member in 2005. Through the NSFAS contractual studies program for employees, I completed my diploma in 2007.

After 17 years, I am still employed by the company and work in finance, which is where the wheels come on. It brings me great joy to work for our organization since we get to assist kids in realizing their aspirations.

If not for those who initially planted the seeds of a dream, the majority of them would never have been able to attain that unreachable star. which resulted in the beginning of TEFSA, now The National Student Financial Aid Scheme. The organization I proudly call my family.

- Ms. Lindiwe May



Pave the way for future students!

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YOUR REPAYMENT COUNTS!

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....!

“We’ve been dealing with putting out fires” - Mr Nomvalo

NSFAS reaffirms it's dedication to maintaining strong and collaborative relations with funders.

Written by
Tshepo Boshiane

["Your network, is your net worth"] said the NSFAS Administrator Mr Freeman Nomvalo, when addressing funders during a strategic engagement meeting held on 28 June 2024 in Johannesburg.

This meeting with funders was aimed at reaffirming the scheme's commitment to maintain its collaboration and proactive measures taken to enhance its operational efficiency and governance.

The meeting provided a platform for funders to raise their concerns and find solutions to challenges.

Amongst other funders who attended the meeting was the Department of Employment Labour, the National Skills Fund (NSF) the Department of Social Development, FoodBev SETA, and the South African Council for Educators (SACE).

Mr Nomvalo said, recently, NSFAS had to deal with solving a great deal of problems, of which some were unfortunately generated by misleading reports in the media. He however, acknowledged that NSFAS is still trying to find its feet, with systems, delayed payments, and student accommodation being some of the challenges faced.

Ms Vuyokazi Mafilika, NSFAS' Strategic Enablement Executive indicated various work streams which the team needed to focus on, which includes system requirements, value added services, policy alignment, and dormant funds.

Giving an update on ICT systems, Mr Thulani Melula, NSFAS' Acting Chief



BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONS: NSFAS Administrator meets with funders, and calls for a collaborative effort in enabling access and success in post-school education and training

Information Officer, said the scheme is currently working on improving its systems, and integration with all key stakeholders could solve a lot of challenges. Mr Tebogo

Maruping, Commissioner: Unemployment Insurance Fund, from the Department of Employment and Labour said that one of the important things that can solve the

country's problems such as fraud was to have a common database across all stakeholders.

Update on the distribution of 2024 university allowances

Written by
Anele Ntswayi

Following a meeting between Universities South Africa (USAf) and the Administrator of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme, Mr Freeman Nomvalo, NSFAS has decided that for the remainder of the 2024 academic year, university students' allowances will be distributed through institutions (universities).

This means that NSFAS will continue with the current arrangement, in which allowances are disbursed to institutions and subsequently distributed to



University students on Campus - Photo Cred:UCWOnline

students until the conclusion of the 2024 academic year. This adjustment has no influence on the pilot accommodation procedure.

NSFAS will continue to disburse allowances and tuition fees to institutions based on the valid registration data received and

processed successfully. NSFAS urged institutions to validate students' data before disbursing allowances to ensure that only qualifying students receive the correct amounts.

The scheme will communicate further with universities pertaining the 2025 academic year allowance distribution channels.

The scheme then requested that Institutions submit cancellations for the 2024 academic year by July 26, 2024. NSFAS will process and update registration records for the 2024 academic year as they are received.