

The Disburser

Social Justice

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SEPTEMBER EDITION



NSFAS officially opens 2026 Applications

APPLY NOW!

You can NOW APPLY for NSFAS funding online by visiting www.nsfas.org.za. Our applications are **free, quick and easy**.

NSFAS is also currently visiting various communities, schools, and other public facilities across the country to assist with 2026 Applications. Be on the look out, our next stop might be in your community.

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- NSFAS pays tribute to the late Sis' Thotho



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READY... SET, APPLY!



Minister of Higher Education, Buti Manamela, Deputy Minister, Dr Nomusa Dube-Ncube, and Acting NSFAS CEO Waseem Carrim



Tshepo Boshiane

The Minister of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Mr Buti Manamela officially announced the opening of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) 2026 Applications during a media briefing held at the GCIS on 15 September 2025.

The new application cycle will remain open for two (2) months, closing on **15 November 2025**, giving prospective students sufficient time to apply for NSFAS funding.

The official launch event took place on 16

September 2025 at the University of Pretoria, Mamelodi Campus, symbolising the gateway to opportunity for young South Africans.

“This is the gateway through which hundreds of thousands of young people– especially from working-class and poor households– will be able to realise their dreams of studying at a university of TVET college”, Minister Manamela said.

The Minister also provided a holistic update on the state of readiness of the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) sector for the 2026 academic year. He emphasised that “when

we speak of “readiness” for the 2026 academic year, we are not referring to ticking boxes or filling reports. Readiness is about the lived experience of every student and family in South Africa: that when the new year begins, the doors of learning and culture are truly open– fairly, on time, and without unnecessary barriers,” the Minister said.

The launch was attended by Deputy Minister Nomusa– Ncube, Members of Parliament and Portfolio Committee Members on Higher Education, the NSFAS Bord and Executive Management.

OUT AND ABOUT

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Outreach Team assisting students with 2026 Applications





NSFAS Acting CEO Mr Waseem Carrim addressing members of the media during the NSFAS Board Inaugural briefing.

“ NSFAS is widely recognised as one of the most impactful social support initiatives of the democratic government. Through NSFAS, government has empowered hundreds of thousands of students from impoverished and working-class communities to pursue higher education and realise their families’ aspirations. ” - NSFAS Board Chairwoman Karen Stander

NSFAS Board outlines its strategic approach during inaugural media briefing

Tshepo Boshiane

Wednesday, 27 August 2025 - The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Board and Executive Management held an inaugural media briefing at the Government Communications and Information Systems (GCIS) to provide insights on several imperative issues relating to governance and administrative developments. Dr Karen Stander, the NSFAS Board Chairwoman, spoke at great length about the Board’s strategic actions in stabilising and enhancing NSFAS’ operations.

Dr Stander said the Board has engaged both internal and external stakeholders to deliberate on the institution’s turnaround strategy and established specialised Board Committees to facilitate effective governance and oversee its implementation.

“With the vital mission in mind that NSFAS has, our immediate focus as the Board has been to take decisive and strategic actions to stabilise and enhance NSFAS’ operations. We have approved all C-Suite appointments, prioritising the filling of executive vacancies to reinforce leadership capacity. Additionally, we authorised a controlled recruitment process for other critical roles within the organisation to ensure the effective execution of its mandate,” Dr Stander said.

“These measures represent more than compliance; they are a demonstration of our collective resolve to restore confidence in NSFAS, safeguard student funding, and align with the highest standards of governance” she added.

Dr Stander said the Board inherited an organisation facing significant challenges, including a collapse in

financial and supply chain governance, compounded by the absence of a sustainable funding model focused on impact; which has resulted in governance issues that hinder the organisation’s ability to form meaningful partnerships.

The Board Chairwoman said a critical trust deficit exists between NSFAS, higher education institutions, student bodies, and students, with ongoing blame-shifting within a system characterised by essential interdependencies. With regards to the organisation’s leadership, Dr Stander said instability spanning nearly a decade has contributed to its turbulence and governance breakdowns. Also, insufficient reputation management has impeded NSFAS’ capacity to establish and sustain vital partnerships necessary for fulfilling its mandate.

With the challenges of funding shortfall at hand, Dr Stander outlined the factors

Funding shortfalls at the centre of Board’s strategic move

Dr Stander says several factors leads to the shortfall:

Continues from Page 4

which led to this shortfall:

1. An increasing number of students qualifying for higher education.
2. The ongoing cost of living crisis, which has expanded household eligibility for NSFAS support.
3. Declining state resources in real terms, impacting funding availability. “It is important to stress: this is a shortfall, not a bail-out. The new Board and Acting CEO are committed to correcting this course,” she said.

The NSFAS Acting CEO, Waseem Carrim said NSFAS made early funding decisions and upfront payments to the institutions from January till March. These funds enabled institutions to promptly provide essential allowances to students.

On Universities:

- Total Allocation for 2025: R39.30 billion

- Total Paid to Date (including upfront payments): R28.86 billion
- Allocation Balance: R10.43 billion
- Percentage Utilised: 73.45%
- Cash Received to Date: R28.86 billion
- Funding Shortfall for the Year: R10.06 billion

On TVET Colleges:

- Total Allocation for 2025: R9.12 billion
- Total Paid to Date (including upfront payments): R6.44 billion
- Allocation Balance: R2.68 billion
- Percentage Utilised: 70.62%
- Cash Received to Date: R6.44 billion
- Funding Shortfall for the Year: R1.61 billion

“These payments were made to 783,035 students, comprising 576,762 university students and 206,273 TVET students”

the Acting CEO said.

NSFAS is calling on former beneficiaries who received loans before 2018 to repay their student debt, as required by their signed agreements. These repayments are due once a debtor earns above R30,000 per year. The minimum monthly repayment amount is determined by income level.

NSFAS and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) have since reprioritised funds within its existing budget of R13.3 billion to support 34 000 students with blocked registrations and second semester registrations of 15 000 students. **See full detail on the media statement: Page 6)**

To date, NSFAS has received a total of 24, 113 registration records loaded by 57 institutions translating to 21, 2323 for universities and 2,790 for TVET colleges.



NSFAS Spokesperson:
Ishmael Mnisi



NSFAS Board Chairwoman:
Dr Karen Stander



NSFAS Acting CEO:
Waseem Carrim



MEDIA CORNER

MEDIA STATEMENTS: ISHMAEL MNISI ON BEHALF OF NSFAS

NSFAS STATEMENT ON ADDRESSING THE FUNDING SHORTFALL FOR THE 2025 ACADEMIC

17 SEPTEMBER 2025 - The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is pleased to announce has developed funding mechanisms to address the substantial shortfall experienced in the 2025 academic year. To this end, NSFAS and DHET have reprioritised funds within its existing budget of R13.3 billion to support 34 000 students with blocked registrations and second semester registrations of 15 000 students.

The deficit had arisen due to several factors:

- An increasing number of students qualifying for higher education funding.
 - The ongoing cost of living crisis, which has expanded the eligibility criteria.
 - Declining state resources in real terms.
- Students who were affected by the funding deficit were as follows:**
- University students who applied during the TVET cycle.
 - Students whose registration confirmations were received after the registration portal had been closed.
 - Students who had successful appeals that were unfunded.

Second semester registrations. Student accommodation providers who were impacted by the above will also be in a position to now receive payments for services rendered.

This marks a significant moment in the stabilization of NSFAS for the 2025 academic year. It however does not underscore the need for a sustainable financing and funding framework for the higher education sector.

NSFAS appreciates the understanding and support of all stakeholders as we navigate these challenges and work towards securing sustainable funding solutions for South African students. For further inquiries, please contact NSFAS.



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A **NATION** THAT **WORKS** FOR ALL



WHO QUALIFIES FOR NSFAS FUNDING?

You are encouraged to **apply** if you meet the following **criteria**:

THE NSFAS BURSARY

- ✓ You are a **South African citizen** or **permanent resident**
- ✓ Your **combined gross household income** not exceeding **R350 000** per annum
- ✓ If you are a person with a **disability**, your **combined gross household income** does not exceed **R600 000** per annum
- ✓ You are **planning** to study at one of the **26 South African Public Universities** or **50 TVET Colleges**
- ✓ You are **currently registered** at one of **26 South African Public Universities** or **50 TVET Colleges** and are not funded by NSFAS



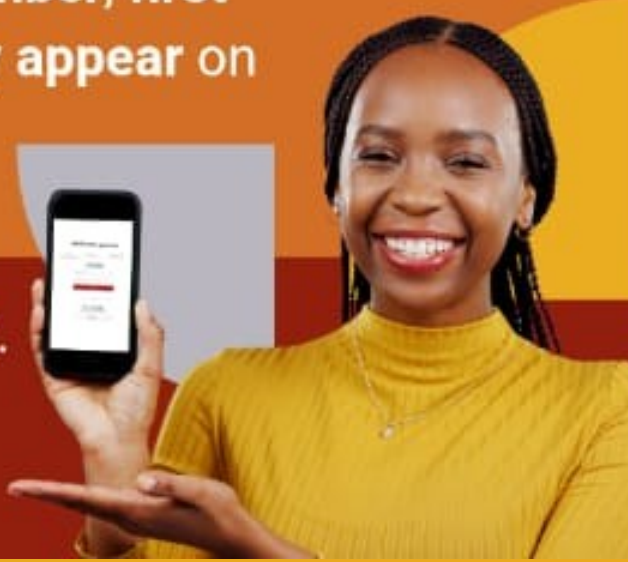
Important: When applying, ensure that your **ID number**, **first name(s)**, and **surname** are entered exactly as they **appear** on your **South African identity document**



Applications will close on 15 November 2025.

#NSFAS2026 #NSFAS2026Applications

#AccessTodaySuccessTomorrow



[illegible]





2026

Applications

Access Today. Success Tomorrow.

NSFAS 2026 APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OFFICIALLY OPEN!

NSFAS 2026 Applications will be closing on **15 November 2025**



Apply now: www.nsfas.org.za



higher education
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Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



ARISE VALUES:

ACCOUNTABILITY | RESPECT | INTEGRITY | SOCIAL JUSTICE | EXCELLENCE

Farewell Sis' Thotho

In loving memory of Thobeka Sothondoshe



Lala Ngoxolo!

