



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

MARCH MEDIA STATEMENT: APPLICATIONS, APPEALS, ACCOMMODATION AND DISBURSEMENTS UPDATE

GCIS Hatfield Offices, Pretoria | Thursday, 5 March 2026

Fellow Board members present
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

NSFAS was established to transform access to higher education and training for the youth of South Africa. Our mission is clear: to ensure that no deserving student is denied the opportunity to pursue their studies simply because of financial constraints.

We believe that education is the most powerful tool for changing lives, combating poverty, and building an inclusive society. NSFAS has opened doors for millions of ordinary South Africans, many of whom have gone on to become leaders, innovators, and contributors to our economy and communities.

Through our work, we strive to level the playing field, promote social justice, and unlock the potential that exists in every corner of our country. As we look to the future, we remain committed to expanding opportunities and ensuring that talent, not circumstance, determines one's prospects.

Disbursement Timelines and Funding Updates

One of the most critical aspects of our mandate is the timely and efficient disbursement of financial aid. We understand that the start of the academic year is a time of hope and anticipation, but also anxiety for students and families who depend on NSFAS support.

For universities, we have made two major upfront disbursements for student allowances, including accommodation:

- On 02 February 2026, NSFAS disbursed R3,557,285,045 to cover allowances and accommodation, ensuring students could begin their studies without undue financial stress.
- On 02 March 2026, we made a second disbursement of R2,824,849,085 continuing our commitment to supporting students throughout their academic journey.
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For TVET colleges, our disbursements have been equally robust and targeted:

- On 02 February 2026, we released R679,079,050 to cover tuition fees, ensuring that institutions could register and support students from day one.
- On 13 February 2026, R145,457,290 was paid to 51,130 students for qualifying allowances.
- On 27 February 2026, we paid R446,590,368 to 138,115 students, covering all allowances, including transport and accommodation.

These investments are not just numbers; they represent our commitment to removing financial barriers and creating an enabling environment for academic success.

Application and Funding Outcomes

The scale of our operations continues to grow, reflecting the deep need for financial support across the country. This year, NSFAS processed a record number of applications:

- 692,704 first time entering students and 550 959 continuing students have been approved for funding, a testament to our reach and diligence. It must be considered that first time entering places at both Universities and TVET colleges are limited.
- 1,561 loans were approved, providing much-needed support for students to continue their studies.

NSFAS remains dedicated to ensuring that all eligible students have access to the financial support required to pursue their studies. We appreciate the cooperation of applicants and encourage those with outstanding issues to visit our website or contact our support centers for assistance.

REGISTRATION DATA RECEIVED

Our work is supported by close collaboration with institutions to ensure a smooth registration process:

- Registration data has been received for 174,962 TVET students and 54,280 university students across South Africa.
- This data enables us to process and disburse funding efficiently, minimizing delays and ensuring that eligible students can access their funding and start their studies without uncertainty.

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APPEALS PROCESS

A student who has not met academic progression or financial eligibility has a right to file an appeal. An appeal may be granted on the grounds of medical condition, traumatic event or propensity to complete a qualification.

In our previous media briefing, we provided all the information regarding the documents to be submitted for a successful appeal process.

- NSFAS has handled a total of 101,201 appeals, including 22,654 approved, 9,073 awaiting documents, 18 108 rejected and 44 411 closed, deleted and withdrawn.
- The appeals process is designed to be fair, accessible, and responsive. We encourage students with pending appeals to submit any outstanding documents promptly, as delays may impact funding and support.
- We are committed to transparency and timely communication regarding the appeals process, and regular updates are provided on our website and through our support centres.

Delays in documentation submission may impact the outcome and disbursement of funding.

STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

NSFAS is committed to ensuring that all eligible students secure safe and suitable accommodation for the 2026 academic year:

- To date, we have received 224,983 accommodation applications from students across the country.
- 148,825 students and accommodation providers have submitted signed leases, confirming their accommodation arrangements for the year. This is an important step in the funding and allocation process, ensuring that students can focus on their studies in a secure environment.
- However, a significant number of applicants have not yet submitted their signed lease agreements. NSFAS urgently appeals to these students and accommodation providers to complete the process by signing and submitting their leases as soon as possible. Failure to do so may result in delays or complications in the allocation of accommodation and related allowances.
- Students are encouraged to liaise with their accommodation providers and ensure all documentation is submitted promptly. For assistance or further information, please visit the NSFAS website or contact our support centres.

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OPERATIONAL TIMETABLE

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to indicate that as NSFAS, we have completed all our tasks relating to the smooth commencement of the academic year. Only the registration portal closure remains, scheduled for 31 March 2026.

Description	Date	Status
Submission of Continuing Student Results	15 December 2025	Completed
NSFAS Funding Decisions Completed	31 December 2025	Completed
University Admission Lists	31 December 2025	Completed
NSFAS Funding list	02 January 2026	Completed
Registration Portal Opened	05 January 2026	Completed
Matric & TVET Results Release	13 January 2026	Completed
TVET's Accept Walk In Students	15 January 2026	Completed
TVET First Registration Cut-off for February Allowances (Revised)	02 February 2026	Completed
Upfront Payments to Universities & TVET's	02 February 2026	Completed
TVET First February Allowance Payment (Revised)	13 February 2026	Completed
TVET 2nd Registration Cut-off for February Allowances (Revised)	18 February 2026	Completed
TVET 2 nd February Allowance Payment (Revised)	27 February 2026	Completed
University March Allowances Upfront	02 March 2026	Completed
First accommodation disbursement (Revised)	13 March 2026	On track
Registration Portal Closes	31 March 2026	On track

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CLOSING REMARKS

In closing, NSFAS stands as a pillar of opportunity, equity, and progress in South Africa. Our work is not just about administration; it is about transformation. We believe in the potential of every young person, and we are committed to creating pathways for success.

I encourage all students to engage actively with their institutions, submit required documents, sign accommodation leases, and check their application and appeal statuses regularly. NSFAS will continue to provide updates and support to ensure a smooth and successful academic year.

Together, we are building a future where every talented young South African can access quality education and training, regardless of their background. Thank you for your trust, your partnership, and your dedication to our shared vision.

Issued by:

Dr Mugwena Maluleke

Chairperson, National Student Financial Aid Scheme

Date: 05 March 2026

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