

DATE: Wednesday, 24 February 2021

TO: All media

ATTENTION: News Editors/ Reporters

For Immediate use:

**MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION
CONGRATULATES THE CLASS OF 2020**

Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, congratulates the Class of 2020 on the outstanding achievement of a 76.2% pass rate.

Minister Nzimande says these results illustrates the resilience of the South African youth and our schooling system, despite the unprecedented challenges brought by COVID-19.

The Minister also sent his words of comfort to all those matriculants who did not achieve their desired results, and encouraged them to take advantage of support initiatives, including the Second Chance Matric Programme offered by the Department of Basic Education.

Adults and out-of-school youth who want to improve their marks are also encouraged to register for examinations by 21st March 2021 for the May/June 2021 senior certificate examinations at Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges. A list of CET colleges is on the homepage of www.dhet.gov.za.

“As the Post-School Education and Training sector, we are ready to receive a new cohort of first-time entrants in all our institutions of higher education and training” said the Minister.

“As we head into a new academic year, it is important to remember that admissions’ decisions are made by individual universities and colleges and that Institutions have staggered registrations for continuing and new students,” said Minister Nzimande.

The Minister further said admissions decisions will be processed this week following the release of the matric results.

“Some continuing students have already commenced with the 2021 academic year, particularly in medicine and other health sciences. Others will be commencing between March and April 2021.

In TVET colleges, first-time enrolments will be offered to two qualification types, namely the National Certificates (Vocational) for those without matric, and the National N Diploma (made up of the N4, N5 and N6 certificates and work experience).

“Those students who need strengthening of their learning foundations can be enrolled in the Foundational Learning Programme (FLP) for one year, and then proceed into a qualification offered in our colleges,” advised Minister Nzimande.

Applicants are also encouraged to check for placement opportunities at the college closest to them.

A full list of colleges can be accessed on the homepage of the Department's website: www.dhet.gov.za.

Furthermore, all applicants are urged to ensure that they submit all the required documentation for the processing of their applications in order to avoid processing delays.

Due to the limited spaces in universities and colleges, meeting the minimum requirements does not mean a space for everyone who applies.

"The Department has therefore made available the Central Application Clearing House (CACH) for students who have applied for a space but were declined," said Minister Nzimande.

CACH is a referral system. Sign up by sending an SMS with your name and ID number to 31629, visit cach.dhet.gov.za or e-mail CACH@dhet.gov.za. It is important to remember that CACH handles applications and not admissions as these are handled by individual institutions.

ON FUNDING DECISIONS

Minister Nzimande said that all students who are already funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and who have met their study and eligibility criteria will continue to be funded this year (2021).

The Minister has said that NSFAS has received an unprecedented number of applications compared to the previous years, with approximately 730,000 online applications received and additionally, with approximately 60,000 applications received through the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the TVET college walk in processes.

"NSFAS is currently finalising the due diligence and quality checks of the application information received. They will communicate funding eligibility once the verification and quality assurance process is complete in order to ensure the credibility of this important process," said Minister Nzimande.

The Minister said that it is important to note that NSFAS will fund eligible students when they have been registered at a public university or TVET college.

"Students are hereby given assurance that NSFAS is aware of and takes into account that communication should be finalised before the registration windows of the various learning institutions close," said the Minister.

Students are advised to regularly track their funding statuses on the NSFAS **myNSFAS** portal. This portal will assist students to upload any pending documents where required.

Applicants should take note of the following:

- Keep your username and password safe.
- Contact NSFAS should a cellphone number change or if it has been lost.
- Do not share your NSFAS Wallet details.
- Report any suspicious communication that requests you to share your personal information or passwords.
- Do not leave your personal information exposed, and make sure you log out of your myNSFAS account when you are not using it.
- Note that your status will be communicated directly to you officially only by NSFAS (Be aware of fake news).

ON LEGACY QUALIFICATIONS

Minister Nzimande said that there has been much speculation in recent days about which qualifications are funded.

In July 2016, the Department of Higher Education and Training indicated in a Government Gazette that the 31st December 2019 would be the last date for first-time entering students to consider studying or registering for academic programmes that are not aligned with the Council on Higher Education's Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework. These qualifications are now referred to as legacy qualifications.

"Those students who are already being funded for these qualifications may continue to complete their qualifications and their funding will not be affected. However, institutions will not be registering new students on the legacy qualifications," confirmed the Minister.

The Minister further confirmed that the Bachelor of Nursing and the Bachelor of Education are still offered at institutions at NQF level 7 and are both funded by NSFAS.

-Ends-

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