

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: FRIDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 2023**

**SUBJECT: NSFAS RESPONSE TO FALSE CLAIMS OF HAVING ACCREDITED SHACKS FOR STUDENT ACCOMMODATION.**

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Cape Town, 17 November - The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) expresses its concern regarding the misleading claims that they have accredited shacks for student accommodation.

NSFAS recognizes the importance of ensuring that its beneficiaries stay in accommodation that is conducive, supports learning and gives every student the opportunity to succeed.

It is important to clarify that the Board Ad hoc committee on Student Accommodation, together with management, acted upon the claims made in a Portfolio Committee of Higher Education, Science and Innovation meeting that took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2023 by sending an internal audit team which was later joined by members of the Ad hoc committee and management to investigate these claims by meeting with the College management to better understand the student accommodation processes at the College.

The College made NSFAS aware that they had reviewed the lease agreements signed by students and had found no record of students residing in shacks. It was, however, mentioned that in some cases students changed accommodation without updating their lease agreements and College records accordingly. These developments made it even more important for the College to be part of the NSFAS Student Accommodation pilot project.

NSFAS is aware that the state of some private and institution owned accommodation is not conducive for learning. This is one of the reasons that NSFAS undertakes a stringent process in ensuring that NSFAS beneficiaries stay in approved accredited accommodation.



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

NSFAS has in place rigorous processes to ensure that all beneficiaries are placed in accredited accommodation that meets their specific needs. As part of the process for accrediting student accommodation, NSFAS uses the DHET Norms and Standards for Housing which provides for institutions of higher learning and Colleges to accredit suitable accommodation facilities in order to increase the number of student housing stock available. However, it is worth noting that demand far exceeds supply in this sector. Many students still cannot access suitable accommodation close to their learning institutions. While some institutions have built capacity internally to facilitate for accreditation of student housing, many are still not able to build such capacity and thus fall short of implementing the DHET Norms and Standards for Student Accommodation within their own institutions and externally with potential investors and partners.

The NSFAS Student Accommodation Process is as follows.

- Accommodation providers must register their accommodation by providing location details, bed capacity, and other information about their accommodation.
- When physically inspecting the accommodation, the accreditation agent will digitally complete grading entries.
- 2nd level/desktop grading process will grade and accredit all accommodation facilities and provide results to accommodation providers upon completion of the grading and accreditation process.
- Students can apply for accommodation online on the NSFAS student accommodation portal for NSFAS-accredited and approved accommodation (these include both Private and institution owned accommodation).

By prioritizing their academic needs and overall well-being NSFAS aim to create an environment that fosters academic success and personal growth.

NSFAS Board and Management remains committed in ensuring that NSFAS beneficiaries have access to quality student accommodation that adequately supports their learning. Our dedication to fulfilling our mandate as a funding agency is unwavering, as we are dedicated to supporting deserving students from poor and working-class backgrounds.



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

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