

NSFAS committed to settling outstanding disbursements

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) says it is determined to conclude all outstanding 2023 disbursements by 15 January 2024, in consultation with the affected institutions.



Image source: Brian Jackson – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The NSFAS Board held an extraordinary meeting on Sunday, 31 December 2023 to consider reports from NSFAS management on various issues including the final disbursement of the 2023 allowances, the NSFAS budget adjustment and the NSFAS accommodation pilot project.

NSFAS said the commitment made on the outstanding disbursement is to ensure that the 2023 bursary allowances do not affect the returning students for the 2024 academic year.

“Early in January 2024, the NSFAS Board will have further stakeholder engagements with the Universities South Africa (Usaf), the South African Public Colleges Organisation (SAPCO), the South African Union of Students (SAUS) and the South African Technical Vocational Education and Training Student Association (SATVETSA) and labour unions to brief them on the preparations for the 2024 academic year and the NSFAS eligibility criteria and conditions for financial aid,” NSFAS said in a statement.

NSFAS has disbursed about 234,124 students allowances from 5 December 2023, as part of the reconciled final disbursements for the 2023 academic year. This exercise was done in order to disburse the final allowances to students whose allowances were not concluded due to changes in their registration data.

NSFAS said this process ensures that disbursements are paid directly to institutions for tuition and for advancing payments to students.

“The [NSFAS] reconciliation data... is divided into three categories: (1) direct payment – direct allowance to students, (2) allowances on tuition disbursement to institutions, (3) student allowances via institutions.

“NSFAS confirms that there are 20,000 allowances which are yet to be concluded. These unresolved cases of disbursements require further input and consultation with institutions,” read the statement.

At its meeting, the board also discussed the NSFAS 2024 programme of action and the formation of a Rapid Response Team in preparation for the 2024 academic year.



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2024 applications

Applications for financial aid for all learners who wish to enter the post-school system and students who do not have financial assistance to continue their studies in the 2024 academic year officially opened on 21 November 2023.

In a statement issued by NSFAS in November, NSFAS said applications for 2024 funding will close on 31 January 2024.

Werksmans Attorneys report

The NSFAS Board said it will further make public announcements on the implementation of the Werksmans Attorneys report in relation to direct payment service providers.

In October 2023, the NSFAS Board adopted the recommendations of the report into allegations surrounding the appointment of direct payment service providers.

The board had appointed Werksmans Attorneys and Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi to conduct an investigation into allegations of irregularities relating to Bid NO. SCM022/2021.

The investigation followed allegations against former NSFAS CEO Andile Nongogo relating to his conflict of interest in the appointment of service providers.

Despite the challenges, the board reaffirmed its commitment to implement the direct payment solution.

“The board views the direct payment solution as a necessary measure to reduce instances of unauthorised access to beneficiaries’ allowances, payment of ghost students, inconsistencies and delayed payments of allowances.

“The direct payment solution is inline with the Student-Centered Model that NSFAS adopted,” said board chairperson

Ernest Khosa at a briefing in October.

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