

New funding scheme for missing middle students

More than 1,000 students from the “missing middle” stand to benefit from a new student funding scheme.



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The Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP) will be piloted this year at six universities and one technical vocational education and training (TVET) college.

The scheme will fund students who come from families with income levels above the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) threshold, but who cannot afford post-school education.

“The pilot programme will fund the studies of about 1,500 students studying in a number of general formative degrees, as well as seven professional qualifications and one artisan qualification for the duration of their studies. Funding to enable the pilot has been sourced mostly from the private sector,” said Minister Nzimande.

Nzimande said the programme will be piloted at the University of Venda, Wits University, University of Pretoria, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Tshwane University of Technology, University of Cape Town and one TVET college - Orbit TVET College.

Briefing the media on the outcomes of engagements with higher education stakeholders on the state of readiness for the 2017 academic year on Thursday, 26 January, Nzimande said together with the Department of Science and Technology minister, the department has also committed to expanding grants and scholarships for postgraduate studies.

“It is a pipe dream to think that we have a decolonised higher education system without training new academics... it’s a pipe dream, two things must go together,” the minister said.

He said the department is hoping that everyone would use 2017 to give the institutions of higher learning some stability, calling on student leadership to make sure that the education system is not harmed or damaged.

“This is the year we hope that the issue of fees would be addressed in one way or another. We are calling on everybody to give the Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education Funding a chance.”

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