

Nzimande approves NSFAS eligibility criteria for financial aid

Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, has approved the proposed 2024 National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) eligibility criteria and conditions for financial aid.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

In terms of Section 4 of the NSFAS Act, the first and second functions of NSFAS are to “allocate funds for loans and bursaries to eligible students” and to “develop criteria and conditions for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students, in consultation with the Minister”.

Nzimande said the approved 2024 Eligibility Criteria and Conditions apply to students at public universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

“The approved 2024 Eligibility Criteria and Conditions make slight amendments to the 2023 NSFAS Financial Aid Eligibility Policy but maintain the principles of the 2023 NSFAS Board policy positions.

“The changes recommended by the NSFAS Board were proposed in consideration of, among others, the differences between TVET college and university student bursary packages,” Nzimande said in a statement on Tuesday.

The policy changes for the 2024 academic year, are as follows:

University-managed self-catering and private off-campus accredited accommodation will be capped at R50,000 in metro areas and R41,000 in all other areas per academic year, while university-managed and catered accommodation is capped at R66,500 in metros and R57,500 in other areas, per beneficiary.

TVET college-managed and leased self-catered accommodation and private off-campus accredited accommodation will be capped at R50,000 in metros and R41,000 in other areas, whilst TVET college-owned catered residence will be capped at R60 000 in metros and R51,000 in other areas, per beneficiary.

In 2024, the living allowance will be R10,000 for TVETs and R16,500 for universities per annum (distributed monthly), per beneficiary.

Nzimande noted this is aimed at progressively but decisively closing the gap between TVET College and university students.

Conditions on policy changes

The conditions on policy changes include that students who change institution types (shift from TVET college to university or vice versa) must re-apply for funding.

Students who de-register or drop out during an academic term and wish to resume their studies in future academic terms, must re-apply.

A student that no longer complies with the university N+Rule or TVET college N+Rule may not be funded. The university N+Rule is based on the number of years a student is registered in the higher education sector.

The TVET college N+ Rule is based on NSFAS-funded academic terms at TVET Colleges.

“The additional NSFAS funded academic term may be for repeating at any level from the entry academic term to exit the academic term.”

The policy notes that the N+ Rule does not apply to occupational programmes as “these programmes are aligned to employment contracts which do not make provision for the N+1 period of study.”

Financial aid received cannot be used to settle historic debt unless it is specified as such.

University academic eligibility criteria

The policy states that the academic progression criteria will be measured by the percentage of course credits that a student achieves in the academic year. Institutions and NSFAS will progressively align academic progression criteria requirements.

As of 2024, continuing and First Time Entering Students (FTEN) university students must achieve a credit pass rate of 50%.

Continuing and FTEN university students must achieve a course credit pass rate of 60% for the end of the 2024 academic year to succeed academically for the 2025 funding year.

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