

Applications for 2018 financial aid open

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 2018 academic year, has officially opened.



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National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) Acting Executive Officer Lerato Nage made the announcement during a media briefing on Tuesday at Ratanda in Heidelberg, Johannesburg.

“From today [1 of August 2017], NSFAS will accept applications from anyone who qualifies to enter the post-school education system but cannot afford to finance their studies. Applications will be opened from the 1 August to 30 November 2017,” said Nage.

Nage said that for the 2018 application cycle, NSFAS has partnered with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) to provide easy access for learners to apply for funding.

He said the partnership will allow NSFAS to make use of the 15 NYDA branches nationwide, as well as the more than 50 Local Youth Offices (LYO) to accept NSFAS applications for funding.

These local youth offices are situated within local government facilities in all nine provinces, Nage said.

He added that the decision to invite the NYDA to help with applications campaign was influenced by the knowledge that many young people cannot access or use internet facilities, and will require a walk-in centres, where they can be assisted to complete their application for funding form.

“The partnership between us and the NYDA has created short term employment for 115 previously unemployed young graduates, who come from all nine provinces across the country. Together with the NYDA, we have finalised the recruitment of these young people, who will work as assistant workers.

“Their responsibility will be to welcome walk-in applicants at all these centres, assist them with enquiries and the completion of the application form, its submission and the issuing of bar coded stickers to generate the application’s reference number. These interns have been professionally trained and equipped with the knowledge they require to assist the applicants,” Nage explained.

Public awareness campaigns

Throughout the applications period, NSFAS will be running public awareness campaigns in rural communities to make sure that the message reaches the most rural parts of the country.

Nage said that NSFAS takes particular interest in learners who live in rural villages, where there is widespread lack of resources and facilities.

For the 2017 academic year, NSFAS has funded at least 524,950 students, with 246,640 at the 50 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and 278,310 students at 26 public universities.

Nage said the scheme anticipates to receive an even greater number of applications this year, for the 2018 academic cycle.

“We have worked behind the scenes to strengthen and improve our internal systems and capacity to be able to deal with the high volumes of applications that we are expecting,” he said.

He called on all Grade 12 learners, including out-of-school young people, unemployed young people, public university and TVET college students not currently funded by NSFAS, and who will need financial support in 2018, to start submitting their applications.

Ways to apply

First, students can log onto the NSFAS website (www.nsfas.org.za), where they will be asked to register and create an account in one simple step, and then proceed to complete the online application form.

Second, they can walk to any NYDA branch or LYO in their region, where they will be assisted to complete and submit a manual application.

Applicants will need to have certified copies of supporting documents ready before they start the application process, whether applying online or manually.

Before applying

Before applying you should have decided which course they want to study and at which public university/TVET college. You will need to select these choices in the application form.

You must make sure they have electronic (and certified copies) of the following:

- Your South African identity document/card or, an unabridged birth certificate
- IDs of parents and/or guardian (or death certificate where applicable)
- IDs of each person living with you in your home
- Pay advice/letter of employment/pension advice (not older than three months)
- Please download the consent form and fill it in with your parent/guardian's signatures.
- Applications without a consent form that is signed by all people whose incomes have been declared in the application will not be accepted, and will be considered.
- If you have a disability, please download the Disability Annexure A and fill it in.

When you provide your cell phone number on the application form, make sure it works and do not change it afterwards, as NSFAS will use it to communicate with you during and after the application process. Do not provide someone else's cell phone number as your contact number.

You will also need an email address. If you do not have an email address, you can easily create an email address online (an option is provided to assist in creating an email address).

You must not apply if:

- You have already applied and have an application reference number
- You are not intending to apply for admission to a public university or TVET college
- You already have NSFAS funding for 2017
- You are not a South African citizen
- Application for postgraduate qualification

Applications for postgraduate studies

For postgraduate studies, only students who plan to do the following postgraduate qualification may apply:

- B Tech - Architecture/Architectural Technology
- Tech - Biokinetics/Biomedical Technology/Biotechnology
- Postgraduate Certificate in Education

Nage stressed that students wishing to undertake other postgraduate qualifications must not apply.

“These students will need to apply for the National Research Foundation fund when it opens for applications later this year. Information about this could be found on the NSFAS website.”

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