

NSFAS makes headway in direct payment solution

Higher Education and Training Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, says the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has made strides in the implementation of its Student-Centred Model.



Source: [Unsplash](#)

The Student-Centred Model is aimed at the implementation of the NSFAS direct payment solution, known as the NSFAS Bank Account, and the development of the NSFAS Student Accommodation Portal.

Briefing media on developments at NSFAS on Tuesday, Nzimande said the Student-Centre Model is premised on an approach that places the needs of students at the heart of the scheme's operations. It also aims to streamline all processes that affect the disbursement of funds for tuition, transport, food and accommodation.



NSFAS collaborates with government agencies to identify unqualifying students

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The Minister said 509,220 claims, with a total of R40bn, have been received from university students, and out of this, an amount of R29.6bn has already been paid to 491,457.

“There are 23,389 students with exceptions that we are currently funding. These exceptions occur when NSFAS cannot confirm the funding pathway or funding rules are not complied with, as per submitted registration records.

“The biggest exceptions relate to institutions claiming incorrectly by including meals yet they are catered by institution. This means it is double dipping, which must be attended to,” Nzimande said.

NSFAS has also received 250,548 claims from Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college students to the value of R6.8bn, with R4.8bn already being paid to 209 352 students.

Nzimande reiterated his call to all beneficiaries, who have not been on-boarded (registered) or converted onto the new payment system, to urgently register in order to enable NSFAS to pay their allowances without any further delay.

According to data, 90% to 99% universities' students have been onboarded. This exclude the University of South Africa (Unisa), which stands at 67%, and the University of Fort Hare at 56%.

Nzimande said the NSFAS institutional support teams will extensively focus their attention in all institutions whose percentages are low so that they improve on their onboarding processes.

"The team will continue to hold bi-weekly meetings with the institutions' finance offices and the direct payment partners so that institutions have a platform to raise the challenges and areas of clarity, where both NSFAS and the partners are present.

"In relation to our TVET colleges, the process of onboarding continues, as they have multiple academic terms," Nzimande said.

Bank charges

Regarding bank charges to student accounts, Nzimande said he has directed NSFAS to relook the entire bank charges regime to find possible measures to further reduce bank charges for the beneficiaries.

"I have been briefed that NSFAS negotiated for a R12 monthly bank charge, which excludes money transfer costs to other banks. I will await the NSFAS board final determination in this regard.

"I have been assured by the NSFAS board that reports that NSFAS disbursed incorrect amounts to beneficiaries are misleading and untrue. However, should it happen that such instances may have occurred, I urge the affected students to immediately report these to NSFAS," Nzimande said.

Warning to students inappropriately benefitting from NSFAS

Meanwhile, Nzimande has issued a stern warning to students, who are inappropriately benefitting from the scheme.

He said the appropriate criminal and legal action must be taken against anyone found defrauding the system.