

NSFAS 2023 application cycle opens

The National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) 2023 application cycle has opened.



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Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister, Dr Blade Nzimande, made the announcement of Wednesday's (28 September) opening of the application process at a briefing on Tuesday, 27 September 2022.

Briefing the media, Nzimande said the scheme resolved to open the application cycle early, as opposed to the previous year, in order to give prospective applicants enough time to submit their applications and supporting documents.

Giving an update report on NSFAS funding for the 2022 academic year, Nzimande said a budget of R43 billion was allocated to the scheme towards the beneficiaries' tuition fees, including food and travelling allowance, and study material.

He said 985,672 applications were received with approximately 140,636 application unsuccessful.

Of the applications received, 739,526 applications were provisionally funded pending registration from their respective

institutions.

“[The] majority of unsuccessful applicants failed to provide sufficient evidence to support their application for funding; exceeded the financial eligibility threshold; already achieved the highest level of qualification that NSFAS funds, exceeded the N+ rule and being non-compliant to the academic pathways of the TVET college sector,” Nzimande explained.

Over 200,000 SASSA beneficiaries received instant approvals

As part of the system’s improvements, Nzimande said NSFAS introduced real-time response to funding applications from applicants who are beneficiaries of South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), and 287,217 of those applicants received instant approvals because “beneficiaries in the SASSA category often receive automatic qualification for funding.”

“Currently, approximately 708,147 applicants are being funded by NSFAS across our 26 public universities and 50 Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. We are also working with the National Treasury to ensure that we align the Post School Education and Training (PSET) calendar with government funding calendar to ensure that NSFAS has reserve funds prior to the reopening of PSET institutions.



NSFAS allocated R49bn budget

13 May 2022



Improving the application system

In a bid to improve its application system and process to simplify it for prospective applicants, Nzimande said this year, NSFAS has implemented a number of enhancements to the system to ensure a seamless application experience.

He said the NSFAS online application portal was redesigned to be more user friendly and closer to other platforms that prospective applicants are accustomed to such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram.

“The application process itself has been simplified and the questions asked are easier to understand by the public. Additionally, applicants can pause the process and continue at a later stage without restarting from scratch, something that was not possible in previous cycles.

“Over and above the enhancements, NSFAS developed additional channels of application to cater for applicants from diverse backgrounds, also keeping in mind that most of the prospective applicants are young people who embrace the digital way of doing things,” Nzimande said.

The new channels include a mobile App, USSD and WhatsApp, where one can apply for NSFAS funding, track application status and cancelling applications amongst other things, which is normally done through the web portal.

Furthermore, to ensure that no applicant is left behind, Nzimande said NSFAS will embark on an outreach campaign, to ensure that individuals who do not have access to technological devices that enable them to apply online are given the necessary resources and support to apply.

How to access NSFAS bursary

You qualify for a NSFAS bursary if you are a South African citizen who plans to study in 2023 or you are already studying at a public university or TVET college and you meet the following requirements:

- You are SASSA grant recipients or

- Your combined household income is not more than R350,000 per year or
- If you are a person living with a disability, your combined household income should not be more than R600,000 per year or
- If you are a student who begun their university studies before 2018 and their household income is not more than R122,000 per year.

Visit the NSFAS website at www.nsfas.org.za for more information on the required supporting documents and the application process.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>