



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, 05 JULY 2023

SUBJECT: MESSAGE TO ALL NSFAS BENEFICIARIES AND AFFECTED PARTIES

On the 15 June 2023, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) issued a circular to all institutions, student bodies as well as to students individually via SMS stating the following:

- ❖ “Students whose statuses were on ‘pending decisions’ have now been assessed and the outcome is reflected on the profile on the NSFAS portal. Students who are funded will reflect on the funding list whilst those who are rejected can lodge appeals with correct supporting documentation. It should be noted that if the appeal option button is not available on the student's profile it means that the application has been declined and closed due to reasons that cannot be appealed.
- ❖ The updated funding list as of 15 June 2023 is available on the NSFAS portal for institutions to view.
- ❖ Update on appeals: NSFAS is continuously processing the appeals. As and when the appeal is approved, it will be updated on the funding list and the student funding outcome will be reflected on their student portal. If an appeal is rejected that will also be communicated to students on the portal.

Noteworthy, is the huge number of students that have appealed but did not submit the relevant supporting documents. NSFAS cannot conclude these appeals without supporting documentation. We will be issuing SMS to those students to submit the relevant documents within 10 working days before we can close their appeal. We urge institutions to encourage students to submit these documents.”

This circular was issued after the conclusion of a rigorous verification and authentication process of the entire NSFAS beneficiary database. All beneficiaries at all levels or years of study are required to meet the financial and academic eligibility criteria. If at any stage it is discovered that the eligibility criteria have been compromised, corrective action will be taken immediately, including removing from the funded list those who may have supplied falsified or misleading information. NSFAS does not necessarily and conclusively frame it as defunding, but a data integrity review process and; its impact on the student financial assistance quality assurance value chain.

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As much as management appreciates the sensitivity and moral considerations for funding poor and destitute families; the adverse but correct outcomes of stringent application of NSFAS information vetting protocols would, naturally, result in unintended and adverse results against funds approved and advanced to students based on either fraudulent, misleading and contradictory supporting documentation. NSFAS, therefore, has a fiduciary obligation to reconsider the circumstances under which such funds had been disbursed and, where applicable, withdraw and redirect such funds to legitimate and compliant applicants.

We also believe that there is an urgent need to educate students of the legal implications of unethical dealings with the institution, which have the potential to carry serious financial crime legal sanctions against perpetrators.

We are confident that continued collaboration with other state institutions such as the South African Revenue Service, the Department of Home Affairs and others will continue to greatly assist NSFAS in stress testing the accuracy, completeness and consistency of information received from applicants by cross checking it with relevant national citizen databases.

Crucially and finally, the institution has overarching triple responsibilities of safeguarding taxpayers funds, operating in a prudent and sustainable manner and, ensuring that funds disbursed are first and foremost in line with our mandate; policies and procedures.

Issued by:

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme

FOR MEDIA ENQUIRIES

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