

MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE: 01 March 2022

TO: All Media

ATTENTION: News Editors/ Reporters

For Immediate use:

MINISTER NZIMANDE STATEMENT ON PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS ON REGISTRATION IN VARIOUS INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND TRAINING

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, has, as is the case during this time of the year, been closely following the opening, registration and commencement of the 2022 academic year in all our universities and TVET colleges throughout the country.

The Minister is encouraged by the level of commitment to institutional engagements between management and the Student Representative Councils (SRCs) to resolve all outstanding challenges.

Progress in engagements have been realised through the resolution of many of the initial registration challenges raised by students in the past two weeks. This includes concerns raised by students on registration, unblocking of returning students, payment of allowances, historic debt, mandatory vaccinations and accommodation issues.

“I therefore would like to encourage both the management and students’ leaders to continue to find institutional based solutions to the outstanding challenges, using the framework provided by the Department of Higher Education and Training,” said Minister Nzimande.

Minister Nzimande urges all institutions to ensure that whilst they are working to resolve all remaining challenges, they must also ensure that the security and safety of students is guaranteed, as well as the protection of public institutional property.

“There should be no students left to sleep in unsafe environments because their registration is pending finalisation. I therefore urge all our institutions to work with the Student Representative Councils (SRC) to ensure that all those students who are not as yet registered are provided the necessary care and support, and where appropriate, to be provided with temporary accommodation, in line with the institutional extension of registration,” said Minister Nzimande.

The Minister said whilst institutions are working on ensuring that all students are safe, students have an equal obligation to ensure the safety and protection of the university or private property.

“Students also have an obligation to publicly shame and condemn anyone who maliciously destroy this much needed infrastructure within the Post School Education and Training sector,” emphasised the Minister.

As a result of the delays in the registration process and to ensure that there are no students who are left behind, there has been an extension registration periods in some affected institutions.

The following universities have extended their registration deadlines:

- Durban University of Technology (DUT) - first year registration extensions from (21 February to 11 March). Returning students from 21 to 25 February);
- Nelson Mandela University (NMU) from 14 February to 4 March;
- University of the Free State (UFS) first year extension 21 to 28 February;
- University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) registration extended to 4 March 2022.

“In certain circumstances, there are some universities who also took a decision to delay the commencement of the academic year. For those who have commenced with the academic year, universities are using blended teaching and learning methods with the study content also available online for those who might not have been registered at the time of the commencement of classes,” confirmed Minister Nzimande.

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) student portal technical lapses have been resolved and NSFAS released the confirmation lists to all institutions on those students who are getting the NSFAS bursary for the academic year 2022.

All our institutions use the NSFAS confirmation list to register students who are NSFAS beneficiaries. The list is also used to confirm accommodation as approved by institutions.

Students can also lodge their appeals on myNSFAS Student Portal – wwwnsfas.org.za.

NSFAS appeals opened on the 3rd February 2022. Students wishing to appeal must upload all required supporting documentation to substantiate the reasons for appeal.

Through the student CACH referral system to date 9046 offers were made to students, 828 accepted and 451 declined.

CACH will close on the 30th March 2022 and the services are available from Mondays to Friday between 8am to 6pm and Saturday from 8am to 2pm.

“Whilst the Department is yet to finalise the Guidelines on vaccinations, discussion between management and all stakeholders, including staff, workers and students, must continue in order to strive for maximum possible institutional consensus on vaccinations.

On South African students studying in Ukraine

The Department of Higher Education and Training is working closely and in consultation with the Department of International Relations and Cooperation in ensuring the safety and comfort of all the 32 students studying in various institutions in Ukraine.

We will provide more details to the public as the situation unfolds in this regard.

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