



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA RELEASE

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DHET CLARIFIES THE GAP FUNDING GRANT

The Department of Higher Education and Training has reiterated the government's commitment to funding the 2017 fee adjustments for poor, working class and missing middle students at universities and TVET colleges, whose family incomes are below the R600 000 ceiling as announced by Minister Blade Nzimande at the end of last year.

In this regard, the government's grant assistance for any fee increases - up to 8% - will be allocated to students who come from poor and working class families, and for the first time in the history of post-school education and training, the so-called "missing middle" – those families with income levels above the NSFAS-threshold, but who still find post-school education difficult to afford. The DHET 8% gap funding grant must not be confused with NSFAS financial support as it is a direct response of government to the call for a 0% fee increase for 2017. This grant is directly administered by the DHET in conjunction with universities.

Government will pay fee increases capped at 8% for all qualifying registered students with a gross combined family income up to R600 000 per annum in 2017. This is an earmarked GRANT and not a LOAN and will not have to be REPAID by qualifying students. The DHET 8% gap funding grant covers the increases for tuition fees and university or college managed accommodation.

Students from quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools (as determined by the Department of Basic Education), and those who will be funded by NSFAS in 2017, will automatically qualify for the 8% DHET gap funding grant. Students from families with a gross income of up to R600 000 per annum, "the missing middle students", who fall outside of these two categories, MUST however apply for the 8% grant at their respective universities.

To qualify for the grant, university students must apply for the 2017 fee adjustment grant through a form obtainable from their institutions.

To recap:

- NSFAS funded students from poor and working class families will not pay any fee increase.
- Students from families with a gross combined income of up to R600 000 per annum, i.e. “missing middle” students, will not pay any fee increase. This means university students from these families will be paying the same fee they paid in 2015 and 2016.
- This grant will benefit more than 75% of university and TVET college students, and in some institutions, more than 90% of students will benefit.
- Students from families with a gross combined income **above** R600 000 per annum will be expected to pay the fee increase. All students who come from richer families must pay their full fees.

In summary this means:

- 0% fee adjustment for poor and working class students;
- 0% fee increase for the “missing middle”; and
- 8% maximum fee increase for students from families with an income above R600 000 per annum.

Ends

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