

MEDIA STATEMENT

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**TO: All media
ATTENTION: News
Editors/ Reports**

For Immediate use:

MINISTER NZIMANDE PUBLISHES THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR TUITION AND ACCOMODATION FEES FOR 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR IN PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, published in the Government Gazette No 43487 of 29 June 2020, a National Framework for tuition and accommodation fees for academic year 2020 in the public Higher Education Institutions.

The purpose of the framework is to prescribe temporary payment and cash flow measures or steps currently necessary to alleviate, contain and minimise the effects of the COVID-19 threat to the public higher education sector. The measures relate to the following:

The payment of NSFAS allowances to students, particularly the allowances for living and accommodation expenses;
The payment of university-managed accommodation fees for the 2020 and 2021 academic years;
The payment of accommodation fees for those living in private accommodation, both University leased and individually leased accommodation; and
The payment of tuition fees.

“The framework will also provide directives to officials of public higher education institutions to disseminate information and all applicable measures for implementation, to alleviate and contain the effects of the COVID-19 threat,” said Minister Nzimande.

The Minister further said that the directives will also assist to alleviate the financial strain on institutions, NSFAS, private fee-paying individuals and private accommodation providers, recognising that the COVID -19 pandemic affects all groups in different ways.

TUITION FEES

In terms of the directives on tuition fees, the 2020 Academic Year is conceptualised as a “package” regardless of its length. This means that the cost for tuition will remain the same for the 2020 academic year regardless of its length for each institution.

NSFAS payment for tuition fees to institution will be made on the basis of the original agreed tuition fee.

ACCOMMODATION FEES

The cost for University-owned accommodation remains the same for the academic year, regardless of its length, capped to the end of March 2021. This assumes that while there will be periods of non-occupation, most students will return for a period of time to complete the academic year.

NSFAS payments for university-owned accommodation will also remain at the same original level as with tuition fees.

The cost for university-leased accommodation remains at the same level for the 2020 Academic Year regardless of its length, subject to an agreement that the original fee would be paid for both the 2020 and the 2021 academic years with an agreed inflation-linked increase for 2021.

“This means that wherever possible, the costs of both academic years would be conceptualised as a package and payments spread out over the full period,” Minister Nzimande emphasised.

Minister Nzimande said that where there are periods of non- occupation of accommodation, monthly payments can be reduced, based on a payment regime that spreads out the agreed costs over the extended 2020 academic year.

In relation to individually-based private accommodation, where students are responsible for making payments themselves, the above principle will apply in respect of university accredited and registered private accommodation as far as possible.

Minister Nzimande said that NSFAS allowances have continued to be paid to students during the lockdown period and therefore NSFAS students are expected to continue to pay private accommodation providers in terms of their original lease agreement.

However, wherever possible, institutions should facilitate agreements with providers on behalf of students to reduce the payments for periods of non-occupation, but with the full payment spread over the extended academic year.

“It must be noted that there is currently a process underway to model and plan for any additional academic year costs for NSFAS funded students. Currently no funding has been allocated or approved for additional academic year costs in 2020,” said the Minister.

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