MEDIA STATEMENT

DATE: Monday, 27 July 2020

TO: All media

ATTENTION: News Editors/ Reports

For Immediate use:

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION STATEMENT ON THE TEMPORARY WAIVING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 80% ATTENDANCE POLICY REQUIREMENT FOR PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES TO TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, has directed Department of Higher Education and Training to waive the implementation of the 80% attendance policy requirement for payment of allowances to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training College (TVET) students for the 2020 academic year.

The decision by the Ministry follows the announcement by President Cyril Ramaphosa of the countrywide lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“A paradigm shift from the normal academic operations is required as this pandemic has adversely affected teaching and learning over the past few months in our entire post school and training sector,” said Minister Nzimande.
Minister Nzimande said that anticipated continuous implementation of social distancing guidelines to contain the spread of the coronavirus means that college operations continue to be affected by the pandemic now and for the foreseeable future and this compromises student compliance with the attendance and punctuality policy.

“These extraordinary circumstances have prompted NSFAS to activate a business continuity plan to facilitate uninterrupted funding to students and ensure that students receive their allowances during the lockdown, emphasised the Minister.

Minister Nzimande further said the Department of Higher Education and Training also initiated several interventions to support TVET students with their studies during the lockdown.

In terms of paragraph 56 of the 2020 Amended Rules and Guidelines for the Administration and Management of the Department’s TVET College Bursary Scheme, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges are required to link payment of allowances with students’ compliance with the Department’s TVET College Attendance and Punctuality Policy, 2013.

Furthermore, paragraph 56 of the 2020 Amended Bursary Rules and Guidelines referred to above, stipulates that should the Colleges experience extraordinary circumstances where the attendance rule needs to be legitimately waived, this decision must be approved by Council, and documented accordingly, together with all supporting evidence, which must be presented on request from DHET for audit purposes.

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