

Institutions submit registration data to NSFAS

Twenty-nine institutions that have submitted registration data for catch up payment for the 2024 academic year allowances, will be paid by Friday, says the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).



Image source: HONGQI ZHANG – [123RF.com](https://www.123RF.com)

The acting Chairperson of the NSFAS, Professor Lourens van Staden, said following delays in the 2024 academic year, mainly due to registration, the NSFAS board took a decision to request institutions in the interim to operate as a channel to pay the February and March allowances.

“Communication was therefore sent to all universities notifying them of this decision. We also sent another communication to indicate the 2024 academic year allowances type distribution channel.

“Financial aid managers were asked to confirm the universities allowances payment commitment dates. For Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, we will be paying through the direct payment channel,” Van Staden said on Monday.

Upfront payments

To support institutions and students, Van Staden said the scheme made two upfront payments to all institutions, including the first upfront payment, which was disbursed on 31 January with the second upfront payment disbursed on 29 February 2024.

“These upfront payments were made to institutions for them to use the funds to distribute students’ allowances. The majority of institutions committed to paying students from the last week of February 2024,” Van Staden said at a media briefing held in Pretoria.

The first upfront payment was administered to cover the book allowance which was calculated at half of the 2023 academic year cost.

The payment included funds to cover one month of accommodation costs. For medical students, provision was made for two months’ worth of allowances, to assist select institutions that registered medical students whose academic year starts in January.

The second upfront payment includes book allowances, which is calculated for the second half of the 2024 academic year based on the 2023 payments made; accommodation allowances to cover the accommodation allowances for the second month (March) of the 2024 academic year; transport allowances, which is calculated to cover February 2024 allowance.



R4bn upfront payment for higher learning institutions

26 Jan 2024



The NSFAS advanced an upfront payment to both universities and TVET colleges.

For universities, Van Staden said the NSFAS disbursed R2.8bn in January 2024.

The chairperson noted that this disbursement does not include the calculation of the tranche payments, which “NSFAS will disburse at the beginning of April 2024.”

“This upfront payment covers one month of student accommodation and the book allowance. The book allowance is calculated at half of the total cost, whilst the accommodation is calculated as one month of the accommodation cost.

“For TVET colleges, a total of R580,150,950 was paid to colleges as tuition upfront in January 2024. An additional R1bn is earmarked for three months’ worth of allowances to be paid based on registration from the January-March period,” he explained.

Enabling registration for approved students

He emphasised that all the upfront payments are meant to enable institutions to register all NSFAS-approved students for the 2024 academic year.

“We all know that in February, the university sector commences with its registration. This means that by the time the first payment is made (usually at the beginning of February), the majority of the students have already registered and are already attending classes.

“This is the reason why the board ensured that the upfront payments are inclusive of the registration period commencing in January for medical students in the university sector.”

He further explained that NSFAS requested institutions to pay allowances for both February and March due to challenges experienced at the beginning of the 2024 academic year, which led to delays in receiving registration data from institutions.

He said institutions were also requested to allow direct payment service providers to conduct the process of onboarding students, whilst they continue with payments.

“The direct payments of allowance for the 2024 academic year will commence in April 2024 and institutions will administer the payment of allowances for only two months (February and March) because the third allowance will be made on the direct payment platform. No exceptions or deviations will be allowed.”

Van Staden has encouraged all other institutions to submit registration data, to enable NSFAS to make a catch-up payment.

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