



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

LETTER OF NOTICE TO ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS (APs) 03 OF 2024

TO: ALL NSFAS ACCREDITED PRIVATE ACCOMMODATION PROVIDERS

CC: HEAD(S) OF STUDENT ACCOMMODATION, FINANCIAL AID OFFICE, STUDENT SUPPORT MANAGERS AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS

FROM: OFFICE OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DATE: 01 MARCH 2024

SUBJECT: STUDENT ACCOMMODATION PILOT PROJECT FOR NSFAS BENEFICIARIES IN 2024

Dear Landlords

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) wishes to express its gratitude for your support in its implementation of the private student accommodation pilot project for the 2024 academic year.

The NSFAS Board Executive Committee resolved in its meeting of 04 December 2023, to onboard a total of 23 TVET colleges and 17 universities to participate in the accommodation pilot project for the 2024 academic year. The intervention by NSFAS to the selected institutions comprises the accreditation, placement, and onboarding of NSFAS-funded students in Private Accommodation (PA).

The NSFAS has been for years making a huge financial contribution towards the provision of student accommodation, yet it could not determine with certainty where students are placed, and the quality of accommodation provided.

KEY POINTS

Placement/ Onboarding of Funded Students

NSFAS is working in close collaboration with institutions participating in the accommodation pilot. It is important to note that NSFAS confirms the funding statuses of the students, whilst the institution determines whether the student qualifies for an accommodation allowance.

In the event, that the Landlord has students without the knowledge of either NSFAS or the institution, and the statuses of such students have not been confirmed, no payment should be expected either from NSFAS or the institution.

The Halyard, 4 Christian Barnard
Cape Town City Center, Cape Town, 8000
Private Bag X1, Plumstead, Cape Town, 7801

T: 0800 067 327
E: info@nsfas.org.za
W: www.nsfas.org.za

Board Members: Mr. Ernest Khosa - Chairperson | Prof. Lourens van Staden – Acting Chairperson | Mr. Masile Ramorwesi – Acting Chief Executive Officer | Mr. Bamanye Matiwane | Ms. Jullie Beya | Mr. Maxwell Nceba Fuzani | Prof. Ntombizozuko Dyan-Mhango | Prof. Pumela Msweli | Ms. Reshma Mathura | Ms. Lisa Seftel | Mr. Lucky Masuku | Mr. Melosi Baloyi | Mr. Sanele Zondi | Mr. Cyril Madiba | Mr. Yonke Twani



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The onboarding of the qualifying students is very crucial for the success of the project. This process assists NSFAS in determining the number of NSFAS beneficiaries on the system as well as confirming the actual property they are residing at and the associated rate.

Landlords are encouraged to assist with the onboarding process to the portal so that there are no delays in the processing of accurate payments.

As mentioned before, the funded students can ONLY be confirmed by NSFAS and the institution.

Unaccredited Accommodation Provider

NSFAS wishes to state clearly that it does not have any arrangements with unaccredited accommodation providers. Institutions apply different approaches to managing unaccredited accommodation and it is in the resolve of NSFAS that in the near future, no NSFAS-funded student will be residing in an unaccredited accommodation. Where accommodation providers have applied to NSFAS for accreditation, they are encouraged to consult the portal to check their statuses.

Allegations of corruption & bribery

NSFAS has been alerted to alleged corruption and bribery between Accrediting Agents and Landlords. If this is indeed true, we wish to reiterate that this will not be tolerated by the scheme and that should anyone be found in the wrong, NSFAS will report these to Law Enforcement Agencies. Any suspected fraud should be raised through our whistleblowing hotline, Vuvuzela: Toll-free number: 0860 247 653. SMS Call-back to 30916. Fax: 086 726 1681.

Transport issues

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) funding guidelines indicate that a student can only qualify for either accommodation allowance or transport and NOT both.

The Policy also indicates that Accommodation Providers (APs) who are 5 km radius and beyond have a responsibility to provide transport to students to their respective campuses and back. Issues of transport are complicated, and this is a space that is highly regulated hence we would encourage APs to have an open-door policy as they engage Transport Associations.

To date, NSFAS has been inundated with queries on transportation and we would like that in our first meeting this issue be discussed in detail.

Security issues

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This project was premised on the understanding that the provision of accessible, decent, safe, and academically conducive student accommodation in South Africa is of great importance to the quality of the higher education and training system and the success of our students, especially those from rural and poor backgrounds.

NSFAS is concerned about security in some of the APs' properties. To date, 2 incidents have already been reported to NSFAS and we will always hold the property owners accountable for the safety of our students.

It is important that the AP takes the issue of security seriously and should NSFAS deem your property not compliant we will remove our students for their safety.

Appeals Process

NSFAS is finalising its appeal processes in the event APs want to raise valid concerns regarding the outcome.

Capping

NSFAS in its funding policy for the 2024 academic year as concurred by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation pronounced the new capping following a research study conducted by the sector. The capping for the 2024 academic year is confirmed at R50,000 per annum for Metro institutions and R41,000 per annum for Non-Metro institutions.

Payment Methods for NSFAS-accredited APs on Pilot

NSFAS will be responsible for the payment of all NSFAS accredited APs on the Pilot Project for 2024.

As per the funding policy for 2024/25, NSFAS will be paying for a period not exceeding 10 months. In the event there are special considerations by the institution, NSFAS will through Portal Providers engage the affected APs.

It must be noted that Circular 4 of 2024 dated 26 February 2024 from NSFAS clarified that all NSFAS accredited APs who are accommodating NSFAS-funded students as confirmed by NSFAS or institution will be paid by NSFAS directly through Portal Providers and NO other means.

To date, Portal Providers working with APs are encouraged to place and/ or onboard funded students, URGENTLY, so that leases are generated and signed from the system.



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NSFAS is pushing for all this to be concluded soon so that the February payments are done no later than 15 March 2024, however, this is subject to the receipt of valid registrations from institutions and compliance with funding requirements.

NSFAS will strive to keep lines of communication open, and we wish to commit to engaging with APs per Regions once per quarter, however, in the event there are urgent issues these will be attended to as soon as possible.

For any clarity-seeking questions, these should be directed to the following email address.

NSFAS related: accommproviders@nsfas.org.za,

System/ Portal – related issues, should be sent directly to the relevant Portal Providers, namely: Xiquel Group or ProfetiaIT or New Dawn Technology or Training Young Minds.

Issued by:

Mr. M. Ramorwesi
Acting Chief Executive Officer