



National Student Financial Aid Scheme

25 November 2024

South African College Principals Organisation

17 Kersieboom Cres, Zwartkop

Centurion

Pretoria, 0028

Dear Principal,

## **PREPARATIONS FOR THE 2025 ACADEMIC YEAR**

1. On behalf of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation for your support and participation during our various consultations, viz, at the formation of the National Student Accommodation Task Team, the National Student Accommodation Roadshows and recently, during the Pilot Review meeting held at the Nelson Mandela University. These engagements have been instrumental in assisting NSFAS in developing systems and processes to support the implementation of the NSFAS Student Accommodation Project in 2025.
2. Drawing from your experiences as well as lessons of the pilot, we have undertaken measures which we believe will henceforth significantly improve the management and administration of private student accommodation. Below are measures which will be implemented for the 2025/2026 academic years:

### **2.1 Student Accommodation Pilot Project**

The NSFAS student accommodation pilot project reached its end. Effective from 2025, we will be implementing the NSFAS student accommodation project. For the 2025 academic year or a period as may be determined between NSFAS and

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respective institutions where lease agreements are still active, the following measures will be implemented:

- (a) Having considered the challenges of the pilot project as well as advises from the stakeholders, the NSFAS will retain the number of beds from the pilot project for the 2025 academic year. This decision is to ensure the NSFAS limited capacity in the management and administration of the NSFAS Student Accommodation Project is not stretched further. An Increase on the number of beds on the NSFAS Student Accommodation Project will only be from the 2025 new beds or in circumstances where institutions elect to offload beds into the NSFAS Student Accommodation Project or accreditation of new beds in support of the TVET sector and our rural institutions.
- (b) Institutions are encouraged to make their necessary arrangements for only continuing students.

## 2.2 Accreditation of new beds for 2025

- (a) In line with the resolutions of the NMU Pilot Review Meeting, the Association of College and University Housing Officers (Acuho-i) has commenced the training of officials from Universities and TVET Colleges on the agreed accreditation tool for the PSET system. All PSET institutions will henceforth be required to utilise the newly approved accreditation tool.
- (b) Given the challenges regarding accreditation process, we are drawing additional capacity from Acuho-I to strengthen the accreditation process and most importantly to ensure all newly accredited beds complies with the minimum norms and standards. This additional capacity will be utilised for the 2025 accreditation.

We will also be reaching out to the Higher Education Facility Management Association (HEFMA) *for additional capacity.*

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- (c) In all instances of accreditation process, the accrediting team must at least comprise the following expertise;
- Hospitality and/or Living and Learning and /or Student Support Services
  - Civil Engineer or Built Engineer or Quantity Surveyor
  - Electrical Engineer
- (c) The NSFAS will retain the responsibility to intervene where there are disputes or allegations of unfairness or otherwise.

### 2.3 Allegations regarding the 2023/2024 Private Student Accommodation accreditations

A process to review all accreditations is now underway. We encourage all affected Private Accommodation Owners to submit their disputes to [Accommlnstitutions@nsfas.org.za](mailto:Accommlnstitutions@nsfas.org.za) not later than the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

### 2.4 Regulating transfer of student from one accommodation provider to the other.

Having appreciated the challenges regarding unregulated transfer of a student from one accommodation provider to the other, a transfer process will be implemented effective from 2025. The transfer process will ensure both the NSFAS, and the Institution are aware of the transfer as well as the reasons thereof. The respective institutions will be required to provide the necessary support in such instances.

### 2.5 System Interface and Access to Student Data

Mindful of the POPI Act requirements as well as the safety of our students, the NSFAS and institutions will work closely to ensure private accommodation owners admit only registered and funded students. The system interface will also enable the NSFAS to ensure timeous disbursements and speedy resolution of queries.



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## 2.6 Training on NSFAS Private Accommodation Accreditation Process

The NSFAS Private Accommodation Accreditation Process training, facilitated by ACUHO-ISAAC is currently underway to ensure that all stakeholders are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to support the accreditation process effectively. Last week, on 15 November 2024, a training session was successfully held for all TVET Colleges, providing valuable insights and tools tailored to their specific needs. The next session is scheduled for Monday, 25 November 2024, and will focus on universities. Stakeholders are encouraged to participate actively as these sessions are critical for standardising and improving private accommodation practices across the sector.

## 2.7 Implementation of the Co-Management Model

Drawing from the engagement with the various stakeholders, it is evident that the disengagement of institutions in the management of Private Student Accommodation has impacted the learning and living support negatively. It is also evident that in some instances, it has resulted in accreditation of properties that do not meet the minimum norms and standards requirements.

In preparations for the 2025 academic year, the NSFAS will be implementing the Co – Management Model which will provide for the following:

- (a) Continuous cooperation between institutions and accommodation providers.
- (b) Regular meetings between institutions and accommodation providers.
- (c) Exchange of data in respect to private student accommodation.
- (d) Extension of implementation of residence rules at private accommodation.
- (e) Additional support for private accommodation as may be determined by institutions.
- (f) Extension of institution student transport system as may be determined by both parties.

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The appointment of Mr Sithembiso Freeman Nomvalo as the Administrator to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme is in terms of Section 17A to 17D of the NSFAS Act (Act 56 of 1999 as amended). Effective from 11 April 2024 as published in the Government Gazette NO. 50482 by the Minister of Higher Education and Training. Dr BE Nzimande.



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## 2.8 Establishment of the Private Student Accommodation Provincial Structures

In line with the resolutions of the NMU Pilot Review Meeting, we will be initiating a process for the establishment of provincial structures for representation of private accommodation providers across all the 9 provinces. We intend to complete this process by end of November 2024.

In preparation for the 2025 academic year, a meeting with provincial representative structures as well as other PSET stakeholders is being arranged for the 1<sup>st</sup> week of December 2024. The meeting is intended to ensure a common understanding in the implementation of the above measures.

Once again, I wish to thank you for your constructive engagement and support. We are committed to ensure a better working relationship in the 2025 academic year.

**Best wishes,**

Mr SF Nomvalo  
NSFAS Administrator