

HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Your Guide to Level 2 in the Post-School Education and Training System



#SaveLives #SaveTheAcademicYear

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



BACK TO CAMPUS UNIVERSITIES

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PLAN

WHAT TO DO

UNIVERSITIES

- An uncontrolled return of students would be highly irresponsible and place lives at risk.
- Institutions are expected to begin reintegrating further groups of students up to the 66% from 1 September 2020.
- All students who cannot be safely reintegrated will continue to be supported through remote multimodal teaching, learning and assessments - until they can return to campus.
- While challenges remain, all universities have made significant progress in their teaching and learning strategies and campus safety strategies.
- Higher Education, Science and Innovation Minister Dr Blade Nzimande is aware that there have been different approaches and strategies for completion of the academic year across the system, and some institutions have faced difficulties in implementing their teaching and learning plans effectively. However, together with the DHET, everything possible is being done to ensure institutions are supported. This includes the reprioritisation of funds to support the COVID-19 response at public universities.
- According to the latest Departmental report on a wide number of readiness and operational indicators, 14 universities are considered low risk, six are deemed at medium risk and six are deemed to be high risk. Some universities have not adequately resumed academic work. The DHET is engaging with medium and high risk institutions to put in place special support measures to ensure academic activities resume at an accelerated pace.

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WHAT TO DO

Which university students will return during Level 2?

- All groups that had been prioritised to return in Level 3, but couldn't be accommodated due the maximum campus carrying capacity having been reached;
- Students in all years of study who require laboratory and technical equipment to complete the academic year;
- Students in all years of study who require practical placements, experiential learning or workplace-based learning to complete the academic year (provided the work places and platforms are open and prepared);
- First year students in all undergraduate programmes;
- All other students will continue to be supported through remote multimodal teaching, learning and assessments until they can return to campus;

International students

International students studying at South African universities who are currently outside our country will only be able to return to their campuses during Level 1, once international travel resumes. Priority may have to be given to Registrars and senior medical students in this category should international travel be permitted under Level 2.

The 2020 academic year

The Department is targeting all institutions to complete the 2020 academic year by the end of February 2021, with starting dates for the 2021 academic year ranging from 15 March 2021 to 15 April 2021. All efforts will be made to ensure that outlier institutions get up to speed to meet this requirement. The detailed management of these processes across the system will be communicated by the Department, once all the necessary consultations have been completed.

BACK TO CAMPUS TVET COLLEGE STUDENTS

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WHAT TO DO

TVET COLLEGES

- TVET college students returned to campus in a staggered approach, from 10 June 2020. The last cohort of students returned on 27 July 2020, as per the approved revised academic calendar for the 2020 academic year.
- Colleges have successfully run classes in compliance with COVID-19 requirements, including providing for physical distancing through the splitting of classes.
- National exams for Engineering Studies' students were successfully concluded in July 2020.
- The remainder of the academic year will see decreasing pressure on TVET colleges as Semester students will write exams next month and go into recess for the remainder of the year.

TVET registrations and exams

- Colleges will open registrations for Trimester 2 students as soon as Trimester 1 results are released, following the standardisation process which was scheduled for 24 August 2020.
- Exam activities have been conducted in compliance with the revised 2020 academic calendar and will continue until the completion of the NC(V) exams on 11 December 2020.

PLAN

WHAT TO DO

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRES

- The CET colleges' calendar is aligned to that of the Department of Basic Education as CET college learning sites use the infrastructure of the public school system.
- The resumption of the academic programme means that students reported to community learning centres and satellites on 24 August 2020.
- The DHET will issue a revised academic calendar and to recover the lost tuition time, will issue a Curriculum Recovery Plan with an Implementation Plan which will be supervised by the CET college executive management and centre management.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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WHAT TO DO

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

- Level 2 means more opportunities regarding workplace-based learning programmes.
- With the four months' exemption in the skills development levy from 1 May 2020 to August 2020 regarding COVID-19 tax relief measures, it is expected that employers will now prioritise skills development under Level 2.
- The easing-down provisions will also enable the greater restoration of artisan development activities to a level of approximately 70%.

DIGITAL DEVICES

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WHAT TO DO

DIGITAL LEARNING DEVICES

- The NSFAS Administrator has informed Minister Nzimande that none of the bids competing for the supply of learning devices, as specified in the bid process, had achieved the mandatory requirements as required in the bid document. For this reason, no tender was awarded.
- NSFAS will have to start the process afresh and follow the letter of the law. Government policy is clear that procurement processes must promote an inclusive economy with diverse players, with specific priority given to credible broad-based black economic enterprises to ensure we that broaden the base of our economy.
- Once a service provider has been appointed, the learning devices will be delivered directly to students at the address provided on the acknowledgement of debt, or request for digital learning device, form.

Who qualifies for laptops?

- Only contact NSFAS funded students who are currently registered at universities and TVET colleges will qualify to receive a device.
- The NSFAS funding policy makes provision for NSFAS funded students studying at universities to receive a learning material allowance annually, which covers the cost of necessary learning material (books or learning device).

DIGITAL DEVICES

PLAN

WHAT TO DO

- The NSFAS funding policy does not make provision for NSFAS funded students studying at TVET colleges to receive a learning material allowance. Minister Nzimande has however signed a once-off policy deviation which will allow TVET college students to receive digital devices for the 2020 academic year. At this point the policy deviation will only apply for this specific academic year.
- University students who are not funded in the DHET scheme do not qualify, e.g. Funza Lushaka, Department of Social Development, Rural Education Access Programme and SETAs (pre-funders) do not qualify for the devices under the COVID-19 digital learning device scheme. Pre-funding agencies (all funding administered by NSFAS outside of the DHET budget) indicated that there is no additional funding set aside to purchase and procure devices. Funding for digital devices and associated costs must be sourced from the available 2020 funding budget.
- Trimester 1 and Semester 1 students at TVET colleges will not qualify to receive the learning devices, as these students have already written their final exams. These learning devices are meant to assist students in completing their 2020 academic year. However, Trimester 1 and Semester 1 students who will be enrolling for Trimester 2 and Semester 2 will qualify to receive the devices.
- Students will have an option to accept or decline the offer of a digital learning device.

DIGITAL DEVICES

PLAN

WHAT TO DO

University students who have opted to receive the learning device will receive them on a loan-to-buy basis. The cost of the device would be added to the student fee account and the student will have an option to:

1. Purchase it, by settling the cost with the institution,
2. Purchase it, by providing consent to NSFAS to withhold the learning material allowance in future academic years, or
3. Return it in good working order to the institution.
4. Students who will exit the higher education system at the end of the 2020 academic year must return the device in good condition or purchase the device at a price agreed with the institution. Failure to comply will result in the student's fee account having a positive balance. This includes students who will graduate, students who may exit because of academic progression or N+ rule violations, or students who may opt not to return in 2021.

NSFAS

PLAN

WHAT TO DO

THE 2021 NSFAS application cycle

The NSFAS 2021 application cycle opened on 3 August 2020 and will close on 30 November 2020.

NSFAS beneficiaries who provided incorrect information

NSFAS recently removed 5 000 students who were incorrectly funded on the basis of providing incorrect information for the 2020 academic year. This decision by NSFAS was due to recent financial information obtained from SARS which revealed these students came from families that had household income that exceeded the maximum threshold of R350 000 per annum.

The affected students will have 14 days from the date they received the SMS communication to dispute the decision by submitting proof of family income, or change of income, to NSFAS for review. These documents need to be submitted to NSFAS via e-mail: IncomeReview@nsfas.org.za.

Read Minister Blade Nzimande's full statement from 26 August 2020 on www.dhet.gov.za

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