



**13 October 2017**

## **First-time applicants to NSFAS 2018 must apply before the 30 November closing date**

Universities South Africa (USAf) urges all students aspiring to enrol at public universities in 2018, and who also need financial support, to ensure that they submit their online applications to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) before 30 November 2017.

Speaking from the USAf Office in Pretoria this morning, Chief Executive Officer, Professor Ahmed Bawa said that given the demand for higher education and the number of university applicants in need of financial aid, it did not make sense that as at 11 October, NSFAS had received less than half of the numbers they anticipate for 2018 – two full months since opening up the online application process on 1 August 2017. Of the over 200,000 new applications that NSFAS expects to attract by 30 November 2017, just over 82,000 had been received as at 11 October.

“That there is a need for student financial support is unquestionable,” Professor Bawa said. “Students aspiring to enter the public university sector must therefore take up the NSFAS opportunity. Even though the closing date is still at least six weeks away, students must apply sooner rather than later so as to allow the system to process those applications within such time that administrative glitches are minimised for the 2018 academic year.”

According to NSFAS, only first-time applicants and students who have not received NSFAS funding in 2017 must apply. Once an application is approved, a student’s study costs are covered for the duration of their study programme. Those funded for the first time in 2017, and who will be progressing in 2018 to the next level of their studies, will automatically continue to receive support. They need not re-apply for the 2018 academic year.

NSFAS has reiterated that it will **NOT** accept applications once the closing date has passed.

NSFAS is a government loan scheme assisting financially needy but academically deserving students. These loans are available for all fields of study at a low interest rate. Loans are available to South African citizens who are engaged in full-time undergraduate study, who meet the criteria as determined by NSFAS. For the past five years since 2012, NSFAS has been supporting an annual average of 200 000 students in the public university sector alone.

Aspiring financial aid recipients must visit [www.nsfas.org.za](http://www.nsfas.org.za) or call 086 006 7327 for more information. **Applications close on 30 November 2017.**

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