

HIGHER EDUCUCATION AND TRAINING



YOUR POCKET GUIDE TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND THE END OF THE 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR



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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



THE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND THE END OF THE 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR

PLAN

WHAT TO DO

COVID-19 OUTBREAKS

HigherHealth has been on the ground to deal with cluster outbreaks close to a few campuses in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. Despite the interventions, more cluster outbreaks are anticipated. Minister Blade Nzimande has appealed to students and staff to adhere to preventative measures, including wearing masks, sanitising hands, and physical distancing, as well as avoid shaking hands. If students are experiencing mental health challenges during this trying time, please call the toll-free number 0800 36 36 36 for assistance.

NATIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID SCHEME (NSFAS)

Laptops

Given that the procurement process has been concluded much later than originally planned, laptops will now be distributed in the new academic year.

On the N+2 Rule Appeals

A NSFAS investigation revealed there were potentially 29 000 students who were affected by the N+ rule. The majority of these students exceeded their N+ rule due to medical reasons, while some have exceeded but because they are currently in their final year of study, they had to be accommodated.

A total of 9 541 N+2 review appeals were received with 8 761 review appeals approved and 780 rejected for various legitimate reasons.

Minister Nzimande has urged institutions to urgently communicate the appeal decisions to all affected students.

On the 2021 NSFAS Application Cycle

As at 26 November 2020, NSFAS received a total of 650 000 applications for 2021 of which over 69% applications are from young women, with young men accounting for 31%. Estimates are that there will be over 800 000 new applications for the 2021 application cycle by the closing date at the end of November 2020.

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UNIVERSITIES

Twenty five universities will start the 2021 academic year at the end of March 2021 and one university will begin in April 2021. Two universities (UJ and UP) are set to complete the 2020 academic year during November 2020; eight universities (CPUT, SPU, SU, UCT, UFS, UNISA, UWC and WITS) plan to complete the year in December 2020; three universities (NWU, RU and UMP) in January 2021; nine universities (CUT, DUT, MUT, NMU, UKZN, UL, UNIVEN, UNIZULU and VUT) in February 2021, and four universities (SMU, TUT, UFH, and WSU) in March 2021.

NSFAS has identified some funding to support the extended academic year. Minister Nzimande is pleased that additional living allowances to cover meals and personal expenses will be made available for those qualifying university students who require additional months to complete their academic year. This, however, is not blanket support and students who have completed their academic year will need to wait until the 2021 academic year for their new allocations. NSFAS will work closely with universities to identify the students affected and the extended time for each student that requires support. Universities will have to provide this necessary information to NSFAS to enable the allowances to be expeditiously processed.

TVET COLLEGES

The start of the 2021 academic year will see students arriving on campuses on 25 January 2021. The 2020 examinations will continue until 11 December 2020 with colleges closing on 15 December 2020.

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The 2021 academic year will get underway on 27 January 2021. The Department will conduct monitoring and support visits at the commencement of the academic year to assess the state of readiness and functionality of centres.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

There's a positive indication that skills development activities are resuming, including artisanal activities, such as trade testing. There are decreased estimates for the skills levy collections for the financial year ending 31 March 2021. The implication is a revision of targets for the current financial year, especially regarding the workplace-based learning opportunities, such as learnerships and apprenticeships, which are important in keeping young people engaged in some form of socio-economic activities. The Department will be reviewing its SETA Grant Regulations.

THE 2020 NATIONAL LIST OF OCCUPATIONS IN HIGH DEMAND

Minister Nzimande has launched the National List of Occupations in High Demand (OIHD) in South Africa. The list reflects the work undertaken by the DHET, through the Labour Market Intelligence research programme, to support human resource development in the country. This list indicates which occupations are likely to have vacancies and which occupations are likely to grow due to new investments, especially by Government. The list identified that 345 occupations that are in high demand out of a total of 1 500 registered in our Organising Framework for Occupations. These occupations are at both high as well as intermediate skills levels. Higher education institutions and training providers are called upon to use the list to inform the selection of programme offerings, their resource allocations and enrolment planning processes, as well as the identification and development of new qualifications and programmes.

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