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**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NUMBER: 1695**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 04 JUNE 2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NUMBER: 16 - 2021**

**1695. Ms B S Masango (DA) to ask the Minister of Social Development:**

(1) Whether her department has funded bursaries for social workers in the (a) 2020 and (b) 2021 academic years; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;

 (2) What number of bursaries have been allocated for the (a) 2019, (b) 2020 and (c) 2021 academic years;

(3) Whether a lesser number of bursaries were awarded in the specified academic years; if so, what are the reasons for the decline in the number of bursaries awarded? NW1904E

**REPLY:**

1. (a) Yes, the department has funded social worker students through the scholarship programme in the 2020 academic year.

(b)Yes, the department is funding social work students through the scholarship programme in the 2021 academic year.

1. (a) Nine hundred and twenty five **(925)** social work students were funded through the scholarship programme in 2019.
2. Three hundred and eighty nine **(389)** social work students were funded through the scholarship programme in 2020.

(c) One hundred and fifty six **(156)** social work students are funded through the scholarship programme in 2021.

1. The lesser number of students have been awarded scholarships since 2019/20 because of the reduction of funds. During the 2017-2019 MTEF period, the allocation for social worker scholarships was reduced to fund the conditional grant for employment of social work graduates. This grant was implemented over a period of three years (2017 – 2019), therefore the department suspended recruitment of new students in the scholarship programme. All students funded in 2019/2020, 2020/21 and 2021/22 are those who were previously funded and were in the process of completing their studies.