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**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 274**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 16/02/2018**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 2 OF 2018)**

**Ms H Bucwa (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

(1) (a) What amount of funding support does the National Student Financial Aid Scheme currently provide to a full-time student requiring accommodation at technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, (b) what are the details of the process followed to determine this amount of funding support, (c) what is the detailed breakdown of the expense of what this amount of financial support is supposed to cover, (d) how many days of accommodation will a student have to budget for while undertaking full-time studies at a TVET college in each academic year and (e) how does the amount of financial support given to a student studying at a TVET college compare to that given to a student studying at a university;

(2) Whether she has been informed of any instances where a TVET college (a) is not providing and/or (b) would rather not provide student accommodation due to substandard services; if not, what is the position in this regard; if so, what are the relevant details? **NW295E**

**REPLY:**

(1) (a) The maximum amount that may be awarded for accommodation to a full-time student for the 2018 academic year is R22 019 per annum.

(b) The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is responsible for making a determination on whether student applications are successful or unsuccessful in so far as their tuition fees are concerned. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges are responsible for making a determination on the applications for travel and accommodation allowances, subject to the availability of funds, after NSFAS has determined whether or not a student qualifies for financial aid.

In making a final determination on the award for the accommodation allowance, the College Financial Aid Committee is required to consider, inter alia, the actual accommodation costs and rental agreement in the case of private accommodation. In the light of this, the amount awarded for accommodation may vary from one student to another.

(c) The award for accommodation is inclusive of meals. In making a determination on the award for accommodation, the College Financial Aid Committee must consider including meals in instances where students do not receive meals from the landlord. Furthermore, colleges and landlords in the case of private accommodation must provide at least three meals a day.

(d) Taking into account the TVET college calendar for 2018, a student will require 279 days of accommodation whilst undertaking full-time studies at a TVET college. The 279 days takes into account, amongst others, the dates on which classes commence, lecturing days, examination days and the dates on which colleges close.

(e) There is a significant difference between the amounts of financial support given to a student studying at a TVET college to that of a student studying at a university. Firstly, each TVET college student enrolled in a Ministerially-funded programme is subsidised by the State at 80% of the total programme cost. Secondly, the difference of 20% of the total programme costs, which constitutes tuition fees, must be recovered from the student. However, in respect of qualifying students, NSFAS covers the 20% component of the total programme costs.

In addition to tuition fees, NSFAS covers transport or accommodation allowance (inclusive of meals) for qualifying students, subject to the availability of funds as per each individual institution's allocation. Finally, each TVET college student, regardless of being funded by NSFAS or not, receives textbooks and other essentials, such as protective gear for practical work.

(2) (a) There are instances where TVET colleges do not have student residential facilities or the college has limited capacity to accommodate all qualifying students in its residences.

(b) Colleges are required to support all students who qualify for accommodation. In this regard, colleges must consider conducive private accommodation in instances where there are limited spaces in college residences, or there are no college residences. Colleges have a responsibility to ensure that students are accommodated in facilities that do not provide a substandard service.

However, it must be noted that priority is given to college residences and as such, private accommodation may only be considered if college residences are already filled to capacity or in instances where the TVET college does not have student residential facilities.