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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3394**

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**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 36 OF 2022**

 **Mr V Pambo (EFF) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

In the light of several protests at the universities and technical vocational education and training (TVET) colleges on account of inefficiencies of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), what (a) turnaround strategy is in place to ensure that the inadequacies of NSFAS is completely a thing of the past and (b) total number of such protests have been recorded in the 2022 academic year at (i) universities and (ii) TVET colleges? **NW4203E**

**REPLY:**

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| No. | **Institution/University** | **Turnaround strategy** | **Total number of protests recorded in 2022** |
| 1. | Cape Peninsula University of Technology | The allowances were paid on time to students. The university made some concessions to allow NSFAS qualifying students to register whilst await for the advancement from NSFAS. | There were no protests reported. |
| 2. | University of Cape Town | The University advances all NSFAS funded students with meals, books and accommodation allowance until funds are received from NSFAS. | The university had minor protests this year that were contained. Not all the protests were NSFAS-related.  |
| 3. | Central University of Technology  | The NSFAS to issue the Funded List and Guidelines to all the universities & TVET colleges at the beginning of the academic year | **Bloemfontein Campus:*** 23-24 February 2022
* 28 February 2022
* 07 March 2022
* 13-14 March 2022
* 17 March 2022
* 22 March 2022
* 24-25 March 2022
* 06-07 June 2022

**8 in total****Welkom Campus*** 04 February 2022
* 27-30 March 2022
* 03-04 April 2022

**3 in total** |
| 4. | Durban University of Technology | There was a delay in payment of the upfront payment by NSFAS as a result payment of allowances to students delayed. | On 8 -11 March 2022 The protests were not only about NSFAS matters. However, the concerns raised by students included the delays in payment of allowances  |
| 5. | University of Fort Hare | The university extended the registration period to allow NSFAS funded students to register upon confirmation of funding by NSFAS. | In the beginning of the academic year, there were pockets of demonstrations due to delayed NSFAS lists of funded students |
| 6. | University of the Free State. | All other concerns were addressed during registration period. Only the issue of accommodation took longer and was addressed in May 2022 through engagements between DHET, NSFAS, Students represented by SRC, and UFS management.  | From 21 to 23 February 2022 in both Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa campus The concerns raised include withdrawal of offers due to late confirmation of funding from NSFAS for first-time entering students, late confirmation of funding for continuing students, immediate payment of allowances to NSFAS students, N+1/2 Rule, Accommodation for NSFAS funded students  |
| 7. |  University of Johannesburg. | The University administers funds on behalf of NSFAS for over 25 600 students registered in 2022. All efforts are made to ensure that potential NSFAS students are assisted with registration and allowances at the beginning of the year while waiting for NSFAS to confirm funding whilst waiting for the upfront payment from NSFAS.The University lifted a financial block to 8998 students who were identified as potential NSFAS beneficiaries. This includes 872 SASSA beneficiaries. The university also set aside a budget for the SRC Trust Funds. A total number of 4462 students were approved for SRC trust fund during the academic registration period.The University of Johannesburg advances all NSFAS funded students with meals, books and accommodation allowance until funds are received from NSFAS in April 2022. | The experienced protests were sectional (groups of common interest protesting – not led by the SRC).On the10th of February 2022, about 50 students attempted to disrupt registration process but the University responded in time to prevent the disruption.All the protests were managed successfully by of course pressurizing the relevant sectors to be responsive by addressing the problems. |
| 8. | University of KwaZulu-Natal | The vast majority of list of demands received from the SRC, includes issues, as students experience them, with respect to NSFAS. Concerns raised include poor communication, non-responsiveness, perceived inequity/bias in applying NSFAS rules, systems, e.g., for appeals, not working well NSFAS funded students were assisted whilst waiting for communication and funds from NSFAS.  |  27 May 2022, 6 & 14 June 2022. |
| 9.  | University of Limpopo | The challenging area with regard to the NSFAS funding has been around the student’s allowances, and in particular, Off-Campus accommodation allowances.The matter was resolved immediately with NSFAS taking full responsibility of the administration of the process as such, further challenges would be resolved within the shortest turnaround time.  | 14 September 2022. |
| 10. | Mangosuthu University of Technology |  NSFAS qualifying students are assisted to register | On 23 June 2022, not NSFAS related  |
| 11. | University of Mpumalanga | No protests experienced  |  |
| 12. | Nelson Mandela University | Nelson Mandela University has been working closely with NSFAS. Ongoing communication with the NSFAS agent has proved valuable in addressing certain operational issues.A visit to the NSFAS Office in Cape Town with a multi-stakeholder University team, assisted in attending to some strategic interventions that were required. A productive and meaningful relationship with NSFAS is required with institutions to ensure open and constructive flow of information and planning. An academic year requires prior planning to ensure that universities can enrol new and returning students without any significant disruptions. The sector needs to be engaged through a multi-stakeholder task team and informed well in advance if there will be significant policy changes to ensure adequate risk mitigation and preparation for unintended consequences. | The University experienced protests that closed the campus on 14 February, as well as 3and 4March.A management team lead by the Dean of Students engaged on the issues.**The main issues of the closure on 14 February being:*** Students awaiting funding statuses including NSFAS appeals which then result in allowances not being able to be released. This included the Higher Certificate
* unfunded students
* Postgraduate student funding
* Unfunded students that do not qualify for University concessions for registration
* Historic debt.

Following positive engagements, the parties found each other on a number of issues raised.**The main issues of the protests on 3and 4March being:*** Extension of the closing date for registration

Management agreed on an extension to the registration period from 4 March to 11 March 2022. |
| 13. | North-West University | The NWU has set aside funds to pay allowances from the end of February albeit that an NSFAS payment had not been received. An agreed-upon process and measures involving members of the university management and the student leadership has been in place to address concerns that had been raised by students – some of which were related to NSFAS | The University experienced some unrest in February 2022. The issues raised were NSFAS and registrations related. A meeting was arranged between the SRC and management and matters raised, were resolved. |
| 14. | University of Pretoria |  There were no protests at UP on NSFAS. |  |
| 15.  | Rhodes University | The university committed support initiatives that would make NSFAS more efficient and effective.  |  No protests experienced. |
| 16. | Sefako Makgatho University | University takes upon itself to process and allocate allowances to funded students and later claim from NSFAS.  | So far, no protest actions were experienced at SMU during the 2022 academic year. |
| 17. | Sol Plaatje University | There were no protests experienced. |  |
| 18. | University of South Africa  | Protests experienced were not NSFAS related. The protests were led by the labour unions on labour and management related matters. |  |
| 19. | Stellenbosch University | Stellenbosch University had no NSFAS related student protests in 2022. |  |
| 20. | Tshwane University of Technology | TUT has implemented mitigating strategies to try and resolve challenges experienced with NSFAS.This involved TUT and NSFAS embarking on a series of engagements to address concerns and queries through the NSFAS Service Agent, robust meetings with Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa (FAPSA) and Usaf (FEF) | (b) The students protest on NSFAS matters were recorded at Tshwane University of Technology in the beginning of 2022, i.e., during February and March. The most challenging issues that affected all six campuses were recorded as follows:* Delay in the release the list of NSFAS Funded students;
* N+2 Rule of NSFAS; and
* NSFAS appeals process being slow.

. However, there protests were not just limited to NSFAS related concerns. Other student demands also played a role |
| 21. | Vaal University of Technology | NSFAS officials visited the campus to address outstanding challenges regarding NSFAS. | On 10 June 2022, the guard house at the entrance of the campus was set alight. |
| 22. | University of Venda | The University of Venda Strategy is to open registration for all NSFAS potential funded students pending NSFAS confirmation and reimbursement of funds to the university. University decided to pay students allowances towards food and to pay landlords before NSFAS pay to ensure well-being of students and stability on campus. As for book allowances universities decided to wait for NSFAS to pay the university considering the magnitude of the invoice as majority of UNIVEN enrolment is funded by NSFAS. |  one protest action was recorded during May 2022. |
| 23. | Walter Sisulu University | The interventions by the University included: Ongoing engagements with institutional and campus SRCs, NSFAS visiting campuses to deal with NSFAS related matters, | Walter Sisulu University encountered protests from February to June 2022 on its four campuses (Zamukulingisa, Mthatha, Ibika and Buffalo City). The concerns raised by students included: unfunded students, and student accommodation not compliant to DHET minimum norms. |
| 24. | University of the Western Cape | No protest actions related to NSFAS issues | . |
| 25. | University of the Witwatersrand | No protest actions related to NSFAS issues |  |
| 26. | University of Zululand | NSFAS qualifying students are assisted whilst NSFAS has not yet paid the upfront payment to the university. | On 9 March 2022 at the KwaDlangezwa. The concerns raised by students were not only NSFAS related. Students complained against students living off campus and inadequate residences. The University managed to source more off-campus accommodation.  |