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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 3990**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 28/10/2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 42 OF 2022**

**Ms C V King (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

(a) What total number of (i) deaf students and (ii) academic staff are at institutions of higher learning and the technical vocational education and training colleges, (b) what measures are in place to assist deaf students and academic staff (i) with teaching and learning and (ii) during evaluation and assessment processes and (c) how were deaf students assisted during lockdown?

**NW4960E**

**REPLY:**

1. (i) There were 2 665 students with hearing disabilities at universities within the 2021 academic year;

(ii) The Department does not collect academic staff information in relation to disabilities as part of its Higher Education Management Information System processes;

1. and (c)   The NSFAS/DHET Disability Fund is aimed at providing financial support for students with disabilities who are financially needy and academically able. It is intended to open opportunities for further study in higher education and provide the necessary additional teaching and learning support for students to enable them to overcome barriers to learning.

Students who qualify fall within the maximum threshold of up to R600 000 of combined gross family income per annum. In addition to paying for students' full cost of study, the bursary also provides students with assistive devices (e.g., wheelchairs, hearing aids, adapted laptops, etc.) and human support (e.g., carers, scribes, tutors, sign language interpreters, etc.) at a capped amount that is reviewed annually by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Allowances for students with disabilities are outlined in the 2022 NSFAS Eligibility and Conditions for Financial Aid.