**Memorandum from the Parliamentary Office**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 831**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 18/03/2016**

**(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER 09 OF 2016)**

**Prof B Bozzoli (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

(1) (a) How many students have been funded through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) in each financial year since its inception, (b) what is the detailed breakdown in terms of how many of the specified students were at (i) universities, (ii) technical colleges and (iii) any other higher education institutions and (c) how many students funded by NSFAS (i) were studying, (ii) graduated and (iii) dropped out in the specified financial years;

(2) of the specified students who dropped out while receiving funding from NSFAS, what amount (a) was spent by NSFAS to fund these students, (b) has been paid back to NSFAS by the relevant students, (c) is still owed to NSFAS, and (d) has been written off by NSFAS?

**NW950E**

**REPLY:**

1 (a) The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has funded 1 700 533, students in public universities, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and other institutional types as required by various funders that have partnered with NSFAS. In 2007, the NSFAS legislative mandate was expanded to include the responsibility for granting and administering bursaries to students at public Technical and Vocational Education and Training (former Further Education and Training) colleges. From 1991 to 1995, through the then TEFSA and Kagiso Trust, funds were provided to private institutions and from 2004, NSFAS paid other public institutions such as the National Institute of Education: Mpumalanga and Northern Cape, which have since been disestablished on 7 November 2014.

(b) A breakdown per year is provided below.

| **Year** | 1. **Universities**
 | 1. **TVET Colleges**
 | 1. **Other Institutional Types**
 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1991** | 7 240 |  | 1 |
| **1992** | 14 160 |  | 11 |
| **1993** | 20 811 |  | 82 |
| **1994** | 28 260 |  | 28 |
| **1995** | 43 876 |  | 10 |
| **1996** | 72 788 |  |  |
| **1997** | 70 574 |  |  |
| **1998** | 75 764 |  |  |
| **1999** | 75 344 |  |  |
| **2000** | 83 251 |  |  |
| **2001** | 80 603 |  |  |
| **2002** | 86 147 |  |  |
| **2003** | 96 552 |  |  |
| **2004** | 98 813 |  | 74 |
| **2005** | 106 852 |  | 78 |
| **2006** | 108 416 |  | 119 |
| **2007** | 113 616 | 12 283 | 509 |
| **2008** | 117 766 | 35 353 | 678 |
| **2009** | 135 202 | 55 174 | 664 |
| **2010** | 148 387 | 61 706 | 498 |
| **2011** | 144 757 | 114 971 | 341 |
| **2012** | 194 504 | 188 182 | 428 |
| **2013** | 194 923 | 220 978 | 464 |
| **2014** | 186 150 | 228 642 | 10 |
| **2015** | 173 885 *(still to be audited)* | 235 446 *(still to be audited)* | - |

(c) NSFAS does not hold a complete data set on dropouts, and is currently augmenting this data from data sources such as the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS). NSFAS, in collaboration with the Department, is currently in the process of conducting a full cohort study looking at cohorts of students from 2005 through to 2014. It is expected that the results from this study will be finalised by the end of June 2016.

Stellenbosch University conducted a cohort study for NSFAS in 2012, which revealed that 34% of the first-time entering student cohort for the 2000 academic year had qualified, 29% were still studying and 37% had dropped out. After a full nine years, 55% of this same cohort had qualified, 6% was still studying and 38% had dropped out.

This study goes on to conclude that non-funded students have a slightly higher drop-out and lower qualification rate, with 48% having completed their qualification, 6% still studying and 46% having dropped out. These figures are consistent with figures released annually by the Council on Higher Education, which includes both NSFAS funded and non-funded students.

2 (a)–(c) In respect to students who received NSFAS loans while studying and dropped out without completing their undergraduate degrees, NSFAS has 247 913 active debtor students. These students have repaid R1.8 billion with an outstanding debt of R4.7 billion.

2 (d) NSFAS only writes off debts for students that are deceased, as confirmed through the Department of Home Affairs.

COMPILER/CONTACT PERSONS:

EXT:

DIRECTOR – GENERAL

STATUS:

DATE:

QUESTION 831 APPROVED/NOT APPROVED/AMENDED

Dr BE NZIMANDE, MP

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

STATUS:

DATE: