



Anyone with potential can study

There's a perception that young people from poor homes will never be able to study after school because studying is for 'rich kids'. But Government is addressing this through substantial amounts of money being made available for higher education.

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) administers student funding on behalf of the **Department of Higher Education and Training**. Other Government Departments also provide moneys – Agriculture, Labour, and Social Development. There's also funding from the private sector.

These moneys allow young South Africans from the neediest homes to realise their potential through being able to study at public universities and universities of technology and at Further Education & Training (FET) Colleges. Some of the funds are bursaries – these do not have to be paid back but some have workback conditions. Most are loans, and the student is expected to pay back the capital amount plus interest when he/she begins to work one day. They are different from commercial bank loans in that:

- up to 40% of the loan amount may be converted into a non-repayable bursary if the student succeeds academically;
- the interest rate charged is lower than the banks'. (The current interest rate – as of 1 April 2010 – is 5.2%.)

So, if you dream of studying but don't have your own money, don't give up. Apply to a public institution to study your chosen degree and, if you're accepted on academic grounds, visit the Financial Aid Office at a public University or University of Technology or the Student Support Centre at an FET College to apply for financial assistance.

What to take along when you apply for financial assistance:

- *A certified copy of your barcoded SA ID*
- *Proof of your family's household income, e.g. parents' salary slips, pension advice slips, etc.*
- *Certified copies of IDs or birth certificates of family members who attend university, college, school or pre-school*

Who may qualify for financial assistance from NSFAS?

- *Needy students who meet the requirements of the National Means Test*
- *Students who have selected to study in various scarce skills fields, e.g. teaching, social work, accounting, IT, etc.*

When to apply:

As soon as you get your Grade 12 June exam results, apply for a university course. Find out from the university about the process of applying for financial aid.

For an FET College you need a minimum Grade 9 pass. You can apply for the National Certificate (Vocational) programme towards the end of the year before the year you plan on studying.

Some NSFAS facts and figures:

- NSFAS administers the **DHET Colleges Bursary Scheme** for study at FET Colleges. These bursaries cover the National Certificate (Vocational) **NC(V) programmes**. **Students do not have to pay back the bursary on completion of an NC(V) programme.**
- During 2009 NSFAS assisted 191 000 students.
- Students who received NSFAS funding pay back when they start working. This money is used to fund other students.
- Contact details for NSFAS:
 - Send a query by SMS to **32261**. (Standard SMS rates apply.)
 - Email NSFAS – info@nsfas.org.za
 - Call the NSFAS call centre on 021 763-3232
 - Send us a letter: Private Bag X1, Plumstead 7801
 - Visit the NSFAS website - www.nsfas.org.za