

Vuk'uzenzele



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Govt to subsidise poor and missing middle



Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande says government wants to strengthen post-school learning and teaching.

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Universities will individually decide on the fee increases for 2017 academic year, Higher Education and Training Minister Blade Nzimande announced recently.

The Minister made the announcement at a special media briefing following the Council on Higher Education (CHE) report for 2017 fee adjustments as well as the Minister's ongoing consultations with key stakeholders.

"Our recommendation is that fee adjustments should not go above eight percent," Minister Nzimande said.

He added that universities currently face serious challenges in terms of funding, while at the same time large numbers of South Africans find it difficult to access post-school education because of financial challenges.

FAST FACT:

- Students with a family income of up to R600 000 per annum will be supported by government.
- In 2016 government provided R1.9 billion of the R2.3 billion shortfall following the subsidy on the 2016 university fee increase.
- In the 2016/17 financial year R14.5 billion has been made available to NSFAS.
- A total of 405 000 students received government support to access universities and colleges in 2016.

"Government is aware of these challenges and takes them very seriously."

The Minister said government is committed to finding the resources to support chil-

dren of all poor, working and middle class families, with a household income of up to R600 000 per annum, while subsidy funding will cover the gap between the 2015 fee and the adjusted 2017 fee.

"This will be done for fee increments up to eight percent."

Minister Nzimande said a key priority for government is to ensure that post-school learning and teaching is strengthened, and that financial sustainability of the sector is not eroded.

"Our economy is currently weak and our fiscal position parlous. The tax burden has been rising in recent years, and we must preserve the fiscal space to fund government's policy agenda in future years.

"This means that any funding government mobilises to support the pressing challenges in higher education, it would need to reprioritise from other government pro-

grammes."

He added that students' concerns about the affordability of university education were legitimate.

"At the same time, we need to ensure that those who can afford to pay must pay."

He added that the post-school budget has to cover students in technical and vocational education and training, while at the same time face the challenge of providing 18 million South Africans, who are unable to study at university, access to community colleges.

"In other words, our job as government requires a number of very delicate balancing acts."

All National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) qualifying students, as well as the so-called "missing middle" students will experience no fee increase in 2017, as government will pay for the



3 000 young people training to be artisans

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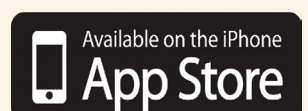


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