



**MINISTER
HIGHER EDUCATION
AND TRAINING
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH
AFRICA**

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Mr TW Letsie
Chairperson
Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training
Parliament Street
Cape Town
8000

By e-mail: akabingesi@parliament.gov.za

Dear Mr TW Letsie

THE LETTER DATED 16 JULY 2025 REFERS

The Department and NSFAS have considered SAMSU's matter for several weeks. In our first meeting, the officials advised that they would need to assess any data sets SAMSU may be willing to share, given the significant budget implications presented by the requests from SAMSU.

We soon realised that other medical programmes, such as Bachelor of Physiotherapy, Bachelor of Speech Pathology, Bachelor of Pharmacy, etc., will need allowances and accommodation extended to them as the same dilemma confronts them.

The Chair of NSFAS subsequently commissioned research to investigate what measures are required to support the needs of students in the medical field.

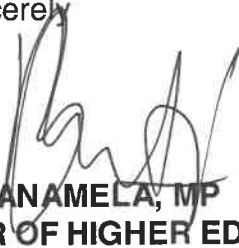
Indeed, it has been difficult to schedule meetings given the conflicting schedules of NSFAS and the Branch. However, in the interim, the Branch engaged Mr Ambrose Lekalakala telephonically on at least three occasions and discussed the following:

1. The NSFAS is currently confronted with a shortfall of just over R11 billion, and is unlikely to have funds to meet the needs of affected South African Medical Students this year. This financial year the Department is prioritizing students who are registered and without any financial support.

2. The Department could not be seen to be focusing only on one segment of medical students, and further engagements with all the universities would be required to determine the scale of affected students; thus, the importance of the research and assessment undertaken by the Chair of NSFAS.
3. Advised SAMSU to escalate their concerns to SAUS, which was best placed to address their concerns. Ordinarily, the Department does not engage with student issues outside established structures.
4. Agreed to support SAMSU's meeting with the Department of Health, which offers support to other health-related programmes, such as Bachelor of Nursing, for an additional two months.

The Department is genuinely constrained by the fiscus; however, it will pursue engagements with the Minister of Finance, who is best placed to review the budget. Furthermore, the Department will engage its counterpart, the Department of Health, and the leadership of various universities to support deserving students.

Yours sincerely



MR KB MANAMELA, MP
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

DATE:

16/9/2025