



13 October 2020

Dear students and staff

CHALLENGES RELATING TO NSFAS STUDENTS OPTING FOR PRIVATE, NON-ACCREDITED ACCOMMODATION

As a caring institution, TUT appreciates and acknowledges the plight of students in terms of their choice of accommodation, especially those who want to stay in non-accredited, private, single-use accommodation, which is close to the respective University campuses.

The University is, however, bound by the directives provided by governmental funding authorities who have oversight over the expenditure of the funding to qualifying students. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) as well as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) provide these directives. In terms of student accommodation and travel allowances, the following information from these directives should be noted:

1. University students living in private off-campus accommodation can only qualify for an accommodation allowance if they are accommodated in university-accredited accommodation. If students are to be supported with accommodation allowances, institutions will be required to formally accredit private accommodation.
2. Universities should accredit private providers of student accommodation and should monitor the quality of accommodation provision to students living off campus.
3. Students who do not stay in accredited private accommodation, will be assumed to be living at home or in privately arranged accommodation and will only receive the transport and living allowance.
4. In general, qualifying students whose home address is close to a university campus, or those who choose to make their own accommodation arrangements, would not be considered for an award for an accommodation allowance. In 2020, these students qualify for a travel allowance up to a maximum of R7 500.

In view of the above, the University, through the Tshwane University of Technology Enterprise Holdings (TUTEH), has gone to great lengths to accredit and lease sufficient, adequate and quality student accommodation for students.

The process of allocating NSFAS funded students with accommodation starts in order of priority – students are firstly placed in University owned, then University leased, then University accredited spaces. A student's choice is therefore limited to the DHET and NSFAS directives and guidelines. Hence, private off-campus, non-accredited accommodation is only considered when neither University owned, leased nor accredited accommodation is available. This is only applicable for students at TUT's Polokwane Campus in 2020

With regard to a number of queries from students and property owners in the Soshanguve campus region over the past few weeks, it has been confirmed that no applications for accreditation have been received and therefore no private accommodation in Soshanguve has been accredited for 2020. Subsequently, no lease agreements between students and property owners have been submitted to the University. To date, the University has however engaged the Executive Committee



of the property owners' association (RSA) several times. An agreement has been reached with the property owners who claim to have housed these students since the beginning of the year.

The University is currently awaiting final student name lists from the property owners in order to verify the status of the students. The facilities of the property owners on the list will then be subject to an evaluation process for accreditation. Where accreditation is granted, payment of allowances to the respective students will be made for the period of stay in private accommodation.

It is important to reiterate that the University aligns its policies and procedures with those of DHET and NSFAS, which ensures uniformity in practice across all higher education institutions. The practice of placing students in well-established, accredited, adequate and safe facilities is a non-negotiable requirement that is closely monitored by DHET and the Ministry. This requires strict control and oversight measures to ensure the interest of the students, DHET, NSFAS and the University are protected.

We appeal to students who continuously attempt to disrupt academic activities at the Soshanguve campuses to consult their property owners on the latest deliberations between the Executive Committee of RSA and TUT as reflected in this communiqué.

We want to assure students and other stakeholders of TUT's commitment to address uncertainties and resolve challenges.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. van Staden', written over a white background.

**PROF LOURENS VAN STADEN
VICE-CHANCELLOR & PRINCIPAL**