

Department of Education

Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme

Frequently
Asked
Questions
(FAQ's)



education

Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The programme

1. What is the Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme?

It is a new multi-year programme that was launched in 2007 to promote teaching in public schools as the career of choice for able and committed South Africans. Full-cost bursaries are available to enable eligible students to complete a full teaching qualification in an area of national priority. Recipients of a Funza Lushaka bursary are required to teach in a provincial education department for the same number of years that they received the bursary.

Approximately 4500 bursaries will be awarded in 2008 and this number will substantially increase in subsequent years.

Roles and responsibilities

2. How are roles and responsibilities for the Funza Lushaka programme divided?

This is a national programme which is run locally at each higher education institution (HEI). It is funded by National Treasury and executed by the Department of Education (DoE).

The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) administers the programme on behalf of DoE through the Student Financial Aid office at each HEI.

Eligible students must meet the admission criteria of the academic programme at the HEI to which they apply, and must meet the national selection criteria for the Funza Lushaka bursary. Selection of bursars is undertaken at each HEI in accordance with the selection criteria and the funds allocated to each HEI for the programme in 2008.

Once qualified, bursary recipients are employed by a provincial education department.

Applications and eligibility

3. Where are application forms available?

The Funza Lushaka Bursary Programme uses NSFAS application forms. These are available from Student Financial Aid offices at all higher education institutions.

4. Where can prospective students find out more about the bursary programme?

Student Financial Aid offices will give students application forms and details about financial matters, service obligations, etc. Staff in the Faculty or School of Education will provide information on teaching as a profession, academic programmes and an individual's eligibility for admission.

5. How does an institution determine whether a student's academic programme complies with the priority areas selection criterion?

The bursary programme is designed to boost recruitment into teaching, especially in priority areas. In most cases, Faculty or School of Education staff will be able to determine the fit between a student's programme and the teaching priorities. In difficult cases, staff will have to use their best judgment, bearing in mind the purpose of the programme.

6. What are the priority areas?

Grades R-9: Foundation Phase; African Languages; English Language; Mathematics; Natural Science; Technology.

Grades 10-12: African Languages; English Language; Mathematics; Mathematical Literacy; Agricultural Sciences; Life Sciences; Physical Science; Agricultural, Civil, Electrical, Mechanical, Information Technology, Computer Applications Technology; Engineering Graphics and Design.

7. What programmes will be funded?

Bachelor of Education (BEd);

Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE); and

BA, BSc, BCom and BTech degrees with majors suitable for admission to a PGCE programme, which the recipient of the bursary will agree to enter on graduation. At least one of the major subjects in these degrees must be selected from the list of priority area subjects.

8. Are there official quotas for the distribution of bursaries by programme, year of study or priority area?

No, this year the distribution by programme is at the discretion of each institution.

9. Are first-year students eligible?

Yes, first-year students in the appropriate programmes are eligible.

10. Are ACE (Advanced Certificate in Education) student eligible?

No. Bursaries are available only for the initial professional education of teachers.

11. Are distance education and part-time students eligible for a bursary?

Yes, provided they are eligible in all other respects.

12. Are recipients of other bursaries eligible to apply for a Funza Lushaka bursary?

Yes, if they are eligible in other respects and the terms and conditions of the other bursary permit such an application. The intention of the Funza Lushaka programme is to secure candidates for the teaching profession. A student who has been offered both a Funza Lushaka bursary and another bursary may choose to forfeit the other bursary or to accept a reduced Funza Lushaka bursary with reduced service obligations. (See Money Matters below.)

Selection matters

13. Who should sit on a bursary selection committee?

The composition of the committee will depend on the Institution, but must include academic members of the Faculty or School of Education, an experienced professional representative of the relevant provincial education department and a representative of the Financial Aid Office.

14. What selection criteria should be applied?

The criteria applied by an institution's selection committee must be clear, empirically-based, transparent and publishable and must include:

- (1) Academic ability*
- (2) Eligibility for one of the academic programmes for which the bursary is granted*
- (3) Commitment to a teaching career, which includes: interest in working with young people; enthusiasm for a professional career in teaching; readiness to face and surmount difficult challenges; and personal integrity*
- (4) Commitment to teach in any school to which a student may be appointed by a provincial education department*

Everything else being equal, selection should favour candidates from rural areas, candidates who wish to teach in rural areas, and candidates whose financial position would otherwise exclude them from enrolment for a teaching qualification.

15. Will late applications be considered?

This is a matter for each institution to determine in terms of its admission procedures. Institutions are encouraged to exercise maximum flexibility in accommodating eligible students who have been awarded Funza Lushaka bursaries.

Money matters

16. Have higher education institutions been allocated a certain number of bursaries or a certain allocation of funds for bursaries?

Institutions receive funds, not bursaries. Each institution will pay out bursary funds according to the purposes of the programme and its own cost structure.

17. Are more funds available than those initially allocated to an institution for 2008?

If some institutions are unable to use all the funds allocated to them, the balance will be redistributed to other institutions where the demand is greater. This will be done when the situation has been monitored at the end of the normal registration period.

18. How much is a Funza Lushaka bursary worth?

Funza Lushaka bursaries cover all the recipient's essential expenses. Institutions have different cost structures, so the total value of a bursary differs from institution to institution.

19. What does the bursary cover?

Registration fee, tuition fee, residence fee or approved accommodation and meal costs, book and learning material allowance and an allowance for monthly living expenses. In exceptional circumstances travelling costs at an economical rate may be included if students would otherwise not be able to accept the bursary.

- 20. Can a student accept a bursary for fewer than the number of years required to complete a programme?**

Yes, provided that the bursary covers the year in which the teaching qualification is completed.

- 21. Can a student accept less per annum than the total amount on offer?**

Yes. The recipient's service obligations will then be reduced pro rata.

- 22. Can a student who has another bursary receive a full-cost Funza Lushaka bursary?**

The student may consider forfeiting the other bursary in order to receive a full-cost Funza Lushaka bursary. Alternatively if the terms and conditions of the other bursary permit, the student could retain that bursary and be offered a reduced Funza Lushaka bursary with reduced service obligations.

- 23. If a student repeats a year will the bursary be paid for that extra year?**

The bursary period will be extended to cover one additional year in a degree programme or the time required for completion of one additional course in the PGCE programme. Only one such extension will be granted. Any additional time required will be at the recipient's own cost.

- 24. Who pays for costs incurred over and above the allocated bursary amount?**

The student.

- 25. Is the bursary renewable?**

Yes, the bursary is awarded for one academic year at a time and on proof of academic success the bursary may be renewed each year until the recipient of the bursary has qualified as a teacher.

- 26. How will a student's accommodation and living expenditure be paid?**

According to the institution's normal practice with NSFAS awards.

Service agreement

- 27. Must the recipient of a bursary receive a copy of the service agreement?**

Yes. The agreement must be explained to the recipient before he or she signs it, and a signed copy must then be given to the recipient.

- 28. For how many years will the recipient of a bursary be required to teach?**

Recipients of bursaries will be required to teach one year for every year for which they receive a bursary.

- 29. If a student migrates from an NSFAS loan to a Funza Lushaka bursary will the years on the NSFAS loan become part of the service contract?**

No. The NSFAS loan and the bursary have different conditions.

- 30. Must the bursary be repaid?**

The bursary must be repaid only if the recipient fails to qualify, fails to apply for a teaching post with a provincial education department at a public school, fails to take up a teaching post with a provincial education department at a public school, leaves a teaching post with a provincial education department before the end of the contracted service period, or otherwise fails to meet a requirement of the bursary agreement.

- 31. How much must be repaid?**

The full amount of the bursary received under the programme, less one year's funding for every year spent teaching at a public school.

- 32. Will interest have to be paid on the amount owing?**

Yes, at the rate of interest at prevailing commercial rate.

- 33. Who determines the placement of newly qualified teachers in terms of the programme?**

Qualified recipients of bursaries must apply for an appropriate public school position with the provincial education department (PED) of their choice. The PED concerned will determine whether there is a suitable post available. If there is not, the applicant will be offered employment in a PED that does have suitable vacancies. Offers of employment will be made subject to the Employment of Educators Act, 1998, and the South African Schools Act, 1996.

- 34. Are Funza Lushaka bursary recipients eligible for SGB posts at public schools?**

Only when they have fulfilled their contractual obligations to a provincial education department.

- 35. Are Funza Lushaka bursary recipients able to take a "gap year" immediately after qualifying?**

No, students are required to accept a teaching post immediately after qualifying – an extension will not be granted to a qualifying student.

- 36. Will an extension be granted to qualifying students to complete further studies?**

No, students are required to accept a teaching post immediately after qualifying – an extension will not be granted to a qualifying student.

- 35. Are foreign students eligible for a Funza Lushaka bursaries?**

No, NSFAS will not enter into a contract with a foreign student or a student that holds a temporary resident permit.