



## **HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING WINDOW GUIDELINES - 2026**

- **Unemployed Learners Granted Bursaries (New)**
- **Unemployed Learners Granted Bursaries (Continuing)**

## BANKSETA FUNDING WINDOW GUIDELINES

### 1. Purpose

This document has been developed to guide the application process for BANKSETA Discretionary Grant Funding Windows. It considers the SETA Grant Regulations and the BANKSETA Discretionary Grant Policy. This document provides guidelines for the opening of funding windows, inviting applications, evaluation of applications, allocation of funds and payment of funds. This document aims to ensure a consistent, fair, and transparent process.

**Definition:** A funding window is an invitation to stakeholders to apply for funding from the SETA for the programmes that the funding window is intended for. The window period has a specified opening date and a specified closing date.

### 2. Objective

The objective of this funding window is to invite public higher education institutions to apply for funding from the BANKSETA for programmes that are aligned to our Sector Skills Plan. This funding window is aimed at Bursaries for **new** students (first year students), as well as **continuing** students (second to final year) students. The courses universities are applying for should be aligned to the list of occupations included in Annexure 1: Sectorial Priority Occupations and Annexure 2: Emerging Occupations extracted from the BANKSETA Sector Skills Plan 2025/2026.

*NB:* This funding window is subject to the approval of BANKSETA's Annual Performance Plan (APP) and budget for the 2026/27 financial year.

Indicator Title	Description
3.24. Number of unemployed learners granted bursaries ( <b>new enrolments</b> )	The number of unemployed learners granted bursaries at universities who are funded by the BANKSETA. New enrolments are first-year students.
3.25. Number of unemployed learners granted bursaries ( <b>continuing learners</b> )	The number of learners awarded bursaries at universities who are funded by the BANKSETA continuing with 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , and final year of studies

### **3. Invitation Process**

**3.1** BANKSETA will publish all funding window invitations on the BANKSETA website [www.bankseta.org.za](http://www.bankseta.org.za)

**3.2** Each funding window will remain open for at least 6 weeks

**3.3** No late application will be accepted.

#### 4. Criteria

##### 4.1 Bursary Programmes (National Diploma/Degrees and Post Graduate Candidates including Master Degrees)

Submission Criteria	Stakeholder & application Eligibility Criteria	Evaluation Criteria	Allocation Criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stakeholders must apply online using the SIMS platform</li> <li>The Application form must be completed in full and duly signed.</li> <li>The closing date to submit the application is <b>24<sup>th</sup> December 2025 at 16h00pm.</b></li> </ul>	<p>Stakeholder must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Universities or</li> <li>University of Technology</li> </ul> <p>Application is for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New (2026 academic year)</li> <li>Continuing</li> </ul>	<p>All applications must meet the evaluation criteria as indicated below to qualify for funding. Any application not adhering to the below will be declined.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application forms must be completed in full and correctly and uploaded to the online system</li> <li>Applications must be in support of skills identified in the BANKSETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP), see attached: <u>Annexure 1: Sectorial Priority Occupations and Annexure 2: Emerging Occupations extracted from the BANKSETA SSP 2025/26.</u></li> </ul> <p>Bursaries for studies in 4IR and Artificial Intelligence will be welcomed</p>	<p>Cap per learner is <b><u>R120</u></b> 000,00 per year and cover the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tuition cost: R50 000,00</li> <li>Study material: R 10 000,00</li> <li>Accommodation: R45 000,00</li> <li>Living allowances/meal allowances: R15 000,00</li> </ul> <p>Available budget will be allocated equitably amongst all qualifying applicants</p>

## 5. Submission Process

- 5.1 Stakeholders must apply online via BANKSETA MIS platform available on BANKSETA's website on the following link: [SIMS](#)
- 5.2 Stakeholders may utilize the online DG manual link to complete the registration and application: <https://sims.bankseta.org.za/>
- 5.3 Training to apply online and method of registration on the BANKSETA MIS will be provided in the compulsory briefing session to be held on **MICROSOFT TEAMS** on the 15 January 2026 at 10h00. Attendance of the briefing session is compulsory.
- 5.4 The briefing session link will be shared via email by the 15 January 2026.
- 5.5 Post briefing session recording may be accessible upon request
- 5.6 The Application form must be completed in full and duly signed. This form must be uploaded to the BANKSETA system when applying online. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of the applications.
- 5.7 The closing date to submit the application is **29 January 2026 at 16h00pm**. No late applications will be accepted.
- 5.8 Institution to ensure that learners participating on the BANKSETA bursary programme are not funded by other public funders i.e. SETAs/NSFAS.
- 5.9 Applicants agree to provide information as required by BANKSETA for the purpose of reporting to the Department of Higher Education and Training, as well as other statutory stakeholders
- 5.10 A separate application is required for each category, and each application will be evaluated individually.
- 5.11 Please note that each funding category will have its own performance information requirements depending on the type of programme applied for.
- 5.12 Applicants must keep a copy of their submission for their internal use and backup purposes.
- 5.13 This funding window seeks to provide financial assistance to learners that fall within the NSFAS bracket, **as well as** those that fall within the so called “missing-middle” category (with household income between R350 000 and R 600 000 per annum).

## 6. Evaluation and Allocation Process

- 6.1 The evaluation panel will be appointed by the CEO.
- 6.2 All members will be required to sign a declaration of interest.
- 6.3 The evaluation panel and decision will be recorded for audit purposes.
- 6.4 BANKSETA will evaluate all applications and approve funding in a way that will ensure the equitable allocation of funding by limiting the number of learners approved for each application and limiting the amount per learner.
- 6.5 Applicants may apply for more than one programme but submit *one* application to BANKSETA.

- 6.6 BANKSETA reserves the right to approve / decline applications, without any preference given to any applicant, and to apply discretion to equitably distribute funding per category, based on the availability of funds and to reallocate funds from undersubscribed categories.
- 6.7 BANKSETA reserves the right to approve application as per funding availability and past performance.
- 6.8 BANKSETA may approve additional applications or increase the funding for a particular application should additional funding become available at a later stage. Approval of additional funding to the project, is subject to Board approval.
- 6.9 Additional funding allocation, following Board approval of funds, will follow the same allocation process as described above. Additional funding awarded to an applicant will not exceed the initial number of learners applied for.
- 6.10 Feedback on the status of the application will be provided to all applicants whose application was received before the deadline.

## **7. Approval, Appeal and Change Request Process**

- 7.1 The evaluation documentation will be submitted for Probity Review. The probity review report will be submitted for review to the CEO. Once the CEO has reviewed, the report and supporting evidence as required will be submitted to the Finance and Remuneration Committee for recommendation to the BANKSETA Board. Final approval will be done by the BANKSETA Board. The BANKSETA Board may delegate approval functions to the CEO as indicated in the BANKSETA Delegations of Authority Policy.
- 7.2 Funding window approvals will be subject to Board approval of the projects and budgets in the Annual Performance Plan for 2026/2027.
- 7.3 Should an (unsuccessful) applicant want to appeal the decision, this must be done in writing and **within one month** of receiving the evaluation outcome. Should there be grounds for an appeal this will be submitted to the CEO office to reconsider. After the reconsideration, the CEO Office's decision is final.
- 7.4 Change requests must be submitted to the BANKSETA within one month of signing the Memorandum of Agreement (MoA), with a motivation for the change. The approval of the change request is at the discretion of the CEO provided that the approved amount is not exceeded and that the change is still in line with the guidelines.

## **8. Contracting, Commitment Schedule and Project system update**

- 8.1 BANKSETA will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the successful applicant for any application that is approved.
- 8.2 The approval notification to the applicant will include a deadline date for the return of signed MoAs to the BANKSETA so that funds are not left uncommitted for long periods of time.

- 8.3 The project manager will monitor all the received MoAs and any MoA not signed and returned to BANKSETA by the agreed date will be cancelled.
- 8.4 If the MoA has expired, and no project extension request is received by BANKSETA at least **three months before the lapse of the MoA** or if BANKSETA detects there is no project activity taking place and no reasonable cause has been provided, the MoA will be terminated, and the funding forfeited.

## 9. Invoicing / Funds Disbursement Process

- 9.1 Upon approval of the application, the Applicant, and BANKSETA will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to formalize the application and to agree to the disbursement schedule (in line with the specific application)
- 9.2 The first invoice to the BANKSETA must be accompanied by official proof of banking details as well as proof of registration with the Central Supplier Database (CSD).
- 9.3 The final invoice will be paid subject to all the project requirements being met. This may include a monitoring and evaluation audit conducted by BANKSETA.
- 9.4 Progress Reports are to be submitted with invoices as required (BANKSETA to send template).
- 9.5 Invoices will be paid provided all project requirements are met and supporting documentation are provided.
- 9.6 Successful applicants and payments are subject to a monitoring and evaluation process.
- 9.7 The BANKSETA will only be paying for beneficiaries who successfully complete the programme as required and only make final payments once all other tranche criteria requirements are met.
- 9.8 Applicants are reminded that all supporting documentation related to their funding should be submitted **within one month of signing the MoA**.
- 9.9 Completion letter or completion certificates should be submitted **within one month** of the learner successfully completing.

## 10. Extensions

- 10.1 Applicants should endeavour to meet deadlines and complete the project within the agreed timelines. Extension of the end date of the MoA is discouraged but if this cannot be avoided, the applicant must apply in writing to have the timelines extended **at least three months before** the MoA end date.
- 10.2 MoAs that have already expired will **not** be extended nor re-signed.

## 11. Disclaimer, Termination and Breach

- 11.1 In all instances, BANKSETA reserves the right to approve / decline funding at its discretion

- 11.2** The BANKSETA reserves the right to verify, monitor and audit any of the above approved grants during the implementation period by a designated BANKSETA representative. Payments are also subject to these processes as per the quality requirements stipulated by BANKSETA.
- 11.3** The BANKSETA may withhold grants or recover any grants paid to an applicant if it is found that the grants allocated are not being used for the purpose for which the grant was intended.
- 11.4** Non-compliance will lead to summary termination of the agreement, and the Contracting party will, due to non-compliance, have neither right to any grants or disbursements nor any other right out of this agreement.

## **12. Confidentiality of information**

In compliance with the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI), BANKSETA wishes to inform all its stakeholders that in applying for funding, invoicing the BANKSETA and providing supporting information for such invoices, the below standards will apply:

- 12.1. BANKSETA undertakes to keep all information obtained or received by it for purposes of funding applications, funding agreements, invoicing, and performance information disclosed or provided by the employers in confidence and in a safe and secure manner
- 12.2. Information shall be revealed only to the representatives, agents, and employees whose knowledge of the information is required for the purpose related to administering the funding applications, funding agreements, invoices and supporting documentation.
- 12.3. *The purpose related to administering the funding applications, funding agreements, invoices and supporting documentation includes the following:*
  - 12.3.1 reporting skills development initiatives to the Department of Higher Education and Training.
  - 12.3.2 reporting enrolments and achievements of programmes to the South African Qualifications Authority.
  - 12.3.3 reporting on quality assurance functions to the Quality Council of Trades and Occupations.
  - 12.3.4 evaluating and processing applications for access to funding.
  - 12.3.5 compiling statistics and other research reports.
  - 12.3.6 providing personalized communications.
  - 12.3.7 providing information for internal and external auditing purposes
  - 12.3.8 complying with the law; and/or
  - 12.3.9 for a purpose that is ancillary to the above.

Information related to Memoranda of Agreement will be kept for 5 years after the stated end



date. After 5 years it will be destroyed.

If BANKSETA is required by legal process to disclose any of the information, it shall provide the employer with prompt notice of such requirement so that the employer may seek a protective order or agree to the provision of information. If a protective order or other remedy to ensure that only information covered by such order or other remedy is obtained, the BANKSETA shall use all reasonable efforts to ensure that only the information covered by such order or other remedy is disclosed. Whether or not a protective order or other remedy is obtained, or the employer party agrees to the provision of information, BANKSETA shall take all the reasonable steps to ensure that only the portion of the information which it is legally required to disclose, is disclosed.

**NB:** Priority will be given to programmes expressed on our SSP (especially qualifications on 4IR), see attached BANKSETA [Annexure 1: Sectorial Priority Occupations](#) and [Annexure 2: Emerging Occupations](#) extracted from the BANKSETA SSP 2025/26.

**For queries applicants may contact the BANKSETA team as follows:**

- Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal and Northwest Province-[busisiweb@bankseta.org.za](mailto:busisiweb@bankseta.org.za)
  - Northern Cape and Free State Province-[Ngwakom@bankseta.org.za](mailto:Ngwakom@bankseta.org.za)
  - Limpopo and Mpumalanga Province- [Elelwanin@bankseta.org.za](mailto:Elelwanin@bankseta.org.za)
  - Eastern Cape and Western Cape Province- [Nobuzwem@bankseta.org.za](mailto:Nobuzwem@bankseta.org.za)
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