

Grade 11s to strain NSFAF, varsities

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With about 20 000 Grade 11 learners allowed to apply for university this year, in addition to their Grade 12 counterparts, it is feared the country faces an uphill funding battle.

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The Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF), the higher education ministry and tertiary institutions are sitting with a headache of potentially 20 000 Grade 11s applying for universities this year, putting a further strain on meagre government funds.

The national budget for 2020/21 tabled by finance minister Ipumbu Shiimi shows that the higher education ministry receives N\$3.3 billion or 5.1% of the total allocation. Of this money, N\$900.2 million is for the University of Namibia (Unam) and N\$503.9 million will go to the University of Science and Technology (Nust).

NSFAF will be receiving N\$1.5 billion, including a guarantee-backed loan facility of N\$238 million.

New curriculum

Grade 11 graduates, under the revised curriculum, may study further if they qualify for university admission. This is besides the matriculants who will be sitting for their final exams this year.

The total number of registered full-time candidates for 2020 ordinary level is 27 005. Higher level is 20 712. The total number of part-time candidates for ordinary level is 41 654 and 2 288 for higher level. In addition to this number, the total number of full-time candidates for 2020 revised curricula is 21 485.

Nust and the International University of Management (IUM) have amended their admission requirements to accommodate learners from Grade 11.

NSFAF acting CEO Kennedy Kandume said as funders of higher learning institutions they always have money available to accommodate the growing numbers.

Kandume said although he admits that more students would mean financial strain on the allocated budget, he believes the impact will not be as much.

He was unable to give an estimate of the amount of money the fund will have to fork out in the coming financial year, saying this can only be determined once results are known and the number of those meeting admission requirements.