



STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR 2016

A total of 3 562 students have received financial assistance in 2016 (2 667 financial aid and 895 GAP funding). These students met both the academic and financial eligibility requirements set out by NSFAS and UCT. Last year, UCT provided financial aid to 3 540 undergraduate students (2 706 financial aid and 834 GAP).

The total student financial aid for 2015 to undergraduates totalled R550 million, up from R538 million in 2014 and R505 million in 2013. We anticipate that for 2016 all undergraduate financial aid will amount to over R550 million.

Appeals for debt and 2016 funding

Following the announcement from the Vice-Chancellor in January on [UCT's plan to help students with debt](#) over 700 students who did not meet the requirements above appealed to the financial aid appeals committee. The appeals committee assessed each case on its own merit and 422 students were successful in their appeals as some had improved their performance following loss of financial aid the previous year or were in their final year of study.

The appeals committee took the view that all students who were in their final year of study should be assisted as it is in the best interest of the country, student and the university to ensure that such students attempt to complete their degrees and are financially assisted to do so. A total of 157 appeals were unsuccessful. The majority of these students did not meet the academic or financial eligibility set out by NSFAS or UCT. NSFAS requires that all students pass at least 50% of their courses and not have been academically excluded. UCT has adopted the same requirement to ensure consistency when dealing with all applications for funding. Other students did not meet the financial eligibility, for example, appeals from students whose families' household income is more than R550,000 a year. Others were doing postgraduate study or are doing a second undergraduate qualification. The university offers a sibling rebate to parents with more than one child studying at the university, if they do not qualify for either financial aid or GAP funding. It should also be noted that the appeals committee assesses what a family can afford and not all the outstanding debt is converted into a loan. The family may still be required to pay part of the debt. Payment plans have, however been entered into to allow students with debt less than R10,000 to register while still owing some money. Other appeals did not provide the necessary supporting documents and an outcome will only be communicated once all the information has been provided and assessed. The deadline for all appeals was 5 February 2016 but was extended to 12 February 2016. All appeals received on or before 12 February have been assessed and students have been informed if they were successful, unsuccessful or needed to provide supporting documents.

Late applications for 2016

A decision on 304 late applications for financial aid is still pending. The closing date for applicants was 31 October 2015, in line with Admissions applications. In keeping with the message from Government no NSFAS students will be denied funding if they are eligible for funding. Therefore, the Financial Aid Office will assess all applications over the next few days and engage with DHET and NSFAS providing information on the number of students who qualify and how much additional funding is required. The University will be prepared to underwrite funding, if the DHET and NSFAS commit to funding those students.