CIRCULAR NOTICE NO. 2 OF 2026
(UNIVERSITIES AND TVET COLLEGES)

TO: **UNIVERSITY VICE CHANCELLORS**

                     TVET PRINCIPALS

CC: **SAPCO| USAF| SAUS| SATVETSA**

                     CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS

                     HEADS OF FINANCIAL AID

                     STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICE MANAGERS

FROM: **WASEEM CARRIM**

                     ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

DATE: **21 JANUARY 2025**

SUBJECT: **MERSETA FUNDING – MISSING MIDDLE**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this circular is to outline the administrative requirements, application processes, disbursement procedures, and governance guidelines applicable to students funded under the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (MERSETA) arrangement administered by the NSFAS.

RECRUITMENT OF 2026 APPLICANTS NEW AND RETURNING

Institutions are advised that the MersETA recruitment process for the new intake of 2026 will commence on 26 January 2026 and close on 20 February 2026.

FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Strictly R350 001+ to R800 000 combined household with:

- ✓ declarations of income (affidavit)
- ✓ proof of employment as applicable/ Proof of income for both parents/guardians
- ✓ Fully completed and signed application form
- ✓ Certified copies of their CLEAR Identity Documents
- ✓ Parent(s) or guardians' Identity documents
- ✓ Death certificate if a parent is deceased

APPLICABLE QUALIFICATIONS IN LINE WITH MERSETA PRIORITY SKILLS

- ✓ Mechanical Engineering
- ✓ Chemical Engineering
- ✓ Electrical Engineering
- ✓ Industrial engineering

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- ✓ Mechatronics
- ✓ Civil Engineering
- ✓ Electronic engineering
- ✓ Power engineering
- ✓ Robotics
- ✓ Financial Management
- ✓ Manufacturing – Operations Management
- ✓ Computer Sciences - Software Developer

Qualifying Missing Middle students will be required to sign a <u>Merseta Application form.</u>

First year applicants
a) Clear copy of ID – front and back if it is a smartcard ID
b) Copy of learner Highest Qualification - Matric certificate
c) Current year proof of registration from the University/TVET College
d) Merseta Application form

Continuing Learner: from year 2 onwards
a) Clear copy of ID – front and back if it is a smartcard ID
b) Proof of 2026 registration in a relevant program
c) Previous year academic records from University/ TVET
d) Academic transcripts or recent academic results

SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS
Ensure all documentation is complete and accurate to avoid delays in processing:
- ✓ Applications must be accompanied by the financial eligibility assessment supporting documents
- ✓ NSFAS Bursary Agreement Form
- ✓ Manual claims pack

FILEZILLA (SFTP): once the institution has uploaded to FileZilla, the institution is required to send notification to prefunderclaims@nsfas.org.za clearly indicating their submission on the subject line.
2026 Disbursements schedule

Manual Claims Payment processing		Claims submission Cut-off date		ETA Payment Date
Upfront payment		N/A		N/A
Batch 1		28-02-2026		31-03-2026
Batch 2		20-03-2026		15-04-2026

Batch 3		14-04-2026		12-05-2026
Batch 4		13-05-2026		15-06-2026
Batch 5		13-06-2026		17-07-2026
Batch 6		11-07-2026		14-08-2026
Batch 7		14-08-2026		16-09-2026
Batch 8		13-09-2026		16-10-2026
No Claims processing in December				
Mop-up batch		15-11-2026		19-1-2027
Reconciliation files preparation Institutions confirm payments		N/A		12-03-2027
Credits returns i.r.o. Overpayments		N/A		15-04-2027

CONCLUSION

There are Universities that haven't submitted claims for MerSETA approved students in the 2023, 2024 and 2025 academic cycles which makes it difficult for the funder to meet its targets. Unfortunately, this seems to suggest that Merseta funding for missing middle students is not required. The Funder team will be convening regional workshops, to ensure that challenges encountered in the claims process are resolved.

We encourage institutions to carefully review this circular and adhere to the guidelines provided. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at prefunderqueries@nsfas.org.za.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Waseem Carrim
Acting Chief Executive Officer