

AGRICULTURAL TRAINING INSTITUTES BURSARY POLICY

DIRECTORATE: SECTORAL COLLEGES



agriculture,
forestry & fisheries

Department:
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1. PREAMBLE

One of the government priorities in line with the Medium Term Strategic Framework and National Youth Development Strategy is to strengthen the skills and human resource base for all people who live in South Africa. However this cannot be an event, but will require that there is a coordinated and holistic response by all stakeholders involved in youth development programmes and activities. To this effect the South African government has developed a regulating policy framework.

This framework regulates and encourages youth of South Africa to access and enroll for programmes that will see them realising their goals. South African government interventions necessitate that government establish institutions that will reinforce youth training programmes. These Agricultural Tertiary Institutes (ATIs) contribute towards the development of our communities, particularly in agricultural related fields.

The Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) has therefore, realized the need to make an intervention around this subject area. The resolution was that, the ATIs should develop a policy that will regulate the Bursary allocations within these institutions, not losing sight of government wide policies and other prescripts.

The principal aim of the bursary policy will be to provide financial support to competent and financially deserving students registered with the ATIs in the agricultural sector through quality, effective and accessible academic and practical agricultural education and training that is relevant to the needs of society and the market.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The prime purpose of the ATI Bursary Policy is to contribute towards human resource development and to promote agricultural education and training by broadening financial assistance amongst ATI going students.

3. POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 To increase a number of agricultural technicians and scientists in designated fields
- 3.2 Broaden financial assistance to financially needy, performing and ATI going students
- 3.3 To achieve a competitive agricultural sector through awarding financial assistance
- 3.4 To increase the number of farmers from designated emerging to commercial farmers
- 3.5 To make a contribution towards removing barriers to access to agricultural education and training
- 3.6 To mobilize learners from the Further Education and Training institutions to train and nurture them to be competent technicians and prospective farmers relevant to the present and future market needs of the agricultural sector.

4. LEGISLATIVE MANDATE

This policy derives its mandate from:

- 4.1 The Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998)
- 4.2 National Skills Levies Act No. 97 of 1999
- 4.3 National Human Resource Development Strategy
- 4.4 Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture
- 4.5 Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997
- 4.6 Further Education and Training Act No. 98 of 1998
- 4.7 South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995)
- 4.8 The Education White Paper 4 – a programme for the transformation of higher education
- 4.9 National Agricultural Education and Training Strategy of 2005
- 4.10 Treasury Regulations

5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

The Provisions of this policy will only apply to potential students and those who have completed their Agricultural studies, who are South African citizens, enrolling in one of the Agricultural Training Institutes.

6. DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 **Bursary** In modern English usage, the term has become synonymous with "bursary award", a monetary award made by an institution to an individual or a group to assist the development of their education.
- 6.2 **Students** for the purpose of this policy only, is any individual enrolled in a course of study at the Agricultural Training Institutes under the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- 6.3 **Agricultural Tertiary Institution** for the purpose of this policy only, an institution of higher education created to educate and grant Agricultural related qualifications at the Agricultural Training Institutes under the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- 6.4 **Department** In this case means the department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- 6.7 **Principal** means Head of Agricultural Training Institute.
- 6.8 **Bursary Scheme** means Financial Aid provided to academically performing and financially needy students.

7. ABBREVIATIONS

7.1	ATIs	Agricultural Training Institutes
7.2	FET	Further Education and Training
7.3	HET	Higher Education and Training
7.4	HOD	Head of Department
7.5	MEC	Member of the Executive Authority

8. POLICY PRINCIPLES

- 8.1 Access to Agricultural Education and Training Institute
- 8.2 Qualified Agricultural Graduate
- 8.3 Accredited Qualification
- 8.4 Equity
- 8.5 Competitiveness
- 8.6 Sustainability

9. THE ATI BURSARY SCHEME

- 9.1 The Provincial Department of Agriculture will be the main donor towards the ATI bursaries to support the academically performing and financially needy students
- 9.2 The ATI bursary scheme will operate separately from the other existing bursary schemes
- 9.3 Awarding of bursaries and other financial assistance will be administered by the Training Directorate and the ATI bursary committee as per set criteria
- 9.4 Financial support will also be based on the level of income of the parents and or guardians which will be thoroughly investigated

The ATI bursary scheme will only finance the following key areas:

9.1.1 Registration fees

- ❖ as may be determined in line with treasury regulations

9.1.2 Tuition fees as determined through Treasury Regulations and guideline

- ❖ All academically qualifying, performing and financially needy students enrolled at the ATIs may qualify for the financial aid
- ❖ Certain programmes will be exempt from fees and notice will be given for such programmes
- ❖ The ATI will ensure that all student fees due to the ATI are collected timeously.

9.1.3 Boarding and lodging fees

- ❖ All students lodging in the boarding facilities of the ATIs will be charged boarding and lodging fees according to Treasury regulations.

9.5 ATI Student Union (ATISU) Funds

9.5.1 The bursary scheme will also cover the ATISU fees.

10. MANAGEMENT OF BURSARY FUNDING

- 10.1 The Management of ATI finances is the responsibility of the Registrar, who reports to the Principal, as the Responsibility Manager
- 10.2 Bursary allocations will be utilised specifically for supporting financially needy and academically deserving and performing students who meet the set criteria
- 10.3 The ATI will be responsible for the preparation and application of the appropriate ATI students financial aid scheme guidelines
- 10.4 The ATI will make recommendations and the final approval of the bursary financial aid & expenditure will rest with the Principal of the ATI.
- 10.5 The ATI will have an effective internal budgetary control system and will manage finances according to Government procedures in liaison with the finance section
- 10.6 All finances in the ATI, being a government institute, are managed according to PFMA (Public Finance Management Act)

11. THE SELECTION CRITERIA

The selection criteria for financial aid would be applied as follows:

- 11.1 Students would be requested to provide proof of all income sources of their parents or
- 11.2 Guardians which will be accompanied by a certified affidavit from the commissioner of oaths
- 11.3 Upon receipt of the documents, a further verification on Persal and other sources of income that might not have been revealed by the applicant will be undertaken
- 11.4 The situation will also be evaluated in terms of whether parents are deceased or are pensioners
- 11.5 Academic potential/performance as proven by the latest academic reports will be taken into consideration
- 11.6 Registration on discipline (Diploma and Bachelors Degree), as may be offered by the ATI and in liaison with other identified training institutes will all be recommended for support
- 11.7 The scheme will only support students who are South African citizens.

12. CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE GRANTED

12.1. The bursary support will be awarded under the following conditions:

- ❖ Enrolled full-time student who are academically performing and financially needy in their first, second or third year of their studies at the ATIs will be eligible
- ❖ Granting of bursaries/financial assistance is a privilege not a right or entitlement under the auspices of the Skills Development Act
- ❖ The Principal / ATI Council has the final say in the approval of such assistance and in exercising the prerogative may refuse the support owing to several reasons.

The following shall serve as guidelines for financial aid in terms of bursary support:

12.1 **CATEGORY 1:** Best Academically Performing and Financially Needy Students

Each ATI will be allocated 17 bursaries as to cater for the year level as identified below:

- Deserving students in their first year of study at the ATI
- Deserving students in their second year of study at the ATI
- Deserving students in their third year of study at the ATI

12.2 **CATEGORY 2:** Financially Challenged Students Based On Income Levels of Parents or Guardians.

12.3 **CATEGORY 3:** Existing third year students continuing with their fourth year of Bachelors Degree studies

- ❖ Students from ATIs
- ❖ Deserving students who are to Graduate to continue their studies at an NQF level 7 qualification
 - These studies will be part-time over two years
 - Whilst studying, they will be employed as interns by the ATI, to assist the current farm technicians; to gain experience.

13. FEES EXEMPTION: PROPOSED GUIDELINES

It must be noted that students that do not perform academically will not be eligible to benefit from the proposed scheme. Admission of any student is dependant on student's ability to meet prescribed entrance criteria.

The following categories are proposed with example requirements:

Category stipulated	(% of fees	Level of Family (Guardian's) Annual Income is Equivalent to Approximately:
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payable)	
0% of stipulated fees	R0 – R60,000
25% of stipulated fees	R60,001 – R120,000
50% of stipulated fees	R120,001 – R240,000
75% of stipulated fees	R240,001 – R350,000
100% of stipulated fees	R350,001 and above

The above situation applies to students who are performing well and who are marginalized in terms of income and other circumstances as may be decided on by the bursary selection committee.

14. COMMENCEMENT OF THE BURSARY SCHEME:

- The scheme will be implemented as soon as this policy is approved
- Related to category 2 proposal the implementation will take place in 2010 except in deserving cases at the discretion of the Head of Department

14.1 Application for Bursary Support

The bursary would be internally advertised (in ATIs) as it would be applicable only to registered students in the ATIs

- Application forms shall be obtainable from the ATIs or in the office of the Registrar
- Screening of applications will be coordinated by the office of the Training Manager and the appointed committee
- Interviews will be conducted by the same committee and recommendations will be submitted to the Principal
- Award letters shall be forwarded to successful candidates who will then be requested to confirm their acceptance of the award
- Upon acceptance of the award an award contract will be signed by the student

14.2 Termination of Bursary Support

- ❖ Students who do not perform satisfactorily will lose the opportunity of continued financial support
- ❖ Students who do not manage to attain a minimum number of credit will also lose the opportunity
- ❖ The Principal, Academic Registrar and the Quality assurance manager will review the cases and advise the bursary committee accordingly on whether to renew the support or cancel it
- ❖ Breaching of ATI disciplinary rules and regulations may lead to the termination of financial support
- ❖ Unsuccessful students shall be informed of the termination of the award in writing and the reasons thereof.

14.3 Continued funding

All bursary holders shall reapply for funding annually by completing the necessary application forms. Students who have been awarded continued funding will be advised in writing. Students will only qualify for continued funding to a Bachelors Degree after the completion of their Diploma studies.

14.4 Contractual Obligations

In line with the policy provisions and objectives, funded students on the completion of their studies will be obliged to serve the department for a period equals to that of their funding.

In cases where the department can not absorb them, they will have latitude to pursue their careers elsewhere.

14.5 Breach of Contract

Students who fail to honor their contractual obligations unless the context indicates otherwise, will be deemed to have breached their contract and will have to refund all the monies used for that particular period.

15. ASSUMPTIONS

The ATI will only provide financial assistance to students based on the availability of funding

16. MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

- 16.1 The policy will be reviewed as determined by the new developments
- 16.2 ATIs shall conduct monitoring of bursary allocation
- 16.3 They will be responsible for monitoring academic performance of funded students on a semester basis
- 16.4 Graduates shall be evaluated at the end of each academic year
- 16.5 ATIs shall ensure resources are allocated in accordance with the set criteria