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BANKSETA FUNDING WINDOW GUIDELINES

1. Purpose

This document has been developed to guide the application process for BANKSETA Discretionary Grant Funding Windows. It takes into account 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

This guideline is for Higher Education Bursaries. The Eligibility Criteria, Evaluation Criteria and Allocation Criteria are reflected in item 3 below.

3. Invitation Process

- BANKSETA will publish all funding window invitations on the BANKSETA website www.bankseta.org.za
- Each funding window will remain open for at least 6 weeks.
- No late applications will be accepted.

4. Criteria

Eligibility Criteria	Evaluation Criteria (must score at least 60%)	Allocation Criteria
All applicants must be public Universities, Universities of Technology, TVET Colleges and Community Education and Training Colleges, Business schools linked to public universities. The application is for 2024 academic year students, both new and returning	Business Case – 35% Project Plan – 20% Equity Targets – 25% Track Record / Completion Record / Exit Strategy – 20%	Cap per learner is R120 000,00 per year and cover the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuition cost: R50 000,00• Study material: R 10 000,00• Accommodation: R45 000,00• Living allowances/meal allowances: R15 000,00 Available budget will be divided equally amongst all qualifying applicants so that each Higher Institution is awarded the same amount.

Eligibility Criteria	Evaluation Criteria (must score at least 60%)	Allocation Criteria
Programmes applied for must comply or be consistent with the current BANKSETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP).		

5. Submission Requirements

- Applications and other related documents are to be submitted on BANKSETA templates, and as per the prescribed submission process. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of the applications.
- Applications must be received in the specified timeframes; no late submissions will be accepted.
- Applicants agree to provide information as required by BANKSETA for the purposes of reporting to the Department of Higher Education and Training, as well as other statutory stakeholders.
- Please note that each funding category will have its own performance information requirements depending on the type of programme applied for.

6. Submission Process

- Early submissions are encouraged. No late applications will be accepted.
- Applicants are required to submit separate applications per category where applicable.

Applications must be submitted on a secure platform such as Dropbox, WeTransfer or Microsoft OneDrive. Submissions on this platform must be confirmed by the applicant by sending an e-mail to a specified e-mail address. Submission of the application will be acknowledged; however, applicants must note that the completeness and correctness of applications will only be evaluated after the closing date.

- Applicants are not limited on the number of applications per category. However, applicants are requested to carefully consider business needs and prioritize applications as funding may be limited or declined considering the funding available and the number of applications received.
- Each application will be evaluated individually.
- Applicants must keep a copy of their submission for their internal use and backup purposes.

7. Evaluation and Allocation Process

- In all cases an evaluation panel shall be established to evaluate applications.

- The evaluation panel will be appointed by the CEO.
- All panel members will be required to sign a declaration of interest.
- The evaluation panel and decision will be recorded for audit purposes.
- All grants are VAT inclusive, and this funding is specifically for Tuition cost, Study material, Accommodation and living allowances / meal allowances.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 is subject to Board approval.
- 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.
- Feedback on the status of the application will be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

Specific Exclusions

- Capital and business set-up costs.
- Salaries and directors' fees.
- Application development costs.
- Planning and marketing costs.

8. Approval, Appeal and Change Request Process

- 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.
- Should an (unsuccessful) applicant want to appeal the decision of the BANKSETA, this must be done in writing and the request will be submitted to the CEO to review and should there be grounds for an appeal this will be tabled at the Board to reconsider. After their reconsideration the Board's decision is final.

- Change requests must be submitted to the BANKSETA 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.

9. Contracting, Commitment Schedule and Project system update

- BANKSETA will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the applicant for each application that is approved.
- The approval notification to the applicant should 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.
- 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.
- If the MoA has expired, and no project extension request is received by BANKSETA 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.

10. Invoicing/ Funds Disbursement Process

- 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)
- The first invoice to the BANKSETA must be accompanied by official proof of banking details as well as a valid Tax clearance certificate failure to provide the tax certificate shall warrant BANKSETA to remind the applicant on need to be compliant but still process payment.
- 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.
- Progress Reports are to be submitted with invoices as required (BANKSETA to send template).
- Invoices will be paid provided all project requirements are met and supporting documentation are provided (such as proof of payment to other parties, proof of disbursement of stipends to unemployed learners, etc.)
- Successful applicants and payments are subject to a monitoring and evaluation process.

- 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.
- Applicants are reminded that all supporting documentation related to funding of employees, should be submitted within two months of signing the MoA.
- Statements of results or completion certificates should be submitted within two months of the learner successfully completing and no later than the end of each financial year.

11. Extensions and/or re-applications

- Applicants should endeavor to meet deadlines and complete the project within the project plan submitted during application phase. If, however, this is not possible the applicant should apply in writing to have the timelines extended and where needed to sign an addendum to the MoA to extend the end date.
- In the event where, due to unforeseen circumstances an agreement lapses, and the applicant is only able to continue with the project at a later stage the applicant may submit a motivation to re-instate the previous approval if the overall project is still open and if there is still funds available in the project.
- This new application and agreement must follow the same process as the initial one and is subject to Board approval or as delegated to the CEO in the Delegations of Authority Policy.

12. Disclaimer, Termination and Breach

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

13. 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:

- 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.
- 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.

The purpose related to administering the funding applications, funding agreements, invoices and supporting documentation includes the following:

- reporting skills development initiatives to the Department of Higher Education and Training.
- reporting enrolments and achievements of programmes to the South African Qualifications Authority;
- reporting on quality assurance functions to the Quality Council of Trades and Occupations;
- evaluating and processing applications for access to funding.
- compiling statistics and other research reports.
- providing personalised communications.
- providing information for internal and external auditing purposes
- complying with the law; and/or
- 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.

In the event that 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. In the event that 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.