

Devastated University Students Mass Meeting About NSFAS Failure

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On 23 February 2024, students from the University of the Witwatersrand went on strike after being unable to register to study this year as they met at the Wits Amphitheatre. The strikes happened because the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (Nsfas) failed to pay for full tuition for students who were eligible for funding for 2023. Nsfas is alleged to have only paid for students' tuition but left it short of R10,000 or more in some cases. This resulted in those students not being able to register for studies in 2024 because the Wits registration is R10,000, the amount many of the affected students owed to the institution.

The students decided to protest the situation. Their strike went largely unnoticed as other students were already attending classes and did not partake in the strike. At the time of writing, some of those students were still struggling to register.

A male student from Wits named Lindo, in his twenties, who resides in the Eastrand commented but asked to not give too much information about his details fearing repercussions and being kicked out of school. He said, "I deeply understand how those students are feeling. Imagine not being able to finish your course, causing you not to get a degree. Some of those students have people depending on them at home to finish their studies and get a degree so they can change their home situations. Nsfas should settle the debt."

There should be questions why Nsfas is failing to pay for full tuition and accommodation for students on time. Students do not deserve to be burdened with academic stress then also have to deal with stress not knowing if they still could finish and get their degrees because of the lack of funding.

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