

<b>MEDIA RELEASE</b>	PSA calls for abolishment of unjustifiable university application fees at expense of struggling learners
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) is extremely concerned about the payment of university application fees resulting in universities making vast profits even when rejecting these applications.

One university reportedly received over 600 000 applications with applicants each paying a R200 application fees. The university made an enormous profit of R150 million to just reject applications. South Africa recently celebrated an 87.3% matric pass rate with 337 158 learners achieving admission to Bachelor studies.

The reality is that the excitement will be short-lived as only 39% of these learners can be accepted at universities. The majority of universities received more than 300 000 applications whilst having an average on only 5 500 spaces, leaving a vast number of learners disappointed. Historically, universities have established that there will be much more applications than admissions, which to most of these universities equals free money. The application fee is an unnecessary financial burden on learners from low-income families who are struggling to cover the costs of necessities.

The PSA urges the Minister of Higher Education to abolish these non-refundable applications fees and allow learners to freely apply at these universities. Some progressive universities have already introduced free online applications. Rural schools should be assisted with information and communication technology to enable learners to apply for university admission. The abolishment of university application fees will demonstrate a commitment to equity and inclusion, ensuring that all qualifying learners, regardless of their financial situation, can apply for higher education admission.

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