

ISFAP: Funding critical skills professionals

‘Through ISFAP I am so close to the finishing line of achieving my childhood dream of becoming a medical doctor and moreover, a first-generation doctor in my family. Without the financial support of ISFAP, I would not have managed to reach this far.’—Sizamkele Hombakazi Mahlasela, 5th year medical student, Walter Sisulu University

Funders of tertiary education want to know that their investment is used effectively, and accounted for professionally. They also demand to see results and want to know that their money is applied purposefully to make a noticeable difference. At the same time, talented, motivated students with a lack of funding need support to set them on the road as critical skills providers.

The **Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP) Foundation NPC** attracts investment into the future of our communities and the economy: its focus and practical approach is to support the ‘missing middle’ segment of students at public universities throughout South Africa. ISFAP currently focuses mainly on the critical skills needed in the IT and data science, engineering, chartered accountancy, actuarial and medical professions. The programme’s expansion into funding other disciplines will remain responsive to the skills demands of the economy.

In 2021 ISFAP became the largest private bursary provider in the country, and was named as the ‘Best Bursary provider’ by the B-BBEE Commission.

Medicine

The Covid-19 pandemic has increased the already-urgent need for funding, because many households have been devastated by its effects. More learners in all disciplines now need assistance to reach their professional goals and make the contributions that our economy needs during and after Covid-19. In addition, the pandemic places enormous demands on the shoulders of individuals working in the medical disciplines. ISFAP’s contribution to support qualifying students in this critical skills area is of the utmost importance, and the programme’s results since inception in 2017 have been notable:

- Nurses: 18 graduates
- Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics: **49 graduates**
- MBCHB: 9 Graduates
- Occupational Therapy: **18 Graduates**
- Pharmacy: 11 Graduates
- Physiotherapy: **3 Graduates**
- Speech-Language Pathology: **1 Graduate**

‘The ISFAP bursary has given me a chance to not only comfortably pursue my degree but to also someday contribute to growing our economy especially during this global pandemic. I will forever be thankful to ISFAP and the opportunity they have given me.’—Ineeleng Moope, 2nd year pharmacy student at Wits.



Wrap-around support

ISFAP ensures much better throughput rates than traditional bursary schemes and therefore reduces the long-term cost per graduate: fewer students need to repeat an academic year. What sets ISFAP apart is the wrap-around support in addition to what a normal bursary provides. The model for our approach was the highly successful Thuthuka Bursary Fund that concentrates its focus on chartered accountants.

Our wrap-around support includes among others:

- University fees
- Accommodation, meals and books
- Academic support as well as tutoring, extended academic programmes and IT support (laptops and data allowance)

- Dedicated programme managers on every campus to support students academically and psycho-socially
- Life skills training
- Mentoring
- A stipend
- Some medical support for students needing reading glasses etc.
- Ongoing administrative support, including regular check-ins with students to ensure they remain on track.

Key governance facts and current figures

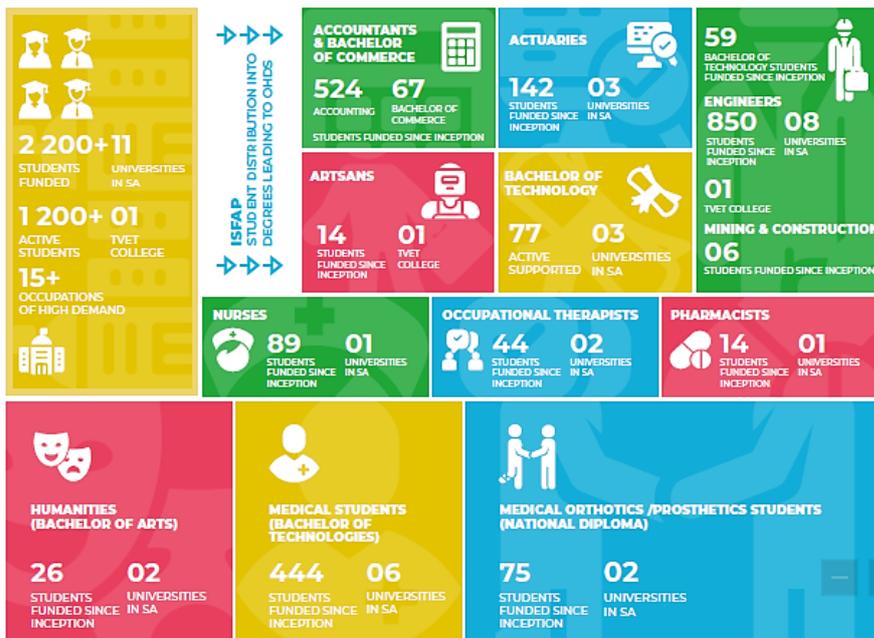
'It is our duty to look after the generation of young people who will provide the critical skills that our country needs. Transforming the education sector of South Africa is one part of the picture. Another is the support of business leaders and other funders with the vision to make a difference.'

— Sizwe Nxasana, Chairman of ISFAP

The ISFAP Foundation is set up as a public benefit organisation (PBO) under the directive of the Ministerial Task Team led by Cabinet and the Department of Higher Education and Training. It is a registered provider of bursaries for tertiary education.

- ISFAP is **chaired by Mr Sizwe Nxasana**, a visionary leader who plays a critical role in transforming the education sector of our country.
- Since **inception in January 2017**, we have **funded over 2200 students across 11 universities** in South Africa. We have already **graduated over 360 of those students**.
- Our **throughput rate exceeds 80%**.
- In 2021 ISFAP became the largest private bursary provider in the country.
- ISFAP was noted as the 'Best Bursary provider' by the B-BBEE Commission in March 2021 for the programme's outstanding contribution towards skills development in the country.

TOTAL ISFAP INTERACTIONS



'During my four years of study, I was not only financially sponsored by ISFAP, but the ISFAP team made it their mission to go beyond that and ensure emotional, academic and social support. I knew that if I needed anything, I can ask and they will refer me to the help I needed. I have never been disappointed, but supported and encouraged to do better. Thank you very much for giving me a chance. Now, I am proud to say I am a graduated occupational therapist, because ISFAP was there.' — Selinah Seepo

Why partner with ISFAP?

'The core reason to partner with ISFAP is the concept of active citizenry: active support and participation by the people. Reaching the economic development aims as set out in the National Development Plan requires the cooperation of all sectors of society, and we play an important role in ensuring that students can fulfil their potential to contribute to the South African success story.'—Morné du Toit, ISFAP CEO.

In addition to the overall contribution towards filling posts in the critical skills professions,

- ISFAP offers a reliable tracking and reporting system that makes it easy to know your funds are secure and which students you support.
- ISFAP's aims are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. You will be contributing to reaching global goals.
- All ISFAP funding partners can tailor their own funding constraints to fit their own company or industry demands for specific professions.
- National and international companies can increase their B-BBEE points through cooperation with ISFAP.

Main funding partners for students studying in the medical field

The demand for medical professionals in the country remains high, particularly since Covid-19 affects the whole of the South African economy and every citizen. The work done by people in the medical field is critical and ISFAP is grateful to all the funding partners of the programme. For the medical field in particular the current (2021) main funders supply vital support:

- Absa
- Allan Gray
- First Rand Foundation
- Standard Bank
- The Compensation Fund (Department of Employment and Labour).



'ISFAP has been a life changing experience. Having to study free of worry and anxiety about academics, food and finances has been relaxing and assuring. The support we have been getting has been immaculate. I was able to study and finish my degree in record time. Now I'm doing my community service. I would 100% like to be part of ISFAP, one way or the other.'—

Njabulo Shabangu, Baccalaureus Technologiae, Nursing Science

'Thank you, ISFAP, for changing my life and making my dream come true. I have been working temporary and unprofessional jobs such as a security guard, but now, through ISFAP help, I have hope that I will have a decent job and be able to support my three children and my wife. Thank you ISFAP! Keep on changing people's lives!'—Xolani Mkhwanazi, National Diploma, Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics

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