



UF NEWS

A Newsletter of the Universities Fund

Government to Inject Additional Funding into Scholarship Kitty

The government will pump more money into the higher education sector for scholarships and loans under the new funding model to alleviate the burden on students and promote access to education.

During his address to the nation at State House, Nairobi, on July 5, 2024, President William Ruto said the government will source for more funds to finance higher education.

President Ruto announced that the government will raise Sh346 billion through borrowing and budget cuts to finance other major projects and programmes.

“We will use the money that we borrow to protect funding of some of our critical areas, which include additional funding for the new funding model that was in our plan,” President Ruto said.

Under the new funding model, the government has so far disbursed over Sh7 billion through the Universities Fund to universities to cater for students’ tuition fees.

The President launched the Student-Centred Financing Model



President William Ruto addresses a past event. President Ruto said the government will increase budgetary allocation for the higher education sector.

last year to help promote equity in funding of students, ease the debt burden of universities, increase research and innovation outputs, and make the institutions more autonomous.

As per the scheme, only students placed to public universities and colleges by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) are eligible for scholarships.

Students are required to make online applications through the Higher Education Financing portal (www.hef.co.ke).

Scholarship allocation is based on a student’s level of need that is determined by various factors including family economic background (poverty probability index), affirmative action (persons with disabilities, gender and those from marginalised regions) and family education expenditure.

Students are categorised based on five bands and are entitled to an upkeep of between Sh40,000 and Sh60,000, and a scholarship of between 30 and 70 percent.

UF Records Growth, Lays Out Plan to Boost Higher Education Sustainability

The Universities Fund (UF) is seeking at least Sh4.5 billion to boost the competitiveness of the local higher education sector, as it marked significant accomplishments.

According to UF Strategic Plan 2023/2024-2027/2028, the agency established the priority areas it will implement over the period to elevate the sector.

and continuous improvement of monitoring and evaluation.

“This strategic plan aligns itself with the broad government agenda of transforming Kenya’s education system for the 21st Century, expanding access, promoting equity and enhancing the quality of training in our universities,” the document read.

However, the Plan showed that UF potentially faces a deficit of about Sh2.7 billion that might derail the implementation of the strategic initiatives. The Fund intends to plug the

data management system that enhances auditing and tracking of its operations. The UF added that it has managed to grow its staff and encourage performance management to maximise staff productivity.

“The Fund developed and implemented various policies and standard operating procedures (SOP) that give guidelines in running the operations for all the processes in the organisation for better quality service and accountability,” the document read in part.

The agency also succeeded in enhancing stewardship and accountability through minimising non-compliance issues and strengthening stakeholder relations following the success of the First Biennial Conference in 2023.

The conference – which took place in Mombasa – drew vice chancellors of public and private universities, government officials, higher education experts and international partners, who reached resolutions on promoting resource mobilisation and commercialising research and innovation.

The report further underlined that some of the challenges encountered during the strategy implementation ranged from funding deficit, unstructured and inadequate research funding for universities to dwindling appropriation-in-aid in universities.

The strategic plan underscored the agency’s commitment to bolster internal operations, promote customer experience and satisfaction and enhance corporate governance. It will equally promote the country’s socio-economic development by supporting environmental and social practices.



Illustration: Students during a graduation ceremony. The Universities Fund is seeking to promote quality training in universities.

They include diversification of funding sources, financial accountability and transparency, responsible resource allocation and adopting human resource best practices.

Others are encouraging adoption of ICT infrastructure, implementing the business continuity plan, attaining the highest level of risk maturity,

deficit through robust resource mobilisation strategies and better resource management.

The document shed light on the achievements realised during implementation of the 2021-2026 strategic plan, highlighting growth in areas such as sustainable financing, innovation and customer service.

The Fund also established a

Monari to Amplify Role of Universities in Job Creation during Conference

Universities Fund Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari will participate in the Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship Institutions Leaders (CEIL) Summit in August organised by Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA).

Mr Monari will provide insights into the significance of innovation-driven progress and the place of universities in spurring economic opportunities for young people.

The fourth edition of the high-level meeting - which promotes conversations on socio-economic growth, linkages and research - will be held in Mombasa from



Illustration: Youths applying for jobs. The CEIL Summit aims to enhance conversation on employment opportunities

29-30th August 2024 under the theme 'Youth, Job and Wealth Creation through Innovation and Entrepreneurship'.

The conference is designed by

investors, institutional heads and government officials to exchange ideas and explore opportunities for growth and collaboration in various industries.

KeNIA to serve as a fulcrum driving forward the national innovation system. The event was first organised in 2021.

According to KeNIA, participants deliberate on issues surrounding innovation funding, case studies on commercialisation, and the enhancing of innovation and entrepreneurial systems within institutions of higher learning and research centres.

The summit brings together entrepreneurs,

Students Urged to Apply for Scholarships, Loans for 2024-2025 Academic Year

The Universities Fund and Higher Education Loans Board are inviting applications for scholarships and loans from undergraduate students in universities and colleges.

The eligible students are those applying for the first time and continuing students applying for the second and subsequent scholarships and loans under the old and new funding models. According to a media advert published on July 30, Kenyan

students placed by KUCCPS to public institutions and those in self-sponsored programmes in public and private universities in Kenya and the East African Community that are recognised by the Commission for University Education qualify to apply.

Eligible students under the old model are those that sat their KCSE examination before the year 2022, while those applying under the new model should be newly placed and should have sat the examination in 2022 or 2023.

"Please ensure that you read, understand, and follow the instructions provided at

the beginning of the online scholarship and loan application process, including reading and undertaking the HEF Financial Literacy Programme," the notice stated.

New applicants should submit their applications online through the Higher Education Funding portal and continuing students should apply using HELB mobile application or short SMS code *642#.

The advert said application is free, cautioning students against fraudsters. The closing date is December 31, 2024.

Special Needs Education, Climate Change Rank High on List of Investment Priorities

The Universities Fund (UF) has prioritised special needs education, promotion of research and innovation and enhancement of climate action initiatives as part of concerted efforts to expand access to equitable higher education.

According to its Resource Mobilisation Strategy (2024-2026), the Fund intends to raise Ksh600 million over the three-year period to fulfil its mandate amid rise in demand for university education.

The strategy, therefore, will provide UF with a roadmap for building more revenue streams to spur financial sustainability, strengthen partnerships and broaden its impact on the socio-economic development of the country.

“The strategy will gradually evolve to meet changing development needs and priorities, evolving trends in donor funding, insights gleaned from the experiences and knowledge of other organisations and the organisation’s own strategic path,” the document reads in part.

On special-needs education, UF will create and foster systems that improve accessibility of learning to students with disabilities through provision of scholarships, friendly accommodation and learning aids.

The Fund will collaborate with individual universities to acquire

and repair learning aids and provide infrastructure that enhance the mobility of the students.

This is in line with the government’s plan of promoting transition of learners to higher education.

Secondly, UF will set up a graduates’ innovation fund to

promote research and innovation through increased financial access, while fostering linkages with private sector and exploring avenues for commercialising research.

The agency highlighted that lack of sufficient funding has inhibited local researchers from actualising their ideas over the years.

“The Universities Fund will play a pivotal role in facilitating these linkages by organising industry-academia collaboration forums, matchmaking events and networking opportunities,” the document indicates.

Additionally, adoption of eco-friendly initiatives by public universities will reduce the cost of managing the institutions.

Advancement of solar initiatives, setting up of climate change centres and tree planting will promote economic opportunities while conserving the environment.



Universities Fund Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari speaks during the Data Innovation and Entrepreneurship Challenge at Kabarak University on May 31, 2024.

While launching the Universities Solarisation Project in Nairobi in March this year, UF Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari highlighted that solar power has the potential of reducing universities’ electricity bills by up to 40 percent.

Such a pathway will help universities to reduce the collective debt burden that has now spiralled to more than Sh60 billion.

The agency, in partnership with Cooperative Bank, intends to install solar panels in the institutions through a leasing model.

For UF to achieve the priority areas it will step up advocacy drives, intensify corporate social responsibility initiatives and reach out to bilateral and multilateral partners for funding. The agency will also grow its own income generating activities to boost its sustainability.