



Ministry of Education Opens Higher Education Financing Portal for Scholarships Applications



UF staff demonstrates the scholarship application processes on the HEF Portal at the Meru ASK Show

Students seeking State funding for higher education can apply for scholarships on the Higher Education Financing (HEF) portal following its official opening on June 18.

The HEF Portal serves as the platform for students to apply for government financial assistance soon after they receive their admission letters.

Education cabinet secretary Ezekiel Machogu while announcing the official opening of the portal stated adequate time will be allowed to accepting

applications.

“We wish to assure all parents, guardians and students that the Government will allow sufficient time for all eligible learners to apply for the funding in the form of scholarships and loans, in the spirit of leaving no one behind,” he said.

The HEF portal applications target students set to join universities and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions.

Initially scheduled for launch on June 15 2024, the opening was postponed following the declaration of a public holiday on June 17th to celebrate Eid Al-Adha.

“In solidarity with our Muslim

fraternity, we decided to move the portal opening date... to allow Kenyans ample time to prepare and celebrate Eid Al-Adha,” said Mr Machogu in a statement.

This initiative is part of the Student-Centred Funding Model, aimed at the 2023 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) cohort. The model is designed to distribute higher education funds directly to students based on specific criteria.

To be eligible for this financial aid, students must have been placed by the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) to pursue an accredited course within the country.

In an earlier statement, Mr Machogu notified the public that the results of the funding application will be released from July 31 2024.

Under the student-centred funding model, the placement process for first-year university students has been separated from the funding process.

As a result, KUCCPS publishes the full fee structure for each declared course alongside the cluster requirements for degree programs on its portal.

This new approach is designed to streamline the funding application process and ensure that students receive the financial support they need in a timely manner.

UF Commits to Raising Sh600 Million to Propel Education Programs

The Universities Fund has embarked on a raising Sh600 million in the next three years as part of its strategic plan to support its programmes.

UF chief executive Geoffrey Monari shares insights on what the strategy entails and measures in place to achieve the target.

Let's begin with the basics. What is the significance of the Universities Fund in the current higher education landscape?

Our main mandate is to ensure the sustainability of universities in Kenya, mobilise resources, and establish the criteria for funding these institutions.

What are the major challenges Kenyan universities are grappling with?

The biggest challenge is inadequate funding, leading to huge pending bills. Increased enrollment amid limited infrastructure and the reliance on part-time lecturers due to financial constraints are also significant issues.

How is the Universities Fund addressing these challenges in alignment with your Strategic Plan 2021-2026?

We have several strategies, including resource mobilisation focusing on special needs students, climate change initiatives, as well as research and innovation to make universities more entrepreneurial. We are also lobbying the government for more financial support and advising universities on efficient resource management and income-generating activities.



What milestones have you accomplished in line with the Strategic Plan, and what strategic pillars is the Fund banking on?

We disburse up to Sh55 billion annually to universities. We've shifted from the Differentiated Unit Cost (DUC) model to a need-based, student-centered formula for funding. We've enhanced entrepreneurial activities and developed frameworks for Public-Private Partnerships, allowing companies to work with universities to enhance efficiency and provide industrial experience for students.

How is resource mobilisation being executed and what are your key priority focus areas?

Our resource mobilization focuses on special needs education, climate action initiatives, and research and innovation. We offer scholarships for special needs students, embed green skills in university curricula, and

promote solarisation and water recycling. We're also looking at commercializing university research and fostering innovation to reduce dependence on the Exchequer.

Can you elaborate on the solarisation aspect?

We aim for all public universities to use solar energy, mitigating climate change impacts and reducing energy costs. This initiative involves working with various partners to finance solar adoption, thus saving on costs in the long run.

What plans do you have for enhancing the financial sustainability of the Universities Fund and securing Sh600 million over the next three years?

We are creating endowment funds with alumni, collaborating with industry on innovation, and working with development partners like the British Council and the World Bank to fund targeted university programs.

PICTORIAL...

Editor's Pick



1
UF team educates students on the New Funding Model at the Meru Ask Show held from May 28 to June 1, 2024.



2
Geoffrey Monari, Universities Fund CEO (3rd left) join staff for this year's team building in Naivasha.



3
Universities Fund staff participate in team building held between May 30 to June 2, 2024 at Lake Naivasha Resort.



4
UF Assistant Director, Corporate Communications, Immaculate Njoroge takes students through the new funding model at the Kakamega ASK show held from June 12 to June 15, 2024.



5
Universities Fund CEO Geoffrey Monari (third from left) poses for a photo with other delegates attending the Data Innovation and Entrepreneurship Challenge 2024 at Kabarak University on May 31, 2024.



6
Universities Fund Chief Executive Officer Geoffrey Monari addresses participants during the Data Innovation and Entrepreneurship Challenge at the Kabarak University on May 31, 2024.

Frequently Asked Questions on the Higher Education Portal

Education Cabinet Secretary Ezekiel Machogu has announced the opening of the HEF portal for applicants who sat their KCSE exams in 2022 and 2023. Below are some frequently asked questions to guide applicants through the process:

What is a Scholarship?

A scholarship is financial aid awarded to undergraduate students in public universities placed by KUCCPS and trainees in TVET institutions under the Ministry of Education. The funds are allocated based on the assessed level of need and are paid directly to the university or TVET institution as tuition.

How is it different from a loan?

Scholarship recipients do not have to repay the funds, whereas loans must be repaid with interest and other charges as per the terms and conditions.

Who qualifies to apply for a UF scholarship?

Kenyan students in public universities recognized by the Commission for University Education in East Africa are eligible to apply.

I am below 18 years, am I eligible for scholarship funding?

Yes. Minor/underage applicants can use their KCSE index number to access the application.

Note: The bank account used should be solely owned and fully operated by the student.

Must I apply for both a scholarship and a HELB loan?

It is not mandatory to apply for both. Apply for the scholarship and HELB loan only if you need financial assistance during your studies.

Will I be required to apply for a scholarship every year?

Yes, applications must be submitted annually through the available platform if financial support is needed within the approved course duration.

Does a scholarship attract any interest?

No, scholarships do not attract any interest charges and are not repayable.

How do I check my scholarship application status?

Log on to the Higher Education Financing (HEF) Student Portal to get the updated status of your scholarship application.

What should I do if I successfully process inter-institution or inter-faculty transfers?

Inform the funding institutions of the changes to enable them to update their records accordingly.

Looking for Government Scholarship?

The Higher Education Financing Portal is now OPEN.

Apply for FREE on www.hef.co.ke

Eligible applicants: 2022 & 2023 KCSE candidates

SUSTAINABLE FINANCING FOR UNIVERSITIES