



Stellenbosch University Guidelines for Off-campus Private Student Housing Accreditation 2023

Private Accommodation Office, Centre for Student Accommodation, Registrar's Division
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I. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Please take note that NSFAS has officially opened a portal for service providers to register their properties as NSFAS beneficiaries. NSFAS plans to grade, cost and cap the cost of student accommodation, enter lease negotiations on behalf of students and pay landlords directly. The University has not yet received official communication to adjust the accreditation process accordingly. Until the NSFAS Guidelines is approved by the Minister of Education and published and the University receives formal notification, the Stellenbosch University (SU) Private Accommodations Office will continue to accredit private accommodation for 2023. The rules and regulations of this Guideline for accreditation is therefore applicable until the new rules are implemented.

- 1.1 Accreditation is the regulation of off-campus privately owned student housing (“**off-campus private housing**”) at South African Universities according to regulation of the Policy on the Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing at Public Universities of September 2015 (the “**Policy**”).
- 1.2 The Policy stipulates that universities should rate and differentiate off-campus private housing according to standards set by each university and that off-campus private housing providers (“**landlords**”) shall establish clear and comprehensive standard lease agreements after consultation with relevant University officials and student representatives.
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide the necessary guidelines for Stellenbosch University (“**SU**”) accreditation. Landlords within proximity of any SU campus can apply to join the accreditation scheme for student housing.
- 1.4 Accreditations are done by SU’s **Private Accommodation Office** within the Centre for Applications, Student Accommodation and Client Services. The centre forms part of the services of the Registrar’s Division.
- 1.5 The National Student Financial Aid Scheme (“**NSFAS**”) provides funding for students who meet certain criteria and are studying at public universities.
- 1.6 The 2020 Guidelines for the Department of Higher Education and Training Bursary Scheme for Students at Public Universities that was approved by the Minister of Education on 6 December 2019, indicated that students living in private leased accommodation can only qualify for an accommodation if they are accommodated in university accredited accommodation.
- 1.7 The Guidelines is annually updated by the NSFAS Board and approved by the Minister of Higher Education. Management of private accreditation is therefore subject to the Guidelines.

In this regard it is important to note that the stipulations in this document are subject to change.

- 1.8 The Minimum Norms and Standards are used as the guiding principles for accreditation of private accommodation at Stellenbosch University (SU). It is, however, important to keep in mind that SU is situated in a medium-sized town and the student community is part of the town. SU is dependent on the local community to provide adequate private accommodation and support to students. In town, there are only 2 buildings that provide accommodation for more than 200 students. The profile of the majority providers include flats, student houses and single dwellings.

2. NSFAS ACCOMMODATION ALLOWANCE

- 2.1 For 2023 NSFAS proposed a cap of **R45,000.00** for accommodation excluding the meal allowance.
- 2.2 No deposits or any other costs (e.g. administration cost, wifi or transport) are covered by this NSFAS accommodation allowance.
- 2.3 At Stellenbosch University many rooms in residences, as well as private NSFAS-accredited accommodation, will cost more than R45 000 per year in 2023
- For this purpose, accreditation is divided in two categories, namely accreditation within the prescribed cap and accreditation exceeding the prescribed cap. **Accreditation within the prescribed cap** includes accommodation that is all inclusive and falls within the R45 000 cap.
 - **Accreditation exceeding the cap** includes accommodation that exceeds the R45 000 NSFAS cap. The student will be responsible for any amount that exceeds the capped amount from NSFAS
- 2.4 The full accommodation allowance is paid in ten (10) instalments (February to December) for Stellenbosch campus; and eleven (11) instalments (January to November) for Tygerberg campus per year to the student. The students are responsible to pay landlords on time.
- 2.5 Students must provide proof of a written lease agreement with landlords, before they can receive their accommodation allowances every month.
- 2.6 SU reserves the right to request further documents to verify the legitimacy of such lease agreements.
- 2.7 In cases where more than 20 beds are provided to NSFAS students, direct monthly payments to private accredited landlords for NSFAS students can be made, provided that SU receives instruction in writing from the student and landlord to do so.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Responsibilities of students, including bursary recipients

- 3.1.1 It remains the responsibility of the student to ensure that they understand the content of the lease agreement, the cost of accommodation and their obligations as a lessee in terms thereof. The lease agreement is between the student and the landlord. SU is not a party to the agreement. SU will therefore not be able to intervene in matters pertaining to the contract between the landlord and the student
- 3.1.2 It remains the prerogative of the student to choose suitable off-campus private housing.

- 3.1.3 The landlord may impose his/her own accommodation rules in respect of off-campus private housing which a student must follow. It is the responsibility of the student to abide by these rules.
- 3.1.4 Bursary recipients:
 - 3.1.4.1 Bursary recipients need to complete a questionnaire that will be e-mailed to them after they have registered for the academic year. It will be required for the bursary recipient to indicate their accommodation type and address and to also upload their signed lease agreement. The Undergraduate Bursary and Loans Office (“**UBL**”) will send the questionnaire.
 - 3.1.4.2 Students must inform UBL if they cancel the lease agreement, at the same time that they notify the landlord. In this regard students need to take note of the cancellation regulations in the lease agreement. After confirmation of cancellation, the payments for that accommodation will stop. Payments will continue once a new lease agreement is provided.
 - 3.1.4.3 The student remains liable for payments that exceeds the NSFAS capped allowance.**
 - 3.1.4.4 Please keep in mind that NSFAS stipulates a deadline for changes in accommodation.

3.2 Responsibilities of the Undergraduate Bursaries and Loans Office (UBL)

- 3.2.1 UBL is responsible for the financial administration of payments to the student or service provider until further notice (see Important Notice).
- 3.2.2 The UBL will check and confirm the student’s status as a NSFAS-bursary recipient and will provide written proof thereof to the student and any potential landlord (if necessary), with the consent of the student.
- 3.2.3 UBL will send out the survey to NSFAS-recipients to establish their accommodation status and addresses.
- 3.2.4 UBL will receive lease agreements along with the survey
UBL will make monthly payments to students (or directly to landlords, where applicable and where the student gave consent) until NSFAS implements direct payments to service providers.

3.3 Responsibilities of landlords

- 3.3.1 The Landlord should ensure that the off-campus private housing is accredited by the **Private Accommodation Office**.
- 3.3.2 The Landlord will ensure that the prescribed application for accreditation is submitted to SU. The application form is available on www.maties.com (> accommodation > private accommodation).
- 3.3.3 The Landlord will provide the signed lease agreement between the student and the landlord, to the student, until such a time when NSFAS will enter an agreement with the service provider on behalf of the student.
- 3.3.4 An accreditation of property cannot be transferred to any other property even if the properties are owned by the same service provider/landlord.
- 3.3.5 The PAO must be informed of any changes to the conditions of the accredited off-campus housing and ownership of the property.
- 3.3.6 The Landlord will ensure a standard of living and comply with the guidelines throughout the year. It remains the landlord’s responsibility to ensure that the off-campus private housing complies with the original agreed standards at all times.

- 3.3.7 The Landlord's off-campus private housing must comply with all municipal and statutory requirements for accommodation. Landlord's must familiarize themselves with these requirements. SU is not responsible for any non-compliance by the Landlord.

3.4 Responsibility of the Private Accommodation Office (PAO)

- 3.4.1 The PAO will provide the applicable form for accreditation to be completed by the landlord.
- 3.4.2 The PAO will be responsible for the accreditation process as stipulated in par 4 of this document and for communicating with the Landlord in this regard.
- 3.4.3 The PAO will monitor the standard of living throughout the year and reserves the right to revoke the accreditation if the facilities are not maintained and is not meeting the agreed standard.
- 3.4.4 The PAO is responsible for listing the accredited accommodation on SU's website on www.maties.com and the office will refer students to the relevant private accommodation options. In this regard the PAO complies with the regulations set out in the POPI Act and received consent from the providers to publish the accredited accommodation sites.
- 3.4.5 Once applications for accreditation have been processed, PAO will provide UBL with the list of accredited accommodation.
- 3.4.6 The PAO will not be able to intervene in matters pertaining to the contract between the landlord and the student. PAO is not party to the agreement between the student and the landlord.

3.5 Appeals process

- 3.5.1 An applicant whose application has been declined may appeal against the decision of the PAO.
- 3.5.2 An applicant must lodge an appeal with the PAO within five (5) working days after receiving the formal outcome of the application and at the same time provide the PAO with written submissions setting out fully the grounds of appeal accompanied by substantiating facts and documents.
- 3.5.3 The PAO determines its own process, which may include inspecting the premises. The PAO concludes the appeal as soon as is practically possible and reasonable. The PAO reserves the right to uphold or reject the appeal. If the appeal is upheld, the PAO can substitute the outcome of the accreditation process with another outcome that the PAO could have reached.
- 3.5.4 The decision of the PAO is final.

3.6 Complaints

- 3.6.1 A regular review of complaints received will be undertaken against any service provider subject to the guidelines managed by the PAO to determine whether such complaints are commonplace and proven.
- 3.6.2 If the PAO receives such a complaint, the PAO reserves the right to re-evaluate the accredited accommodation to establish whether it still meets the requirements set in the guidelines.
- 3.6.3 Consent will be obtained from the student to inform the landlord of the complaint.
- 3.6.4 Should the student agree, the complaint will be sent to the landlord for feedback.
- 3.6.5 The PAO can only act on matters pertaining to the guidelines of accreditation.
- 3.6.6 If it is found that these requirements are not met, accreditation may be reconsidered.
- 3.6.7 The University, its management, and employees, will under no circumstances be responsible for any claims that Students or the public might have against a landlord and/or service provider or owner of the land.

3.7 Disclaimer

- 3.7.1 Students who enter into a lease agreement with landlords providing off-campus private housing do so in their private capacity.
- 3.7.2 SU is not a party to any lease agreement entered into between the student and the landlord in respect of off-campus private housing. SU will not become involved in and does not accept liability for any issues arising out of the operation of the lease agreement between the student and the landlord, payment of rent and/or disputes between the parties pertaining to the lease agreement and/or service delivery.
- 3.7.3 SU will not be involved in the securing of tenants and will not be held responsible for empty rooms or non-payment by students.
- 3.7.4 SU will not be involved in the collection of rentals, held responsible for any outstanding balances, damage to personal property and personal harm to students as a result of accreditation of the facility.
- 3.7.5 Accredited off-campus private housing will be evaluated and approved annually by SU.
- 3.7.6 Accreditation of off-campus private housing can be withdrawn if the standard drops below the prescribed minimum standards and SU will not be responsible for any loss if accreditation is withdrawn.
- 3.7.7 All accredited off-campus private housing will receive priority marketing within the structures of SU and will be identified as preferred suppliers once all the on-campus beds are filled.

3 PROCEDURE

Step 1: Complete the application form for accreditation of off-campus private housing (“**accreditation application form**”), available on the Private Accommodation website (maties.com > accommodation > private accommodation)

The following documentation should also be included:

- Proof of applicable municipal zoning permit;
- Original Tax Clearance Certificate of the applicant; and
- Proof of Ownership of the property

The University will only consider applications in respect of which:

- (a) application forms have been completed in full; digital signatures will not be accepted
- (b) all the required information has been provided;
- (c) all relevant documents have been furnished;
- (d) the time period for the validity of the documents have not expired;

Step 2: E-mail the completed accreditation application in one PDF format document to privateaccomm@sun.ac.za to reach the Private Accommodation Office before the end of the preceding year.

Step 3: The Private Accommodation Office will arrange a site visit with the landlord to verify the information on the accreditation application form.

Step 4: If all criteria are met, the accreditation will be confirmed in writing and, if accredited, the property will be listed on the SU website. In cases where some matters might be outstanding, the accreditation will be pending. Accreditation will be granted as soon as the pending matter have been resolved.

Accreditation status must be renewed on an annual basis. Should the landlord fail to meet the requirements, the dwellings accredited status will be revoked and any reference of such a landlord will be removed from the SU website.

4 CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION

- 4.1 Accreditation is divided in two categories, namely accreditation within the prescribed cap and accreditation exceeding the prescribed cap. **Accreditation within the prescribed cap** includes accommodation that is all inclusive and falls within the R45 000 cap.
- 4.2 **Accreditation exceeding the cap** includes accommodation that exceeds the R45 000 NSFAS cap. The student will be responsible for any amount that exceeds the capped amount from NSFAS.

ACCREDITATION

Number of beds

- Accreditation is applicable to any number of beds within one facility that meets the set accreditation criteria.

Distance and transport

- Dwelling should be situated in Stellenbosch or, in the case of Tygerberg campus, in the surrounding area.
- The accommodation should be within a 3 km walking distance from campus. Students can make use of campus shuttle service at various pick-up points on campus.
- If accommodation exceeds 3 km, NSFAS accreditation requires that the landlord should provide reliable transport running between the off-campus private housing and the relevant campus at regular intervals from 06h00 to 22h00.
- If students have their own transport, no provision for transport will be required.

Facilities

- Student double rooms should be no smaller than 14m², and a single room should be a minimum of 8m².
- Rooms should be furnished with at least
 - ✓ lockable closets;
 - ✓ a single bed steel or wooden frames including mattress/sponge;
 - ✓ a study desk;
 - ✓ a chair; and
 - ✓ a bookshelf.
- No more than four (4) students should share a bath or shower and toilet.
- Kitchen or kitchenette:
 - ✓ Cooking inside student rooms should not be permitted;
 - ✓ Suitable student storage, preparation and kitchen space should be provided;
 - ✓ Stove – one (1) per four (4) student residents;
 - ✓ Sink – one (1) per 10 students in commune dwellings and 15 student residents in high rise buildings;
 - ✓ Lockable cupboards – one (1) per student resident;
 - ✓ Microwave oven – one (1) per eight (8) student residents in commune dwellings and 12 in high rise building;
 - ✓ Countertop space – sufficient for eight (8) students' in commune dwellings and 12 students' in high rise buildings; and
 - ✓ A minimum provision of cold storage, 210 litres per five (5) students.

- In cases where a student could provide their own furniture, for example for an unfurnished flat, accreditation could still be considered.
- A communal area should preferably be available.
- If applicable, the parking norm provision of one (1) parking bay per two tenants for residential developments shall be applicable to off-campus accommodation.
- The necessary safety measures should be in place, e.g. fire alarm, fire extinguisher and/or fire blanket. The accommodation should be a conducive environment for learning and living.

Services

- Students are to clean their own rooms or flat (if applicable).
- The landlord is responsible for the cleaning of all communal areas, ablution areas in larger facilities on a regular basis.
- Laundry facilities must be provided at the off-campus private housing, or laundromat facilities should be accessible near it.
- Wifi/Internet must be available on site.

Rent

- ✓ **Accreditation within the prescribed cap:** The bed tariff meets the NSFAS accommodation allowance cap. Rental charged per student is, as far as possible, inclusive of internet, water and electricity.
- ✓ No upfront deposit is required upon proof of NSFAS funding.
- ✓ Please note that NSFAS rental payments are allocated over a 10-month period (and not 12 months)
- ✓ **Accreditation exceeding the prescribed cap:** NSFAS students will be responsible for the amount that exceeds the NSFAS allowance cap and all other expenses that is not included in the rent, e.g internet, deposit, parking, etc.