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2026/27 Discretionary Grant (DG) application guidelines

1. The **Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority** (CATHSSETA) is a national public entity established in terms of the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998) as amended, and as such is mandated to promote skills development for the CATHSSETA sector.
2. CATHSSETA hereby invites suitable employers, stakeholders, and interested parties to apply for Discretionary Grant (DG) funding.
3. This grant is intended to meet the sector needs as set out in the Sector Skills Plan (SSP), Strategic Plan, and the priorities outlined in the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP).
4. In this window, CATHSSETA will be allocating DG funding for the learning programmes listed below. Please refer to **the learning programme guidelines** for definitions, unit costs to be funded per learner, and targets to be fulfilled in this window for each learning programme.
 - 4.1. Learnerships for employed & unemployed learners
 - 4.2. Bursary for employed & unemployed learners
 - 4.3. Skills Programme for employed & unemployed
 - 4.4. Artisan for unemployed learners
 - 4.5. Adult Education & Training (AET)
 - 4.6. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
 - 4.7. Graduate Internship for unemployed University/University of Technology (UoT) learners
 - 4.8. Internship N-diploma and NCV for unemployed TVET College learners
 - 4.9. Internship Category A for unemployed University/UoT learners requiring work experience to complete their qualification.
 - 4.10. CET College Internship
 - 4.11. Skills programmes for CET and TVET college lecturers

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5. Who can apply

The following stakeholders and legal entities that fall within CATHSSETA sectors are invited to apply for DG funding:

- 5.1. CATHSSETA levy-paying employers
- 5.2. Non-levy paying employers operating within CATHSSETA sectors (submit company profile to verify that the organisation operates within the CATHSSETA sub-sectors);
- 5.3. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), namely public Universities, Universities of Technology (UoTs), CET Colleges, and TVET Colleges;
- 5.4. Government departments, and state-owned enterprises operating within CATHSSETA sub-sectors; and
- 5.5. Training Providers accredited with CATHSSETA qualifications

6. CATHSSETA will not award DG funds for

- 6.1. Projects that have already commenced before the approval of the application
 - 6.2. Set-up costs, e.g., start-up costs
 - 6.3. Capital expenditure, e.g., building costs, equipment such as computers, etc.
 - 6.4. Existing operating expenses, e.g., salaries of current employees who will undergo training
 - 6.5. Organisational policy development
 - 6.6. Interventions that result only in “awareness” for participants
 - 6.7. Training of any learners who are currently being funded through other programmes.
7. CATHSSETA awards DG funding at its discretion to attain its strategic objectives as outlined in the Strategic Plan (SP), Annual Performance Plan (APP), and the development of skills as articulated in its Sector Skills Plan (SSP), subject to the availability of funding.
8. Qualifications aligned to CATHSSETA **subsectors and occupational shortages and skills gaps** reflected below (**annexure 1**) will be given priority.
9. Applications should be properly completed, and **ALL** required supporting documents must be submitted (Please refer to **annexure 2** below for required and compulsory documentation).
10. Levy-paying employers applying must be up to date with their levies.

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11. Employers applying for Internship N-diploma & NCV - should recruit learners from TVET Colleges (Preference will be given to public TVET Colleges).
12. Employers applying for Graduate Internships and Internship Category A - should recruit learners from universities & universities of technology (Preference will be given to public universities & universities of technology (UoTs).
13. It is the responsibility of applicants to familiarise themselves with CATHSSETA's Discretionary Grant (DG) Policy, which is available on the CATHSSETA website.
14. For applicants applying for Learnerships, Skills Programmes, AET, RPL, and Artisans, please ensure you upload active proof of accreditation outlining the qualification/s you are applying for. This document forms part of compliance.
15. Experience has shown that the total value of applications each year exceeds the available discretionary funds by far. Stakeholders are therefore encouraged to focus on actual needs when preparing applications. **CATHSSETA reserves the right to lower the number of learners applied for, depending on the availability of funds.**
16. 60% of the Discretionary grant funding will be given to CATHSSETA levy-paying employers, as they have the capacity to host and absorb learners.
17. Accredited training providers need to partner with employers operating within CATHSSETA subsectors for the Learnership/Skills Programmes/ Artisan programmes. Training providers with an extension of scope qualification (MOU provider) are requested to submit their verification report not older than 3 years, together with their proof of accreditation.
18. Higher Education Institutions need to partner with employers operating within CATHSSETA subsectors to host the learners for the Graduate internship/WIL programmes.
19. **Bursary applications**
 - 19.1. Only CATHSSETA sub-sector-related qualifications shall be supported for unemployed learners, and preference will be given to HEIs.

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- 19.2. For bursary recipients employed, preference will be given to companies operating within CATHSSETA sub-sectors, for other qualifications aligned to the occupational shortages supporting their enterprises.
- 19.3. No bursary funding shall be provided to students who receive funding from other Government sources, e.g., NSFAS.
- 19.4. Applicants who were funded in the previous year and would like to continue with the same qualification must reapply (Continuations).
- 19.5. Bursary funding is to cover tuition for the 2026 financial year; funding will not apply to previous years.

20. Artisan applications

- 20.1. CATHSSETA only funds the **occupational certificate: Chef** qualification for the **Artisan** learning programme.

21. Learnership and skills programme applications

- 21.1. Due to legacy qualifications being phased out, all learnership programmes for legacy qualifications should commence by June 2026.
- 21.2. The only occupational qualification that will be implemented as a learnership will be the occupational cook qualification. No other occupational qualification will be considered in the 2026 DG window.

22. A list of accredited training providers is available through the ETQA department. Kindly liaise with the ETQA department should you require a training provider for learnerships, skills programmes, artisans, AET and RPL.

23. Kindly note that CATHSSETA does not accept applications from individuals; this must be done through an accredited training provider, institution, or employer, who will be providing the training or experience. Therefore, a recipient or learner must apply through the relevant employer or training provider.

24. Applications submitted by 3rd party organisations (e.g., recruitment agencies) are discouraged.

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25. Employers are urged to deduct the Unemployment Insurance fund (UIF) from learners' prior to stipends being paid, for the duration of the project.
26. All Discretionary Grant funds are VAT zero-rated.
27. Upon submitting your application form, you will receive an automated response and DG reference number.
28. Applicants will be informed of the outcomes once the entire evaluation process is complete.
29. There is no appeals process for Discretionary Grant funding.
30. CATHSSETA DG window opens from December 10, 2025, and closes on January 31, 2025, at 4:00 PM. Applications must be submitted via the CATHSSETA Integrated Management System (CIMS). CIMS automatically closes at the indicated time, and there will be no extension to submit applications after the deadline. Below is an overview of how to apply:
 - 30.1. **Step 1:** To access information on DG funding, go to the CATHSSETA website, www.cathsseta.org.za. Familiarize yourself with this document (application guidelines), which provides the specifications of what CATHSSETA is looking to fund. Please take note that applications must be submitted per learning programme. Should an applicant wish to participate in more than one learning programme, they must complete an application form for each learning programme.
 - 30.2. **Step 2:** Complete the “declaration of authorized person” document, as an acknowledgement that you have been approved to apply for Discretionary Grant funding on behalf of the organisation.
 - 30.3. **Step 3:** Familiarise yourself with the DG Policy, which outlines Discretionary Grant funding and the evaluation criteria, and complete the “Acknowledgement of DG policy and application guidelines” document.
 - 30.4. **Step 4:** To access CIMS, go to www.cathsseta.org.za, click on the link given and follow the process, or click on the following link <https://cims.cathsseta.org.za/>. Register on the system as an SDF, and you will be approved and given login details before you can access the application form. The system manual on how to navigate the system is available on the CATHSSETA

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website. You can also click on the following link:
<https://www.facebook.com/cathsseta/videos/508098694765886>, to access the system demonstration recording. Please note that you only need to register once as an SDF; you do not need to re-register when applying for funding.

- 30.5. **Step 5:** Use the checklist that is appended to this document (Annexure 3) to prepare all documentation that must be submitted with the application form. Ensure that all the compliance document templates are downloaded on the CATHSSETA website (where applicable), completed, and signed where applicable. These documents should be submitted as part of the application form. Documents that are required for compliance are important, and an application will not be processed further without them. Documents that are required for the evaluation form part of the evaluation for an application and increase your chances of improving the evaluation score.
- 30.6. Once you have completed the application together with the supporting documents, click the submit button, and you will receive an automated response with a DG reference number.

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Annexure 1 – Top 10 Occupational Shortages and skills gaps to be supported

Preamble: CATHSSETA is specific with the skills it needs as developed in its SSP, As such, this window is targeted at developing the occupational shortages and skills gap occupations below. The full list of occupational shortages is available in the sector skills plan (SSP).

SUB-SECTOR	OFO MAJOR GROUP	OCCUPATION CODE	OCCUPATION	SPECIALISATION/ ALTERNATIVE TITLE
Arts, Culture and Heritage	Technicians and Associate Professionals	(2021-352103)	Sound Technician	Video and Sound Recorder, Sound Effects Person, Re-recording Mixer, Dubbing Projectionist (Sound Mixing), Dubbing Machine Operator, Sound Editor/Mixer/Recordist/Operator /Specialist, Audio Technician, Audio Operator
	Professionals	(2021-251301)	Multimedia Specialist	Multimedia Programmer, Animation Programmer, Computer Games Programmer, Graphical Programmer, Digital Media Specialist, Multimedia Developer
Conservation	Professional	(2021-213301)	Conservation Scientist	Marine Ecologist, Forestry Conservationist,
				Animal Ecologist, Conservancy Advisory Scientist, Fisheries Advisor, Soil Conservationist, Ecological Researcher,
				Water Conservation Scientist, Fish and Game Officer, Species Protection Officer, Ecologist,
				Conservation Officer
	Professional	(2021-213307)	Park Ranger	Game/Park Warden, Beach and Estuary Warden, Fish Warden Wildlife Officer/Warden

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SUB-SECTOR	OFO MAJOR GROUP	OCCUPATION CODE	OCCUPATION	SPECIALISATION/ ALTERNATIVE TITLE
				Wildlife Conservationist
Gaming and Lotteries	Clerical Support Workers	(2021-421202)	Gaming Worker	Casino Gaming Inspector, Casino/Gaming Dealer, Gaming Pit Boss, Gaming Inspector, Casino Surveillance Operator, Gaming Operator, Croupier, Gaming Table Operator
Hospitality	Technicians and Associate Professionals	(2021-343401)	Chef	Chef de Partie, Commis Chef, Head Chef, Pastry Chef, Demi Chef, Sous Chef, Saucier, Executive Chef, Second Chef
	Manager	(2021-141201)	Café (Licensed) or Restaurant Manager	Bistro Manager, Internet Cafe Manager, Cafeteria Manager, Catering Manager, Food Services Manager, Caterer, Restaurateur, Mess Manager, Canteen Manager, Food and Beverage Manager
Sport, Recreation and Fitness	Technicians and Associate Professionals	(2021-342204)	Sports Coach or Instructor	Diving Coach, Callisthenics Instructor, Show Jumping Instructor, Diving Instructor (Open Water), Football Coach, Martial Arts Instructor, Dive Master, Snowboarding Instructor, Water Polo Coach, Gymnastics Coach or Instructor, Tennis Coach, Athletic Coach, Snorkelling Instructor, Swimming Coach or Instructor, Polo Coach, Dressage Instructor, Squash Coach, Cricket Coach

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SUB-SECTOR	OFO MAJOR GROUP	OCCUPATION CODE	OCCUPATION	SPECIALISATION/ ALTERNATIVE TITLE
				Scuba Instructor, Surface Supply Breathing Apparatus (SSBA) Instructor, Equine Tutor/Riding Instructor, Skiing Instructor, Snowsport Instructor, Basketball Coach, Rhythmic Gymnastics Coach
		(2021-342301)	Fitness Instructor	Physical Training Instructor, Aerobics Instructor, Physical Fitness Trainer, Health and Fitness Instructor, Aquarobics Instructor, Gym Instructor/Trainer, Gymnasium Attendant, Physical Education Officer, Physical Activity Coordinator, Fitness Centre Worker, Fitness Consultant/Trainer/Instructor, Personal Trainer

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**Annexure 3: Document submission checklist**

Applicants are required to upload the following documents with their application form:

Documents	Purpose	Downloadable from website ¹	Checklist
Organisation's registration documents (Government-owned organisations must submit a signed written confirmation of organisation type)	Compulsory for compliance	No	
Declaration of the authorised person		Yes	
Acknowledgement of CATHSSETA Discretionary Grant policy & application guidelines		Yes	
Declaration of interest		Yes	
Training Provider accreditation letter outlining qualifications (Skills Programme, Artisan, AET, RPL & Learnerships)		No	
CATHSSETA levy payments up to date (CATHSSETA will conduct validation) - Applicable to levy-paying employers		No	
BBBEE Certificate (if applicable)	Required for evaluation	No	
Host employer confirmation letter - applicable to applicants who will not host learners, e.g. Training providers, Universities, Universities of Technology, TVET Colleges & CET Colleges		No	
Prior experience with running a SETA-related project (upload reference letters)		No	
Financial statements or bank statements		No	
Lease or Title deed documents (applicable to where the learners will be hosted)		No	
Asset register (In relation to the number of learners applied for)		No	

¹ Where applicable, templates must be downloaded from the website – www.cathsseta.org.za by clicking on the **DISCRETIONARY GRANTS SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS**.

Documents required for the evaluation form part of the evaluation; the evaluation grid is on the Discretionary Grants policy. The CIMS system manual is accessible on the CATHSSETA website.

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**CONTACT INFORMATION****Regional offices**

REGION	REGIONAL MANAGER	CONTACT NUMBER	PHYSICAL ADDRESS	EMAIL ADDRESS
Eastern Cape, Western Cape & Northern Cape	Ms Martha Collett	066 495 0604	Northlink College, Tygerberg Campus, Rothschild Boulevard, Panorama	Martha@cathsseta.org.za
Free State & KwaZulu-Natal	Ms Lungile Dlamini	060 998 5119	Thekwini TVET College central office, 262 Daintree Avenue, Asherville, Durban	Lungile@cathsseta.org.za
Gauteng & North West Mpumalanga & Limpopo	Ms Zandile Ntshangase	060 998 5518	270 George Road, Midrand. Johannesburg	zandilen@cathsseta.org.za

Head Office

DESIGNATION	REGIONAL MANAGER	CONTACT NUMBER	EMAIL ADDRESS
Acting Learning programmes manager	Ms Tebogo Mohulatsi		tebogo@cathsseta.org.za
Learning programmes administrator – SDF registration approval and workshop information	Ms Nonkonzo Zwane	066 206 6203	Nonkonzo@cathsseta.org.za
Training Provider information	Ms Neo Lesaoane	011 217 0600	lesaoanen@cathsseta.org.za
CIMS SUPPORT			cimssupport@cathsseta.org.za cims@cathsseta.org.za support@icdynamix.co.za

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