



merSETA

MANUFACTURING, ENGINEERING
AND RELATED SERVICES SETA



PUBLIC NOTICE:

DISCRETIONARY GRANT (DG) FUNDING WINDOWS

2026/2027 FINANCIAL YEAR

The **Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA)** hereby invites eligible entities to apply for **Discretionary Grant (DG) funding** for the **2026/2027 financial year**.

This call is issued in accordance with the **merSETA Grants Policy (DGD-PL-001)** and the **Discretionary Grant Guidelines (DGD-GL-002)**, to enable the implementation of the **Sector Skills Plan (SSP)**, **Strategic Plan**, **Annual Performance Plan (APP) 2026/27**, and the **DHET Service Level Agreement**.

Important Notice: Award of Discretionary Grant funding is not automatic and remains at the sole discretion of the merSETA, subject to verification, evaluation, adjudication, approval processes, and availability of funds.

1 Funding Window Structure (2026/27)

For the 2026/27 financial year, Discretionary Grant funding will be implemented through seven **(7) dedicated funding windows**, structured by **eligible entity category**.

Window	Eligible Entity Category
1	Employers: Levy-Paying
2	Employers: Non-Levy-Paying & SMMEs
3	Government Departments & Municipalities
4	SEZs, Industrial Parks, Development Corporations & SOCs
5	Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), TVET & CET Colleges
6	NGOs, CBOs, Trade Unions & Co-operatives
7	Skills Development Providers (SDPs) & Assessment Centres

Each funding window specifies:

- Eligible entity types.
- Eligible programmes (PIVOTAL and/or Non-PIVOTAL).
- Applicable grant values.
- Strategic and APP alignment requirements.

Full details per window are contained in the **DG Funding Windows Guideline: 2026/27** available on the merSETA website.

2 Funding Window Schedule

Window	Opening Date	Closing Date
Window 1 - Levy Paying Employers	30 April 2026	13 July 2026
Window 2 - Non-Levy Paying Employers & SMMEs	30 April 2026	13 July 2026
Window 3 - Government Departments & Municipalities	30 June 2026	20 July 2026
Window 4 - SEZs, Industrial Parks & SOCs	30 June 2026	20 July 2026
Window 5 - HEIs, TVET & CET Colleges	30 May 2026	13 July 2026
Window 6 - NGOs, CBOs, Trade Unions & Co-operatives	30 May 2026	13 July 2026
Window 7 - SDPs & Assessment Centres	21 July 2026	17 August 2026

The merSETA reserves the right to amend the funding window dates subject to operational requirements.



Please scan the code to access the **Guidelines**
or click the following link:

https://www.merseta.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/merSETA_DG-Funding-Windows_2026-27_Ext.pdf

3 Eligible Programmes

Discretionary Grant funding supports **PIVOTAL** and **Non-PIVOTAL** learning programmes, including but not limited to:

PIVOTAL Programmes

- Apprenticeships
- Learnerships (Levels 1-4 and Occupational Certificates)
- Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL)
- Occupational Skills Programmes and Part Qualifications
- Student Internships (Categories A, B & C)
- Graduate Internships and Candidacy Programmes
- Bursaries (Employed and Unemployed Learners)
- Adult Education and Training (AET / NASCA)

Non-PIVOTAL Programmes

- Enterprise and SMME Development Skills
- Township and Rural Development Programmes
- Worker Education and Trade Union Capacity Building
- Career Guidance and Awareness Programmes
- Lecturer Development and Industry Exposure
- Infrastructure, Equipment and Capacity for Artisan Development
- Green Economy, Digital and Industry 4.0 Skills

Legacy qualifications will not be considered for learnership and skills programmes. Programme eligibility and grant values differ per funding window and must be read together with the approved DG Guidelines.

4 General Eligibility Requirements (All Windows)

All applicants must:

- Be **legally registered** in terms of applicable legislation (**Registration documents must be uploaded on NSDMS**).
- Submit proof of Tax compliance (**Tax compliant certificate must be uploaded on NSDMS**).
- Non-Levy Paying Employers, SMMEs, SDPs & Assessment Centres must submit up-to-date **company profile**.
- Submit a **valid B-BBEE certificate** or **sworn affidavit** (EME/QSE) (**Compliant certificate or a fully compliant affidavit must be uploaded on NSDMS**).
- Have **no outstanding compliance issues or debt** with the merSETA.
- Submit a **signed Conflict of Interest declaration** (**Upload proof on NSDMS**).
- Where applicable, hold **valid accreditation** as a Skills Development Provider or Assessment Centre (**Upload proof on NSDMS**).
- Meet **minimum transformation targets**:
 - Youth (15–35 years): ≥ 20%
 - Women: ≥ 10%
 - Persons with Disabilities: ≥ 4%

Failure to meet minimum compliance requirements will result in **automatic disqualification**.

5 Application Process

- All Discretionary Grant applications must be submitted via the **National Skills Development Management System (NSDMS)** at: www.merseta.org.za
- Applications submitted outside the official window dates or through other channels will **not be accepted**.
- Applications will be subjected to:
 - Administrative verification
 - Technical evaluation
 - Adjudication
 - Approval by the appropriate governance structure (MANCO / FGC)

Applicants will be notified of outcomes **within 90 days** after the closing date of the relevant funding window.

6 Important Conditions

- Learning programmes funded through the **Mandatory Grant** process will **not** be funded through DG.
- Funding awards are **performance-based** and linked to contracted milestones.
- Discretionary Grant awards must be taken up within **six (6) months** of approval. Unutilised awards will be forfeited.
- The merSETA reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet policy, guideline, or funding window requirements.

7 Support And Enquiries

- **Website:** www.merseta.org.za
- **Regional Offices:** Refer to published contact details on the merSETA website

Applicants are strongly advised to **read the merSETA Strategic Plan, Sector Skills Plan, Annual Performance Plan, Grants Policy, DG Guidelines and Funding Window Guidelines in full** before submitting applications.

Issued by:

The **Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (merSETA)**

Discretionary Grant Management

2026/2027 Financial Year