



# higher education & training

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Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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## **The appointment of an Administrator for Central University of Technology**

**Pretoria, 22 June 2012** – The appointment of the Administrator for the Central University of Technology in the Free State, Professor Stanley Ridge, comes at a time when a number of public higher education institutions in the country are characterised by conflict among key stakeholders within institutions of Higher Education and Training.

Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, says the conflicts in the main are between management and students, management and unions, and in other instances, between management and council, where accountability is often sacrificed at the altar of self-interest, power and greed.

“In situations where campus politics and petty political squabbles have come to shape and define governance and management, or the lack thereof, institutions of higher education and training and students suffer the most. This situation is intolerable and we are compelled to act in the best interest of students, protecting them against those who act out of self-interest,” Minister Nzimande says.

In the case of CUT serious allegations of abuse of power and concerns relating to tender irregularities at the institution were made. These were referred to the Council, but were never dealt with effectively.

It was on the basis of the inability of Council to deal effectively with the matters that the Minister appointed an Independent Assessor in March 2012. The Independent Assessor's Report, published in the government gazette on 11 May 2012, highlighted serious problems in the governance and management of the Central University of Technology (CUT), which are undermining the effective functioning of the institution. Some key findings of the report are:

- Council has shown poor adherence to good governance principles and an unsatisfactory level of fiduciary responsibility;
- The role of the university management in creating a culture of fear at the institution which compromises the transformation objectives; and
- The inability of the university management to effectively manage the human resource function.

After careful consideration of the Independent Assessors report, as well as the representations by the CUT council, Minister Nzimande appointed Professor Ridge as the Administrator for CU T in terms of Section 41A of the Higher Education Act, 1997 as amended.

Professor Ridge has vast experience in the higher education sector and is currently the special assistant to the Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Western Cape.

The general and specific terms of reference of the Administrator, as published in the Government Gazette today, are:

- To take over the authority of the Council of Central University of Technology for a period not exceeding twelve months.

- To take over the authority of the Management and administration and to identify and initiate processes and initiatives to restore proper governance, management and administration at Central University of Technology, pending the outcome of the investigation into alleged abuse of power by the Vice-Chancellor.
- To steer the institution back to operational sustainability with an effective functional Council by managing the appointment of new Council members, including the review and establishment of the necessary appointment necessary Council sub-committees.
- To conduct a forensic audit into alleged irregularities and expand it to include management of grant/donor funding, awarding and management of tenders, and the management of student financial aid and any other matters that may arise. The investigation should be carried out in order to identify any corrupt practices and to institute appropriate action within the prescripts of the law.
- To draft and submit a new Statute for the University, to the Minister of Higher Education and Training.
- To conduct a detailed analysis of the human resource and financial management functions and implement systems necessary to restore governance, management and effective and efficient operations and viable systems and processes in these areas.
- To undertake a review on past and present labour relations matters, such as retrenchments, severances and disciplinary action, dating back to 2007.

Professor Ridge commenced his duties on 20 June 2012.

***Issued on behalf of the Ministry for Higher Education and Training.***