



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEDIA RELEASE

28 March 2017

DHET opens cases against fraudulent private higher education colleges

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has formally lodged a total of 21 cases with the South African Police Services (SAPS) in the past four years to investigate suspicions of unlawful practices in the private higher education sector.

The pending cases were reported between 2012 and 2017 and are at different levels of investigation with the SAPS. They range from allegations of unregistered institutions, illegal use of qualifications and offering of unregistered programmes.

Registration and regulation functions for private higher education institutions are governed in accordance with the Higher Education Act No. 101, 1997 and Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions (Gazette No 39880, 2016).

The requirement to register a private higher education institution only applies to institutions offering learning programmes that result in the awarding of qualifications such as certificates, diplomas or degrees at higher education level.

The purpose of the legislations is to ensure that institutions operate within the law, have the necessary resources, capacity and expertise to offer acceptable standards of higher education qualifications that are also aligned with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

DHET is aware of several colleges and institutions either not duly registered with the Department in accordance with regulations or purporting to offer unaccredited higher education programmes.

In dealing with these institutions the Department will from time to time embark on mass public awareness campaigns at targeted major public venues and taxi ranks around the country to sensitise both prospecting students and parents on the pitfalls of illegal or bogus colleges.

Early in 2017, the Department in partnership with local law enforcement authorities forcibly shut down several fake colleges during an impromptu inspection blitz in Braamfontein and downtown Johannesburg for operating fraudulently and contravening the relevant legislations in the private college sector. Some of the cases were referred to the police for further investigations.

The Department will continue to monitor the status of these cases through regular contact and enquiries with the relevant investigating officers.

The Department urges matriculants and students seeking study opportunities to be vigilant and to ensure that they authenticate the accreditation credentials of institutions before enrolling.

Prior to enrolment, students are urged to thoroughly verify the credentials of private colleges or institutions by contacting DHET Call Centre on 0800 87 2222. The Department also maintains a full record list of both registered and unregistered private higher education institutions, private Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and skills providers which is available at: www.dhet.gov.za/SitePages/DocRegisters.aspx

Information can also be obtained by visiting the Department's Client Centre at 123 Francis Baard Street in the Pretoria CBD or by contacting DHET local district offices directly. Local district office details are available on www.dhet.gov.za.

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Issued by the Department of Higher Education and Training