

Occupations in high demand

Angela Church

OF ABOUT 340 occupations most needed in South Africa, most are professional, according to the latest List of Occupations in High Demand published by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in the Government Gazette.

The Department first produced its list in November 2014, and in January 2016 updated it into a longer list to conform to six-digit code occupations listed by the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO), as opposed to having some occupations clustered, as was the case in the 2014 version.

Furthermore, new occupations were added to the 2014 list, based on new information and an improved methodology.

Occupations are said to be in high demand if they:

- Have shown relatively strong employment growth over the past five years;
- Are still showing relatively strong employment growth;
- Are expected to show relatively strong employment growth in the future;
- Have been identified as being in shortage in the labour market; or
- Are new and expected to emerge in the near future as a result of innovation, technological advancements and the development of new industries (for example, new occupations in “green” industries).

The list will help DHET in its Post-School Education and Training (PSET) planning, particularly in relation to enrolment, resource allocations, career advice and qualifications development. It will also help universities, colleges, education and training providers, employer bodies, employers, professional bodies, trade unions and other organisations to support their own decision-making processes.

The need to identify skills is part of a process of developing a PSET system that is responsive to the needs of individual citizens, communities and the economy, as well as meeting broader social developmental objectives.

Information about occupations in high demand provides useful insights into the skills needs of the economy and mismatches between qualifications and occupations – a problem that is particularly important to address, given that the South African labour market is characterised by high unemployment on the one hand, and skills shortages on the other.

A number of research methods were used to update the 2014 list, including:

- Data from the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys provided by Statistics South Africa, and the Job Opportunities Index compiled by the Department of Labour;
- The Linked Macro-Education Model, which forecasts occupational growth trends until 2025, provided information on the top 20 fastest growing occupations and the top 20 occupations with the most number of job openings for the next 10 years;
- Publications that focus on skills supply and demand, and the imbalances between them, at both national and sectoral levels; and
- Interviews with stakeholder representatives, a workshop with skills development experts and a “Call for Evidence” were used to obtain firsthand information on occupational trends.

The “Call for Evidence” invited stakeholders to propose either the inclusion or exclusion of occupations in high demand, with supporting evidence, or new occupations that are emerging, or are expected to emerge in the future, as a result of factors such as technological advancements, innovation and the establishment of new companies, with supporting evidence.

There were 37 submissions from various organisations as a result of the “Call for Evidence”, and generally the respondents requested the inclusion of additional occupations in the list.

A total of 164 of the occupations fall under the professional category, and include occupations such as finance managers, medical superintendents, physicists and astronomers, laboratory animal



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technologists, meteorologists, geologists, dental specialists and actuaries.

The second-largest category includes 60 technician and associate professional occupations such as chemistry technicians, agricultural technicians, physical science technicians, forestry research technicians and ship engineers.

An almost equal number of occupations — 35 and 34

respectively — fall under the category of skilled agricultural, forestry, fishery, craft and related trades, and the category of plant and machine operators and assemblers.

There are also 30 managerial occupations, such as local authority managers, chief information officers, senior government officials, ICT project managers and even child care centre managers.

Only 10 occupations fall under the category of clerical support workers and seven under service and sales workers.

Ms A Church is Communications Consultant to the Director-General, Department of Higher Education and Training. To view the full list of occupations in demand, visit www.dhet.gov.za

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Shadrack Mpondomse

THE Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) recognises its responsibility to deliver an effective service to society and to ensure that all work done is beneficial to the entire community of South Africa. The HRD Council has revised the HRD Strategy and come up with a strategy to fast-track and improve performance within the human resource development system.

This revision of the HRD strategy takes into account the first five years’ implementation challenges and successes. The aim now is to clear all blockages in the human resource development

value chain. The revised HRD strategy has been developed in alignment with the National Development Plan (NDP) and endorses its agreed purpose, goals and values.

To support the implementation of the HRDC’s work, a new vision, mission and goals have been adopted that set out a clear framework for the next five years.

The HRD Strategy Towards 2030 is a build-up from the HRDSA 2010-2030, which

is aligned to the NDP, and is the overarching plan for the country up to 2030. It will act as a mechanism to address the needs of the economy and the importance of supporting industrial strategy so as to achieve inclusive growth and skills development.

The strategy is not limited to skills development: it also considers the entire HRD system, particularly factors that impede human resource development.

Developed in consultation with stakeholders and council members as key drivers for organisational change, capacity building and performance improvement within the HRDC, the HRD Strategy sets out five strategic goals and objectives, and five programmes to achieve optimum impact. The delivery of these five strategic goals, objectives and programmes will endeavour to deliver the core outcomes for the HRDC, which will have

a long-term impact on the economic growth. This should contribute to increased employment, better standards of living and reduced inequality.

The implementation of the HRD Strategy is based on a five-year plan (2015 to 2020) that provides an integrated HRD roadmap for all stakeholders involved in the HRD pipeline. It provides strategic objectives, the intended outcomes aligned to such objectives and performance targets to be achieved by 2020.

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Fast-tracking development for the benefit of all