

DRAFT POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INFORMATION POLICY

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higher education
& training

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2. ACRONYMS

CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CET	Community Education and Training
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CLC	Community Learning Centre
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DCS	Department of Correctional Services
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPME	Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DST	Department of Science and Technology
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HETIS	Higher Education and Training Information System
HETMIS	Higher Education and Training Management Information System
IT	Information Technology
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
PSETI	Post-school Education and Training Institution
PSETISC	Post-school Education and Training Information Standards Committee
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAAIR	Southern African Association for Institutional Research
SASQAF	South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SITA	State Information Technology Agency

3. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
“Census”	a survey conducted on the full set of observation objects belonging to a given population or universe (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“College”	a public and/or private college established or declared as a (i) Technical and vocational education and training college or (ii) a community education and training college or a private college established or declared or registered under the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006).
“College data manager”	any college official designated and charged with certain responsibilities regarding post-school education and training information in terms of this policy.
“Community Education and Training College”	post-school education and training institution that is established to cater for youth and adults who did not complete their schooling or who never attended school, and thus do not qualify to study at the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and/or Private Colleges and/or Universities (White paper for post-school education and training , 2013).
“Data”	a representation of facts, concepts, or instructions in a formal manner, suitable for communication, interpretation, or processing by humans or by automatic means. (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Data accuracy”	a degree to which the output correctly describes the phenomena it was designed to measure (SASQAF, 2010).
“Data archiving”	repository holding documents or other material containing a variety of data, usually those of historical and/or rare value. (Education Information Standards Dictionary of Education Concepts and Terms 2010).
“Database”	a logical collection of information that is interrelated and that is managed and stored as a unit, for example in the same computer file (OECD, 2007).

Term	Definition
“Data coding”	a process of converting verbal or textual information into codes representing classes within a classification scheme, to facilitate data processing, storage or dissemination (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Data collection”	the process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established systematic fashion, which then enables one to answer relevant questions and evaluate outcomes (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Data collection system”	a method applied for gathering data for official statistics (SDMX, 2016).
“Data confidentiality”	a property of data usually resulting from legislative measures which prevents it from unauthorised disclosure (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Data integration”	a process of combining heterogeneous data residing in different sources and providing the user with a unified view of these data (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Data integrity”	values and related practices that maintain users’ confidence in the agency producing the statistics and ultimately in the statistical product (South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework, 2010).
“Data manager”	any person who manages an administrative process by which the required data is acquired, validated, stored, protected, and processed, and by which its accessibility, reliability, and timeliness is ensured to satisfy the needs of the data users (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Data quality”	the fitness for use (South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework, 2010).
“Data source”	a record, organisation, individual or database from which data is obtained (OECD, 2007).
“Data subject”	the person to whom personal information relates (Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013).
Term	Definition
“Data verification”	processes by which data is checked, assessed, reviewed and audited (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
”Department”	the Department of Higher Education and Training.
“DHET entities”	public entities listed in Part A (National Public Entities) of

	Schedule 3 for the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) that report to the Minister of Higher Education and Training. These are as follows: the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the Council on Higher Education, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations and also uMalusi that is deemed to be a DHET entity with regard to the functions in terms of the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006.
“Director-General (DG)”	Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training (Higher Education Act 101 of 1997).
“Higher Education and Training Information (HETIS) Officer”	an official appointed with certain responsibilities regarding Higher education and training information in terms of the Information Policy, November 2013.
“Higher Education and Training Management Information System (HETMIS)”	the higher education and training information system including all processes, rules, standards, and responsibilities for information collection and management in the post-school sector (The Higher Education and Training Information Policy, November, 2013).
“Information”	data presented in a context so that it can be applied or used (The presidency, 200, Policy Framework for the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation Systems).
“Information Standard”	item that has been formally approved as the information standard by the approving authority (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Institution Management Information System”	an information system used by an institution to handle administrative, management and planning functions in terms of this policy.

Term	Definition
“National data and statistics”	data and statistics used in the public domain that are sustainable but have not been designated as official by the Statistician-General as contemplated by the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999).
“Personal Information”	information relating to an identifiable living natural person and where it is applicable, an identifiable, existing juristic person including , but not limited to the names of the person if it appears with other personal information relating to the person or if the disclosure of the name itself would reveal information about a person. (Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013).
“Post-School Education and Training (PSET)”	a sector comprises all education and training provision for those who have completed school, those who did not complete their schooling, and those who never attended school (White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2013).
“Post-School Education and Training Information Standards Committee”	the committee established in terms of the Post-School Education and Training Information Policy that advises the Director General with regards to higher education and training information standards (The Higher Education and Training Information Policy, November, 2013).
“Post-School Education and Training Institutions (PSETIs)”	the institutions that provide education and training, which include universities, national institutes of higher education and private higher education institutions, Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges, private colleges, Community Education and Training colleges and skills providers. These are established, declared or registered by any law assigned to the Minister of Higher Education and Training.
“Preliminary data”	the first released version of a series of data to final audited data version in terms of this policy.
“Private college”	any college that provides continuing education and training on full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is registered or provisional registered as private college under the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006).
“Public college”	any college that provides continuing education and training on full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is established or regarded as having established as a public college or declared as a public college under the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006).

Term	Definition
“Quality Councils”	the primary bodies with a direct role in governing quality assurance and certification. Through their responsibility for setting standards, they are also responsible for curriculum and assessment (White paper for post-school education and training, 2013).
“Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)”	a sector education and training authority established in terms of section 9(1) of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998).
“Staff”	persons employed at any post-school education and training institutions.
“Stakeholder”	an organisation or body with a direct and continuing interest in the education institution, programme, phase or sector in question (Education Information Standards Dictionary of Education Concepts and Terms 2010).
“Statistics”	aggregated numerical information relating to demographic, economic, financial, environmental, social or similar matters, at national, provincial or local level, which is compiled and analysed according to relevant scientific and statistical methodology (Statistics Act, No 6 of 1999).
“Student”	any person registered as a student at any post-school education and training institutions in terms of the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006).
“Survey”	a process which collects, examines, and reports on data concerning variables of interest for a reference period (Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa, 2017).
“Technical and Vocational Education and Training College”	any public college that provides continuing education and training on full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is established or regarded as having established as a public college or declared as a public college under the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006).
“Unique Identifier”	any identifier that is assigned to a data subject and is used by a responsible party for the purpose of the operations of that responsible party and that uniquely identifies that data subject in relation to that responsible party (Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013).

4. INTRODUCTION

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The reasons for reviewing the 2013 Information Policy

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) adopted its information policy in 2013. This document updates the policy to take into account changes in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system such as the amended legislations relevant to the PSET sector.

4.1.2 Fragmentation in South African post-school education and training information systems

The South African PSET system is characterised by a multitude of information systems, computerised and paper-based or manual, which provide the basis for the many business procedures in which the PSET system must engage. This requires, among others, the development of and adherence to effective and adequate information standards governing PSET management information systems.

4.2 Rationale

4.2.1 The importance of education and training information

The effective gathering, dissemination and analysis of data in the PSET system of any country is vital for sound planning, decision-making, monitoring and management. In the case of South Africa, effective use of information derived from the analysis of data, can greatly advance meaningful democracy, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the PSET system. The constitutional duty of the state to provide a PSET system that develops individual citizens and the nation as a whole is thus of great consequence.

4.2.2 The post-school education and training information policy gap

Attempts to generate information systems standards at the Department have been hampered by the absence of a policy that would lay down the structures and procedures to be followed in the generation of such standards. Lack of properly mandated standards has prevented the development of systems, and where systems were developed in the absence of standards, the result was systems that could not be integrated and/or interfaced with related systems and systems that were not thoroughly informed by the education and training context.

4.2.3 Benefits for PSET stakeholders and participants

Students, national government, regional and local government, employers and the public as a whole will have access to reliable information relating to the skills development opportunities and post-school education and training institutions (PSETIs) in the post-school system. The Department will provide all stakeholders with information on the educational and skills development choices available. Essential information on post-school education and training as a whole will be available in the Department and in the PSETIs.

4.2.4 Information systems in the Department, PSETIs and Departmental entities

It is also recognised that with better information systems in place, education and training planners at all levels would have access to greater volumes of reliable data for planning and other purposes, on condition that these information systems adhere to national standards

that ensure compatibility at all levels. The PSET system will benefit from the use of information systems that will facilitate planning, monitoring and management. The systems of the Department will receive data from systems at institutions and entities in a standardised format, which will allow for more effective planning and administration in the Department. This will ensure that data are accessed from a centralised system.

4.2.5 Improved education management

Planning, monitoring, management and funding, at all levels from organisational and institutional level to departmental level, will be improved through the greater availability of accurate and relevant information on the education and training system. This will result in better-informed implementation and resource allocation strategies, which will improve the overall performance of the education and training system. Through access to this information, legislators and other publicly elected officials will be in a better position to serve their constituencies in education and training related matters.

4.3 Goals/Expected Outcomes

4.3.1 The overall goal

This policy creates a framework that allows for the co-ordinated and sustainable development of PSET information systems. The goal is to have PSET information systems that would yield valuable data and statistics needed for planning, monitoring and management purposes at all levels, from individual PSETIs and entities to the DHET.

4.4 Objectives

4.4.1 The main objectives of the policy are to:

- i. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation as well as the use of information in policy and programme planning through the regulation and standardisation of the collection, collation and dissemination of the PSET data;
- ii. Clarify the main roles and responsibilities for each administrative level and each category of staff in the mechanisms for ensuring data completeness, data quality and data use and “ownership” at all levels of the PSET system;
- iii. Ensure data security, confidentiality, integrity and availability of information according to regulatory and legislative requirements;
- iv. Provide guidance on the flow of data and statistics between the Department, PSETIs and the DHET entities;
- v. Ensure that all role players understand their roles and responsibilities for protecting the confidentiality and integrity of the data they deal with, and that they comply with the set standards;
- vi. Ensure that users are aware of the relevant legislation that mandate the Department to provide statistics on PSETIs; and
- vii. Ensure ethical and judicious usage of data at various levels of the PSET system.

4.5 Scope of application

4.5.1 *The scope of application*

This policy is applicable to DHET, all PSETIs that are established and/or registered with the Department as defined above, and the relevant DHET entities.

5. POLICY CONTENT

5.1 Policy Principles

This section describes the overarching values and beliefs underpinning the policy.

5.1.1 *Principles guiding the Department's vision*

The principles governing the vision for the South African PSET system are the following:

- i. The aims, principles and operations of this policy may not infringe the ownership rights of the information shared, nor should it unreasonably frustrate the effective planning, monitoring and management of an institution;
- ii. The Higher Education and Training Management Information Systems (HETMIS) must be a well co-ordinated system of education management information sub-systems, such as the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), which facilitates planning, monitoring and management at departmental, institutional and entity levels;
- iii. The ultimate aim of an information system is to improve efficiency in the broader planning, monitoring and management of the higher education and training system, to introduce more transparency in the activities of the Department and to ensure greater accountability for the use of scarce public resources;
- iv. The HETMIS must provide the public with access to accurate, timely and relevant information within the legal framework to all role players. Information on education and training inputs, processes and outcomes at all levels of the system should be accessible to the public, with the exception of personal information, where confidentiality should be ensured;
- v. The existing sub-systems will continue reporting in terms of relevant legislation, procedures and guidelines applicable to the institution;
- vi. The HETMIS must be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the changes taking place within the PSET system and the new priorities at all levels of the system;
- vii. Data flow must be bi-directional, both vertically and horizontally;
- viii. The system must be simple, accessible, efficient and standardised;
- ix. There must be mechanisms for facilitation, support and training on collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and use of information at all levels of the PSET system;

- x. There must be mechanisms for co-ordination between the Department, PSETIs and the Departmental entities to accommodate diverse needs in establishing a core dataset and the use of appropriate and compatible technology;
- xi. The HETMIS may, subject to agreement between parties, exchange data with other Departmental entities and other government departments such as the Department of Labour, the Department of Basic Education and others, taking into account the issue of confidentiality and the purpose of data exchange. A legal agreement must exist which allows the sharing of data, which can be through a Protocol of Agreement or Service Level Agreement;
- xii. Transformation in terms of HETMIS should be inclusive. Parallel to the development of improved computerised systems and the diffusion of e-Government, should be the ongoing improvement of manual systems in line with the design of computerised systems, so that elements of education systems are not excluded and the transition from manual to computerised systems can be streamlined; and
- xiii. This policy complements the Batho Pele strategy of Government to improve service delivery to the public, by creating a framework for systems development. This policy will facilitate the improvement of the PSET Information Systems which will, in turn, improve the lives of those who participate in the PSET sector.

5.2 Related Policies and Legislation

South Africa has key policies and legislation that support the development and implementation of the PSET Information Policy. Those mostly important for the policy are briefly outlined below.

5.2.1 The Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 1999

- i. National Treasury Regulations issued in terms of the Public Finance Management Act No. 1 of 1999 stipulate that: "The Accounting Officer of an institution must establish procedures for quarterly reporting to the executive authority to facilitate effective performance monitoring, evaluation and corrective action".
- ii. Section 40 (1) (d) of the PFMA of 1999 (as amended) stipulates that: "The accounting officer for a department, trading entity, or constitutional institution - must submit within five months of the end of a financial year to the relevant treasury and, in the case of a department or trading entity, also to the Executive Authority responsible for that department or trading entity—(a) an annual report on the activities of that department, trading entity or constitutional institution during that financial year;(b) the financial statements for that financial year after those statements have been audited; and (c) the Auditor-General's report on those statements.

5.2.2 The Statistics Act No. 6 of 1999

In terms of section 2 (e) of the Statistics Act No. 6 of 1999, the Statistician-General shall formulate quality criteria and establish standards, classifications and procedures for statistics. Section 14 of the Statistics Act deals with the obligation of government departments to work closely with the Statistician-General, for example in maintaining standards of statistical reporting and co-ordinating the statistical collections of the country. This policy creates a framework for the Department to comply with this obligation in a more organised and effective manner, through improved procedures for ensuring the accuracy and proper presentation of education and training statistics. The education and training statistics report will respond to the obligations mentioned in paragraph 5.2.1.

5.2.3 *The Promotion of Access to Information Act No. 2 of 2000*

The Promotion of Access to Information Act No. 2 of 2000 gives effect to the constitutional right of access to data and information held by the State and that is required for the exercise or protection of any rights, and it provides a framework for requesting such data and information. The Act aims to foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public and private bodies, and to actively promote a society in which the people of South Africa have effective access to information to enable them to more fully exercise and protect all of their rights. While the Promotion of Access to Information Act deals mainly with access to individual records, this policy deals mainly with access to data and statistics as a whole. Moreover, where the Act focuses mainly on action to be taken by the state in response to requests for information, this policy focuses to a large degree on the pro-active steps that the department, the PSETIs and the Departmental entities must take in order to ensure wide access to information, which will reduce the need for individual requests. This policy directly complements the Promotion of Access to Information Act, by specifying the level of the education system at which specific information is made available in the first instance.

Key Education and Training Policies and Legislation that provide the broader context for the PSET Information Policy include:

5.2.4 *The National Qualifications Framework Act No. 67 of 2008*

The National Qualifications Framework Act No. 67 of 2008 mandated the Minister of Higher Education and Training to determine policy on NQF matters in terms of this Act and publish in the Gazette. It further stipulates in section 27 (J) (i) and (ii) that all Quality Councils (QCs) (DHET Entities) must maintain a database of learner achievements and related matters for the purpose of this Act, submit such data in a format determined in consultation with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for recording on the National Learners' Records Database (NLRD) contemplated in section 13(1)(l) of this Act. Through the PSET Information Policy, the PSETIs will be able to establish and maintain the required data by the QCs.

5.2.5 *The Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997*

In terms of the Higher Education Act , 101 of 1997,section 3(1) and (2) the Minister of Higher Education and Training must determine policy on higher education after consulting with Council on Higher Education (CHE); and publish such policy in the gazette and table it in Parliament. In section 6 of the Higher Education Act, indicates that every national and provincial department of state, every publicly funded science, research and professional council and every higher education institution must provide the CHE with such information as the CHE may reasonably require for the performance of its functions in terms of the Higher Education Act. The PSET Information Policy ensures that all Higher Education Institutions have data collection systems and maintain data accuracy and quality.

5.2.6 *The Continuing Education and Training Act No. 16 of 2006*

Section 41G (3)of the Continuing Education and Training Act No. 16 of 2006, indicates that the Department must undertake the monitoring and evaluation contemplated in subsection (1) by analysis of data gathered by means of continuing education and training management information systems, or by other suitable means. According to section 45 (1) and (2) of the Continuing Education and Training Act No.16 of 2006, the Colleges must make information available for inspection by any person in so far as such information is required for the exercise and protection of the rights of such person. Every college must provide such information about the college as required by the Director-General.

5.2.7 The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998

The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, section 22 (2) (C) indicates that the functions of the Department in terms of this act are to provide information on skills to the Minister, the National Skills Authority, SETAs, education and skills development providers, organs of the state, the skills development forums in each province, Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), and any other interested party.

5.3 Duties of the Department of Higher Education and Training

5.3.1 Need to respond pro-actively to the Promotion of Access to Information Act No. 2, 2000

In terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000), the Department has an obligation to provide information to a variety of interested parties. To comply effectively with this obligation, the Department must ensure that the most appropriate points of access for particular types of information are made clear to the public. Moreover, the Department must be pro-active in satisfying the information needs of the public by distributing commonly requested information to potential requesters. Such a pro-active approach can reduce the need to respond to individual requests, and can ensure that more disadvantaged communities, which may normally not make formal information requests in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, are empowered with the information they need.

5.3.2 Minimum information to the public

The Department must make at least the following publicly available: (i) list of basic information on PSETIs, (ii) information data on state-funded programmes and learning opportunities, and (iii) annual statistics reports. In terms of section 20 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000), the Departmental HETIS officer must transfer information requests to appropriate other data managers to respond to the request. The Department may not make facsimile or electronic mail addresses of PSETIs and Departmental entities available for the purpose of marketing. Additional information can be made available according to publication and/or data dissemination standards.

5.3.3 Information to the public for research purposes

The Department must anticipate the needs of researchers to analyse data on the PSET sector and must be pro-active in preparing standards and typical data files. Such files must adhere to the standards, established in terms of this policy, with regard to definitions and formats. In the case of a researcher requiring data not included in the standard and typical data files, and where the research is not officially mandated within the PSET system, the Department must assess the possible value of the research against the departmental resources required to prepare the data, and should respond to the request accordingly. The Department must ensure that the dissemination of the data does not breach the appropriate rules on confidentiality as stipulated in section 17 of the Statistics Act (No. 6 of 1999); as well as condition 7 of chapter 3 of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), Act No. 4 of 2013.

5.3.4 The Department administers a number of regular data collections from PSETIs and entities

The Department administers a number of regular data collections from PSETIs and the Departmental entities, using up-to-date and easy-to-use data collection procedures and data

collection tools. The data and statistics must be reliable and in accordance with the Department's standards.

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5.3.5 Special requests for statistics

The Department may make special requests for additional data and statistics, where these are not covered in the regular cycles of submissions of data and statistics from PSETIs and Departmental entities. In making special requests, the Departmental HETIS officer must supply clear specifications for the request, and timeframes that are reasonable relative to the nature of the request. The Departmental HETIS officer will specify the reason for the special request.

5.3.6 Feedback on analysed information to respondents

The Department must take active steps to supply the PSETIs and the Departmental entities with relevant statistical and analytical results of data collection surveys in which they participated. This will make participation in education censuses more meaningful to institutions and entities and will encourage future participation.

5.3.7 Adequate definitions of terms and classifications of data collection tools and systems

In order to facilitate the collection of accurate and comparable information from PSETIs, the Department must ensure that all data collection systems and tools include clear and precise definitions of terms used and classification of data to prevent ambiguities and misinterpretations. These definitions and classifications must conform to existing and new approved standards in this regard.

5.3.8 Information in PSET Statistics Report

The Department must include statistics tables that contribute to its accountability to the legislature and the public in general in its statistics reports. The standards governing these statistics that were agreed upon must be adhered to. The Department must publish and disseminate only aggregated data.

5.3.9 Protection of private information

In providing information to the public, the Department must ensure that procedures exist that prevent the release of information considered private or protected in terms of Chapter 4 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000). Persons involved in the collection of data must take an oath of confidentiality. Clarity should be sought on who has access to data and in what manner. As indicated on condition 7 of chapter 3 of POPIA, the person involved in the collection of data must secure the integrity and confidentiality of personal information in his/her possession or under his/her control by taking appropriate, reasonable technical and organizational measure to prevent a loss off, damage to or unauthorised destruction of personal information, and unlawful access to or processing of personal information.

5.3.10 Warehousing of PSET data

The Department must safely and accessibly store data reflecting the current PSET system, and historical profiles of the PSET system from the past, in accordance with the archiving standard of the Department. To ensure valuable records are permanently safe and superseded records are removed from records systems.

5.3.11 Relationship between the Departmental HETIS Officer and the Information officer as designated by the Promotion of Access to Information Act

The Department must clearly define and distinguish the functions of the Departmental HETIS Officer from the roles of the Information Officer as determined by the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000).

5.4 Duties of PSETIs and Departmental Entities

5.4.1 PSETIs and the DHET entities provide information to the Department

According to the applicable legislation, referred to in section 5.2 of this policy, it is the duty of PSETIs and the Departmental entities to provide information to the Department.

5.4.2 Completion of education census forms

It is the duty of all heads of PSETIs and Principals and/or Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of the Departmental entities to ensure that education data requirements are completed to the best of their ability, in the knowledge that the deliberate distortion of information constitutes fraud. For planning, monitoring, management and funding purposes, it is necessary for data and statistics to be provided on a regular and cyclical basis by the PSETIs and the Departmental entities to the Department. The data and statistics must be reliable and in accordance with the standards of the Department.

5.5 Duties of the Departmental HETIS Officer

5.5.1 Departmental HETIS officer

The Director-General of the Department must designate a Departmental HETIS officer, whose basic functions will be to:

- i. act as the only Departmental official, apart from the Director-General of the Department, with the authority to approve a data collection system;
- ii. analyse, report on and make continual recommendations for improvements to the electronic and non-electronic PSETI information systems, so that the system can contribute to the vision of education information systems explained in this policy;
- iii. ensure that statistics and data released according to paragraph 5.5.1(v) of this policy comply with standards for accuracy and presentation;
- iv. act as the only Departmental official, apart from the Director-General of the Department, with the authority to classify statistics and data of the Department as national and as a true record of higher education statistics, in accordance with section 14 of the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999);
- v. co-ordinate and control the release of Departmental statistics and data to other government departments, statutory bodies such as Statistics South Africa and international organisations;
- vi. monitor compliance with information systems standards where education information systems are being developed at the national level;

- vii. promote the adequate standardisation of information provided by institutions and entities to the Department;
- viii. organise meetings with all data managers of the PSETIs and Departmental entities and with relevant stakeholder information forums in the furtherance of the education information systems vision at the national level;
- ix. organise meetings with all internal data managers of the Department to promote awareness of the Departmental data available from each branch of the Department and to cooperate and work together to contribute to PSET statistics reporting;
- x. ensure that there is adequate communication between data managers of the PSETIs, Departmental entities and the Post-School Education and Training Information Standards Committee of the Department to ensure delivery; and
- xi. liaise with the Statistician-General and Statistics South Africa to promote the aims of the Statistics Act, 1999 and to ensure that section 14 of the Statistics Act, 1999, requiring the relevant Minister to approve the undertaking of a new statistical collection, or the substantial changing or discontinuation of a statistical collection is adhered to.

5.5.2 *Efficient utilisation of state resources*

In recognition of the fact that information systems are costly to develop, and the fact that needs across sectors, entities and institutions are often similar, the HETIS officer in the Department must encourage national systems development projects, to avoid duplication and the inefficient use of state resources. The Departmental HETIS officer thus has to undertake cost-benefit analyses, which will inform the development of systems.

5.5.3 *The Departmental HETIS officer and the Statistician-General*

Section 14 of the Statistics Act No. 6 of 1999 requires the Statistician-General to ensure the maintenance of national standards in official statistical collections, and to co-ordinate statistical collections. The South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) (2010) indicated that all standards and policies must be in place to promote consistency of statistics collections and results. The HETIS officer in the Department must actively support the Statistician-General in this obligation.

5.5.4 *The Departmental HETIS officer as designator of national statistics*

Only data and statistics formally certified as a true record by the Director-General of the Department or the Departmental HETIS officer may be regarded as valid. In determining whether data or statistics can be certified as a true record, the Departmental HETIS officer must ensure that a reasonable level of analysis and verification has occurred. The Departmental HETIS officer must be informed of the purpose for which the data or statistics will be used when determining whether the data or statistics can be regarded as a true record. The Departmental HETIS officer must be guided by generally accepted practice, and general government standards, in particular those issued by the Statistician-General in terms of the Statistics Act No. 6 of 1999. Where problems or possible problems exist in national data or statistics, the Departmental HETIS officer must make this clearly known through adequate explanatory notes. Moreover, the Departmental HETIS officer must clearly state the source of any data or statistics that have been disseminated by the Department.

Reasonable consistency between different releases of national data and statistics must be maintained.

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5.5.5 The Departmental HETIS officer may disseminate preliminary/provisional data

Notwithstanding paragraph 5.5.4, the Departmental HETIS officer should not be precluded from exchanging preliminary/provisional data and statistics. This provisional data has to be referred to as estimates. However, only data and statistics that have been certified as a true record may be used in final statistics reports and in final decisions.

5.6 Duties of the Departmental Data Managers

5.6.1 Departmental Data Managers' Duties

- i. Design and plan education and training data collection systems in accordance with prescribed standards;
- ii. Manage data capturing processes, both manual and automated;
- iii. Maintain data accuracy and quality;
- iv. Submit data to the Departmental HETIS officer in accordance with the required standards;
- v. Archive key historical data in accordance with information standards;
- vi. Analyse systems, including the effectiveness and compliance of management systems and standards; and
- vii. Provide training to data managers in PSETIs and Departmental entities where necessary.

5.7 Duties of the PSETIs and Departmental Entities Data Managers

5.7.1 Institution and entity data managers in the PSET sector

Head of institutions and Principals and/or CEOs of entities must designate a data manager(s) or any appropriate official to liaise with the Department on any matter regarding data and information. The data managers must collaborate with each other and the Departmental HETIS officer in the furtherance of the HETMIS.

5.7.2 The process of providing data and statistics

The designated data managers or appropriate designated officials or the heads of PSETIs and Principals and/or CEOs of the Departmental entities must officially hand over the requested data or statistics to the Departmental HETIS officer through the relevant Departmental data manager. The data managers of PSETIs and Departmental entities must state formally any conditions regarding the data and or information provided. Formal exchange of data and statistics between the PSETIs and the Departmental entities may occur, even if it is for preliminary analysis and reporting only.

5.7.3 Guidelines for supporting data managers

Data managers should be supported with adequate finances, human and physical resources in order to perform their contracted activities, which may include, but are not limited to the following:

- i. Design and plan education and training data collection systems in accordance with prescribed standards;
- ii. Manage data capturing processes, both manual and automated;
- iii. Maintain data accuracy and quality;
- iv. Submit data to the Departmental HETIS officer in accordance with the required standards;
- v. Archive key historical data in accordance with information standards;
- vi. Analyse systems, including the effectiveness and compliance of management systems and standards; and
- vii. Deal with the formal exchange of data and statistics.

5.7.4 Collaboration between Data Managers for development purposes

The Data Managers or appropriate designated officials of the PSETIs and the Departmental entities must work together to improve the efficiency and value of statistical collections.

5.8 Post-School Education and Training Information Standards

5.8.1 Power to set standards

The Minister of Higher Education and Training has the power to determine the standards referred to in paragraph 5.8.3 below insofar as they affect the PSETIs and the Departmental entities referred to in legislation contemplated in item 1.7 of the Schedule of the Presidential Proclamation No. 44, published in Government Gazette No. 32367 of 1 July 2009.

5.8.2 Consideration of the broader information systems environment

Processes used to arrive at information standards must reflect the complexity of the information systems environment itself, and of a system of PSETIs and Departmental entities with varying degrees of autonomy. Processes should strike a balance between the urgent need for standards to be generated, the constitutional rights of the PSETIs and Departmental entities and the need for consultation. Moreover, processes should be sensitive to the reality that some PSETIs and Departmental entities have, for historical reasons, not been in a position to invest as much in information systems as others. In this regard, it must be ensured that processes empower the historically disadvantaged, by ensuring that building capacity accompanies system development, while at the same time

valuable lessons gained from systems where considerable investment has taken place, are made to benefit the country as a whole.

5.8.3 Types of Standards

For the purposes of this policy, different types of information standards will be identified and developed concerning the statistical value chain, including operational standards in accordance with the SASQAF, second edition, 2010. The following are some of the information standards required, but do not constitute an exhaustive list:

- i. **Descriptors and definitions of education and training terms.** Terminology and classifications used in the administration and planning of the education and training sector need to be uniform across the country. This terminology should be captured in the higher education and training sector data dictionary, which should also be a point of departure for specifying the inter-relationships between terms that systems designers require and the data field names that would correspond to particular terms. The existing standards should be integrated.
- ii. **Statistical tables.** Key statistical tables produced, for instance in annual statistical reports, must be standardised for higher education and training sector planning to be possible. Standards in this regard should consider and incorporate official and emerging higher education and training indicators for South Africa and international organisations.
- iii. **Information publications.** In the interest of user-friendliness and comprehensiveness, it is important for certain information publications to be standardised across the Department, PSETIs, Departmental entities and SETAs, for instance list of institutions made available to the public.
- iv. **Unique identifiers.** Identifiers that are unique to the higher education and training sector are required for a range of people and items, for example students, lecturers, skills, occupations, curriculum offerings and institutions. Standards governing the generation of such unique identifiers are required.
- v. **Data file layout.** Where different datasets exist that must be integrated, the standardisation of data files is essential. The key identifier(s) must be flagged as this will show the inter-relationship between data files.
- vi. **Data coding.** Codes used to refer to attributes must be standardised for data integration to be possible.
- vii. **Data quality.** The processes of data capturing and cleaning by the Department, PSETIs and Departmental entities must be governed by minimum quality standards in order to ensure that data accuracy is of an acceptable level.
- viii. **Platforms of systems.** Minimum standards must be set for hardware and software in so far as this is required for integration of systems and transfer of data.
- ix. **Performance of systems.** Certain aspects of the performance of systems should be standardised, in particular aspects relating to efficiency, timeliness, quality of data, the protection of privacy and the backing up of data.

- x. **Communication between systems.** Network protocols must be standardised for the secure and effective transfer of data between systems.
- xi. **Data archiving.** Minimum standards for the archiving of historical data are required to ensure that individual histories, as well as the history of the system as a whole, are available for future use.

5.9 Post School Education and Training Information Standards Committee (PSETISC)

5.9.1 Establishment of Post-School Education and Training Information Standards committee (PSETISC)

The Director-General of the Department may establish and appoint members to the PSETISC to advise him or her on the information standards generation process.

5.9.2 Functions of the PSETISC

The functions of this committee are to:

- a) Recommend research into the area of education and training information systems standards;
- b) Recommend consultation on standards between key role players;
- c) Receive and evaluate written inputs from role players, including members of the public and IT firms;
- d) Advise the Director-General on standards to be made official policy, after careful consideration of the options;
- e) Be the custodians of the definitive and most recent set of approved information standards for the education system; and
- f) Make standards widely known and available.

5.9.3 Member of the PSETISC

The PSETISC will consist of between 15 and 20 permanent members and will include representation from:

- i. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET);
- ii. The Departmental Entities;
- iii. The Department of Basic Education (DBE);
- iv. The Department of Science and Technology (DST);
- v. The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA);
- vi. Statistics South Africa (Stats SA);
- vii. The State Information Technology Agency (SITA);

- viii. The Department of Social Development (DSD);
- ix. The Department of Correctional Services (DCS);
- x. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME);
- xi. The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA);
- xii. The Quality Councils:
 - a. Umalusi;
 - b. Council on Higher Education (CHE); and
 - c. Quality Council for Trade and Occupations (QCTO).
- xiii. The South African Association for Institutional Researcher (SAAIR) - HEMIS Institute;
- xiv. Universities South Africa (USAf); and
- xv. Any other relevant stakeholders.

The Director-General of the Department may appoint Departmental officials to represent the Department in the PSETISC. Representation from the PSETIs and the Departmental entities will be collective in nature, and individual members will represent interests as a whole and not the interests of their respective entities or institutions. The PSETISC is not intended to be a fully representative body with decision-making powers. It is instead a specialist advisory body that makes recommendations to the Director-General of the Department. Appointment to the PSETISC should be considered in this context.

5.9.4 Procedures for establishing the PSETISC

The Director-General of the Department must request nominations from the organisations listed in paragraph 5.9.3 of this policy in deciding the appointments to be made to the PSETISC. The Director-General of the Department must appoint a chairperson of the PSETISC. The chairperson shall determine the frequency of meetings and meeting protocols in consultation with the Department. Only the Director-General of the Department may terminate membership of the PSETISC.

5.9.5 Co-option of members to the committee

The PSETISC may co-opt members for limited periods in order to obtain certain expertise, for instance, expertise specific to a particular education sector, such as Community Education and Training.

5.9.6 Process for generating information standards

The research recommended by the PSETISC must apply international best practice, local education priorities and trends in the information technology industry to influence the standards-generating process. Thorough and ongoing analysis of systems and censuses not directly controlled by the education department, but that may influence the development of post-school education information systems, must take place.

5.9.7 Consultation and dissemination of information by the committee

Regular and adequate consultation must occur between members of the PSETISC, but also between the PSETISC and other role players. Regular updates of current work must be submitted to the Director-General of the Department.

5.9.8 The committee and role players submit recommendations

The PSETISC must attempt to make its work known to all potential role players, and must ensure that it is easy for role players to submit recommendations regarding information standards. The Committee must respond to every submission received within two months of submission.

5.9.9 The designation of a technical working group

In order to ensure that the necessary technical work is undertaken to prepare standards, the PSETISC will designate a technical working group as a sub-committee of the PSETISC. The technical working group will receive requests and proposals for standards, prepare the technical standards and present standards to the PSETISC for inputs and recommendation to the Director-General. The technical working group will report directly to the PSETISC. The Information Systems Management Directorate must manage the technical working group.

5.9.10 Stakeholder Information Forums

In order to enable the participation of all stakeholders of the post-school education and training sector in the process of generating standards, stakeholder information forums may be set up. In the case where stakeholder forums exist, the Department will cooperate with them. Each forum will serve a particular related set of institutions or entities such as SETAs, public and private universities, TVET, CET and private colleges, QCs or similar bodies. The role of a stakeholder information forum is to request or suggest information standards to the technical working group of the Department. Stakeholder information forums must be approved by the standards committee and will report to the standards committee via the technical working group.

5.9.11 Information standards must adhere to industry conventions

The standards generated by the PSETISC must be understandable, yet should adhere to conventions that are familiar to participants in the education and training related systems development industry, considering that these participants will constitute important beneficiaries of the documented standards.

5.9.12 Format of the documented standards

The standards generated must be documented in a format that makes the process of periodical revisions clear and manageable. The format must, for example, make it clear when previously existing standards have been withdrawn or modified.

5.9.13 Final approval

When new standards have been generated that serve the interests of the PSET sector, the Minister must officially approve the standards concerned and publish such standards by way of a notice referring to the latest amended collection of all standards generated in terms of this policy, in a Government Gazette.

5.9.14 Dissemination of approved information standards

The PSETISC must ensure that the documented standards become as widely accessible as necessary. Copies of the documentation should be available on the Departmental website.

6. IMPLEMENTATION DATE OF THE POLICY

The reviewed policy will be effective as of the date of gazetting

7. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE POLICY

The Implementation plan is attached as **ANNEXURE A**

8. MONITORING OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY AND ITS REVIEW

The Information Systems Management Directorate of the Department must continuously monitor the implementation of the policy. Monitoring reports must be submitted to the Director-General of the Department by the end of each financial year.

9. PUBLICATION AND ACCESS/COMMUNICATION

The policy will be made available through the Departmental website written in English.

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10. REFERENCES

- 10.1 Department of Higher Education and Training (2013): White Paper for Post-School Education and Training. Pretoria.
- 10.2 Department of Higher Education and Training (2013): Higher Education and Training Information Policy, 2013. Government Gazette No. 36973. Pretoria.
- 10.3 Department of Higher Education and Training (2013): Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 (Act No. 16 of 2006). Pretoria.
- 10.4 Department of Higher Education and Training (2012): Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997). Pretoria.
- 10.5 Department of Higher Education and Training (2010): Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998). Cape Town.
- 10.6 OECD (2007): OECD Handbook for Internationally Comparative Education Statistics, Concepts, Standards, Definition and Classification, Paris. OECD Publishing.
- 10.7 Republic of South Africa (2000): Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act No.2 of 2000): Cape Town.
- 10.8 Republic of South Africa (2004): Public Audit Act, 2004 (Act No. 25 of 2004). Cape Town.
- 10.9 Republic of South Africa (2009): Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No.1 of 1999). Cape Town.
- 10.10 Republic of South Africa (2013): Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013). Cape Town
- 10.11 South African Qualifications Authority (2014): Standard Glossary of Terms: Terms Related to the South African National Qualifications Framework. Pretoria: SAQA.
- 10.12 South African Qualifications Authority (2009): National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008). Cape Town
- 10.13 Statistics South Africa (1999): Statistics Act, 1999 (Act No. 6 of 1999). Government Gazette No. 19957, 21 April 1999. Cape Town.
- 10.14 Statistics South Africa (2010): South African Statistical Quality Assessment Framework (SASQAF) 2nd Edition. Pretoria.
- 10.15 Statistics South Africa (2017): Concepts and Definitions for Statistics South Africa. Version 3. Pretoria.

11. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN OF THE POLICY : ANNEXURE A

As this is the reviewed policy from 2013, most of initiatives have been implemented. The baseline reflects what has been implemented to date.

INITIATIVES	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Approves and publishes developed information standards by way of a notice on the Government Gazette.	Information Standards published in the Government Gazette	The register of information standards approved and published in the Government Gazette	Minister	Ongoing
Establish and appoints members of PSETISC.	Letters of appointments of PSETISC members and Terms of reference	Letters and Terms of reference are available for the existing committee	Director General	As required
Appoint chairperson of PSETISC.	Letter of appointment of a chairperson	A letter of appointment for the previous chairperson is available		As required
Designate a Departmental HETIS Officer.	Letter of designation of the HETIS officer	A letter of designation of the Departmental HETIS officer is available		As required
Approve and sign off the statistics annual reports of the Department.	Signed off statistics reports	2010 – 2015 statistics reports are signed and published		31 March of every year
Approve and sign off annual reports of the PSETISC	Approved annual reports of the PSETISC	None		31 March of every year

Approve the reviewing of policy and information standards	Approved submission	None		September 2018
INITIATIVES	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Chairs the PSETISC	Minutes of meetings	Minutes of 2010-2016 meetings available	Deputy Director-General: P	Two meetings per financial year
Approve and sign off monitoring reports on the implementation of the policy and standards	Approved and signed report	2016 report		31 March of every year
Provide approved surveys or master list to institutions requesting data	Approved surveys and master list	2016 approved surveys and master lists	Departmental Data Managers	31 March of every year
Provide data when requested, upon completion of Data Request Form as stipulated in the Data Dissemination Standard	Logbook of data request provided	2016 logbook of data requests		31 March of every year
Publish relevant list of all PSETIs that are established, declared and/or registered by the Minister on the Departmental website	List of all PSETIs	2016 List of all PSETIs		31 March of every year
Designate data managers or appropriate officials to liaise with the Department on any matter related to data and information.	Contact details of designated data managers or appropriate officials	2016 list of contact details of data managers/appropriate officials	Heads of PSETIs and Principals and/or CEO of the Departmental Entities	31 March of every year

INITIATIVES	OUTPUT INDICATORS	BASELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Ensure that data submitted to the Department are correct and timely.	Signed off data	2015 signed off data		31 October of every year
Collect data and upload/send electronic files to the relevant Departmental data managers.	Data is received	2015 data	PSETIs and Departmental entities data managers	31 October of every year
Provide lists of state-funded programmes and learning opportunities available in the institutions.	Lists of state-funded programmes and learning opportunities are published	None		31 March of every year
States formally any conditions of data before sending it to the Departmental data managers.	Report of conditions of data	2015 report		31 October of every year
Integrate submitted data and publishes it on the Departmental website in an agreed standard.	Integrated data available	None	Departmental HETIS officer	31 March of every year
Chairs the Departmental Data Forum	Minutes of the meetings	Minutes of 2010-2016 meetings		Four meetings per financial year
Quality assure requested data before disseminating to users. Provide data sources with disseminated data.	Register of quality assured data	None	Departmental HETIS officer and/ Departmental data managers	Ongoing

INITIATIVES	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Develop annual statistical report and publish it on the Departmental website.	Statistical reports published on the Departmental website	2010 – 2015 Statistics reports	Departmental HETIS officer	31 March of every year
Provide guidelines and procedures on how data and statistics are disseminated	Data Dissemination Standard	Data Dissemination Standard placed on the Government Gazette in May 2014		September 2018
Ensures that the disseminated data does not breach the appropriate rules on confidentiality as stipulated in the Statistics Act, 1999.	Standard operating procedure on data requests	None		Ongoing
Ensure that all guidelines are available and used in data collection, processing, analysis and dissemination with regards to definitions and formats.	Standard operating procedure of Data Administration	None		Ongoing
Ensure that there are procedures that prevent the release of information considered private or confidential in terms of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013.	Data Confidentiality Standard	None		September 2018
Ensure that the current and historical data of the Department are safely and accessible stored in accordance with the Departmental archiving standards.	Data Archiving Standard	Data Archiving Standard gazetted placed on the Government Gazette in August 2015		Ongoing

INITIATIVES	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Ensure that all data collection systems and tools include clear and precise definitions of terms used and classifications of data to prevent ambiguities and misinterpretations.	Dictionary of Terms and Concepts	DoE Dictionary published in 2009	Departmental HETIS officer	March 2020
In making special request from the data managers of PSETIs and Departmental entities, provide clear specifications of the data requests, and timeframes that are reasonable relative to the nature of the requests.	Director-General approved specifications	None		As requested
To ensure that certified data and statistics are true records, the Departmental HETIS officer must ensure that a reasonable level of analysis and verification has been done.	Certified data and statistics	None		31 March of every year
Ensure that the processes of data capturing and cleaning is governed by minimum quality standards in order to ensure that data accuracy is of an acceptable level.	Data Quality Standard	Data Quality standard placed on Government Gazette in 2012		As required

INITIATIVES	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Establish the Departmental Data Forum consisting of all internal data managers of the Department.	Terms of reference and letters of appointment to participate in the Departmental Data Forum	Terms of reference and letters for existing members		As required
Recommend research into the area of education and training information systems standards.	Recommended research as it appears in the minutes of the meetings	None	PSET Information Standards Committee	As required
Recommend consultation on standards between key role players.	Recommended consultation as it appears in the minutes of the meetings	None		As required
Receive and evaluate written inputs from role players.	Committee input reports	None		As requested
Advise the Director-General on standards to be made official policy, after careful consideration of the options.	DG approved submission	DG submission for standards that have been placed on government gazette		31 March every year
Be the custodians of the definitive and most recent set of approved information standards for the education system.	Register of approved information standards	2016 register of approved information standards		31 March every year
Makes standards widely known and available.	Standards published on the Departmental website	Existing standards published on the Departmental website		31 March every year
Designates Technical Working Group as a	Terms of reference and	None		As required

sub-committee of the PSETISC	appointment letters			
INITIATIVES	OUTPUT INDICATOR	BASELINE	RESPONSIBILITY	TIMEFRAMES
Receive requests and proposals for the development of information standards	Proposals	None	Information Standards Technical Working Group	As requested
Present Information Standards to the PSETISC for recommendation to the DG	Presentations as it appears in the minutes of meeting	2010 – 2016 presentations of different standards as it appears in the minutes of the meeting.		Twice every financial year
Coordinate data-related matters in the Department.	Terms of reference and appointment letters	Terms of reference and letters are available for existing committee members.	Departmental Data Forum	As necessary
Create a platform for sharing information on data and statistical issues across branches in the Department as well as to coordinate the reporting of statistics and indicators in response to Departmental reporting requirements.	Four meetings per financial year and minutes of the meetings	Minutes of 2016/17 financial year meetings.		