

Media Statement

08 January 2019

Statement by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Mrs GNM Pandor, on Opportunities for the Class of 2018 in the Post-School Education and Training System

Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The mandate of the Department is to develop a skilled and capable workforce that can contribute to inclusive growth path. Central to achieving this mandate is also ensuring that students get access to and succeed in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges leading to intermediate and high-level skills.

TVET colleges play a pivotal role in addressing South Africa's skills needs and cater for a wide spectrum and growing numbers of students. TVET colleges have

flexible and diverse course offerings ranging from full qualifications to short courses, occupational and skills programmes, learnerships and other South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) registered qualifications.

While education is an apex priority of government, technical and vocational education and training need to be the apex of post-school education and training, the focus is on ensuring transformation with regards to relevant and responsive curricula, lecturer development, improved administration, management and governance of TVET colleges with the aim of producing employable young people with high quality occupational and vocational education and training skills. Government will continue to grow the system so that TVET colleges become institutions of choice providing skills to growing numbers of students and exceeding the number of university students significantly.

In pursuit of the Department's mandate to increase access and success in TVET college learning

programmes and to transform TVET colleges into institutions of choice in 2019, three new campuses will receive funding support from the fiscus, which will enable them to enrol more students. The planned headcounts enrolments at these three new campuses total 3 620 and are broken down as follows:

Campus	Headcounts
Thabazimbi Campus at Waterberg TVET College in Limpopo	1 018
Bhambanani Campus at Umfolozi TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal	1 236
Nkandla A Campus at Umfolozi TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal	1 366
Total	3 620

Students who have completed Grade 9 or 12, the latter with a minimum of a Higher Certificate achievement can consider studying further at one of 50 public TVET colleges. In 2019, there will be 322 438 new entrant

opportunities provided by TVET colleges of which 102 648 opportunities will be available for students interested in studying towards a National Diploma in Engineering or Business Studies. Meanwhile, 215 129 new entrants' opportunities will also be available across 19 programmes for the National Certificate (Vocational), which provides both theory and practical experience in various vocational fields. There will also be 4 661 entry opportunities into the Pre-vocational Learning Programme (PLP), which will enable students who do not meet the requirements for their programmes of choice to obtain the required knowledge and competencies to enrol in the next academic year.

TVET colleges also offer occupationally directed programmes that are accredited by Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) under the auspices of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO).

In 2019, there will be a total of 70 600 opportunities in these programmes. Among these, are programmes

offered through apprenticeship or learnership agreements between TVET colleges, employers and students. Part of occupational programme enrolment is the Dual System Pilot Project (DSPP), which will have an intake of 146 electrician and plumber apprentices at the Eastcape Midlands and Ekurhuleni West TVET Colleges.

Centres of Specialisation

The Centres of Specialisation (CoS) is a national programme aimed at building the capacity of the public TVET college system to deliver trade qualifications while building the much-needed skills for Strategic Integrated Projects (SIPs). The programme will start at 26 college sites spread across the country. These college sites will provide training in 13 critical trades and occupations that are in short supply for various infrastructure development and the economic needs of the country in general.

Each college site will take in a minimum of 30 apprentices per trade. The programme will start in January 2019 with employers appointing 845 apprentices and sending them

to colleges between February and March 2019. Four employer associations, namely, the Retail Motor Industry (RMI), Steel and Engineering Industry Federation (SEIFSA), Institute of Plumbing (IOPSA) and South African Institute of Welding (SAIW), are part of this groundbreaking initiative.

University Education

Many of those who have met the entrance requirements for university study will be pursuing degrees, diplomas and higher certificates at one of our 26 public universities.

Recent changes in the policy on *Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree requiring a National Senior Certificate* have enabled entry into a Bachelor's degree on the basis of any four 20 credit National Senior Certificate (NSC) subjects with an achievement of four (50 – 59%) or higher, as well as at least 30% in the language of learning and teaching at the higher education institution. This has

enabled a wider range of 20 credit subjects to be recognised for Bachelor entry. The minimum achievement in the language has not changed. It is important to realise that entrance requirement into university studies is linked to academic achievements in the National Senior Certificate (NSC). While the minimum requirement to achieve a bachelor's, diploma, or higher certificate pass in the NSC is set in policy, individual institutions and programmes set specific entrance requirements. This means that a person with a Bachelor's pass does not necessarily meet the requirement for entry into any Bachelor Degree programme.

In 2019, our 26 public universities will provide access to approximately 210 801 new entrants wishing to pursue their studies across all general, technical and professional fields including Business and Management, Science, Engineering, Agriculture and Technology, Humanities, Social Sciences, the Arts and Education.

The mid-term review of the enrolment plan was completed early in 2017. All universities were required to consider their enrolments in terms of the fiscal realities and constraints, and to plan realistically, making sure that the enrolment numbers targeted resulted in the optimum number of new students entering the system for the first time in 2018 and 2019, being fully supported through available infrastructure and sufficient qualified lecturers and academics. The enrolment plan provides details of the enrolment targets for all fields of study, and specifically for those scarce skills fields that support our country's growth, such as Engineering Sciences, Life and Physical Sciences, Animal and Human Health Sciences, and Teacher Education. In 2019, of the 210 800 new entrants, approximately 69 776 students will be enrolling in these areas:

- 17 028 in Engineering programmes
- 14 356 in Life and Physical Sciences programmes
- 11 510 in Human and Animal Health programmes of which
- 819 in Animal Sciences programmes

- 10 507 in Human Health programmes
- 184 in Veterinary Sciences programmes
- 26 882 in initial Teacher Education programmes

Universities have been requested not to over-enrol in 2019 as this could lead to overcrowding, poor quality of teaching and learning, and unsustainability within the university system.

Since the tragic loss of life incident at the University of Johannesburg in 2012, walk-in applications at institutions have been discouraged, and through the *Apply Now! Campaign*, which runs every year from March through to September in conjunction with the Khetha Career Development Services, prospective students have been encouraged to make informed career choices and to apply on time. We are therefore confident that most students who are intending to enter a university in 2019 have applied to the institution of their choice before the closing date.

Fee-free higher education and training to poor and working-class students

Our commitment has been to support as many academically deserving undergraduate students that require financial assistance as possible. In 2018, government announced substantial new funding to support poor and working-class students from families earning up to R350 000 per annum into universities. The new funding was introduced for first-time entry students into the system in 2018 and will be continued for the next group of first-time entering students in 2019. The new funding model will be phased in over five years. Students who qualify for funding must have applied for and been offered a place at a university in the first instance, and in the second instance be from a family with a gross annual income of up to R350 000 per annum. Any student that accepts the funding to study must sign a bursary agreement form and accept the conditions of the funding provided to receive their funding.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme

In 2018, there were some challenges in implementing the new scheme as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme's (NSFAS) system failed. Many deserving students only received their funding late. NSFAS was put under administration in August 2018. The Administrator and his team have managed to get the scheme back on track and has assured the Department that plans and processes are in place for 2019 that will ensure that the same challenges are not experienced. Qualifying students will be in a position to have their funding confirmed early in the academic year to ensure that they have the best chance of success.

While government has invested massively in providing funding for poor and working-class students to support them in university and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) studies, it is important that the private sector and other funders, including foundations, other national and provincial departments,

etc. continue to provide bursaries and scholarship to students studying in the university system. First-time entry students in 2019 who come from households with incomes of up to R350 000, who have been awarded bursaries or scholarships from other funders, will not qualify for full NSFAS bursaries. However, NSFAS will consider financial aid to these students on a 'top-up' basis if they are not fully funded through their bursary or scholarship. NSFAS will work with universities to ensure that there is no "double dipping".

In 2019, we have arranged through NSFAS to pay the registration or first fee instalment for all NSFAS qualifying students as an upfront payment to universities and TVET colleges in January. Therefore, NSFAS qualifying students will not pay any registration or upfront fees in 2019. All other students are expected to pay their upfront/registration fees.

The issue of debt owed to universities students by NSFAS qualifying students is being dealt with through a due diligence exercise carried out in 2018, and which is currently being finalised. All institutions have been

requested to register returning NSFAS qualifying students who meet the academic requirement but who still owe institutions fees in 2019 while this process is finalised. NSFAS qualify students will be requested to sign an acknowledgement of debt form, similar to what was implemented in the 2018 academic year, to enable them to register. It is expected that this due diligence process will be finalised in the first quarter of the 2019 academic year.

All universities have also been requested to continue to implement processes to enable academically successful students who have outstanding student debt to continue with their studies in 2019, wherever possible. The financial sustainability of the quality of universities will be at risk if students do not pay their fees and outstanding debts. Students who are academically deserving and struggling financially to pay their registration fees and/or outstanding debt must engage their university's finance office to agree upon a repayment plan. Universities have been requested to manage student debt through fair and transparent debt management policies and processes to

ensure that outstanding student debt is recovered over a reasonable and mutually acceptable period. The private sector and other funders are encouraged to help support deserving students, especially those who do not qualify for NSFAS funding, but that require financial assistance to complete their studies.

The NSFAS Administrator and his team have been working around the clock to ensure that there is a smooth registration period in 2019. NSFAS will work closely with financial aid offices at institutions to ensure that deserving students are provided with funding decisions as soon as possible.

University students that qualify for the bursary will receive funding for the actual tuition cost plus a set amount for study materials. Students may also qualify for subsidised accommodation and meals or transport capped at specific rates. Qualification for subsidised accommodation, meals or transport will be managed in terms of the accommodation and transport policy of

institutions. Since there is insufficient university owned or managed accommodation available, not all students who qualify for a subsidy will be accommodated in university owned or managed accommodation. Guidelines for the management of student funding for poor and working-class students have been developed and will be implemented to ensure that the funding is effectively and efficiently managed to support poor and working-class students.

Students who apply for and qualify for bursaries will be required to sign a contract with NSFAS. The contract will have binding obligations attached. These will include academic requirements as well as service requirements.

Central Applications Clearing House

Prospective first-time entry students who have applied for spaces in a university but have not been able to secure a space in their institution of choice will be referred to the Central Applications Clearing House (CACH) for

assistance in finding another space available in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system. Students who did not apply to an institution can also utilise CACH for assistance, particularly for referral to career guidance.

The CACH service was developed to assist learners who are eligible for higher education studies and have applied for space at a university but have not been offered a place at the institution of their choice after the Grade 12 results were released. The CACH will go live on the 4 January and will continue to operate until the end of February 2019.

Learners looking for spaces at PSET institutions can contact the toll-free call centre on 0800 356 635, or send an SMS with their name, ID and contact number to 49200 and they will be called back. They can also access the system via the website <http://cach.dhet.gov.za> or send an email to CACH@dhet.gov.za. The CACH service will verify the learner's information and forward it to institutions that still have unfilled places. Where places exist, and applicants meet the admission requirements,

institutions will contact learners to offer them available places.

The 2019 CACH service is linked to the Khetha Helpline, which can provide further advice, guidance and information and assist anyone interested in pursuing higher education and training opportunities or other skills development opportunities in the PSET system. Learners will be guided through possible alternative options at TVET colleges, artisan training and other skills development opportunities.

We call on all prospective students who have not been able to secure a space in a post-school education and training institution and who are interested in studying further in 2018, to register with the CACH to receive assistance. Do not waste your time, money and energy rushing to campuses to try to register if you do not have a firm offer of a space. Increase your chances of finding a placement by contacting the CACH.

Private Higher Education Institutions

There are a total of 127 Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) registered with the Department offering higher education and vocational programmes, across diverse fields of study, ranging from Higher Certificate to Doctoral studies through both distance and contact modes of delivery. The number of registered PHEIs changes from time-to-time, depending on the economy, the accreditation status of programmes and compliance with regulations. The Department monitors the system to ensure compliance on an ongoing basis and publishes an updated register of Registered PHEIs on a monthly basis on the Department's website, which includes details of the accredited programmes they may legally offer, as well as accredited sites of delivery. All prospective students wishing to study at a PHEI needs to check the register to ensure that the institution is operating legally, and is accredited to offer the programme. While PHEIs operating legally play an important role within the higher education sector and offer credible and quality programmes, there are a number of

'bogus' institutions that continue to advertise unregistered and unaccredited programmes to unsuspecting students. It is also important to check that the programme you wish to register for at a legally registered PHEI is accredited by the Council on Higher Education.

Private Colleges

The Department has registered a large number of private colleges to ensure that these private colleges provide quality education and training to students. Some private colleges operate without being registered. To close down unregistered private education and training institutions, the Department is working closely with the South African Police Service and other law-enforcement authorities.

The Department advises students who want to enrol at private colleges to check the registration status of such private colleges with the Department through its toll-free number: 0800 87 22 22. Alternatively, students can log on to the website of the Department where the *'Register*

of Private Colleges' is published and updated on a regular basis. The website address is www.dhet.gov.za/resources/registers.

Students living with special needs

The Department is committed to expanding access and success for students living with special needs in PSET institutions. To this end, NSFAS has a special fund to support students living with disabilities. This fund can be utilised to provide assistive devices as well as financial support for tuition, learning materials and living expenses. Students living with disabilities from families with gross family incomes of up to R600 000 may qualify for support, provided they are admitted into and are registered at a university.

The Department is also committed to improving the capacity of TVET colleges to accommodate and serve students with disabilities by developing the funding model for students with disabilities. The National Guidelines will

provide greater clarity regarding the provision of integrated and holistic support to students in the TVET college sector and will set minimum standards for an inclusive teaching and learning approach to support students in all aspects of students' college life, including academic life, arts, sports and culture.

Furthermore, this holistic approach takes into account the built environment, the use of specialised technology, training in appropriate pedagogies as well as capacity building of lecturers. Currently, about 20% of colleges enrol and cater for students with disabilities. The intention is to grow provision by 5% annually, depending on funding available for this purpose.

Artisan Learnerships and Apprenticeships

The National Development Plan furthermore requires that by 2030 at least 30 000 qualified artisans be produced per year. In South Africa, there is a growing trend of learners, who have completed their NSC and utilised

learnership or apprenticeship opportunities to become artisans in the civil, mechanical, electrical, manufacturing or support services career fields.

To this effect, learners must continue to seek and utilise a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) or National Skills Fund (NSF) funded artisan learnership or apprenticeship opportunities to access artisan training in the various fields of engineering and services areas.

Learners who have an inclination to become artisans, such as a motor mechanic, plumber, electrician, chef, hairdresser, among others, can register at the National Artisan Development Support Centre (NADSC) at INDLELA by going to their website: <http://nadsc.dhet.gov.za> calling the NADSC call centre on 086 999 0125 or by emailing copies of their qualifications to nadscinfo@dhet.gov.za or nadscplacements@dhet.gov.za.

SETAs will be providing 93 685 opportunities in various learning programmes such as learnerships, bursaries, internships, skills programmes, apprenticeship, etc.

They can also approach any of the Student Support Services' offices at any of the public TVET colleges or the Khetha Career Development Services at the Department for more information.

It is critical to note that to be accepted into an artisan-training programme in a technical field, a learner must have passed Mathematics with a minimum mark of 50% and a pass in Science.

Out-of-school youth who wish to enter the world of work, or need to increase their skills capabilities, can also consider the options of learnerships, apprenticeships and skills programmes.

TVET colleges also offer occupationally directed programmes that are accredited by SETAs under the auspices of the Quality Council for Trades and

Occupations. Among these, are programmes that are offered through apprenticeship or learnership agreements between the student, TVET colleges and employers.

National Skills Fund

The National Skills Fund (NSF) will continue to invest in TVET colleges towards funding ±15 000 learners per annum in occupationally directed programmes, which are linked to scarce and critical skills areas, especially with regards to artisan development.

The NSF will also be funding significant quality improvements in the TVET college sector, of which the following can be noted:

- development of a foundational learning programme to improve learner throughput;

- creation of Centres of Specialisation for 13 priority trades across the country in the TVET colleges; and
- providing connectivity to TVET college campuses across the country through the South African National Research Network.

The National Skills Fund has for the 2019 academic year provisionally allocated more than R580 million towards undergraduate bursaries. Students must be enrolled in scarce and critical skills areas related to priority occupations. Based on this preliminary allocation, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) will award undergraduate bursaries, and students wishing to make use of these bursaries are advised to enrol for critical skills study programmes, which include Science, Commerce, Health Sciences, Engineering and many others. As a strategic initiative, the NSF will also support students selected through the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) programme studying towards the Certificate for Theory in Accounting (CTA).

The NSF is also committed to expanding access and success in our institutions for students who have special needs. The NSF will be supporting Blind SA to benefit 50 learners totalling R3.1 million, Higher Education and Training HIV/AIDS Programme (HEAIDS) to the amount of R36 million targeting university and TVET students, and the SA Disability Trust to benefit 1 614 learners totalling R29.2 million.

Enquiries:

Lunga Ngqengelele (Media Liaison Officer)

Ministry of Higher Education and Training

Cell: +2782 566 0446

Tel: +2712 312 5850

E-mail:lunga.n@dhet.gov.za

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