

# WHITE PAPER FOR POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

BUILDING AN EXPANDED, EFFECTIVE  
AND INTEGRATED POST-SCHOOL SYSTEM



higher education  
& training

Department:  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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As approved by Cabinet on 20 November 2013



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# Minister's Preface



In January 2012, I released the Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training as a discussion document. The Green Paper was discussed in various government forums, including Cabinet and the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training. It was also discussed at various conferences and seminars by a wide range of stakeholders, many of whom submitted comments to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). These stakeholders included educational institutions, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), employer groupings, trade unions and other organisations and individuals.

All in all, the DHET received nearly 200 submissions in response to the Green Paper, confirmation of a widespread public interest in post-school education and training policy. All submissions were read and considered. Some, not unexpectedly, contradicted one another, and not all the suggestions were incorporated into this White Paper. However, all enriched our deliberations and, we believe, generally helped us to understand the views of stakeholders, to question our own views and to deepen our understanding of the policy issues.

The Green Paper dealt frankly and honestly with the many challenges facing the post-school system. While acknowledging these challenges, this White Paper focuses its attention on the vision we have for the system and the principles governing that vision, as well as the policies which will be developed and implemented over the coming years. It represents government's thinking in the area of higher education and training and is in line with the country's key national policy documents including the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path, the Industrial Policy Action Plan and the draft Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa.

The aim of this White Paper is to outline a framework that defines the Department's focus and priorities, and that enables it to shape its strategies and plans for the future. Following the adoption of the White Paper by Cabinet, and based on the framework that it provides, the DHET will elaborate a concrete development plan for the period up to 2030.

This White Paper is an important document in the development of our higher education and training system. It is a definitive statement of the government's vision for the post-school system, outlining our main priorities and our strategies for achieving them. It is a vision for an integrated system of post-school education and training, with all institutions playing their role as parts of a coherent but differentiated whole. These institutions include the colleges and universities whose main purpose is the direct provision of education and training and, in the case of universities, the conduct of research. They also include institutions that support the education and training process, such as the Sector Education and Training Authorities, the National Skills Fund and the advisory, regulatory and quality assurance bodies such as the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Quality Councils.

We envisage a system that is made up of a diverse range of educational institutions and institutional types that will expand considerably over the next twenty years to cater for the millions of people – especially the youth, but also a large number of adults – who need its benefits. It will also be a system that recognises that the right to access an educational



institution is not enough, and that institutions must provide education of a high quality. The system envisaged must provide paths for articulation between various qualifications, and there should be no dead-ends for students; there should always be a way for someone to improve their qualifications without undue repetition. Meeting the needs of learners of all ages and levels must be a central purpose of the education and training system.

The White Paper also recognises the importance of partnerships between educational institutions and employers. Most students are preparing for careers in the labour market, and practical experience in the world of work is an invaluable part of their training. Even those students who do not find jobs in the formal labour market will benefit from practical workplace experience as they seek alternative ways of earning sustainable livelihoods. Employers must be drawn closer to the education and training process; they are among its major beneficiaries and must contribute to its success.

However, the education and training system should not only provide knowledge and skills required by the economy. It should also contribute to developing thinking citizens, who can function effectively, creatively and ethically as part of a democratic society. They should have an understanding of their society, and be able to participate fully in its political, social and cultural life.

This White Paper is a vehicle with which to drive and deepen transformation of the entire post-schooling sector. It will provide a framework to build on the many achievements of our democratic government since 1994. It is on the foundations of these achievements that we intend to tackle the many challenges that still lie ahead. The White Paper will empower us as we strive to build a post-school education and training system that is able to contribute to eradicating the legacy of apartheid. It will assist us to build a non-racial, non-sexist and prosperous South Africa characterised by progressive narrowing of the gap between the rich and the poor. Access to quality post-school education is a major driver in fighting poverty and inequality in any society.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this White Paper. This includes Deputy Minister Mduduzi Manana, Director General Gwebs Qonde, and the officials of the Department of Higher Education and Training. It also includes all those stakeholders who made a contribution to developing the Green Paper, those who gave us their responses to it and those who contributed to the consultations that took place during the writing of the White Paper. In particular I would like to give a special word of thanks to the team, led by my Special Advisor, John Pampallis, which did the actual research and writing: Stephanie Matseleng Allais, Michele Berger, Nadya Bhagwan, Tsakani Chaka, Paul Kgobe and Kgomotso Ramushu. Special thanks also go to other various other researchers, too numerous to mention, who helped to inform and develop the White Paper.

**DR B.E. NZIMANDE, MP**

Minister of Higher Education and Training

November 2013

# Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ATR	Annual training report
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CAS	Central Applications Service
CBO	Community-based organisation
CDW	Community Development Workers [programme]
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHW	Community Health Workers [programme]
CWP	Community Works Programme
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
FET	Further education and training
FOTIM	Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GETC	General Education and Training Certificate
HEDSA	Higher Education Disability Services Association
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and communications technology
MEDUNSA	Medical University of South Africa
N-programme	Nated/Report 191 Programme
NAMB	National Artisan Moderating Body
NASCA	National Senior Certificate for Adults
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQF	National Qualifications Framework

NSA	National Skills Authority
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSDS III	Third National Skills Development Strategy
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
ODL	Open and distance learning
OER	Open education resources
PALAMA	Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy
PALC	Public Adult Learning Centre
PIVOTAL	Professional, vocational, technical and academic learning
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIVCET	South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training
SANLIC	South African National Library and Information Consortium
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SDA	Skills Development Act
SET	Science, Engineering and Technology
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
TAFE	Technical and further education [system, Australia]
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
Unisa	University of South Africa
WIL	Work-integrated learning
WSP	Workplace skills plan

# Executive Summary

In January 2012, the *Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training* was released for public comment. It received a great deal of attention from stakeholders in the post-school system. This White Paper seeks to set out a vision for the type of post-school education and training system we aim to achieve by 2030. It has been developed after consideration of the nearly 200 responses to the Green Paper received from educational institutions, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), employer groupings, trade unions, other organisations and individuals, as well as further reflection within the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) on the challenges facing the sector.

The post-school system is understood as comprising all education and training provision for those who have completed school, those who did not complete their schooling, and those who never attended school. It consists of the following institutions, which fall under the purview of the DHET:

- 23 public universities (with two more being established in 2014);
- 50 public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges (formerly known as further education and training [FET] colleges);
- public adult learning centres (soon to be absorbed into the new community colleges);
- private post-school institutions (registered private FET colleges and private higher education institutions, also to be renamed TVET colleges);
- the SETAs and the National Skills Fund (NSF);
- regulatory bodies responsible for qualifications and quality assurance in the post-school system – the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Quality Councils.

In addition, a number of state-owned post-school institutions exist under the authority of several other national government departments, mainly (but not exclusively) training public service workers. Furthermore, some institutions are operated by provincial governments and municipalities to train their own personnel. The DHET – through the Quality Councils – is responsible for assuring the quality of provision in these colleges and for ensuring that the qualifications that they offer are registered.

The White Paper sets out strategies to improve the capacity of the post-school education and training system to meet South Africa's needs. It outlines policy directions to guide the DHET and the institutions for which it is responsible in order to contribute to building a developmental state with a vibrant democracy and a flourishing economy. Its main policy objectives are:

- a post-school system that can assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa;
- a single, coordinated post-school education and training system;
- expanded access, improved quality and increased diversity of provision;
- a stronger and more cooperative relationship between education and training institutions and the workplace;
- a post-school education and training system that is responsive to the needs of individual citizens, employers in both public and private sectors, as well as broader societal and developmental objectives.

## The college system

### TVET colleges

The DHET's highest priority is to strengthen and expand the public TVET colleges and turn them into attractive institutions of choice for school leavers. Total head-count enrolments have increased from just over 345 000 in 2010 to an estimated 650 000 in 2013; they will increase to one million by 2015 and 2.5 million by 2030. Key objectives in strengthening colleges include improving their management and governance, developing the quality of teaching and learning, increasing their responsiveness to local labour markets, improving student support services, and developing their infrastructure.

In addition, emphasis will be given to strengthening partnerships with employers, both at the system level and that of individual colleges. Such partnerships will assist the colleges to locate opportunities for work-integrated learning, to place students when they complete their studies, and to obtain regular workplace exposure for staff so as to keep them abreast of developments in industry. Employers should also be in a position to advise the college system and individual colleges around issues of curriculum, and experts from industry could teach at colleges on a part-time or occasional basis. SETAs have an important role to play in promoting and facilitating links between colleges and employers. A curriculum that responds to local labour market needs or that responds to particular requests from SETAs, employers or government to meet specific development goals will result in a differentiated college system with various niche areas of specialisation.

The current mix of programmes and qualifications in the TVET colleges is complex to administer, difficult for learners and parents to understand, and often poorly quality-assured. The entire gamut of vocational programmes and qualifications will therefore be reviewed and rationalised. The review should ideally be led by both the DHET and the Department of Basic Education (DBE), as both offer vocational programmes; it should also involve the colleges, employers and relevant unions.

### Community colleges

A new type of institution will be established to cater mainly for youth and adults who did not complete their schooling or who never attended school and thus do not qualify to study at TVET colleges and universities. These institutions will be known as community colleges. They will be multi-campus institutions which group together a number of existing public adult learning centres (PALCs). They will be provided with adequate infrastructure and a critical mass of full-time staff, and will be expanded by adding new campuses where this is necessitated by increasing enrolments and programmes. Although they will be public colleges, they will be able to enter into partnerships with community-owned or private institutions such as church-run or other education and training centres.

Community colleges will build on the current offerings of the PALCs in order to expand vocational and skills-development programmes and non-formal programmes. Formal programmes will include the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC) and Senior Certificate programmes currently offered, as well as the proposed new National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) and occupational programmes funded by SETAs or the NSF. The community colleges should draw on the strengths of the non-formal sector – particularly its community responsiveness and its focus on citizen and social education – in order to strengthen and expand popular citizen and community education.

Community colleges will also link directly with the work of public programmes – such as the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Community Works Programmes (CWP), and others – to provide appropriate skills and knowledge. Such programmes can provide work-integrated learning opportunities, while the colleges provide classroom and workshop-based learning. SETAs can play an important role in facilitating such partnerships.

The introduction of community colleges will take a phased approach, and will be preceded by a pilot process to help inform further development of the concept and its roll-out throughout the country. It is envisaged that the community colleges will have a headcount enrolment of one million by 2030, as compared to the 265 000 in the PALCs in 2011.

### **Other public colleges**

All public colleges under the aegis of other government departments must comply with the requirements of SAQA, education and training quality assurance institutions and the national qualifications framework (NQF). It is essential that qualifications at all public colleges should articulate easily with programmes in other post-school institutions.

A government decision to shift responsibility for the agricultural colleges from the Department of Agriculture to the DHET will be effected in the near future.

### **SAIVCET**

The South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) will be established in order to provide necessary and appropriate support to the college sector. The primary responsibilities of SAIVCET will include:

- developing innovative curricula for TVET and community colleges;
- upgrading the technical knowledge and pedagogical skills of existing staff in TVET and community colleges, and promoting the professionalisation of lecturers, instructors and trainers;
- providing a forum for experts to develop materials for TVET and community college programmes;
- advising the Minister on vocational and continuing education;
- initiating research on the TVET colleges, the community colleges and the college system as a whole;
- promoting dialogue, coordination and linkages between TVET and community colleges, and between these institutions and universities, SETAs, employers and workers, in order to enhance coherence and articulation;
- monitoring and evaluation of the TVET and community colleges.

### **Universities**

In this sector, the DHET's main focus will be on promoting the improvement of quality and building appropriate diversity. The aim is to ensure that a wide range of high-quality options is provided throughout the system, as well to improve articulation between higher education institutions and between universities and other post-school institutions. South Africa needs a diverse university sector which is *purposefully* differentiated; the White Paper sets out principles to guide the ongoing differentiation of the university sector and the formulation of institutional missions.

Participation rates in universities are expected to increase from the current 17.3 per cent to 25 per cent – that is, from just over 937 000 students in 2011 to about 1.6 million enrolments in 2030. As participation increases, universities must simultaneously focus their attention on improving student performance. Improving student access, success and throughput rates is a very serious challenge for the university sector and must become a priority focus for national policy and for the institutions themselves, in particular in improving access and success for those groups whose race, gender or disability status had previously disadvantaged them. A particularly important area of focus with regard to expanding student access and success is the development of the scarce and critical skills needed for South Africa's economic development.

The DHET remains committed to progressively introducing free education for the poor in South African universities as resources become available.

The new Central Applications Service (CAS) is a crucial move towards supporting informed access to universities and other post-school opportunities for students, and to make the choices and placement of students across the system more effective.

DHET policy will focus on increasing research and innovation, improving the quality of research, and building on areas of strength identified as important for national development. The staffing of universities is a concern. A policy will be developed, focusing on the need to recruit and retain academics, ensuring that academic careers are attractive, assisting academics to improve their qualifications, improving conditions of service, and attracting academics from other countries where necessary. A National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences will be established to stimulate research and postgraduate studies in these vital disciplines. The DHET will provide support for the study and development of the African languages in our universities.

In general, the university sector has embraced the concept of an integrated post-school system. Some universities have already begun to build strong partnerships with other post-school institutions, particularly TVET colleges. The expansion of such collaboration will be encouraged to achieve a range of objectives that are essential to building a vibrant post-school system. In addition, universities should seek to build strong partnerships with employers in order to promote the expansion of workplace training opportunities, especially in those areas where qualifications or professional registration depends on practical workplace experience. These partnerships can benefit from the inclusion of SETAs.

## **Private education providers**

Presently, the available data on private post-school institutions is inaccurate, incomplete and scattered among various data sets in various institutions. The DHET will make a concerted effort to coordinate, centralise and extend data collection. The analysis of such data – combined with information from the Quality Councils – will give us a better idea of the extent and quality of private educational provision and help us to understand its contribution more fully.

The DHET will undertake a thorough review of the regulation and quality assurance of private providers. Such a review will examine the current system and make recommendations with regard to ensuring that the government and its agencies, especially SAQA and the Quality Councils, use to best affect the resources that are available for these purposes.

While recognising and appreciating the role of private institutions, the Department believes that the public sector is the core of the education and training system. The government's main thrust, therefore, should be to direct public resources primarily to meeting national priorities and to provide for the masses of young people and adult learners through public institutions.

It is roughly estimated that the private TVET and higher education institutions will have an enrolment of approximately half a million by 2030.

## Addressing disability

The DHET will develop a strategic policy framework to guide the improvement of access to and success in post-school education and training for people with disabilities. The framework will require all post-school institutions to address policy within institutional contexts and to develop targeted institutional plans to address disability. These should be based on norms and standards for the integration of students and staff with disabilities in all aspects of university or college life, including academic life, culture, sport and accommodation, developed through the strategic policy framework.

Greater awareness of the needs of students and staff with disabilities needs to be built, alongside the capacity to address disability at all levels of post-school institutions, including lecturers, support staff and management. Particular attention will be paid to the plight of women with disabilities and disabled students from poor families, throughput rates of disabled students, and the need for training and work-based opportunities for students both during and upon completion of their programmes.

The DHET will build its own internal capacity to support a new approach to addressing disability within post-school institutions, including information management, conducting research into disability in the post-school sector, policy development and support, and providing the necessary resources to institutions to enable transformation in this area.

## Opening learning through diverse modes of provision

The DHET will work toward creating a post-school distance education landscape based on open learning principles. This landscape will complement the traditional campus-based provision. It will consist of a network of education providers supported by learning support centres and/or connectivity for students. Such a network will make available a wide range of learning opportunities to potential students that are closer to their homes and at times appropriate to their contexts. Other advantages include the development and availability of well-researched, high-quality national learning resources (made available as open education resources [OER]<sup>1</sup>), collaborative development of learning resources, more efficient use of existing infrastructure, and an increasing emphasis on independent study as preparation for subsequent lifelong learning.

1. A useful definition of open education resources is provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). They are "educational resources that are openly available for use by educators and students, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees" (UNESCO and Commonwealth of Learning, *A Basic Guide to Open Educational Resources* (2011: 5).



Universities, especially comprehensive universities and universities of technology, will be encouraged to expand distance higher education for vocationally oriented diploma programmes. Presently, this area is less developed than distance education for the purely academic programmes. The Department will also encourage all universities to expand online and blended learning as a way to offer niche programmes.

There is currently little distance education provision for the post-school sector below university level. The Department will seriously investigate the possibility of providing distance education programmes at the TVET and community college level, including dedicated staff and equipment. The theoretical component of apprenticeships might also be offered through distance education, especially for those students who live or work far from an appropriate college or who prefer this model.

It will be necessary to ensure continuing professional development for full-time staff in the post-school sector, and to increase staff numbers as the numbers of distance education enrolments grows. In addition, it is essential to expand equitable access to ICT resources. Quality assurance will be an issue with the expansion of open and distance modes of delivery, and must be given attention by the Department and the Quality Councils.

## **Linking education and the workplace**

The design of training systems, including curricula, requires close cooperation between education and training providers and employers – especially in those programmes providing vocational training. In areas of work such as the artisan trades, apprenticeships have traditionally been the pathway to qualifications; however, the apprenticeship system has been allowed to deteriorate since the mid-1980s, resulting in a shortage of mid-level skills in the engineering and construction fields. Re-establishing a good artisan training system is an urgent priority; the current target is for the country to produce 30 000 artisans a year by 2030. It is also important to expand other forms of on-the-job training, including learnerships and internships in non-artisan fields. The SETAs have a crucial role to play in facilitating such workplace learning partnerships between employers and educational institutions.

The roles of the SETAs and the NSF will be simplified and clarified, and their capacity built in line with their core functions. SETAs will focus on developing the skills of those in existing enterprises and the development of a skills pipeline to such workplaces. Their focus will be narrowed to engaging with stakeholders in the workplace, establishing their needs, and ensuring that providers have the capacity to deliver against these. The NSF will be responsible for skills development aligned to national development strategies and priorities, including building linkages within the skills system and providing funds for government strategies such as youth programmes, building small businesses and cooperatives, and rural development. It will also fund research and innovation that is not confined to a particular sector.

The DHET will consolidate initiatives towards developing a central skills planning system. It will establish a planning unit that will work with key public institutions to develop a national skills planning system. The SETAs will supply sector-specific, reliable quantitative data to the national central planning process, engage with key stakeholders to test scenarios that emerge from the central skills planning process, and plan to support provision in priority areas. The DHET, with the SETAs, will use the national and sectoral information on skills demand to plan supply.

The focus of the SETA mandatory grant will be exclusively on gathering accurate data on sector skills needs. Companies will be expected to submit one comprehensive document annually, which includes information about current levels of skills, experience and qualifications of employees, all training that is taking place in that workplace, and their skills priorities and gaps for both the short term and the medium term. Submission of the above will entitle the employer to 20 per cent of their levy (that is, the mandatory grant).

SETA funding of training will come from the discretionary grant. This will be for programmes intended to support existing businesses – for training both existing workers and potential new entrants to the labour market. Providers could be public, private or even the employers' own in-house training institutions, provided they have the capacity to provide all or substantial parts of qualifications. SETAs and the NSF will also use the discretionary grant to fund skills development capacity in public education and training institutions. SETAs must show alignment between the funds they spend and the objectives in their strategic plans.

A restructured and refocused National Skills Authority will concentrate specifically on monitoring and evaluating the SETAs. This implies that it will become an expert body with high-level monitoring and evaluation skills.

## **The NQF and the Quality Councils**

The existing structures and remits of the Quality Councils will remain largely unchanged, but individual Councils will have greater flexibility to quality assure qualifications on NQF levels from which they were previously restricted. So for example, Umalusi could quality assure certain Level 5 qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework. SAQA will mediate where differences arise between Quality Councils.

Ensuring articulation of qualifications is an important concern for the DHET as well as for SAQA and the Quality Councils. SAQA must provide guidance on articulation between the three sub-frameworks<sup>2</sup> and must endeavour to ensure that institutions avoid unfair and irrational barriers to acceptance and credit transfer. All institutions in the post-school system must work together to ensure that there are no dead ends for learners.

Quality Councils should use external assessment to reveal poor performance (except in universities, where assessment is institution-based and moderated through peer-reviewed external assessment systems). The Quality Councils must investigate institutions where learners consistently perform poorly, and institute appropriate remedial or capacity-building measures. Institutions which continue to be problematic should be closed down where necessary.

## **Conclusion**

The White Paper sets out a vision of a transformed post-school system which is an integral part of the government's policies to develop our country and improve the economic, social and cultural life of its people. The post-school system that is envisaged is one that will be more

2. The three sub-frameworks are: the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework; the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework; and the Trades and Occupations Qualifications Sub-framework.

equitable, much expanded and more diverse than it is at present, and will include a key role for employers in the provision of education and training opportunities. The system will be integrated in such a way that the different components complement one another, and work together to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of post-school education and training in South Africa.

# 1.

## Background and Challenges

This White Paper seeks to set out strategies to expand the current provision of education and training in South Africa, to improve its quality, to integrate the various strands of the post-school system, and to set out modalities for ways in which employers in both the private and public sectors can play an important role in the creation of a skilled labour force.

Since the advent of democratic government in 1994, South Africa has been building a new education and training system whose goal has been to meet the needs of a democratic society. Policy developments have been aimed at democratising the education system, overcoming unfair discrimination, expanding access to education and training opportunities, and improving the quality of education, training and research. Important policy instruments have been developed including legislation, White Papers and Green Papers. The basic principles of democracy, equity, quality, expansion of education and training opportunities, and the integration of education and training set out in these documents are generally consistent with the principles guiding this White Paper on Post-school Education and Training. Individual policy documents are referred to in the text where appropriate.

Some important successes have been achieved. The rapid expansion of enrolments in universities and colleges, quality improvements in parts of the system, desegregation and the opening up of opportunities to black and woman students are unprecedented in our history. In addition, we have established a skills levy system that provides the necessary resources to enhance skills development.

Nonetheless, important challenges remain. The Green Paper dealt with these in considerable detail and further elaboration is provided in the chapters of this White Paper. The Green Paper noted that, despite the advances made since the advent of democracy, the education system continues to replicate the divisions of the past. The institutional landscape is still reminiscent of apartheid, with disadvantaged institutions, especially those in rural areas of the former bantustans, still disadvantaged in terms of infrastructure, teaching facilities and staffing. Black students at formerly whites-only institutions have often been victims of racism, and female students have been victims of patriarchal practices and sexual harassment. Poorer students have to fit in with systems that were designed for students from relatively privileged backgrounds. Opportunities in rural areas are far more limited than those in urban areas and informal settlements are also victims of under-provision. The majority of disabled students continue to experience discrimination in term of access to post-school education and training opportunities, and the system as a whole has inadequate facilities and staff to cater for the needs of the disabled. Education for adults has been marginalised and neglected, and has seldom provided a vocational component for those seeking to enhance their occupational skills.

Despite very significant growth, South Africa still has a post-school education and training system that does not offer sufficient places to the many youth and adults seeking education and training. Expansion is needed, both in terms of numbers of available places, and the types of education and training that are available. There should be greater differentiation and diversity among our institutions in order to provide for the wide variety of need of both students and employers.

The system must be expanded to cater for the needs of the over three million young people who are not in employment, education, or training, to cater for the needs of an economy that must enhance its skills levels in order to grow and to provide the high-level research and innovation required by a modern economy. This means expanding general, vocational and professional educational opportunities as well as opportunities for postgraduate study. It requires a far greater number of opportunities for workplace training and experience – and hence considerably more involvement of employers in the education and training process. We must also find ways to assist those who find themselves outside the formal economy and in need of finding creative and sustainable ways to earn a livelihood.

Much (although by no means all) of the education offered in our institutions is inadequate in quality and many post-school educational institutions, the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), the National Skills Fund (NSF), and the skills system as a whole have operated less than optimally. Quality challenges are varied and relate to governance, management, teaching, curriculum, quality assurance, infrastructure, and the insufficient cooperation among post-school institutions and between them and employers.

This situation requires us to re-evaluate our strategies, to review our outlook, to recast (or, in some cases, to reaffirm) our priorities, and to chart the way forward in the new circumstances.

Another significant factor necessitating a re-evaluation of our approach has been the establishment in 2009 of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the amalgamation of those parts of the old Department of Education and the Department of Labour which dealt with post-school education and training. This has greatly facilitated the achievement of the long-held goal of the integration of education and training. Much of this White Paper deals with the development of a common vision and strategies to achieve this goal.

It is not only the education and training system that has changed. The social and economic challenges facing South Africa have also changed. Today, national priorities are seen somewhat differently by government compared to earlier years of democratic rule. In particular, the persistence – and in some ways the intensification – of serious structural challenges associated with unemployment, poverty and inequality have stimulated and refocused the thinking of policy makers and citizens. National economic development has been prioritised, and the role of education and training as a contributor to development has begun to receive much attention. The National Development Plan (NDP), the New Growth Path and other key policy documents of government have set out important strategies and priorities for development, with an emphasis on inclusive growth and employment generation. It is essential that the post-school education and training system responds to these, especially with regard to expanding the pool of skills and knowledge available to the country; achievement of this goal will enable the expansion of the key economic focus areas and equip young people to obtain work.

This is not to devalue the intrinsic importance of education. Quality education is an important right, which plays a vital role in relation to a person's health, quality of life, self-esteem, and the ability of citizens to be actively engaged and empowered. This White Paper reasserts these basic values that have informed the Constitution and which will continue to inspire everyone involved in education and training. However, few can argue with the need to improve the performance of the economy, to expand employment and to equip people to achieve sustainable livelihoods. This means improving partnerships, developing effective and well-understood vocational learning and occupational pathways, and improving the quality of the learning and work experiences along those pathways.

This White Paper seeks to set out a vision for the type of system we hope to achieve in the period up to 2030. Such an aim must necessarily be accompanied by some guidance on the process of how to get from here to there. It thus inevitably entails a tension between outlining a longer-term vision and setting out the path that must be taken in the immediate and medium-term future in order to reach that vision.

This tension is evident in the structure that we have chosen for the White Paper. While our main message is the need to create an expanded, effective and integrated post-school education and training system, we also emphasise the need to strengthen our institutions as the building blocks of that system. In this sense, it is important to focus on short-term and medium-term interventions, especially in the weaker institutions, to ensure that they are able to realise the longer-term vision. We address this point by focusing some chapters on colleges, universities and levy-grant institutions (that is, the SETAs and the NSF). We also recognise that most people working or studying in the post-school system will be focused on the reality of building and transforming the institutions or institutional types in which their efforts are employed. This should in no way detract from the need for these institutions to break out of the silos in which they have developed and – with the assistance of our Quality Councils and regulatory bodies – to contribute to the creation of a single, coherent and integrated system of post-school education and training. As we build our institutions, one of the most important measures of their success will be the extent to which they articulate with the rest of the post-school system.

## 2.

# Main Policy Objectives

The Department of Higher Education and Training seeks to improve the capacity of the post-school education and training system to meet the needs of the country. This White Paper sets out policies to guide the DHET and the institutions for which it is responsible in order to contribute to building a developmental state with a vibrant democracy and a flourishing economy. It sets out a vision for:

- a post-school system that can assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa;
- a single, coordinated post-school education and training system;
- expanded access, improved quality and increased diversity of provision;
- a stronger and more cooperative relationship between education and training institutions and the workplace;
- a post-school education and training system that is responsive to the needs of individual citizens and of employers in both public and private sectors, as well as broader societal and developmental objectives.

This chapter summarises the main policy objectives. The following chapters will elaborate.

### 2.1 Education and social justice

It is close to twenty years since South Africa discarded the apartheid regime and replaced it with a democratically elected government. Much has been achieved since then, but much remains to be done to rid our country of the injustices of its colonial and apartheid past. Deep-seated inequalities are rooted in our past; it is not by accident that the remaining disparities of wealth, educational access and attainment, health status and access to opportunities are still largely based on race and gender. A growing black middle class has been empowered by the new conditions created by the arrival of democracy, and its members have managed to transform their lives in many ways. However, the majority of South Africans have still to attain a decent standard of living. Most black people are still poor; they are still served by lower-quality public services and institutions (including public educational institutions) than the well-off. Patriarchy, also a legacy of our past, ensures that women and girls continue to experience a subordinate position in many areas of life, including in much of the education and training system.

Other inequities also exist irrespective of race or gender, although often aggravated by them: differences based on socio-economic status, ability/disability, or health status (especially HIV/AIDS status). People born and living in poor rural areas have fewer opportunities than urban residents, and those in townships and informal settlements do not fare as well as their

suburban counterparts. The main victims of the growth in unemployment are the youth, the particular focus of the DHET's attention. Historical disadvantages need to be redressed if we are to move towards a more just and stable society.

Education has long been recognised as providing a route out of poverty for individuals, and as a way of promoting equality of opportunity. The achievement of greater social justice is closely dependent on equitable access by all sections of the population to quality education. Just as importantly, widespread and good quality education and training will allow more rapid economic, social and cultural development for society as a whole. Education will not guarantee economic growth, but without it economic growth is not possible and society will not fulfil its potential with regard to social and cultural development.

For the education and training system, this indicates a need to expand access to post-school opportunities far beyond what is currently available, while simultaneously ensuring that the quality of our entire post-school system improves.

## 2.2 A single, coordinated system

Before 2009, responsibility for education and training was divided between the Department of Education and the Department of Labour. Coordination between the two departments was often difficult, and institutions did not always support one another. Even within the Department of Education there was little coordination or articulation between the administration of the universities and the colleges.

The post-school system as conceptualised in this White Paper consists of all the institutions, public and private, for which the DHET is responsible. These include the following sub-sectors:

- 23 public universities (with two more being established in 2014);
- 50 public technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges (formerly further education and training [FET] colleges);
- public adult learning centres (soon to be absorbed into the new community colleges)
- private post-school institutions (registered private FET colleges and private higher education institutions, also to be renamed TVET colleges);
- the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the National Skills Fund (NSF);
- regulatory bodies responsible for qualifications and quality assurance in the post-school system – the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Quality Councils.

In addition, a number of state-owned post-school institutions exist under the authority of several other national government departments, mainly (but not exclusively) training public service workers. Furthermore, some institutions are operated by provincial governments and municipalities to train their own personnel. The DHET – through the Quality Councils – is responsible for assuring the quality of provision in these colleges and ensuring that the qualifications that they offer are registered.

The new configuration of the Department of Higher Education and Training enables tremendous possibilities for cooperation and mutual support among post-school institutions for the benefit of the system as a whole, and for its students and other stakeholders. Cooperation has begun in line with the vision set out in the third National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS III), with SETAs working more closely with public institutions, especially



TVET colleges and universities, with a particular emphasis on universities of technology. The SETAs are beginning to help establish partnerships between these educational institutions and employers, especially to facilitate various forms of work-integrated learning. They are also beginning to assist with work placement of college graduates and, to a lesser extent, university graduates. The colleges are expanding their enrolments, partly enabled by SETA-funded skills programmes. Previously, none of the universities trained vocational lecturers for the colleges, but some have now started to do so. Research on various aspects of the post-school system (especially the TVET colleges and the SETAs) is gradually increasing in the universities. These forms of cooperation are still in their early stages and must be broadened and accelerated.

An important part of establishing a coherent and coordinated post-school system is ensuring that there is easy articulation between different parts of the system. This entails, among other things, ensuring that curricula are designed to permit articulation between succeeding levels of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) wherever possible. – for example, between a Level 4 NCV qualification and access to a university diploma or degree. Wherever possible, and throughout the education and training system, preparatory or bridging arrangements must be made available to assist those who have some but not all the competencies to enter a programme. We must build a system that facilitates the movement of students both vertically and horizontally, between different streams and levels.

In addition to cooperation within the post-school system, it is essential for post-school institutions to build close cooperation with the schooling system. There is widespread concern within post-school institutions that the learners emerging from basic education are insufficiently prepared for further study. Post-school institutions must support these students as best they can through a range of methods such as bridging or foundation programmes, mentoring programmes and so on. However, all levels of the post-school system also have a responsibility to assist the government departments and schools responsible for basic education. On a systemic level there is already cooperation between the DHET and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in areas such as teacher training. The National Teacher Education and Development Plan was jointly developed by the two departments, and both departments monitor its implementation. Cooperation and dialogue between the university Deans of Education and the DBE (and provincial education departments) is on-going. These forms of cooperation must be strengthened and extended.

An important area of concern to both the schools and the post-school system is ensuring that all young people in the latter years of schooling (and those in their early years of post-school education) receive appropriate and adequate career guidance and advice.

It is essential that the DHET aligns its work with that of government as a whole. Government policies should form a coherent whole in order to maximise effectiveness. The DHET and the institutions for which it is responsible must align their strategic and operational plans and programmes with key national policy documents such as the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path, the Industrial Policy Action Plan and the Human Resources Development Strategy for South Africa. This must not be done in a mechanical manner, but in a way that increasingly integrates and coordinates government programmes to improve the learning experiences of those engaged in education and training programmes.

In order to build an efficient fit between the education and training system and the needs of the economy, a reliable and comprehensive system of data collection, storage and analysis

is essential. The current system is fragmented; over time a single, integrated management information system consisting of institutional and labour market data will be put in place. External researchers, including the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and university-based researchers, are working with the Department to develop a system of labour market intelligence which will assist in harmonising education and skills planning on the one hand and the skills needs of the economy on the other. Increasingly, the learning pathways offered to learners, including workplace learning, will be designed to meet the current and future skills needs in workplaces. The needs will be identified through analysis of increasingly reliable information on supply and demand within the labour market. In this way, the education and training system as a whole will become much more responsive to the needs of both employers and learners in a fast-changing economic and industrial environment.

### 2.3 Expanding access, improving quality and increasing diversity

If the post-school system is to serve the country well, we need more places for people to learn, more types of courses and qualifications, more financial support for students, and better quality education and training.

The Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training graphically described the inadequate quality, quantity and diversity of education and training provision in our post-school system. According to figures from Statistics South Africa, in the second quarter of 2013 the number of youth aged 15 to 24 who are not in employment, education or training – the so-called NEETs – comprised 3.4 million young people, making up 32.9 per cent of persons in this age group.<sup>3</sup> The NEET rate is also gender-skewed, being 29.7 per cent among men and 36.1 per cent among women, thus emphasising the need to focus on the expansion of opportunities for women.

As the Green Paper noted, one of the first challenges for the post-school system is to substantially expand access to education and training over the next twenty years. This is essential not only to take account of the needs of the youth who complete school but also for those who do not complete their schooling; it is equally important in order to cater for the needs of older people, including those who never attended school, who require education and training opportunities in order to live fuller and more productive lives as both workers and citizens.

By 2030 the goal is to have head-count enrolments of 1.6 million in public universities, 2.5 million in TVET colleges,<sup>4</sup> and 1.0 million in the community colleges which are discussed in this White Paper. In addition, it is estimated that there will be approximately 0.5 million enrolments in private further and higher educational institutions. A diversity of educational institutions is needed in order to cope with the needs of a large and increasing student population. Not only do we aim to introduce a new institutional type – the community colleges – but we must ensure that the university and TVET college systems are differentiated, with each institution having a mission according to an agreement between the individual institution and the DHET.

This planned expansion of access does not only require making places available in education and training institutions. Education and training must also be affordable for potential students.

3. Statistics South Africa, *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 2 (2013: xvi)*.

4. Note that National Development Plan targets TVET enrolments of 1.25 million. However, that goal appears to refer to full-time equivalents (FTE) rather than head-count enrolments, hence the lower number.

To this end the government has significantly increased the funds available for student loans and bursaries, particularly through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). Since 2011, poor students in TVET colleges have not had to pay tuition fees, and have been assisted with accommodation or transport costs. The government remains committed to progressively extending this to university students as resources become available. Of particular concern is finding ways to assist those students whose parental incomes are too high to qualify for funding from NSFAS, but are too low to qualify for loans from private financial institutions. This group includes the children of teachers, nurses and police personnel as well as many public servants, clerical workers and skilled manual workers. These young people are likely to have a home environment conducive to studying and parents who encourage them. The DHET and NSFAS have already started and will continue to pursue ways to make the necessary resources available to this group.

Consideration will also be given to capping university fees to keep them more affordable, both for individual students and for NSFAS and other funders.

An important element in expanding access to education and training must be the expansion of opportunities for part-time study for those who are working. This implies an expansion of open and distance education and the establishment of more “satellite” premises where universities or colleges provide classes at places and times convenient to students (including in rural areas).

South Africa has many excellent universities and colleges. However, large sections of the post-school system offer a less than satisfactory quality of education. Indeed, we still have a number of colleges – mainly among those which were established for black students under apartheid – which can be fairly described as dysfunctional. Under such circumstances it makes little sense to expand access unless quality can also be improved. This means having strong leadership of institutions in place, ensuring that all teachers have the capabilities and support necessary to perform their functions at a high level, and providing the necessary infrastructure and equipment.

## **2.4 Education and work**

One of the main purposes of the post-school system is to prepare workers for the labour market, or to enable individuals to earn sustainable livelihoods through self-employment or establishing a company or cooperative. Everyone should be able to make a living for themselves and contribute skills to a developing economy.

Government aims to improve the amount and quality of workplace training in South Africa. Places of employment as training spaces in both the public and private sectors do not and cannot come under the direct auspices of the DHET. However, our policies and systems can and must impact on the nature, type and quality of training that is made available in workplaces. Workplace training and work-integrated learning (WIL) must be a central part of our training system. This is an understanding that the DHET and other stakeholders (including employers, the labour movement and community organisations) are coming to share. It is demonstrated by the National Skills Accord, signed in July 2011 by all the partners in the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC). All signatories agreed to promote expanded access to training opportunities in both educational institutions and workplaces.

For much education and training, a combination of both theoretical knowledge and practical experience is important, indeed essential. Theory provides knowledge of general principles and laws, which allows additional learning and adaptation to new technologies and circumstances. Practical experience builds applied knowledge and develops self-confidence in someone's ability to act effectively.

In many areas of study, useful practical experience can be obtained in an institutional workshop where learning can be easily controlled in line with a curriculum. However, institutional workshops often cannot afford to keep up with the most recent equipment available. Even where workshop training is available, it is always beneficial to augment this with practice in an actual workplace where real-life experiences such as working under pressure, dealing with customers, and working as part of a team may be more easily learned. For many areas of work – such as banking, insurance, property management, retail or public administration – simulated workplace experience can be difficult to recreate in a workshop.

This means that training systems, including curricula, need to be designed around close cooperation between employers and education and training providers – especially in those programmes providing vocational training. In some areas such as medicine, where work in teaching hospitals is an integral part of training doctors, this is well developed and could possibly provide a model for others, including professional organisations. In areas of work such as the artisan trades, apprenticeships have traditionally been the pathway to qualifications; however, the apprenticeship system has been allowed to deteriorate since the mid-1980s, resulting in a shortage of mid-level skills in the engineering and construction fields. Re-establishing a good artisan training system is an urgent priority; the current target is for the country to produce 30 000 artisans a year by 2030. It is also important to expand other forms of on-the-job training, including learnerships and internships in non-artisan fields. As has already been noted, the SETAs have a crucial role to play in facilitating such workplace learning partnerships between employers and educational institutions.

Given the demographics of the South African labour force, it is not enough to focus education and training on preparing people for formal-sector employment. Unemployment levels in South Africa are extremely high, particularly among youth. In the second quarter of 2013 the official unemployment rate was 25.6 per cent; if discouraged work-seekers are included, the rate was 38.4 per cent. As noted above, about a third of persons aged 15 to 24 were not in employment, education or training. The unemployment statistics demonstrate the value of an education: The highest unemployment rate (30.3 per cent) was among those without a National Senior Certificate (NSC) or equivalent, while those with an NSC or equivalent had an unemployment rate of 27 per cent. Among university graduates, the unemployment rate was only 5.2 per cent, while the rate for others with a tertiary education was 12.6 per cent.<sup>5</sup>

This situation means that we are providing training for individuals who will not, in the foreseeable future, be able to find formal employment in existing enterprises. To make a living, they will have to create employment opportunities in other ways – by starting small businesses in the informal or formal sector, or by establishing cooperatives, community organisations or non-profit initiatives of various types. The education and training system must cater for people in such circumstances by providing suitable skills. Education must also cater for the needs of communities by assisting them to develop skills and knowledge which are not necessarily aimed at income generation – for example: community organisation; knowledge of how to deal

5. Statistics South Africa, *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, Quarter 2* (2013: xiv).

with government departments or commercial enterprises such as banks; citizenship education; community health education; literacy. The proposed community colleges are expected to play a particularly important role in this regard, and must therefore be designed to be flexible in meeting the needs of their own particular communities. The colleges must build on the experiences and traditions of community and people's education developed by non-formal, community-based and non-governmental organisations over many decades.

## 2.5 Responsiveness

The post-school education and training system is a centrally important institutional mechanism established by society and must be responsive to its needs. This includes responding to the needs of the economy and the labour market through imparting skills as described above. The skills development system – including the SETAs, the NSF, the colleges and the universities – must remain keenly aware of the skills challenges facing our industrial, commercial and governmental institutions as well as those of individuals in need of skills development, especially the youth.

Universities in particular must undertake research to meet the economic and social needs of society, building knowledge-generating partnerships with public and private enterprises, other government departments and other institutions in order to meet these needs. Such partnerships can lead to a deeper understanding of our social, cultural and political life, our relationships with each other and with other societies. It can also lead to technical innovation and economic advancement that can have a major impact on the strength and effectiveness of our economy. This does not mean that universities should be purely instrumentalist in their approach to research, but that responding to South Africa's social, economic and cultural challenges should be one of their key tasks.

Given its history, an important over-arching goal of our society is the imperative for transformation, the elimination of racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, and the entrenchment of democratic norms and a culture of tolerance and human dignity. The post-school education and training system must strive to respond to these transformational goals through all possible mechanisms. In addition, the post-school system must respond to the special education and training needs of various social groups such as the youth, the disabled, the sick, rural dwellers and so on.

# 3.

## The College System

The college sector consists of the existing further education and training colleges (which are being renamed – see below), the planned community colleges (which will absorb the current adult education centres), non-DHET public colleges, and private colleges. This chapter deals with the first three types (the public colleges), while private institutions are dealt with in Chapter 5.

Colleges cater mainly for those who have left school – whether they have completed secondary school or not – and who wish to do vocational training or complete their schooling. Colleges should be rooted in their communities, serving community as well as regional and national needs. They should primarily – although not exclusively – provide education and training to members of their own and nearby communities and develop skills for local industry, commerce and public-sector institutions. They should constantly strive to be seen by their communities as providers of skills that offer a route out of poverty and that promote personal or collective advancement. They should also be seen as institutions that can assist communities to meet some of their cultural and social needs.

The college sector is central to the provision of post-school education and training, and is the area targeted by the DHET for the greatest expansion and diversification. Currently, despite significant growth, colleges still enrol fewer students than universities. This is not ideal for the development of a skilled and educated population or for meeting the needs of an economy which suffers a serious shortage of mid-level skills. The college sub-system will therefore be expanded considerably, and a great deal of attention will be given to improving the quality of its programmes and the capabilities of its staff. Attention will also be given to strengthening colleges' working relationships with employers and their integration and articulation with the rest of the post-school system. Considerable effort will also be devoted to improving the quality of provision, the way that colleges articulate with universities, and how they meet the needs of workplaces.

The college sub-system will be expanded mainly on the basis of two institutional types: the technical and vocational colleges and the community colleges.

### 3.1 Technical and vocational education and training colleges

#### 3.1.1 Overview

The main purpose of these colleges is to train young school leavers, providing them with the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for employment in the labour market. They primarily provide training for the mid-level skills required to develop the South African economy, and tend to concentrate on occupations in the engineering and construction industries, tourism and

hospitality, and general business and management studies. Beginning in 2002, 152 technical colleges were merged into 50 larger multi-campus institutions and renamed further education and training colleges. They are now being renamed once more as technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges. This name better reflects their nature and better defines their main role in the diversified post-school education and training system. In 2013 the TVET sub-system consists of 50 multi-campus colleges, with over 260 campuses.

In terms of the Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act (No. 3 of 2012), these colleges became a national competence and the responsibility of the Department of Higher Education and Training. This is a significant development: from 2013, for the first time, the colleges are accountable primarily to the national government rather than to the provinces.

### **3.1.2 Strengthening the colleges**

The DHET's highest priority is to strengthen and expand the public TVET colleges so that they become institutions of choice for a large proportion of school leavers. Key objectives in strengthening colleges include improving access, throughput rates, management capacity (especially with regard to planning, and financial and human resource management), student support services and student accommodation, as well as developing management information systems, strengthening governance, building partnerships with employers and other stakeholders, increasing the responsiveness of colleges to local labour markets, improving placement of college graduates in jobs, and creating a mix of programmes and qualifications that will meet the varied needs of students.

Colleges are at different stages of development, due in part to their history of differential access to resources, and therefore require different levels of intervention and support to achieve optimal functionality. The initial aim in the weaker colleges is to turn them into efficiently functioning institutions. For the better-performing colleges (whose numbers will increase over time), the aim is to turn them into centres of excellence that constantly seek to improve their service to their students and to their local economies, and then become role models for other institutions. This does not mean that the aim is to make all colleges the same. Their individual characteristics will be determined, above all, by their local environments, creating a diverse sub-system that serves a wide range of needs.

Part of the process of ensuring that colleges become quality educational institutions will involve setting a benchmark for optimal functionality in order to determine the interventions needed in each institution. A turnaround strategy has been developed for the period 2012–2015, and will be extended as necessary. The quality of education and training in colleges will be monitored on an ongoing basis – the Quality Councils will assure the quality of assessments, and the new South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) will fulfil a developmental, monitoring and evaluation role.<sup>6</sup>

### **3.1.3 Increasing access**

Government expects that TVET colleges will become the cornerstone of the country's skills development system. Thus, a major effort will be made to increase enrolments. TVET college enrolments have been increasing rapidly over the past few years, and this growth is envisaged to continue in order to address the country's acute skills shortages.

6. SAIVCET is discussed in detail in section 3.4 below.



Head-count enrolments increased from 345 566 in 2010 to an estimated 650 000 in 2013; enrolments are expected to increase to one million by 2015 and to 2.5 million by 2030. These figures comprise students enrolled in the various programmes mentioned above and include both full-time and part-time students, some of the latter spending part of their year in work-integrated learning. Judging from examination statistics there is, overall, a fairly even gender balance among students in TVET colleges, although

gender stereotypes do persist. Females dominate in certain categories traditionally associated with female employment – for example, office administration or education and development (for early childhood educators) – while males strongly dominate the engineering and construction-related disciplines. However, the growth of women in the latter disciplines and their preponderance in the areas of management studies, finance, economics and accounting, as well as the overall gender balance among TVET students indicate that young women are beginning to take up opportunities afforded to them since the advent of democracy.

Much of the expansion over the past few years was made possible by the abolition of tuition fees and the provision of transport or accommodation allowances to students from poor families. This was the result of an increase of the bursary allocation to TVET colleges from R300 million in 2010 to R1.988 billion in 2013. This amount is expected to increase significantly over the next two decades to accommodate the increasing numbers of students.

Expansion of enrolments will inevitably also require additional campuses, the first twelve of which will be established by 2015. Rural areas, which currently have little post-school provision, will be given particular attention as we expand the system. By 2030 there will be at least one institution offering TVET programmes in every district in the country. Some of these programmes may not be in TVET colleges, but could be offered in community colleges or other suitable institutions. Distance education has an important role to play in the expansion of TVET provision and this is discussed further in Chapter 7 below.

The TVET colleges should progressively shift towards having an increasingly larger proportion of their students enrolled in NQF Level 5 programmes – that is, at Higher Certificate or equivalent level. This will better accommodate the increasingly large numbers of matriculants seeking opportunities for technical and vocational education. Linked to this are the DHET's plans to introduce foundation programmes to the colleges. These programmes will be for matriculants who need additional instruction in Mathematics and Science before going on to college or university programmes.

Our plans to radically increase enrolments have drawn words of caution in some of the comments on the Green Paper (which proposed four million head-count enrolments in colleges and other post-school institutions such as the proposed community colleges). The suggestion has been made that the colleges should first be stabilised and the quality of education improved before they are expanded. The DHET, however, believes that this is not a feasible option given the large numbers of unemployed and out-of-school youth, and that we simply



*must* tackle the issues of increasing enrolments and improving quality concurrently. We also believe that this is eminently possible given the necessary determination by institutional leaders, staff and government officials. This is especially so because many of the students will be in apprenticeships, learnerships and other programmes requiring them to be in colleges for part of the year, spending the rest of their time engaged in workplaces.

In order to ensure that enrolments are increased, admission will not be based solely on qualifications held by learners. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) will be applied more widely, especially for young adults who wish to access programmes in colleges. This will be based on a rigorous RPL policy, currently under development. Good entrance tests and procedures for aspiring learners without formal qualifications will enable them to be appropriately placed. This will allow individuals to enrol in programmes for which they have the necessary background, and will enable colleges to determine which learners need extra support.

### **3.1.4 Programmes and qualifications**

The programmes and qualifications for vocational training in South Africa have developed over many years in disparate circumstances and in various processes. This has resulted in a situation where there is much confusion in the minds of prospective students, their parents and employers as to the merits and demerits of the various programmes. There are conflicting and uneven quality assurance mechanisms and articulation possibilities and complex funding systems. The mix of qualifications in TVET colleges is complex to administer, difficult for learners and parents to understand, and often poorly quality assured. The entire gamut of vocational programmes and qualifications will therefore be reviewed and rationalised into a coherent and simple framework that fits easily into the NQF and makes learning pathways clear to school-leavers and employers.

It is not the purpose of this White Paper to give a historical exposition of vocational education and training curricula. However, in order to elucidate the reasons for the proposed review, we offer here a brief survey of our complex vocational training programmes and qualifications.

Until the establishment of the democratic government and for some years beyond, qualifications delivered at technical colleges (now known as TVET colleges) were anchored in the Nated/Report 191 Programmes (commonly known as N-programmes). For many years these programmes ran very successfully. They were specifically designed for industry and were presented as trimester programmes; learners would spend one trimester in the college and two trimesters in the workplace. Over the years, the neglect of the N-programme curricula meant that they became outdated. Although some employers still support them, many are concerned about the outdated curricula. Most of the students no longer spend time in workplaces, because of difficulties in finding opportunities in the labour market, and so do one trimester course after another in a college.

In 2007 a new National Curriculum (Vocational) [NCV] was introduced as a general vocational programme which included both academic and vocational subjects. The intention was that these programmes would replace the N-programmes. Although the NCV curriculum does include extensive practical components (based in workshops rather than workplaces), they have not been implemented in many colleges. As a result, learners often exit these programmes without the necessary practical skills. One of the main criticisms of the NCV has been its confusing admission policies. Originally meant for young people completing Grade 9, it began to allow, and even to encourage, learners who had finished schooling levels up to the National

Senior Certificate (NSC). This has made life difficult for lecturers, who must deal with students with vastly different educational levels in the same class. It has also led to dissatisfaction among students, many of whom must repeat much of what they have previously covered in school (in the fundamental subjects). Furthermore, the NCV has no provision for part-time or distance learning.

After the introduction of the NCV the Department of Education intended to phase out the N1 to N3 programmes. In 2010, however, due to the perceived lack of flexibility and industry focus of the NCV programmes, the phase-out of the N1 to N3 engineering programmes (but not the business and utility studies programmes) was halted.

The NQF was established in the early 2000s, and with that came the development of occupational qualifications. Certain employers and private service providers started developing SETA-based occupational qualifications on a large scale. These qualifications tended to be very job-specific and therefore very appealing to some employers. However, it was not long before many thousands of qualifications were developed with no coordination. Both the proliferation of qualifications and the cost-effectiveness of provision became a major concern. Effective quality assurance was largely non-existent.

Recently Level 5 (Higher Certificate) programmes have been introduced in some colleges in partnership with universities. This has worked well in terms of developing and enhancing intermediate skills which are in high demand. These programmes are often occupationally directed but have strong articulation possibilities into higher education, something that both the N and NCV programmes largely failed to achieve.

To complicate matters further, there are technical high schools under the control of the Department of Basic Education and provincial education departments that offer the NSC with technical subjects. Over 1 000 technical high schools in the country allow students access to artisan programmes such as apprenticeships. After a period of decline, the DBE has responded to calls to vocationalise the offerings in technical high schools with a recapitalisation programme for technical schools. These schools now again offer occupational subjects in increasingly well-equipped workshops. The current technical high school curriculum in fact has the same purpose as the NCV engineering programmes, as they both provide a general vocational education aimed at Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners.

Given all of these developments, we find ourselves today with five vocational qualification types – Nated (or N) programmes; NCV programmes; occupational programmes; Higher Certificates; and the NSC with technical subjects.

The review will evaluate what the different qualification types have to offer, how they articulate with other post-school programmes and qualifications, what the challenges are, and how the system can be rationalised to be easier to understand, more efficient and user-friendly, in order to meet the economy's needs for mid-level skills. Because of the central role that workplace learning has in the training of workers – for example, those in apprenticeships, learnerships or internships – and because students are being prepared primarily for careers in the labour market, it is essential that employer representatives play a role in the review process together with college staff and other experts, including workers. The review should ideally involve both the DHET and the Department of Basic Education, as both offer vocational programmes.

### 3.1.5 College relationship with employers

Since the main purpose of the TVET colleges is to prepare students for the workplace and/or self-employment, it is essential that they develop and maintain close working relationships with employers in their areas of study. Close partnerships between colleges and employers will assist the colleges to locate opportunities for work-integrated learning and help them to place students when they complete their qualifications. In addition, arrangements should be made for college staff to get regular workplace exposure so as to keep abreast of developments in their industries. Employers should also be in a position to advise colleges around issues of curriculum, and experts from industry could teach at colleges on a part-time or occasional basis. Colleges may also be in a position to benefit from donations of equipment from particular employers.

Such partnerships can be beneficial to employers by providing young people who can assist the business while they learn. They also allow employers to assess students during their workplace training for possible later recruitment.

The extent to which colleges are able to build such partnerships will become an important criterion in assessing their overall performance. Even in areas with a relatively low industrial base, colleges should pursue linkages with employers in small businesses and public-sector organisations such as municipalities, clinics, schools and the police.

SETAs should play a role in forging relationships between colleges and employers, using not only their contacts but also their resources to incentivise employers to take on students for workplace learning opportunities. Partnerships between colleges and SETAs will be facilitated by the establishment of offices representing the SETAs in each college. These offices should represent all the SETAs in that college, and work to promote and facilitate the relationship between the college and individual SETAs in the interests of both. Some SETA offices, representing clusters of SETAs, have already been established in colleges; they are still trying to discover their proper role and the optimal mode of functioning. The DHET will examine the challenges and successes of such arrangements with a view to building models that work, and assisting where necessary. Colleges should grasp the opportunities that SETAs provide and take the lead in initiating joint projects, while also responding to the suggestions and advice of the SETAs.

### 3.1.6 Improving teaching and learning

The most important indicator for the success of a college is the quality of the education offered and consequently the success of its students. For this the colleges need a well-educated, capable and professional teaching staff.

As the college system grows, it is essential that the number of lecturers keeps up with expanding student enrolments. Growth should not result in over-sized classes that compromise the quality of instruction, and there should be enough lecturers to cover all the disciplinary areas required by the colleges. Regulations for minimum qualifications for vocational educators in colleges (together with suitable transitional arrangements) have been developed. They will guide lecturer development and ensure that lecturers meet the minimum professional requirements for employment in colleges. This will go a long way towards improving the quality of educational provision. The universities have an important role to play in training college lecturers, both to expand their numbers and to improve the quality of their teaching skills.



Assistance will be provided to selected universities to expand their capacity to train lecturers.

The evaluation of lecturers as practising professionals has already been agreed to in principle within the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). This will be implemented to ensure that development needs are identified and relevant programmes developed to improve the qualifications and capabilities of college lecturers. SAIVCET will have

an important role to play in this regard. Workplace experience required by lecturers will also be prioritised to ensure that their training is up to date with workplace needs and to provide lecturers with a better understanding of the needs of employers in their field. Lecturers already in the colleges will be incentivised to pursue specialisation studies within their area of subject expertise, while study opportunities for lecturers to move into management and other functional areas will also be available.

College lecturers are currently members of the South African Council of Educators (SACE). This arrangement will be re-evaluated in the medium term, with a view to the establishment of a statutory professional body of college lecturers, as SACE tends to be overwhelmingly absorbed with the concerns of the much larger number of school teachers. Having a professional council of their own should help to build a strong sense of identity and pride among college educators.

The programme to improve the teaching and learning infrastructure of colleges will be continued. Colleges must have the facilities and equipment necessary to provide the type of education that is expected of them. In particular, they must have well-resourced workshops for providing the practical training demanded by their curricula.

### **3.1.7 Student support**

Success rates of college students are still generally too low, despite some improvements over the past few years. Support is crucial to ensure that students adapt to the demands of college life and that they can meet the demands of college programmes. Some colleges already offer various student support services, such as academic support, social support, assisting students to get bursaries and complete their programmes of study, and assistance with finding workplaces for the practical components of their programmes and jobs on completion of their studies. Effective support is not available at all colleges, however, and this situation must be remedied. Even where they are offered, support programmes are often not treated as priorities and insufficient resources are available to the colleges to improve them. Given the needs – especially of those whose schooling has not provided them with a sufficient educational basis to cope well with the requirements of college studies – the DHET will provide ring-fenced funding for student support activities. It is essential that every college has a dedicated student support services office to coordinate such services.

Every effort must be made to ensure that all colleges have adequate facilities for sports and recreation. The availability of student sports and cultural activities will make colleges

more attractive to young people and expand the educational horizons of students into non-curriculum areas.

Career counselling should be an integral component of the post-school education and training system. Improved career guidance at college level will help to ensure that students are able to make appropriate learning pathway and career decisions. This will complement career guidance at school level, as well as that offered through the career guidance initiatives of the DHET and other bodies.

### **3.1.8 Student accommodation**

Student accommodation at TVET colleges is inadequate and in need of expansion and upgrading. This is necessary to make student life more comfortable and to provide conditions more conducive to study. An assessment of the accommodation needs of colleges will be undertaken to prioritise the needs and to guide the Department's approach. Minimum standards for student accommodation will be developed. The necessary expansion and improvements will be integrated into the government's overall national infrastructure plan. Residences must become places for learning as well as for rest and recreation, and should have facilities to encourage study activity. Where institutions are in close proximity to one another, the DHET will seriously consider the possibility of establishing student villages to accommodate students from different institutions, whether they be colleges or universities.

Student residences should provide nutritious food to students at no extra cost above what they pay for accommodation. When students are given money separately for food, it tends to make healthy eating optional. Students are tempted to spend the money on other items or to use it to assist struggling family members. While the latter may be laudable, this has an inevitable negative impact on student health and academic performance.

### **3.1.9 Funding**

The funding model should emphasise the intention to grow and diversify the sector, based on revised norms and standards. The funding norms must take into consideration that colleges largely provide for students from poor families. They must also differentiate between rural and urban colleges, and between colleges at various stages of development.

Core funding will be made available by the DHET for staff, infrastructure and student support services to enable colleges to be responsive and dynamic. Departmental funding should also cover foundation or bridging programmes, where these are approved by the DHET. Fees from those students who do not qualify for subsidies will also make a contribution. Other sources of funding must be explored by college managers, and should include SETAs and employers (especially for specific occupational programmes or short courses) as well as various private funding agencies.

### **3.1.10 Management and governance**

College leadership at council and management levels is vital for ensuring that the system transforms in the desired direction. Ensuring the proper management and governance of all our TVET colleges is a core task in tackling the structural inequalities in our education system as a whole. Without effective, efficient, dedicated and motivated leadership, the colleges will not be able to provide the quality of education and training required by the hundreds of thousands

of youth who enter the colleges every year, or ensure that the college system can expand to meet the country's needs. Unfortunately, the quality of leadership is not as good as is needed in all colleges. While we have some excellent colleges, a large number function at a level that is below what is necessary.

The DHET's leadership development interventions at council and management levels will be intensified in the short term. In cases where there are problems, major attention will be focused on ensuring stabilisation and a shift towards desired levels of functionality, with the development of appropriate interventions at each individual college. Priority will be given to ensuring that colleges achieve the level of functionality required for improved performance and accountability. Capacity-building programmes for college councils will aim to ensure that the councils understand the broader vision of the DHET and play their own role in it.

Programmes should also ensure that council members understand the policy and legislative requirements. When new councils are appointed, appropriate induction programmes should be provided by each college. The DHET is also developing a College Council Charter to guide the work of councils, and all councils will be required to adhere to it.

Capacity-building programmes for senior managers at college level will assist them to effectively perform their duties and provide effective leadership to their institutions. The DHET will partner with universities and other competent institutions to develop and offer such programmes on an ongoing basis. New principals and others in management positions should normally only be appointed if they have appropriate experience and management training. Where there are vacancies in senior positions, these should always be filled promptly as a leadership vacuum can be extremely detrimental to an institution.

One of the biggest challenges in many colleges has been their weak financial management. The DHET, in partnership with the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, has recently ensured that a qualified chartered accountant has been appointed as Chief Financial Officer in each college. Their role is to ensure proper controls over college finances, to put in place sound accounting systems and to mentor financial staff. The Department will also soon ensure that qualified human resource managers are installed in every college. Never again should colleges be without properly qualified and experienced financial and human resource managers.

Nor should they be without up-to-date information technology capacity for conducting all their management and academic functions. Crucial data pertaining to qualifications, the financial status of colleges, student assessment and registration, infrastructure and equipment, and employer demand for programmes offered at colleges should be readily available. In addition, the DHET will build its own capacity to provide support to colleges. This includes developing its capacity to collect and use data in order to monitor institutional and systemic functioning and to share this data with SAIVCET, which will have an important monitoring and evaluation function.

The Academic Boards of colleges must be strengthened so that they are able to provide the necessary academic leadership to improve the quality of programmes offered at each college, including occupationally directed programmes. SAIVCET will also play an important role in this regard.

## 3.2 Community colleges

### 3.2.1 Context

The education and training system must find ways to cater to the needs of the millions of adults and youth who are unemployed, poorly educated and not studying. The expansion of the university and college systems will make an important difference, but will not be sufficient to meet all the needs. In any case, they are not designed for this. There are many who would not qualify to enter a university or TVET college. According to the 2011 census, 3.2 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 were not in employment, education or training; 523 000 of these had only achieved a primary school education or less, and nearly 1.5 million had less than a Grade 10 education. The adults (mainly women) who attend the DBE's *KhaRiGude* mass adult literacy initiative and some of those who attend Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) often find that there is no opportunity to continue their education. The expansion of educational opportunities at which this White Paper aims cannot be achieved only by existing educational institutions. A new type of institution has to be built and supported, one that can offer a diverse range of possibilities to people for whom vocational and technical colleges and universities are not desirable or possible.

Many of those who have not completed school need a second chance to do so. Others may want to continue their education in other ways, learning skills which will empower them to enter the labour market. Others may have lost their jobs or were made redundant by new technologies, and seek to re-skill themselves. We should also face the fact that, given the current high levels of unemployment, many have little chance of entering the formal labour market as employees and need to find alternative ways to earn sustainable livelihoods.

Communities also have learning needs which are not catered for by the current public education and training institutions. These include areas such as: community health care; parenting and childcare; early childhood development; care for the aged; care for those with HIV/AIDS and other diseases; citizenship education; community organisation; making effective use of new consumer technologies for various purposes such as seeking information or marketing local products; skills for self-employment in a range of areas, from market gardening to small-scale manufacture, arts and crafts. The state has a responsibility to meet these needs to the best of its ability.

South Africa has a long history of finding innovative ways to provide adults with opportunities to learn. These range from study circles among black intellectuals in the late nineteenth century, to the Communist Party's night schools for workers in the 1920s, to the popular education programmes for adults offered by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions, political or religious organisations that were a feature of the broad liberation struggle, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. These initiatives provided adults and youth with literacy, numeracy and communication skills, and developed their abilities as individuals, sectors and communities to contribute towards social change and social justice.

Following on this tradition, the post-1994 education and training framework embraced the concept of lifelong learning, recognising that learning takes place throughout a person's life and in many forms. In the first instance, this approach has taken the form of efforts to eradicate adult illiteracy through various campaigns, and especially through the DBE's *KhaRiGude* initiative and through the provision of adult basic education in PALCs. Adult education has also taken place through a variety of non-formal community and popular education initiatives and



projects, run by community-based organisations (CBOs), trade unions, social movements and government departments.

Despite these efforts, it must be admitted that the educational opportunities for adults and post-school youth have been insufficient, and their quality has generally been poor. PALCs are the only state-funded institutions that offer general education to adults, and their efforts

have been inadequate. In 2011, there were 3 200 such centres across the country, serving about 265 000 learners. While some, especially in Gauteng, have their own premises – mainly in public schools that have been closed due to school mergers or demographic shifts – most operate from the premises of other institutions such as schools or community centres. They offer mainly Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) qualifications, including the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC), and Senior Certificate programmes. The majority of teachers in the PALCs are part-time contract workers without tenure. The sector does not have a core of permanent adult educators, and conditions are not uniform from province to province. This severely affects long-term planning, and leaves little room for career and learning path development for either learners or educators. Most learners in the sector study part-time, a relatively slow learning process which requires long-term management and planning. The exclusive focus of the PALCs on general education often means that they fail to attract adults and youth interested in gaining labour-market and sustainable-livelihood skills, and those interested in learning for general self-improvement or cultural and community development.

The state must respond positively to the challenge of providing for the education and training needs of these youth and adults. This will be facilitated by a shift in responsibility for PALCs from provincial education departments to the DHET, which has been made possible by the Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act (No. 1 of 2013).

### 3.2.2 A new institutional type

Despite their weaknesses, the PALCs are currently the only public institutions with a wide distribution around the country and which provide for adults and post-school youth who are not catered for by colleges and universities. The PALCs will be absorbed into a new type of post-school institution: the community colleges, as envisaged in the Further Education and Training Colleges Amendment Act mentioned above. These colleges are expected to be sensitive to the needs of their communities. They will primarily target youth and adults who for various reasons did not complete their schooling or who never attended school.

Community colleges will be multi-campus institutions which cluster the PALCs. They will be expanded by adding other campuses where necessitated by their enrolments and programmes. Although they will be public colleges, they may enter into partnerships with community-owned or private institutions such as church-run or other education and training centres in order to enhance their capacity to meet the education and training needs of youth and adults. The exact nature of such arrangements is still to be determined, but should include the possible absorption of community or private institutions into the colleges by mutual agreement. In any



case, community colleges and their campuses should make an effort to draw on the strengths of the non-formal sector (particularly their community responsiveness and focus on citizen and social education), in order to strengthen and expand popular citizen and community education.

Community colleges will build on the current offerings of the PALCs so as to expand vocational and skills-development programmes and non-formal programmes. Formal programmes will include the GETC and Senior Certificate programmes currently offered, as well as the proposed new National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) and skills or occupational programmes funded by SETAs or the NSF. Non-formal programmes may include community programmes such as those referred to above. However, these will be geared to the needs and desires of local communities and their organisations, including community-based cooperatives and businesses. This means that colleges have to build close working relationships with organisations in their communities. It also implies the need for well-qualified adult educators to teach these programmes.

Community colleges will have to link directly with the work of public programmes to provide appropriate skills and knowledge. These programmes include the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Community Works Programmes (CWPs), the state's infrastructure development programme, and economic and social development initiatives such as the Community Development Workers (CDW) and Community Health Workers (CHW) programmes. Such programmes can provide work-integrated learning opportunities while the colleges provide classroom and workshop-based learning. There is an important role for SETAs in facilitating such partnerships.

Also of importance are partnerships with structures responsible for promoting small, medium and micro enterprises and cooperative development, including in the Department of Trade and Industry and the Construction Industry Development Board.

Initially, community colleges are envisaged to be largely contact institutions, providing face-to-face education. However, they will make use of information and communications technology (ICT) for teaching purposes, including open learning resources. In the longer term, the DHET will consider establishing dedicated distance education capacity at one or more of the community colleges, with the requisite resources and capacity to provide education and training opportunities to eligible youth and adults who are unable to attend face-to-face institutions. (See Chapter 7 for a more extended discussion.)

The community colleges will seek to facilitate a cycle of lifelong learning in communities by enabling the development of skills (including literacy, numeracy and vocational skills) to enhance personal, social, family and employment experiences. They will also seek to assist community organisations and institutions, local government, individuals and local businesses to work together to develop their communities by building on existing knowledge and skills. The focus on "community" implies that these colleges are located within communities, and that they will contribute to local needs and local development, building social agency and social cohesion. Links to communities will take several forms, including building relationships with NGOs, CBOs, local government, and the local economy and labour markets.

It will be important to address the articulation and partnerships between these institutions and others in the post-school sector, such as TVET colleges and universities. For instance, people who have done occupational courses in community colleges and wish to pursue a general vocational programme in a TVET college should be able to do so. All institutions must help to

create an expanded and strengthened post-school system which is diverse but integrated. This process will be assisted by the DHET and by regulatory bodies such as SAQA, the Quality Councils and advisory bodies.

The introduction of community colleges will take a phased approach, and will be preceded by a pilot process to help inform further development of the concept and also inform the development of a long-term plan and its roll-out throughout the country. The introduction of the colleges will inevitably require expansion of the current, very weak, infrastructure in the PALCs so that all colleges have their own premises. However, some of their activities may continue for the time being in rented or borrowed buildings such as schools, community halls or other buildings. Additional campuses will be built over time. As these institutions are built, the DHET aims to expand enrolments by a factor of four, from the current PALC enrolment of 265 000 to a head-count enrolment of approximately one million students by 2030.

### **3.2.3 Governance and management**

Public community colleges will be the responsibility of the DHET, which will oversee the clustering of the PALCs to form the colleges, as well as the expansion of the system. Community colleges will be governed by councils which will include both ministerial appointees and community representatives, but which will also have representation from local government, other post-school educational institutions and local business. The college councils will ensure that the programmes offered respond to local needs. They will also establish mechanisms to ensure that the communities have input into the programmes offered in these institutions.

Management and administrative responsibility for each community college will rest with a principal appointed by the DHET. Details with regard to governance and management structures will be finalised after the conclusion of the pilot process.

### **3.2.4 Institutional development and capacity building**

It is crucial to ensure that the kind of education and training provided in community colleges is of good quality and enables its recipients to make significant progress in learning, training and development. This means that colleges must select suitable and qualified adult educators, and that they provide the conditions which will guarantee maximum opportunity for successful learning. New educators must be trained and many existing adult educators retrained in methodologies that are appropriate for teaching adults and youth.

A qualifications policy for adult educators will be put in place. The policy will describe appropriate qualifications and set minimum standards for these qualifications. Also of importance will be the development of guidelines for the recognition of capacities and experience that exist within communities and how these should be drawn on to strengthen the capacity of colleges to deliver against their mandate, particularly with regard to non-formal programmes.

Universities – and TVET colleges where appropriate – will be supported to develop capacity to train adult educators. Many university-based adult-education units have unfortunately been closed in the past two decades. However, at least two universities have established centres for post-school studies. This is an important development which should be encouraged. Such centres could become hubs for training adult educators and promoting articulation in the post-school sector, as well as becoming nuclei for research on the sector.

As community colleges develop, it is essential that they establish learner support services focusing on areas such as career and programme advice, counselling and guidance, orientation, extra-curricular activities, financial aid, labour market information, community information and links with placement agencies. The DHET will collaborate with the National Youth Development Agency and other relevant agencies to ensure the establishment of Youth Advisory Centres and contact points at community colleges.

SAIVCET will provide support to the colleges by researching the challenges facing their sector; it will also advise on important issues including curriculum and teaching methodologies. Research and expert policy support, as a rule, will be contracted to university adult education units and to NGO- and community-linked research and development organisations.

### **3.2.5 Funding**

Given the context of under-investment in adult education, the introduction of community colleges will require significant investment efforts. Institutional development, including infrastructure and staffing, represent key expenditure areas. The DHET will determine the model and formula for funding, based in part on the pilot process. Although the Department will provide the core funding of the colleges, including for core permanent teaching and administrative staff, this has to be complemented by funds from SETAs and the NSF where appropriate. Private funding will also be utilised where available.

Community colleges may charge fees for some of the programmes that they provide, especially for those funded by SETAs, the NSF or the private sector. In general though, and in recognition of the fact that the colleges will cater largely for poorer people and communities, their fees will be kept to a minimum. As far as possible, youth and adults attending community colleges will be fully funded, whether by the Department or from other sources.

### **3.2.6 Establishing community colleges**

The DHET will undertake a planning and preparation process for the introduction of community colleges. Initially, nine new colleges will be piloted – one in each province, each starting with a cluster of PALCs. The pilot process will be closely monitored and evaluated to assist the DHET in resolving a number of issues, including management systems, core teaching and administrative staffing requirements, curriculum, minimum numbers of learners, governance arrangements, basic facilities, infrastructure and funding requirements, and quality assurance arrangements. Lessons from the pilot will inform how the community colleges and their campuses will be phased in throughout the country.

To ensure that community colleges continuously improve the quality and standards of the education and training that they provide, a monitoring and evaluation division of SAIVCET will be established – see Section 3.4 below.

## **3.3 Other public colleges**

Many government departments have direct responsibility for post-school education and training through colleges, academies and other institutions that train public servants. These include institutions under the national Departments of International Relations and Cooperation, Correctional Services, Defence, Police, Water Affairs and Forestry, the Intelligence

Services and others. The Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) provides training across the public service. In addition, training institutions are operated by provincial governments and municipalities. Nursing and agricultural colleges, currently controlled by the Departments of Health and Agriculture, respectively, train for both public and private sector employment, although most nursing college graduates do tend to work in the public health sector. Some of these colleges have been closed over the past two decades, and many others remain weak.

All the colleges must comply with the requirements of SAQA, education and training quality assurance institutions and the NQF. It is essential that qualifications received at all public colleges should articulate easily with programmes in other post-school institutions. For example, curricula and standards should be designed to allow nursing college graduates to move on to higher nursing qualifications in other institutions such as universities.

A government decision to shift responsibility for the agricultural colleges from the Department of Agriculture to the DHET will be effected in the near future. Following the transfer, the DHET will conduct an assessment of the colleges, and then develop a strategy to ensure that they function effectively and are integrated fully into the work and planning processes of the DHET. The Department will also assess whether further expansion is required. In time, the agricultural colleges may be further integrated with other colleges – for example, by offering non-agricultural programmes in areas where those programmes are unavailable from another institution.

### **3.4 The South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training**

As noted earlier, the TVET colleges face a major challenge in that they must expand enrolments, increase their offerings, and improve the quality of education offered. The sector will face major challenges in the coming two decades, particularly in light of the relatively weak organisational state of most TVET colleges. In addition, the community colleges must be established with no previous model on which to base themselves. Both the TVET and community colleges must be flexible, responsive to employer and community needs, and cater for an expanding number of youth and adult learners, many from the least privileged sections of society. Without dedicated and expert support they will certainly struggle to achieve the goals that we are setting for them.

To provide the necessary support, the DHET intends to establish an institute that will support TVET and community colleges and the skills development system more generally. This institution will be known as the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET).

We acknowledge the legitimacy of concerns expressed in some of the submissions in response to the Green Paper that having too many institutions may complicate the system and stretch the country's limited human resource capacity. Nonetheless, the DHET believes that such an institute is a necessity in order to provide much-needed support to the colleges. In fact, experiences from countries that have similar institutions – for example, India, South Korea, Switzerland and Germany – suggest that they have brought about significant successes.

SAIVCET will not need a large number of full-time staff to fulfil its responsibilities, but rather will partner with the considerable skills available in specialist units in some of our universities and NGOs where this is appropriate. In the process it will help to build a national network of TVET and continuing education specialists.

Taking into account the need to avoid duplicating the roles of existing institutions – another issue raised in the submissions to the Green Paper – the primary responsibilities of SAIVCET will be phased in over time as the Institute’s capacity grows, and will include the following:

- Developing innovative curricula for TVET and community colleges. The Institute will ensure that curriculum development is institutionalised, with long-term capacity to continuously update and improve the quality of programmes. While SAIVCET will engage in curriculum development, it will not have the authority to adopt curricula, something which remains a function of the DHET.
- Upgrading the technical knowledge and pedagogical skills of existing staff in TVET and community colleges, and promoting the professionalisation of lecturers, instructors and trainers. This task will be undertaken with the assistance of university academics, employers and other expert staff.
- Providing a forum for experts to develop materials for TVET and community college programmes. All learning materials will be made available online as open education resources, and thus will be easily accessible to students and to the public.
- Advising the Minister on vocational and continuing education at national level, based on a keen and informed understanding of the changing situation in the colleges and the labour market.
- Advising the Minister on policy for the recognition of prior learning as it affects TVET and community colleges.
- Initiating research on the TVET and community colleges and the college system. The focus here needs to be on applied research and innovation to ensure excellence in teaching and learning.
- Promoting dialogue, coordination and linkages between TVET and community colleges, and between these institutions and universities, SETAs, employers and workers, in order to enhance coherence and articulation.
- The Institute will establish a relatively autonomous monitoring and evaluation unit that will visit colleges, interview selected managers, staff, students and other relevant people (including stakeholders such as employers). In addition the monitoring and evaluation unit will scrutinise reports relating to college management and student performance. The Institute will produce regular reports on each college, which will be presented to the college council and the principal as well as to the DHET. These reports can be used to identify challenges and put in place corrective measures.

SAIVCET will be established with this broad mandate, and will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it fulfils it. SAIVCET will be a national structure with dedicated premises and facilities. It will be governed by an autonomous board of experts and stakeholders established by the Minister; board members will be drawn from the DHET, TVET colleges, community colleges, SETAs, the business sector, trade unions, universities, NGOs and communities.

# 4.

## Universities

### 4.1 Overview

The National Development Plan outlines three main functions of universities. First, universities educate and provide people with high-level skills for the labour market. Second, they are the dominant producers of new knowledge, they assess and find new applications for existing knowledge, and they validate knowledge and values through their curricula. Third, they provide opportunities for social mobility and strengthen social justice and democracy, thus helping to overcome the inequities inherited from our apartheid past.

In 1997, the Department of Education's *White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* set out the vision of a transformed single higher education system. While the fundamental principles of White Paper 3 remain relevant, the university sector has changed substantially since that document came into effect. Because of the changing context, it is necessary to further develop policy on universities in order to tackle current challenges and to elaborate on the role and function of universities within an integrated post-school system. This includes indications of how growth, quality improvement, equity and better articulation will be addressed.

Universities are crucial institutions in terms of reaching our national development objectives. This includes supporting the rest of the post-school system and aligning curricula and research agendas to helping to meet national objectives, including tackling the challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality. This White Paper affirms the principles of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and public accountability as described in the 1997 White Paper. These principles may at times be in conflict with one another, and it is worth noting (and reaffirming) the 1997 White Paper's unequivocal statement that "there is no moral basis for using the principle of institutional autonomy as a pretext for resisting democratic change or in defence of mismanagement. Institutional autonomy is therefore inextricably linked to the demands of public accountability".

Since 1994 there have been numerous changes to the university landscape, and more are in the offing. Via a series of mergers and incorporations, South Africa now has 23 public universities. These comprise eleven "traditional" universities, six universities of technology (what used to be known as technikons) and six comprehensive universities (that combine the functions of traditional universities and universities of technology). There are also two institutes of higher education in Northern Cape and Mpumalanga; they serve as administrative hubs, co-ordinating higher education provision in these provinces through partnerships with universities elsewhere. Two new universities, in Kimberley and Mbombela, will start offering programmes from 2014.

The 2011 student head-count for the 23 universities was 937 455, which includes full-time and part-time enrolments. This represents nearly a doubling from 1994, when the head-count was 495 356. Almost 60 per cent of students were engaged in contact-based study, with the remainder enrolled in distance education, mainly at the University of South Africa (Unisa). In 2011, 82 per cent of the total head-count enrolment was at undergraduate level, 5 per cent at Masters level and just over 1 per cent at PhD level; the remainder were engaged in Honours and Postgraduate Diploma studies or were occasional students.

Redress policies driving improved access for blacks and women have clearly worked. In 1994, 55 per cent of students at public universities were black (African, coloured and Indian), 43 per cent were African, and 55 per cent were male. By 2011 these figures were 80 per cent black, 68 per cent African and 42 per cent male. While the number of Africans has increased substantially, the level is still smaller than the proportion of Africans in the population. The proportion of males, however, has decreased significantly; this must be a cause of some concern if the trend continues. Nonetheless, significant fields of study such as engineering remain male-dominated.

Change has also taken place with regard to staffing. The proportions of black and women staff have grown. However, change here has been slower and remains an area requiring policy attention. Africans comprise only 30 per cent of academic staff in South African universities. While there are almost equal numbers of men and women overall, women are clustered in the lower ranks of the academic hierarchy. Another significant area of concern is the need to attract young people into academia in greater numbers, as many academic staff members are close to retirement.

Discrimination, particularly regarding racism and sexism, continues to be pervasive in South African universities, as it is in broader society. This is a major barrier to the achievement of the sector's transformation goals. The Ministerial Oversight Committee on Transformation in South African Universities has been established to ensure that attention remains focused on the need to overcome discrimination in universities and to advise the Minister on policy in this regard. It is a sad fact that, two decades after the advent of democracy, many black students still feel marginalised in historically white universities, and female students still find themselves being harassed on university campuses, even by staff members.

Head-count enrolments for Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) have grown substantially, from 160 802 students in 2000 to 263 721 in 2011, as have annual graduation rates. The number of SET graduates as a percentage of total graduates has risen marginally, from 27 per cent in 2000 to 29 per cent in 2011. Despite these achievements, South Africa is still not producing enough SET graduates to meet its economic development objectives. Recent studies have reported a loss of status of the humanities and social sciences and have recommended action to strengthen them.

While some expansion is needed in the university sector, the DHET's main focus will be on improving quality and building appropriate diversity within the sector. The aim is to ensure that a wide range of high-quality options is provided throughout the system, as well as improving articulation between higher education institutions and between universities and other post-school institutions.

## 4.2 Differentiation

Differentiation has long been debated in the higher education sector. There is broad agreement that South Africa needs a diverse university sector which is purposefully differentiated in order to meet a range of social, economic and educational requirements. Both White Paper 3 and the National Plan for Higher Education recognise the importance of a diverse higher education system with different institutional missions and programmes. Since the establishment of the DHET, it has been recognised that the principle of differentiation must apply beyond the universities to the entire post-school system.

Although the university sector is already quite diverse, much of the differentiation has been the result of historical legacies. This is manifest in great inequality among the universities, some of which still find themselves with grossly inadequate resources while others are excellent institutions that compare well globally. Other forms of differentiation have been policy-driven, particularly the categorisation of universities into traditional universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities. Differences in university missions and curriculum offerings have been partly the result of government policy and partly the result of the individual decisions of institutions and the resources they have been able to acquire from government or elsewhere.

We consider differentiation in a positive light. For our purposes here, we define it as a process which can increase the diversity of the system. A differentiated university system in South Africa will address the need for diverse institutional missions, development trajectories and identities, incorporating a wide variety of programme offerings, with increasing articulation within the university sector and between it and the rest of the post-school system. Such changes will make the university sector capable of responding better to the broad range of national requirements, while improving efficiency and responsiveness. Of course, at the same time it is necessary to ensure that the integrity of institutions is maintained.

Differentiation is a way of ensuring a diverse system that will improve access for all South Africans to various forms of educational opportunities, improve participation and success rates in all higher education programmes, and enable all institutions to find niche areas that respond to various national development needs. A differentiated system should provide a variety of modes of learning, learning programmes, and methods of teaching and assessment for diverse student bodies, and should support both flexibility and innovation. It should also allow an effective and focused way of distributing public funds, and improve the overall quality of the system.

The following principles will guide the focused differentiation of universities and the formulation of institutional missions:

- The current three categories of universities will remain, and further categorisation of institutions will not take place.
- A continuum of institutions is required in the post-school system, including universities with differentiated missions, in order to ensure that the sector meets national developmental needs. In the university sector this continuum will range from largely undergraduate institutions to specialised, research-intensive universities which offer teaching programmes from undergraduate to doctoral level. All types of institutions are equally important to the overall system.



- Each institution must have a clearly defined mandate within the system. The mix and level of programmes offered at any institution should not be fixed, but should be capable of development over time, depending on its capacity and identified needs in its area.
- All universities in South Africa must offer high-quality undergraduate education. This should be the first step to overcoming historical injustices inherited from apartheid. All universities will engage in some level and type of research, though the extent of this will be determined in relation to the overall mandate of the institution.
- Differentiation will be responsive to the contextual realities of institutions. Policy and funding will recognise the need for developmental funding in poorly resourced institutions, particularly in relation to expanding infrastructure, establishing effective administrative systems, and upgrading staff qualifications.
- Policy and funding should ensure that where quality of teaching and/or research in the system is high, this level is maintained and improved.
- Differentiation policy and strategy will be aligned with national development policies such as the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path and the Human Resources Development Strategy.
- All institutions will be responsible for addressing the imperatives of equity and social justice. Differentiation policy will provide incentives for equal partnerships among universities and between universities and other post-school institutions.
- The entire university system must become an integral part of the post-school system, interfacing with TVET and other vocational colleges, SETAs, employers, labour and other stakeholders. Such cooperation should be taken into account in an institution's planning and the development of its programme mix.
- Better intergovernmental coordination will be required to support policy alignment and implementation in a differentiated system, particularly in relation to collaboration between the DHET and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in the area of research funding and development.

The systemic policy drivers of planning, funding and quality assurance will be aligned to the differentiation policy framework to ensure that the various components of the system are able to effectively support the development of a differentiated system.

The DHET will engage universities and other stakeholders to discuss higher education differentiation in order to develop sufficient national consensus on a programme for purposeful differentiation of the university system and the adoption of institutional missions agreed between the DHET and individual institutions.

### **4.3 Expanding student access and success**

Participation in universities must increase from the current rate of 17.3 per cent to 25 per cent; by 2030 there should be a total enrolment of approximately 1.6 million. This expansion will be at a slightly slower rate than that between 1994 and the present.

Although the main responsibility for expanding post-school access will be carried by post-school institutions such as the TVET and community colleges, plans to expand the university sub-system already exist. The DHET will intervene to encourage expansion in specific areas as required by national needs, including teacher education, health, particular areas of engineering and technology, and others that may be identified.



Two new comprehensive universities area being established in Northern Cape and Mpumalanga; the existing institutes of higher education in those provinces will gradually be phased out, with care taken not to decrease the provision of higher education in the process. The MEDUNSA campus<sup>7</sup> of the University of Limpopo has been demerged from the University, and will be developed into an independent and comprehensive university providing teaching and research for medicine and allied health sciences, including veterinary sciences. A new medical

school will be built in Limpopo. Some former teacher education campuses will be re-opened, attached to particular universities. Additional universities will eventually be required in the context of meeting our enrolment targets. A particularly important role must be played by the expansion of distance education at both Unisa and mainly contact universities. Increasing university enrolments will occur in a measured and planned fashion, thus providing time for universities to recruit skilled personnel, develop new programmes and build new infrastructure.

As the university and post-school sector grows, it will be essential to facilitate student access to the right programmes and institutions. It is vital to improve the information and support available to students as they make pre-admission decisions. It will also be necessary to facilitate access to institutions. The Central Applications Service (CAS) is a crucial move towards supporting informed access to universities and other post-school opportunities for students, and to make the choices and placement of students across the system more effective. Its primary aim for the university sector will be to offer advice and support to students applying to university, to allow them to pay a single application fee, and to facilitate their application to more than one institution if necessary. The CAS will not change the ability of institutions to make their own admission decisions.

The CAS is designed to be student-centred and to provide an efficient interface for universities. By removing the need for students to make multiple applications and pay multiple application fees, the system will support greater efficiency in the university application process. After it is fully established, it will be extended to TVET colleges. It will promote greater equity of access for all students, but particularly the poor, for whom multiple application fees can be prohibitive. It will also offer a clearing-house service that will allow students not accepted into one university to be re-directed to other universities or post-school institutions. Over time, the CAS will replace all other application systems, preventing student walk-ins and building a national culture of applying early for university study.

As participation increases, universities must simultaneously focus their attention on improving student performance. Improving student access, success and throughput rates is a very serious challenge for the university sector and must become a priority focus for national policy and for the institutions themselves. South African universities are characterised by relatively low

7. The Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) was located in northern Gauteng. In 2005, it was merged with the former University of the North to become part of the then new University of Limpopo.

success rates – 74 per cent in 2011, compared to a desired national norm of 80 per cent. This results in a graduation rate of 15 per cent – well below the international norm of 25 per cent for students in three-year degree programmes in contact education.<sup>8</sup> This not only raises serious concerns about the productivity of the system and the high costs to government and institutions from poor student success rates, but also raises substantial equity issues. Despite the overall demographic changes in the student bodies of universities, cohort studies have shown that black students, particularly those from poor backgrounds, are still most affected by poor graduation and throughput rates. The relationship between equity of access and equity of outcomes must therefore continue to be a substantive area of focus. These problems take place in the context of a post-school system with larger numbers enrolled in the universities than the colleges, a high level of youth unemployment and exclusion from post-school opportunities.

The reasons for this poor performance are complex, but are relatively well-known:

- There continues to be significant inequality in the schooling system, especially in terms of access to high-quality schooling for the poor and for those living in townships and rural areas.
- Linked to this, school leavers are generally not well-prepared for university study. Student-to-staff ratios are too high at undergraduate level, particularly for first-year students.
- Early-warning systems and other methods of recognising students who need support are not adequate.
- Factors that impact on student success are diverse and include inadequate funding, poor living conditions, and insufficient support for both academic and social adjustment to university life.
- Support for professional development and recognition of academic staff in the area of undergraduate teaching is generally weak.

The focus on these problems has been significant. Funding has been targeted for several years now as a way to encourage and support academic development in institutions, including funding for foundation programmes. Ensuring adequate financial support for students has also been a major priority for government; this is discussed in the section below on student funding. Universities have many types of interventions in place to address the development of extended and foundation programmes – changes to undergraduate curricula, support for teaching staff in universities, the development and use of educational technologies to support teaching and learning, as well as other kinds of support programmes such as mentoring, counselling and career development, and improving the material conditions of student life. However, it is true that these programmes are not evenly distributed across the university system, and are often lacking in the poorer institutions where students need them most. If success and throughput of students is to improve, as it must, it is clear that large-scale targeted work must continue and be expanded in all institutions, with the support of the state and drawing on the experience of mentoring and support programmes run by NGOs or professional associations.

In order to improve success rates significantly, strengthening teaching and learning across the system must be a priority, ensuring that a high quality of undergraduate education is available

8. Student success rates are determined as follows: full-time equivalent (FTE) degree credits divided by FTE enrolments. These calculations, for a programme or for an institution as a whole, produce weighted average success rates for a group of courses. Graduation rates are calculated by dividing the number of graduates in a given academic year by the total head-count enrolments for that year. These graduation rates function as indicators of what the throughput rates of cohorts of students are likely to be.

to all students and in all institutions. The DHET will intensify its support for these processes through the planning and funding mechanisms available to it. With regard to quality assurance, it will work in consultation with the Council on Higher Education (CHE). All three policy drivers – planning, funding and quality assurance – must continue to be directed at the improvement of the quality of teaching at undergraduate level, reducing the gaps in performance between institutions, and supporting all the elements that contribute to student success as outlined above.

A particularly important area of focus with regard to expanding student access and success is the development of the scarce and critical skills needed for South Africa’s economic development. Universities must provide for the education of sufficient numbers of professionals and other graduates in scarce skills areas. These skills will be determined by the DHET using the labour market intelligence system it is developing through consultations with other government departments and employers; scarce skills lists will be continually updated. The DHET will work with institutions to ensure that priority skills areas are not neglected and that particular priority is placed on producing black professionals and graduates. This will require the development of performance agreements between the Department and individual universities as well as the allocation of ring-fenced funding. The DHET, working together with NSFAS, will introduce full-cost-of-study scholarships for poor students in scarce skills areas. It will also put in place measures to prioritise academic support – including a comprehensive student mentoring programme – in order to improve throughput rates in scarce skills areas.

With almost two-fifths of South Africa’s university students studying through distance education, it is important that a great deal of attention is given to improving the quality of distance teaching. The subject of distance education is discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

Curriculum development initiatives that will contribute to improved success and graduation rates must be explored and supported. This may include new programme structures, such as the possible introduction of a four-year undergraduate degree, something that the CHE is currently investigating.

There must be increased support for staff development initiatives to improve the teaching skills of academic staff. Using more, and well-trained, tutors can make an important contribution to assisting students. Support and recognition must be provided for national, cross-institutional and collaborative initiatives in the improvement of teaching and learning. This is discussed further in section 4.5 – “Staffing the Universities”.

Improvement of undergraduate throughput rates is a key strategy for increasing graduate outputs, for providing the skills needed by the economy, and for ensuring that larger numbers of students are available for postgraduate study. Although there has been some improvement over the last fifteen years, postgraduate enrolments in both Masters and Doctoral programmes remain low. There is an urgent need to increase the number and quality of both the Masters and the PhD degrees obtained.

It is important to recognise that success rates are negatively influenced by the poor living conditions of many students. There is a grave shortage of student accommodation in universities, as well as poor living conditions in many of the existing residences. Very low numbers of first-year contact students are accommodated in university residences, which is likely a contributing factor to poor performance in the first year of study. The nutritional value of meals provided in residences is not always optimal. There seems little doubt that

improvements in the living conditions and nutrition of undergraduate students can improve their academic performance, and both of these are current policy priorities.

As with the TVET colleges, the Department will develop minimum standards for the refurbishment and maintenance of existing university student accommodation and the construction of new student housing for public and private providers. Student villages, accommodating students from more than one post-school institution, will also be pursued where appropriate and cost-effective. The DHET's infrastructure grant allocation over the next few years will embrace the improvement and expansion of student residences for disadvantaged institutions as one of its priorities.

#### 4.4 Research and innovation for development

Research and innovation are integral parts of the work of universities. It is recognised that knowledge production must increase if South Africa's developmental goals are to be achieved.

The National Development Plan acknowledges that, while South Africa's publication output is the highest on the continent, its innovation system is small by international standards. In particular, Doctoral graduate numbers are significantly lower than in equivalent developing countries. This means that the research and innovation system, which includes universities, does not adequately address the developmental needs of our society and economy.

One of the government's aims, as reflected in the *Ten-Year Innovation Plan* of the Department of Science and Technology, is to increase the number of patents owned by universities and other research institutions that enable product innovation by industry. This will assist the realisation of the aims of the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path and the Industrial Policy Action Plan, all of which identify research and technological innovation as important for job creation and for making South African industries more competitive globally.

The National Development Plan states:

The National System of Innovation needs to function in a coherent and coordinated manner with broad common objectives aligned to national priorities. The National System of Innovation, the higher and further education system, SOEs [State Owned Enterprises] and private industries should create a common overarching framework to address pressing challenges (NDP, 2011: 289).

The focus of policy must be on growing research and innovation, improving the quality of research, ensuring coherence of the policy frameworks guiding these areas across the higher education and research communities, and strengthening particular areas identified as important for national development. In short, collaboration must improve, both between universities and across the research community, which includes universities, research councils and other institutions in the private and public sectors. Quality must improve, with a focus on niche areas of national importance. High-level postgraduate output must increase, by encouraging those already in the system as well as by developing future researchers, and with a strong continued focus on improving equity in relation to gender, race and disability.

In order to ensure the level of policy coherence and intergovernmental cooperation necessary to drive improved research and innovation, the DHET will work closely with primary partners



like the Department of Science and Technology and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). Collaborative work will also ensure synergy in the distribution of funds and the generation of increased support for postgraduate study and for senior researchers, as well as a more stable funding model for all educational institutions that conduct research. This is critical as it will ensure the development of new academics to service both the envisaged growth of university enrolments and the need for high-end research production.

In a differentiated university system it is unrealistic for all universities to have similar research goals. However, all universities must be research-active. Developing research capacity for the future should take into account current research capacity and resourcing. Universities with lower levels of research output must be supported through planning and funding to develop their research capacity in particular areas of specialisation, as well as to develop a research culture. As stated earlier, this needs to be built on a solid foundation of strong undergraduate provision at all universities.

The DHET will assist universities wherever possible to build their research capacity in various ways, *inter alia*: developing their research infrastructure, including up-to-date equipment and IT infrastructure; facilitating access to local and international journals and research databases, particularly through central procurement of electronic resources; promoting and encouraging participation by South African universities in global research networks; and increasing the numbers of postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows in key areas.

## 4.5 Staffing the universities

A crucial factor in overall quality improvement and the development of the university sector is its academic staff. South Africa faces a significant and complex challenge in terms of staffing its universities. It has to sustain adequate levels of academic staff, build capacity within the system, develop future generations of academics for the system, and substantially improve equity.

The academic staff profile of South African universities has seen some change since 1994 in both gender and race. However, despite 45 per cent of academic staff being women in 2011, there were four times as many men as women in the senior ranks of the academy. Similarly, African academics made up just over 30 per cent of permanent professional staff, and were under-represented at the senior levels. White academic staff still comprised 55 per cent of total numbers in the academy. Another issue of serious concern is the age profile of academic staff. Significant numbers are approaching retirement age, and not enough young people are becoming academics after they have received their degrees.

The rapid expansion of the university sector in terms of enrolment has not been accompanied by an equivalent expansion in the number of academics. This means that academic staff have experienced increased teaching loads and high student-to-staff ratios.

Academic careers have changed significantly over the last twenty years, both in relation to global changes in academic work and in response to local pressures. Many factors affect academic work including publication pressure, the corporatisation of universities, greater administrative responsibilities, resource constraints, pressure to bring in outside funding, the growth and use of technology to support academic work, and the pressures of teaching in a context of low throughput rates. These influences are widely documented, and must be properly understood when planning for changes to university staffing in South Africa.

A focused renewal and expansion of the academic profession is vital for the long-term sustainability of high-quality public higher education in South Africa. A plan to address the challenges of future staffing of South African universities will be developed without delay. It will focus on the following:

- Improving the pipeline of academic staff, from postgraduate students to attracting young academics to academic careers, while providing them with adequate financial and academic support and mentoring to complete Doctoral studies.
- Ensuring that current academic staff qualifications are improved. This will be achieved partly through the provision of financial assistance for academics and potential academics to undertake postgraduate studies, both in South Africa and abroad.
- Developing mechanisms to employ retired academics, both local and international, who can mentor younger academics and provide experience and knowledge to enrich our academic environments.
- Improving conditions of employment for academics in various ways, including addressing workloads and over-large class sizes where possible.
- The development of appropriate systems to better support and reward teaching in universities.
- Supporting the development of lecturers' teaching skills. While this is best done within disciplines, and therefore requires mentoring and co-teaching, academics can also benefit from opportunities to examine and develop their teaching practice on an ongoing basis.
- The recruitment of academics from other countries in cases where posts cannot be filled by suitable local academics.

## 4.6 Making university education affordable

Higher education policy in South Africa has long recognised the importance of student financial aid in helping poor students to access university studies and to increase equity. The provision of financial aid to the poorest students in the system through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme has been an essential contributor to improved equity in the system. NSFAS has been instrumental in providing access to education for a million students from poor and working-class backgrounds who would otherwise not have been able to go to university.

NSFAS was created in 1999 through an Act of Parliament to provide a sustainable financial aid system for study loans and bursaries for academically deserving and financially needy students. By 2011 the funds made available through NSFAS had grown to R6 billion, and are expected to continue growing. These funds are largely allocated through the DHET, but include monies from other government sources. NSFAS also administers bursaries on behalf of other entities such as the Department of Social Development and the Department of Basic Education.

University education is expensive. All 23 institutions rely on state financial support for varying proportions of their operating costs, and most receive some form of third-stream income, though this varies enormously. However, all universities also charge student fees, which are essential to institutional survival in the current funding environment. Fees have risen substantially over the past two decades, as overall government funding to institutions has not kept up with the financial requirements of the system. Rising student fees continue to pose a major barrier to access for many students. The government will consider ways of controlling fee increases.

A recent study commissioned by the Minister has found that “fee-free university education for the poor in South Africa is feasible, but will require significant additional funding of both NSFAS and the university system”. Everything possible must be done to progressively introduce free education for the poor in South African universities as resources become available. While developing the necessary mechanisms and levels of investment, the system must progressively support access for students of varying financial means. There is a particular concern about students whose family incomes fall above the NSFAS threshold for support, but below the necessary threshold to obtain commercial loans.

Wherever necessary, student funding must go beyond a simple provision to cover student fees. It should also cover reasonable living costs and other study-related expenses. These amounts must develop in line with inflation and recognise the relevance of funding to academic success. In this way, student funding, though not a sufficient condition for academic success in itself, may progressively support greater levels of academic success.

Partnerships will be essential to the success of student funding initiatives. These will include intra-governmental partnerships, such as cost-recovery support from the South African Revenue Service (SARS), scholarship support from other government departments in scarce-skills areas, and government partnerships with the private sector and international partners. The principle of cost recovery of loans from students who have benefited from state funding is well-established in South Africa, and is essential to the affordability of continued and growing student funding. The possibilities of developing formal graduate service programmes, which link community or state service to the repayment of loans, will be explored.

## **4.7 Development of the humanities and African languages in universities**

The National Development Plan highlights the need to address the “decline of the humanities”:

One of our country’s greatest comparative advantages is in the humanities. Our emerging identity, languages, ethics, morality, indigenous systems, struggle for liberation, Codesa, constitution, the creation of a non-sexist and non-racial society and the discovery of humankind are major humanist projects which link our heritage and our future as a society. Our education from basic to tertiary and through the science and innovation system should invest and build capacity and high level expertise in these (NDP, 2011: 290).

Recent reports on the humanities have highlighted a deep malaise in this aspect of South African universities. A number of interventions will be implemented to deal with this challenge. One is the establishment of a National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences which





will initiate research projects by academics in our universities, aimed at stimulating further research in key areas. It will also boost postgraduate, and especially PhD, studies by encouraging and funding Doctoral schools to bring together students and senior academics from all universities. One of its key aims will be to stimulate a new and fresh scholarship in the humanities and social sciences for the post-apartheid era. It will invigorate research on historical and contemporary issues associated with

social, political, cultural and economic issues of interest to a democratic South Africa, and promote research collaboration and dialogue between South African academics and those from across the continent.

The demise of African languages in the academic sphere poses a serious threat to linguistic diversity in South Africa. Many African language departments at universities have been forced to close down due to resource cuts and diminishing student numbers. In 1997, White Paper 3 noted the important role of universities in developing, elevating the status and advancing the use of all South African languages including the official languages, the Khoi, Nama and San languages, and Sign Language. It was envisaged that they would help to prepare language teachers and language practitioners to serve the needs of a multilingual society. Unfortunately this vision has not been realised; in fact the situation has worsened.

In order to do justice to the language policy of the Department of Basic Education and to ensure that African children can be taught in their home language in primary schools, universities must train teachers of African languages as the language of learning and teaching. This in turn will have a positive impact on the African language abilities of students entering university in future.

A cross-disciplinary approach to a renewed focus on developing African languages in universities is necessary, one that integrates African languages into the formal programmes of institutions. Targeted resources, materials and support must be provided. Some universities require that students of, for example, medicine or social work take a course in an African language. The extension of such policies will be supported.

Of central importance to achieving all language-related goals is the targeted strengthening of African-language departments at universities in line with areas of regional strength. This will ensure that capacity is built to expand teaching of South African languages, as well as their development as languages of literature, science and academia.

What is certain is that specialised, targeted support is essential to reverse the decline of African language departments and to recognise the importance of African languages to the work of universities.

## 4.8 Community engagement and graduate community service

Community engagement has been a concept with which the South African higher education system has grappled for more than a decade. The Ministry will encourage suitable feasibility studies and pilot programmes which explore the potential of community service to: “answer the call of young people for constructive social engagement; enhance the culture of learning, teaching and service in higher education, and relieve some of the financial burden of study at this level” (White Paper 3, 1997: 36). The *National Plan on Higher Education* (DoE, 2001) also recognised community engagement as one of three core functions of universities, along with research and teaching.

The CHE subsequently provided advice on the conceptualisation of community engagement and graduate community service in higher education and how these could be implemented. However, it remains a complex issue because it pertains to many different areas of university and academic work. What has emerged is that community engagement, in its various forms – socially responsive research, partnerships with civil society organisations, formal learning programmes that engage students in community work as a formal part of their academic programmes, and many other formal and informal aspects of academic work – has become a part of the work of universities in South Africa.

A study commissioned by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) indicates that many of the community engagement initiatives conducted by universities have been of an *ad hoc* nature, fragmented and not linked in any way to the academic project. These initiatives are generally not state-funded and are not linked to measurable outcomes. Given budgetary and other resource constraints within higher education and the vastly different ways in which universities approach community engagement, it is likely that future funding of such initiatives in universities will be restricted to programmes linked directly to the academic programme of universities, and form part of the teaching and research function of these institutions.

Community engagement that has a direct relationship to academic programmes and research, and which is therefore part of the core mission of universities, should be seen as distinct from the proposals for a national graduate community service programme. The concept of a national graduate community service programme is one that has been implemented effectively only within the health sciences and is growing through the Funza Lushaka teacher education programme, although the latter is primarily a bursary scheme. The feasibility of a comprehensive programme will be further investigated, taking into account the experience of the community service programme in medicine.

## 4.9 Internationalisation

The internationalisation of higher education has grown over the past two decades, and is a reflection of globalisation as well as of South Africa’s return to the international community. Internationalisation takes various forms, including: cross-border movements of students and staff; international research collaboration; the offering of joint degrees by universities in different countries; the establishment of campuses by universities outside of their home countries; the growth of satellite learning and online distance education, including online educational institutions; arrangements between countries for the mutual recognition of qualifications; the regional harmonisation of qualification systems; and the increasing inclusion

of international, intercultural and global dimensions in university curricula. South African higher education has been affected by all these trends.

Many of the trends now affect South Africa in different ways, and some can offer significant benefits to the university system. The movement of academics and students across borders can improve international communication, cross-cultural learning and global citizenship. All of these are important for improving peace and cooperation, and for finding solutions to global challenges such as sustainable development, security, renewable energy and HIV/AIDS. Strong international partnerships and links can contribute to an increase in knowledge production, intellectual property and innovation in South Africa. Research partnerships and exchanges of students and staff can also assist in strengthening our institutions, especially those historically disadvantaged institutions which still do not have extensive international relations. Such institutions must be incentivised and assisted to build their international relationships. Where appropriate, tripartite partnership arrangements should be encouraged between foreign universities, historically advantaged South African institutions and historically disadvantaged institutions. Internationalisation should also be seen as an opportunity to take local and/or indigenous knowledge to the international community.

In 2011, 70 061 foreign students were studying in South African public universities, equivalent to 7 per cent of the total student body. The vast majority of these students (51 671 or 74 per cent) were nationals of countries belonging to the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In addition, there were 5 784 foreign, mainly SADC, students in South African private higher education institutions, constituting 8.8 per cent of all students in that sector. These numbers are significant; South Africa is the eleventh most popular destination worldwide for mobile students, and the top destination for students in Africa.

In line with the SADC Protocol on Education and Training, SADC students are subsidised by the South African government in the same manner as local students. South African students could gain similar benefits in other SADC countries, but few attempt to take up the opportunities there. It is likely that most young people do not know or even think about this possibility, which brings with it not only the benefits of an education but also the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of our region. Regional student and staff mobility also has the potential for increasing collaboration in research and teaching among universities in the region.

Collaborative research projects with other countries carry significant benefits and will be encouraged. In particular, research partnerships involving African countries and other developing countries, including the BRICS nations, should grow to overcome their relative neglect in the past, but without prejudicing established and new relationships with developed countries.

International scholarship and bursaries made available to the Department will be directed to meeting policy goals such as expanding the numbers of South Africans, especially blacks and women, with Masters and Doctoral degrees. Particular attention will be focused on qualifications in scarce skills areas, improving the qualifications of academics, increasing throughput and graduation rates, building research capacity and enhancing research quality. This will include funds provided for study at South African universities, as well as those which are provided for South Africans to study abroad.

Given the complex effects of internationalisation on the South African system, it is necessary to develop a suitable policy framework for international cooperation in post-school education and

training. This type of cooperation can benefit South African universities and other educational institutions, and serve to mitigate negative effects of internationalisation, in line with existing bilateral and multilateral agreements, such as the SADC Protocol.

#### **4.10 Integration with the rest of the post-school system**

The university sector has, in general, embraced the concept of an integrated post-school system. Some universities have already begun to build strong partnerships with other post-school institutions, particularly TVET colleges. The expansion of such collaboration will be encouraged to achieve a range of objectives that are essential to building a vibrant post-school system. Partnership activities can include but are not limited to: joint work on curricula in order to improve the progression of students from colleges to universities; training new lecturers for TVET and community colleges and upgrading existing lecturers; providing study opportunities for college management staff; research by universities on the post-school system, including the relationship between the education and training institutions and the labour market.

In addition, universities should seek to build strong partnerships with employers to promote the expansion of workplace training opportunities, especially in those areas where qualifications or professional registration depends on practical workplace experience. These partnerships can benefit from the inclusion of SETAs which can assist in brokering university–employer collaborations as well as providing advice and resources to facilitate work-integrated learning.

## 5. Private Education Provision

A role for private post-school education and training is provided for in terms of the Constitution and various other policies and legislation. Private post-school institutions help to meet the rising demand for post-school opportunities for an increasingly diverse society and economy. They assist in diversifying and expanding the post-school sector as a whole. This is particularly so in niche areas where public provision is inadequate or non-existent – for example advertising, design, fashion and theological training for various denominations. Others offer education in business and management, certain artistic fields such as film and television, information technology, teacher education and so on. A still small but important type of private provision is education for people with special educational needs, mainly provided in private institutions established and run by associations for people with disabilities.

The private sector includes higher education institutions and further education and training institutions, both of which are required to register with the DHET. It also includes institutions which specialise in shorter skills courses and which are mainly registered with SETAs. Some institutions are accredited to offer degrees up to PhD level, while others offer part qualifications or programmes that are not registered on the NQF. There are also private adult learning centres, with a range of offerings including literacy training, the ABET General Education and Training Certificate and the Senior Certificate. The private sector includes for-profit and not-for-profit institutions, stand-alone institutions and those located in companies. It includes institutions that provide high-quality education and those whose offerings are weak, or even fraudulent and illegal. It includes sizable institutions with several thousand students, and very small institutions with less than a hundred students. Some operate in South Africa but are owned by foreign institutions (which may be public institutions in their home countries). The private institutions are funded by a variety of sources including client contracts, owner's capital, company or SETA training budgets, user fees and donor funds.

Private institutions play a significant role in providing post-school education to South Africans. According to one of the few studies on the matter, the private FET college sector has experienced steady growth; in 2009 it constituted 20.5 per cent of the national registration figures in the post-school FET sector. SAQA's data suggests that, over a period of twenty years (1991 to 2010), 537 362 students achieved qualifications through private post-school education. Of these qualifications, 93 per cent were at or below NQF Level 5. In 2001, 6 436 students obtained degrees from the private system, but in 2010 this had increased to 35 402, indicating significant growth.

Presently, the available data on private post-school institutions is often inaccurate, incomplete and scattered among various data sets in various institutions, including the DHET, SAQA, the Quality Councils and the SETAs. In order for the government – and indeed society at large – to understand the contribution and role of private post-school educational institutions, accurate

and comprehensive information on the profile of these institutions, their qualifications and programme offerings is needed. The DHET will therefore without delay develop systems to ensure that it has reliable information about the private institutions, including the number of institutions and students, how they are distributed across various programmes and areas of study, and how they are distributed geographically. The analysis of such data – combined with information from the Quality Councils – will give us a better idea of the extent and quality of private educational provision and help us to understand its contribution more fully. A typology of different private institutions will be developed, and the Department will reflect on whether a uniform policy is required for the private sector. The DHET will also undertake a thorough review of the regulation and quality assurance of private providers. Such a review will examine the current system and make recommendations with regard to ensuring that the government and its agencies, especially SAQA and the Quality Councils, use to best affect the resources that are available for these purposes.

The state has meagre capacity for quality assurance among private institutions. Neither the registration by the DHET nor institutional and programme accreditation by the Quality Councils is sufficient to ensure accountability by the private institutions. This is partly because of the limited scope of the activities of Quality Councils, and also because of their lack of resources to undertake such a large task. The shortage of resources results, for example, in the quality assurance of private providers mainly being a once-off process with very little, if any, ongoing monitoring done by the Quality Councils.

Some unscrupulous private providers have utilised gaps and weaknesses in the quality assurance system to their advantage by offering what are called provider programmes. Students enrolling for these programmes are misled into believing that they are proper higher education programmes accredited on the NQF, when in fact they are not even quality assured. Similarly, some private providers, including large and apparently reputable ones, openly advertise unaccredited courses in the knowledge that the authorities do not have the capacity to deal with their transgressions.

A further challenge within the quality assurance system relates to the complexity of the existing registration and quality assurance system for private providers, and the sequencing and timing of various processes across the quality assurance bodies. The DHET must develop better communication between itself, the CHE, SAQA, Umalusi and the SETAs, as well as clearer processes for private provider registration and accreditation. Ultimately, we will develop a simple and efficient registration, monitoring and regulatory system for dealing with private providers. The Department, in collaboration with the Quality Councils, will develop a plan to expand and improve capacity for quality assurance for private providers, including making arrangements for ensuring that the necessary resources are available. In line with the public colleges, the private FET colleges will be renamed private technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges.

Many private institutions have made representations (including in response to the Green Paper) for the state to provide funding either directly to the institutions or to subsidise their students. The DHET's position on this has been firm. While recognising and appreciating the role of private institutions, the Department believes that the public sector is the core of the education and training system. The government's main thrust, therefore, should be to direct public resources primarily to meeting national priorities and to provide for the masses of young people and adult learners through public institutions.

# 6.

## Addressing Disability

### 6.1 Policy frameworks

With democratisation, the plight of people with disabilities finally became part of the transformation agenda. There has been an increasing acceptance that people with disabilities can play active roles in transforming their own lives, and can contribute to society. Access to proper education and training opportunities is fundamental to this, and education policy and institutions have to be transformed in several ways if equity for people with disabilities is to be fully achieved.

The South African Constitution outlaws all forms of discrimination, including those based on disability. All organs of state are required to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to opportunities. The Integrated National Disability Strategy was put in place in 1997; it provides a framework and vision for the integration of disability issues in all social, political and economic programmes in the country, and is now supported by the Department of Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities. A number of other relevant legislative instruments are in place to support the inclusion of disability as an equity goal in all sectors. These include the Employment Equity Act (1998), the Skills Development Act (1998) and the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000).

Within the education sector, the South African Schools Act (1996), the Higher Education Act (1997), the Further Education and Training Act (1998), and the Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) all call on educational institutions to ensure that learners with special needs are able to access education. *The National Plan for Higher Education* (2000) obliges universities to increase access for learners with special needs. The Plan requires universities to develop institutional plans indicating aims, to implement strategies and to take steps towards improving access.

*White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (2001) provides a blueprint for inclusive education in South Africa as a means to address the challenge of disability across the education landscape. However, its focus is primarily on schooling. Further and higher education is mainly discussed in relation to access. White Paper 6 calls for “regional collaboration” among higher education institutions when addressing disability – that is, provision for people with disabilities should be planned on a regional rather than an institutional basis, so that the institutions in a region specialise in particular disabilities. In practice, this is restrictive in terms of access because it implies that institutions only cater for certain disabilities, even if students with other disabilities live nearby. However, the cost of provision is extremely high and this may be the best route in the immediate future.

*White Paper 3 on the Transformation of the Higher Education System (1997)* highlights the need for an equitable and just system of higher education that is devoid of all forms of discrimination, including against those with disabilities. This requires that people with disabilities are given fair opportunities to enter higher education programmes and to succeed in them.

Despite this strong legislative and policy framework for addressing disability in the education sector, access and support for people with disabilities remains limited.

## 6.2 The current situation

Census 2001 estimated the prevalence of serious disability at 5 per cent of the population. The 2011 census, which did not ask if persons were disabled but rather asked them if they could perform or if they had difficulty performing various functions (seeing, hearing, communicating, climbing stairs, remembering or concentrating, and taking care of themselves), found that 11.1 per cent of people had at least some difficulty performing these functions. However, accurate and up-to-date data on the number of post-school students with disabilities is not available. It is essential to achieve a fuller understanding of the number of people with disabilities, and the types of disabilities of people within the post-school system. It is recognised that people with disabilities do not always disclose their disabilities, and this must be addressed. Other issues requiring investigation include the appropriateness of the education and training being provided (including skills development programmes and placements), and the facilities and support services available to students and staff with disabilities in relation to individual requirements.

The Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) studied the role and functioning of disability units in fifteen of the country's universities. They found that institutions did not have a single definition of disability; this presented challenges for data gathering and monitoring of disability issues.

Despite attempts to integrate disability into the broader policy arena, currently there is no national policy on disability to guide education and training institutions in the post-school domain. The management of disability in post-school education remains fragmented and separate to that of existing transformation and diversity programmes at the institutional level. Individual institutions determine unique ways in which to address disability, and resourcing is allocated within each institution according to their programmes. Levels of commitment toward people with disability vary considerably between institutions, as do the resources allocated to addressing disability issues. TVET colleges in particular lack the capacity, or even the policies, to cater for students and staff with disabilities.

Data from 22 of the 23 public universities shows that 5 807 students with disabilities were enrolled in higher education institutions in 2011, accounting for only 1 per cent of the total enrolment. This proportion is far below the national proportion of people with disabilities and suggests that barriers continue to exist which discourage people with disabilities from entering universities. This under-representation is clearly a reality even if we keep in mind the tendency of some persons with disabilities not to disclose their disabilities.

The low numbers of people with disabilities in universities and colleges is despite the fact that bursary funding for learners with disabilities is available. A bursary scheme was introduced in





2008 to complement Department of Labour funding provided through the NSF. However, the DHET's Disability Funding was underutilised in 2010 and 2011, at levels of only 47 per cent and 55 per cent respectively of available funding. The low uptake of bursaries is a matter of serious concern, given the continued inequities in access. It is most likely related to the fact that many learners with disabilities do not qualify for university education, but research is required to fully understand this problem.

There is less funding for and resourcing of disability units at historically black institutions compared to historically white institutions. This situation has been exacerbated by the fact that disability grants are not provided directly to institutions. However, a differentiated approach to funding has been implemented through provision of funding to all 23 universities to conduct infrastructure audits with a view to improving accessibility, and to ensure that new buildings are accessible to people with disabilities. The DHET made available an amount of R130 million, with universities providing an additional R52 million towards ensuring universal access to university infrastructure and facilities. Allocation to each university was based on whether addressing disability was a priority and whether capacity existed. In TVET colleges, there is still no ring-fenced funding to improve the accessibility of buildings, although the Norms and Standards for Funding FET (now TVET) Colleges do provide for additional funding for learners with special needs. Greater attention will be given to ensuring that the colleges improve their capacity to accommodate and serve students with disabilities.

### 6.3 A strategic policy framework on disability

A strategic policy framework is necessary to guide the improvement of access to and success in post-school education and training (including in private institutions) for people with disabilities. The framework will create an enabling and empowering environment across the system. Crucially, it will take into account the need for accurate definitions of the multiple types of disabilities that exist in our society and the differentiated response required by the post-school system. The framework will be developed through existing partnerships with relevant organisations, including the Higher Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA) and Disabled People South Africa, and the relevant government institutions, especially the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities. It is essential that the post-school sector is linked with other sectors addressing disability, such as Health, Social Development and Basic Education. Improved communication between the DBE and the DHET on disability is essential to facilitate greater access for people with disabilities to educational opportunities and funding in the post-school sector.

The strategic policy framework will require all post-school institutions to address policy within institutional contexts and to develop targeted institutional plans to address disability, taking into account their current provision for the disabled. The framework will set norms and standards for the integration of students and staff with disabilities in all aspects of university

or college life, including academic life, culture, sport and accommodation. Such an approach will attempt to prescribe guidelines for what may be described as “reasonable accommodation” practices for students and staff with disabilities. In addressing disability, a holistic approach is necessary, taking into account the built environment as well as the use of specialised technology and assistive devices geared for people with disabilities.

A more integrated approach to adapting teaching and learning methodologies and approaches is necessary. This will require collaboration within the post-school sector, within faculties and departments, and across institutions. Greater awareness of the needs of students and staff with disabilities needs to be built, alongside the capacity to address disability at all levels of post-school institutions, including lecturers, support staff and management. Special attention will be paid to the challenges facing women with disabilities and disabled students from poor families, throughput rates of disabled students, and the need for training and work-based opportunities for students both during and upon completion of their programmes.

In order to support a new strategic policy framework, it will be necessary to ensure that the DHET has the capacity to support a new approach to addressing disability within post-school institutions. This will include information management, research into disability in the post-school sector, policy development and support, and provision of the necessary resources to institutions to enable transformation in this area. In order to achieve these imperatives, some level of differentiation in funding provision will be necessary. Thus, a differentiated approach to disability based on the existing resources and needs of these institutions will be considered so as to meet the benchmarked standards outlined in the national policy framework on disability. The DHET is committed to maintaining existing disability capacity within post-school institutions while at the same time ensuring equitable funding across the system.

In the process of developing the policy framework, it will be necessary to consider the role that private institutions, particularly those linked to associations for people with disabilities, play in promoting access to post-school education and training for people with disabilities. The National Skills Fund should consider (on a case-by-case basis) funding non-profit organisations involved in the provision of education and training for people with disabilities.

# 7.

## Opening Learning through Diverse Modes of Provision

### 7.1 Introduction

The *White Paper on Education and Training* (1995) introduced the concept of open learning, which it defined as follows:

Open learning is an approach which combines the principles of learner centeredness, lifelong learning, flexibility of learning provision, the removal of barriers to access learning, the recognition for credit of prior learning experience, the provision of learner support, the construction of learning programmes in the expectation that learners can succeed, and the maintenance of rigorous quality assurance over the design of learning materials and support systems.

These principles are still valid as they collectively take forward the agenda of opening learning to all. The DHET supports the development of a post-school sector based on open learning principles<sup>9</sup> where quality learning environments are constructed which take account of student context and use the most appropriate and cost-effective methods and technologies.

This approach responds to the competing imperatives outlined in this White Paper of increasing enrolment and of improving throughput and curriculum relevance within a system and infrastructure that will continue to be under strain despite the plans to expand it substantially. This document has also highlighted the need for the post-school system to cater for a very wide variety of potential student needs, including mature adult learners who have to study and work at the same time, as well as younger people who may have dropped out of the schooling system due to financial, social, learning or other barriers. Such students require access not only to a diverse range of programmes, but also to appropriate modes of provision which take into account their varying life and work contexts, rather than requiring them to attend daily classes at fixed times and at central venues.

To date, conceptions of how learning programmes are designed and delivered have tended to be restricted to a choice between face-to-face (classroom-based) programmes and programmes offered at a distance. Much of the provision seen in South Africa to date has been clustered around one or the other of the above two poles rather than along a continuum. Increasingly, there is a need to consider mixed-mode programme delivery, with the “mix” being determined by the needs and contexts of learners as well as the requirements of the curriculum.

9. Rather than adopt the term open and distance learning (ODL), this document has taken the view that distance education does not by its nature adhere to open learning principles. Moreover, open learning principles can be vested in all forms of educational provision.

This process of change from traditional approaches is already under way. So, for example, on the more distance-education end of the continuum, existing programmes range from those offering a high level of contact and support on a bi-weekly basis (such as the *KhaRiGude* literacy programme), to having contact in blocks, to more independent and decentralised approaches supported by regular tutoring and mentoring. In all these examples, there is heavy reliance on well-designed learning resources and explicit formative and summative assessment strategies.

As digital technology, and therefore e-learning, has become more accessible in South Africa, it becomes necessary to incorporate this dimension into conceptualising different possible modes of provision. E-learning can be usefully categorised on a continuum, ranging through categories including digitally supported, digitally dependent, Internet-supported, Internet-dependent and fully online.

Rather than view the above two continua separately, it is useful to conceptualise them in relation to each other as horizontal and vertical axes on a grid. Situating various courses or programmes on the resulting grid allows one to examine the degree to which each mode of provision involves students being on campus or remote from the campus and the proportion of face-to-face contact time, as well as simultaneously exploring the type of e-learning (if any) involved in the particular course.

This emphasis on provision other than traditional face-to-face modes takes forward previous post-1994 policy documents, which propose strongly supported distance education as a means to expand access, reduce costs and enhance quality. The focus of educational provision at a distance in South Africa has tended to be on the university sector, where it has made a significant contribution to the overall growth in student enrolment. It accounts for just under 40 per cent of all head-count enrolments and 30 per cent of full-time-equivalent (FTE) enrolments over the last decade. In the last three years, distance education has contributed more than 25 per cent of all graduates from the public university sector.

Of paramount importance for this discussion is the notion that there are rapidly increasing ways of designing educational programmes to meet the needs of learners and the demands of the country. This diversity of provision, based on open learning principles, is seen as a strategic enabler to improve learning opportunities across the post-school education and training sector, and to inform the policy directives which follow. The DHET expects that providers will collaborate in sharing infrastructure, learning resources and staff capacity in order to improve access, quality and cost-effectiveness of provision. This means, *inter alia*, institutions using their resources for the delivery of programmes of other institutions, using a mix of contact and distance modes. So, for example, a TVET college or a community college in a rural area could be used for evening classes for part-time students of a university who are also studying through distance mode. It could also mean the DHET or groups of institutions establishing multipurpose educational facilities to facilitate mixed-mode arrangements.

## 7.2 A network of providers and learning support centres

The potential for exploring a wide range of resource-based distance education methods, including increasing opportunities for using educational technologies, is enormous. The DHET will work toward creating a post-school distance education landscape based on open learning principles. This landscape will complement the traditional campus-based provision. It will

consist of a network of education providers supported by learning support centres and/or connectivity for students. Each of these aspects is discussed below.

Such a network will make available a wide range of learning opportunities to potential students closer to their homes and at times appropriate to their contexts. Other advantages include the development and availability of well-researched, high-quality national learning resources (made available as open education resources [OER]<sup>10</sup>), more efficient use of existing infrastructure, and an increasing emphasis on independent study as preparation for subsequent lifelong learning.

### 7.2.1 A network of high-quality providers

The DHET will encourage all providers of post-schooling to network and increasingly make use of available technologies. It is hoped that they will seek to ensure that their programme offerings are available not only to learners on their main campuses but also to students studying at a distance from them.

In so doing, the DHET expects that providers will:

- Take forward the current transformation of distance education in South Africa as rapidly as possible. They can do so in several ways:
  - by enhancing the course and materials design and development process;
  - by ensuring that students are properly engaged in and supported during the learning process, taking into account the challenges that many of them will experience in coping with distance education studies; and
  - by ensuring meaningful chances of successful graduation.
 Digital technology should be used where appropriate to enhance access, improve communication and generally optimise student engagement.
- Offer a limited range of programmes in order to ensure that economies of scale enable them to be delivered at significantly lower cost than face-to-face alternatives, but without compromising quality.
- Focus on programmes that will give successful graduates enhanced employment opportunities after completion (especially continuing professional development programmes), in line with the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path and other national priorities.
- Ensure collaborative development and use of a common set of self-contained, high-quality learning resources published as open education resources to service these programmes.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication of public provision in some areas at the expense of a lack of provision in others.
- Encourage existing and new providers that offer distance education programmes in the professional development of educators (such as for Maths educators at intermediate and senior phase) and lecturers (including lecturers for community colleges, TVET colleges and universities).

In the university sector, distance education is served by Unisa, as well as by North West University, the University of Pretoria, the University of KwaZulu–Natal and a handful of other

10. A useful definition of open education resources is provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). They are “educational resources that are openly available for use by educators and students, without an accompanying need to pay royalties or licence fees” (UNESCO and Commonwealth of Learning, *A Basic Guide to Open Educational Resources* (2011: 5).



public and private institutions. However, distance higher education for vocationally oriented diploma programmes at comprehensive universities or universities of technology is not as well-developed as that for the purely academic programmes. Through the former Technikon SA, which is now part of the merged university, Unisa does have a long tradition of providing such education and continues to provide it. However, there have been some problems since the merger, partly due to difficulty in finding employers willing to facilitate the necessary work-

integrated learning. Other comprehensive universities and universities of technology have not taken up distance education to any great extent.

In light of the need to increase enrolments, the DHET has decided that predominantly contact universities may choose to offer distance programmes, provided that effective quality-control measures are in place. The onus will be on each institution to justify a particular programme offering in terms of its mission and overall profile as well as the nature of the programme concerned. The DHET will also encourage all universities to expand online and blended learning as a way to offer niche programmes, especially at postgraduate level, to those who are unable to attend full-time programmes, either due to their employment status or their geographical distance from a campus.

Provision for university students at a distance is therefore poised to expand. Policy proposals are being considered on how this may be achieved in a planned and systematic manner that combines access with success, and on how the growth of both ICT infrastructure and learning support centres can be utilised. At postgraduate level, increasing access to digital technologies has already resulted in substantial growth; there has been considerable experimentation with diverse modes of delivery as alternatives to face-to-face instruction.

As the new universities in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape conceptualise their growth plans, they should consider themselves as part of this growing network of distance providers in the post-school sector. They will be expected to collaborate with existing education providers to offer (among other offerings) well-supported NQF Level 5 and 6 distance programmes to students in their own provinces, as well as foundational programmes at NQF Level 4. Students engaging in such programmes would then be well-prepared to continue their studies across a range of modes of provision.

There is currently little distance education provision for the post-school sector below university level. This may be because younger and weaker learners are generally least able to cope with distance education, but this challenge could be mitigated by increased student support. The offerings in vocational and adult education should in any case be made more flexible for those who are able to take advantage of this type of provision. In particular, Senior Certificate subjects, the National Senior Certificate for Adults, and NCV subjects should be offered flexibly

to learners, including through distance education, in order to increase the opportunities for all South Africans to obtain these certificates.

The theoretical component of apprenticeships might also be offered through distance education, especially for those students who live or work far from an appropriate college or who prefer this model. The Department will seriously consider the possibility of providing distance education programmes at the college level, including dedicated staff and equipment. As mentioned above, in the discussion on a single, coordinated system, distance education capacity will also be considered for community colleges. The Australian technical and further education (TAFE) system includes various permutations of online and face-to-face methods of programme delivery to ensure that they cover both the theoretical and practical components of the programme. Such methodologies could be adapted to South African conditions.

Essential to the effectiveness of the above providers would be the access to technology and the administrative and learning support provided by a growing network of shared learning support centres.

### **7.2.2 A network of shared learning support centres**

There are a substantial number of learning support centres throughout South Africa that will serve as sites for the support or provision of distance education programmes. They could provide educational, administrative and logistical support, as well as access to digital and online materials, including access to online library services. Such centres could include the community colleges, underutilised facilities at high schools, colleges and university campuses. They could also be used for contact sessions, particularly in the evenings, over weekends and during school holidays. Multi-Purpose Community Centres and library networks should also be used. The DHET supports the idea of libraries reinventing themselves as learning support centres and offering assistance in activities such as writing skills, group learning and cooperative learning. Such centres are important because the targeted student community will, in the main, need considerable face-to-face support. However, with increasing access to connectivity and mobile technology, the emphasis of student support may shift somewhat to online approaches.

### **7.2.3 Professional development**

It will be necessary to ensure continuing professional development for full-time staff in the post-school sector, and to increase staff numbers in proportion to increasing numbers of distance education enrolments. The DHET will invest in professional development programmes for full-time and part-time staff in various aspects of distance programmes, including online learning and course design using open education resources.

## **7.3 Quality assurance**

Quality assurance is a vital requirement of the post-school education system. Providers must adhere to good standards of practice and to suitable accreditation criteria. Where work-integrated learning is required, education providers must make the necessary arrangements to ensure that these opportunities form part of the curriculum. All institutions involved in education provision, particularly that at a distance, must strengthen their internal capacity for delivering quality education.

The DHET will consult the various quality assurance bodies on how to engage with institutions to strengthen the quality of distance programmes. Particular attention will be given to the accreditation of new distance education provision, which must be informed by an appropriate contextual analysis of need, taking cognisance of existing public and private provision. In particular, the DHET will be vigilant in reducing the practice of using distance enrolments as a cash cow while providing inadequate student support – a problem that has occurred in the past.

## 7.4 Equitable access to appropriate technology

Information and communication technology is increasingly becoming a critical ingredient for meaningful participation in a globalised world. It is also an indispensable infrastructural component for effective education provision, and is central to the notion of opening learning opportunities in the post-schooling sector, especially for the network described above. Currently, ICT access is extremely uneven, making it impossible for education and other providers to fully harness the potential of using ICT to support teaching and learning, particularly at a distance.

South Africa's goal will be to ensure that this infrastructure is extended equitably to all post-school students. Recent increases in the availability of bandwidth, cloud services and affordability of end-user mobile devices such as laptops, tablets and smartphones make this goal attainable.

The DHET intends to improve ICT access by:

- developing an integrated ICT plan that will provide strategic direction to the DHET for the improvement of equitable access to and use of appropriate technology across the post-school education and training system;
- prioritising collaboration with the Department of Communications and other government departments and stakeholders to facilitate increased bandwidth and reduced costs for educational purposes, with particular emphasis on reaching those in more remote areas;
- engaging with stakeholders to negotiate easier access to and reduced costs for Internet-enabled devices;
- bidding for funds to ensure that a comprehensive, enabling ICT infrastructure is put in place for all providers of post-schooling, particularly providers of distance higher education;
- facilitating the shared establishment and management of ICT-enabled, networked learning support centres in areas where home-based provision is likely to be difficult in the short to medium term.

Teaching and learning interventions using ICT must be carefully planned and implemented. The success of an educational programme will be determined by its pedagogical strength and not by the integration of ICT, which can sometimes be used poorly or as a gimmick. Furthermore, sufficient capacity is required in terms of financial and human resources. Staff and students require not only meaningful access to technology, but also the ability to use it effectively. Mechanisms to build capacity in this area will include:

- developing an e-skills plan for the post-school education and training sector that is aligned to the national e-Skills Plan of the Department of Communication;
- enabling development of institutional and inter-institutional ICT policies and plans (aligned to national policies) to facilitate appropriate allocation of financial resources.



## 7.5 Collaborative development of quality learning resources

The goal of attaining meaningful post-schooling must be supported by the development and sharing of well-designed, quality learning resources that build on the expertise and experience of top-quality scholars and educators. Many institutions using face-to-face instruction now incorporate extensive use of resources designed to support learning. The 1997 *White Paper on Higher Education* proposed the “development of a national network of centres of innovation in course design and development, as this would enable the development and franchising of well-designed, quality and cost-effective learning resources and courses, building on the expertise and experience of top quality scholars and educators in different parts of the country” (sections 2.60–2.61). The advent of the OER movement with open licensing of content provides a framework for such engagement.

The DHET will support efforts that invest a larger proportion of total expenditure in the design and development of high-quality learning resources, as a strategy for increasing and assuring the quality of provision across the entire post-school system. These resources should be made freely available as open resources. This would be in line with a growing international movement, supported heavily by organisations such as UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning, which advocate the development of open education resources. Key motivations for OER are the potential improvements in quality and reductions in cost.

The DHET will:

- Provide support for the production and sharing of learning materials as open education resources at institutions in the post-school sector. In particular, all material developed by SAIVCET will be made available as OER. Other potentially successful initiatives in the area of OER across the post-school education and training sector will be supported.
- Develop an appropriate open licensing framework for use by all education stakeholders, within an overarching policy framework on intellectual property rights and copyright in the post-school sector. In particular, the policy framework will seek to address the dissemination, adaptation and usage of education resources developed using public funds.
- Acquire electronic resources through the South African National Library and Information Consortium (SANLIC) for the entire sector, to ensure equal access to learning material and information resources.
- Encourage the use of open-source software wherever possible, as well as the purchasing of shared software licences by collective entities such as the South African Technology Network and other consortia that may be created.

## 7.6 Cross-border distance education

The regulation of cross-border distance education programmes is as important as any regulation that occurs within our borders.

The DHET supports the international exchange of research, scholarship, academics and students, as well as academic partnerships between South African and other universities. In particular, distance education across Southern African borders is strongly endorsed in the government-ratified SADC Protocol on Education and Training, and actively pursued by governments and providers within the region.

The regulation and accreditation of cross-border courses remains challenging. Intergovernmental agreements designed to curb fraudulent or inferior distance higher education at source are the best available safeguards. They commit signatory states to ensuring that providers of cross-border education meet acceptable criteria and are subjected to suitable quality assurance supervision in their home countries. The DHET emphasises the mutual responsibility to ensure that:

- cross-border higher education policy is in place and transparent;
- the provision of cross-border higher education is embarked upon with a sense of social responsibility and academic integrity;
- full and correct information is available to students;
- qualifications are transparent;
- quality assurance processes are in place and effective; and that
- governments and distance education providers maintain a collegial dialogue on the subject.

Higher education is a public good whose provision in South Africa by foreign institutions or companies must be regulated in accordance with South African law. South African providers offering cross-border services must also uphold standards at least as rigorous as they are required to observe at home. The DHET will engage education quality assurers and associations of providers in discussion with a view to developing an agreed framework of principles and guidelines for action by all bodies and institutions in South Africa concerned with offering and receiving cross-border distance education. Furthermore, the Department will ensure that providers of cross-border education and training meet acceptable criteria and are subjected to suitable quality assurance supervision.

# 8.

## Linking Education and the Workplace

### 8.1 Introduction and overview

After 1994 South Africa introduced policies and strategies, and created institutions intended to improve information about training needs and opportunities. These institutions were intended to plan for skills development, to radically expand the training available in workplaces – especially for previously disadvantaged people, including blacks, women and the disabled – and to improve the quality of formal education and training aimed at preparing learners for work. Sector Education and Training Authorities were created, as was a National Skills Fund (NSF) and a National Skills Authority (NSA). The SETAs are key institutions in the effort to bridge education and work. They are stakeholder bodies established in terms of the Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1997).

The mechanism used to fund skills development is known as the levy-grant system. Employers pay a levy for skills development, and 80 per cent of this pool of funds is passed, via SARS and the DHET, to the SETAs. They distribute a portion of the levy funds to contributing employers for training provided to their workers. The remainder is used to support implementation of sector skills plans and various types of training that combines formal institutional and workplace-based training. SETAs are expected to direct and facilitate the delivery of sector-specific skills interventions that help achieve the goals of the National Skills Development Strategy and to address employer demand in their sectors. The SETAs are entitled to use 10 per cent of their allocated levy funds for administration.

The National Skills Fund was also established through the Skills Development Act (SDA). It was created to be a fund which would allocate a proportion of the skills levy to those who would not normally benefit from employer training. The money was meant to be targeted at disadvantaged groups, including the unemployed and those preparing to enter or re-enter the labour market. Particular attention was to be paid to blacks, women, the disabled and others whose training opportunities had previously been limited by law and custom. The NSF is currently allocated 20 per cent of the skills development levies collected from employers, and this is the Fund's main source of income.

The National Skills Authority was established as a stakeholder body. It was originally set up to advise the Minister of Labour, and has now been transferred to the Ministry of Higher Education and Training.

To a considerable extent, the original goals set for these institutions have not been achieved. The institutions have been the subject of widespread criticism. The system has neither produced good information about skills needs, nor increased provision and quality of provision



of education and training in areas needed by the economy. The levy-grant system, as it is currently being managed, has limited credibility among many stakeholders, and public perceptions of the skills system tend to be negative. Low skill levels have consistently been identified as a serious impediment to economic development, and the skills system is not perceived to have made a decisive impact in terms of overcoming the country's skills challenges. A series of reviews and evaluations commissioned

by various government departments and other role players have identified some of the main problems. In recent years, the DHET has been systematically implementing recommendations made by NEDLAC and various task teams appointed to address functioning and performance in SETAs. The Department has also restructured and repositioned the NSF. Nevertheless, the system has yet to fully rise to the skills challenge that the nation is facing.

One of the most serious weaknesses is in the area of skills planning. Inadequate research capacity, a lack of economics, labour market and industry expertise, poor data management, and lack of planning expertise have resulted in sector skills plans that have limited credibility and impact in their sectors. Furthermore, the plans are not viewed as contributing to the achievement of national economic and industrial development goals and plans. As a result, the usefulness of sectorally developed plans has been questioned. Many scarce skills occupations are found across economic sectors, not only in sector silos. Skills needs are increasingly being understood in terms of supply and value chains, and narrowly focused sector skills plans do not allow for the flexibility needed in a fast-changing economic environment. Currently, government economic and developmental priorities are not being adequately addressed, including skills requirements for strategic infrastructure projects, and for implementing the Industrial Policy Action Plan and key sectors identified in the New Growth Path. Far more, and better-quality, research is needed if skills plans are to be improved and gain credibility and value. Workplaces are good sources of information on current skills shortages, which is a crucial aspect of planning, but many other sources of data are required to enable the needs of the labour market to be fully understood and to ensure a sufficiently forward-looking focus.

There is now a level of consensus that in order to achieve inclusive growth there has to be much better coordination across government, with the state playing a more effective role in stimulating and sustaining the economy. The skills level of both existing employees and those entering the labour market is viewed as an important pillar of government strategy for attracting investment, industrial expansion and job creation. Since the decision to shift to a more developmental state, there has been increased pressure to produce labour market information, and to coordinate government-wide processes to determine skills needs, address those needs with relevant and high-quality programmes, and fund and support skills development that is accessible in all parts of the country.

While some changes have been introduced, particularly with regard to strengthening governance, it is clear that further changes to the system are required. The more effective SETAs have demonstrated the positive role that these institutions can play in understanding

the needs of the workplace and in supporting providers and employers to offer the required programmes. However, it has become clear that even the more effective SETAs are finding it difficult to respond to the changing demands being placed on them. In particular, the requirement to reach out to the regions and rural areas is placing a strain on SETA finances. It is not realistic for all 21 SETAs to have a national footprint. Some rationalisation is needed in order to enable access to the skills system in more remote localities.

In the future, SETAs (or their equivalent if they are restructured) will be given a clearer and to some extent narrower and more focused role. The aim will be to locate certain functions (such as skills planning, funding and quality assurance) in well-resourced central institutions, thus enabling sector structures to focus on engaging with stakeholders in the workplace, establishing their needs and agreeing on the best way of addressing them, facilitating access to relevant programmes and ensuring that providers have the capacity to deliver programmes that have a genuine impact. A key role of the skills system structures will be to support efforts to implement workplace learning that complements formal education and training.

## 8.2 Introducing central skills planning

If the provision of education and training is to be better coordinated with the needs of society and the economy, central information about skills needs is required. Planning on a sectoral basis can be misleading, as many occupations are economy-wide. Identifying current and future demand as accurately as possible is extremely important if the goals of the National Development Plan, the New Growth Path and the Industrial Policy Action Plan are to be achieved. If properly researched and credible skills plans can be produced, they will enable much better targeting of resources for education and training and assist in managing wider government processes more effectively. Effective plans will be able to inform:

- supply-side planning in post-school institutions;
- priorities for funding of students by institutions such as the National Student Financial Aid Scheme;
- sector, industry, regional and employer plans;
- strategies for attracting skilled personnel from abroad in the short to medium term, while domestic capacity is being built;
- the allocation of resources to develop qualifications and learning programmes that are relevant to the needs of the labour market; and
- funding norms that determine which programmes are funded.

Our education and training system also needs to be able to support government-funded infrastructure projects. Such projects are a bold and sensible approach to increasing growth and employment, especially during a global economic downturn. However, there is no guarantee that the projects will create sustainable jobs unless skills are developed in the process of infrastructure development.

To achieve all of the above, a national process is needed which can analyse skills demands in the short, medium and long term. The DHET will establish a Skills Planning Unit which will work with key public institutions, such as universities and other research institutions, to develop an institutional mechanism for skills planning. Once established, this institutional mechanism will conduct its work within the broad framework of the Human Resources Development Plan

and the National Development Plan and will become the location for engagement with the key economic departments of government. The planned institutional mechanism will become a repository of labour market information, will develop skills demand forecasting models, and will promote and build labour market research and analysis skills for the country.

The SETAs as currently established will work with the Department's Skills Planning Unit to develop the central planning mechanism. SETAs provide important workplace data, and will continue to conduct sector research and ensure that the sectoral implications of this economy-wide analysis are explored. They will engage stakeholders, test emerging research findings, and determine whether these are consistent with their understanding of where their sector is heading. The Skills Planning Unit will aim to ensure that a coherent set of data is collected – from SETAs, Departmental and other sources of data – that can be used for the analysis. This planning will require alignment of various data sets to ensure that comparison is possible through common categories and definitions. There should be a process in place to annually review the assumptions set out in these scenarios to keep them in tune with current needs.

As discussed below, changes will be made to the system of sector workplace skills plans (WSPs) and annual training reports (ATRs) to improve data collection. This will be supplemented by workplace surveys, coupled with additional information such as tracking of vacancies. The adjusted role of the sector skills structures in the planning process will be aimed at supplying reliable sector-specific quantitative data to the national central planning process, engaging with key stakeholders to test emerging scenarios, and planning to support provision in priority areas. Sector, industry and regional input to the national planning process will ensure the provision of comprehensive information on workplaces in terms of the training that is taking place, the kinds of skills that are present in the workplace, and the nature of skills gaps.

Once a national picture is completed, with a broad understanding of the skills needs across the economy in terms of long-term trends and medium-term scenarios, the national agency will produce “sector briefs” which will provide the basis for effective engagement with stakeholders. There will be consultation with key industry role players and other stakeholders to discuss whether the economy-wide and sectoral skills needs set out in the draft scenarios resonate with their understanding of the sector, or whether there are gaps. It is anticipated that this more focused process will allow, indeed require, engagement at a more senior level within industry than has been the case. In effect, the discussions on skills will involve those individuals who are determining the strategy for their companies.

## **8.3 Changing the roles of the skills levy and grants**

### **8.3.1 Existing problems**

A number of problems have been identified in the way that the levy-grant system has functioned. The intention was that the system should encourage employers to plan and implement training and development, to expand access to training (particularly among those who had previously not benefited), and to improve the quality of provision and its relevance to the economy and the workplace. These goals have not been achieved. Many employers have treated the levy as a tax, and have not engaged with their line SETA. Other employers and providers have regarded SETA and NSF funds as a business opportunity, and the resulting relationships with SETAs are entirely geared to expanding employer income and profits. Some

employers have taken their SETA seriously and engaged in strategic discussions, but have often been disappointed by the experience. The result has been that senior industry players have withdrawn and expectations of the skills system have been lowered.

The system itself has been expensive to administer. More than the permissible 10 per cent administration costs have been incurred; additional costs are paid for from discretionary funds or added to provider expenses for carrying out administrative functions related to the training. Some good work has been done, but because very little of that work has been properly evaluated, it has not been possible to state whether value for money has been achieved. All in all, there is a persisting impression that the overall impact on the economy has been limited in relation to the large amounts spent since 1999.

Revised SETA Grant Regulations were gazetted in December 2012 and came into effect on 1 April 2013. The outcomes from the changes are yet to be felt, and the impact is being monitored. Further changes will be required. The following sections set out what is intended by the regulations and indicate additional changes that are required.

### 8.3.2 Improving data supply

SETAs currently give the mandatory grant to employers on the basis of submission of workplace skills plans and annual training reports. There are serious problems with this system. There is little evidence to suggest that mandatory grants, which amounted to 50 per cent of levies paid by employers, have been utilised as intended. There is very little empirical evidence about the impact of the mandatory grants, the discretionary grants or funds disbursed by the National Skills Fund on skills development and on the system's objectives. In contrast, there is considerable evidence of waste and misuse of funds. There is a need for much-improved data, not only to inform planning but to enable accurate measurement of and reporting on outcomes and the impact of funds deployed.

As mentioned above, workplace skills plans and annual training reports generally do not provide reliable data about the sector or even the workplace, although there are some exceptions to this. Problems include the format specifying what information companies are supposed to provide, the accuracy and comprehensiveness of information provided, and the number of enterprises which are actually submitting the required documentation. The number of larger enterprises submitting plans has been dropping, and for smaller businesses the numbers that complete are insignificant compared to those that pay the levy. Another problem is that SETAs lack the capacity to evaluate the annual training reports against the workplace skills plans or to be aware of what employers are actually doing in terms of training. Overall, the data provided is not adequate to inform strategic decisions at either sectoral or national level.

In future, the focus of the mandatory grant will be *exclusively* on gathering accurate data. Employers must ensure that the WSP/ATR report includes comprehensive information about all training that is taking place in the workplace, current levels of skills, experience and qualifications of employees, and skills priorities and gaps for the short as well as medium term. Submission of this information will entitle the employer to receive the mandatory grant from the SETA. This grant will only require companies to submit useful and accurate data; there will be no need for employers to report how the mandatory grant was spent. Once the SETAs are able to obtain accurate data from workplaces, they can supply valuable information for the national skills planning process, as well as plan and support educational provision. This will be a substantial benefit to employers, as it will enable skills gaps to be addressed.

Companies will be required to provide information in a consistent manner. SETAs that have had most successes in the past in extracting useful data should contribute to the design of a new instrument for use by all SETAs. The intention will be to produce a user-friendly and accessible template that serves its intended purpose.

### **8.3.3 Supporting education and training provision in workplaces**

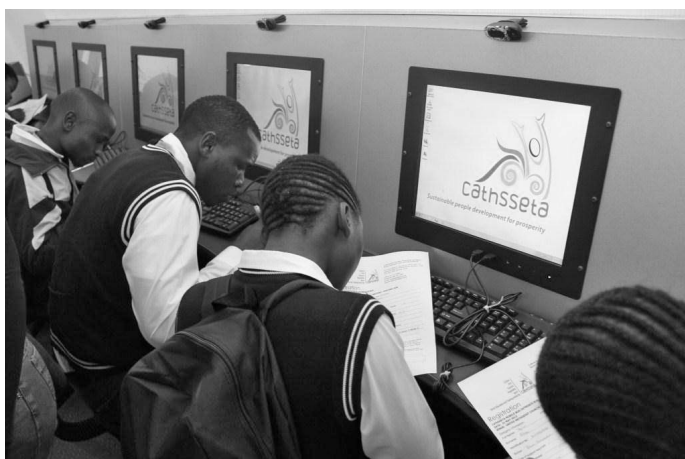
The reduction of the mandatory grant does not mean that fewer funds are available to support education and training provision required by workplaces. An important key aim of the levy-grant system was to encourage training of existing employees and new entrants to the labour market. One of the reasons that this has not happened is that the skills development system paid too little attention to conceptualising and supporting the supply of education and training. Much of the available money has been spent on short courses, which are important but will not change the overall picture of the skills crisis in the country, or on inappropriate one-year qualifications which were not recognised in workplaces.

Supporting education and training provision for workplaces was always one of the reasons for the establishment of the SETAs. It will now be seen as a key focus. The DHET, working with SETAs, will use the national and sectoral information on skills demand to map supply against demand, to establish where there is insufficient capacity to deliver this supply, and to determine strategies to address this shortfall. SETAs, together with the DHET, will play a proactive role in working with education and training providers to understand long-term, medium-term and short-term priorities and to consider how these can be addressed given the duration of different programmes (including education and training as well as workplace experience). SETAs, together with the DHET, will support the capacity development of providers in line with these priorities. In this way, the work of the SETAs will support not only the provision that they themselves fund, but the education and training system as a whole.

The recent reduction in the mandatory grant from 50 per cent to 20 per cent increases the funds available for discretionary grants and projects. Allocations from the discretionary grant will be used to ensure that sector-specific needs are addressed. These funds will be targeted at substantive training for employed people, as well as training for unemployed people entering the sectors in line with agreed sector priorities. The new regulations require 80 per cent of the discretionary grant to fund professional, vocational, technical and academic learning (PIVOTAL) programmes that lead to substantive qualifications. This is because the intention is for the increased discretionary grant to fund training for medium-term needs. This includes qualifications and training programmes that lead to awards recognised by industry – such as tour guide certificates, or certificates for miners to work underground. These can be offered by public or private providers. Employers who work with the SETAs to ensure a common understanding of skills requirements, and who support their employees to participate in training programmes leading to awards and qualifications, will be able to get substantial value from the discretionary grant. Importantly, SETAs are now required to agree plans with sector stakeholders, and to report on the implementation of plans funded in this manner. The DHET will monitor spending of discretionary funds and ensure that there is a significant increase in the relevance and effectiveness of funded training.

Funding mechanisms must enable the long-term stability of the overall system, while ensuring that short-term and medium-term priority areas are addressed. Long-term (and certain medium-term) priorities are the responsibility of the fiscus and will be integrated into subsidy and funding formulae for educational institutions. Particularly with regard to medium-term





imperatives, funding from the levy-grant system should complement this core programme funding through monies from the discretionary grant. Where SETAs are funding the provision of qualifications for undergraduates or postgraduates who are not currently employed in line with sector priorities, they should make ring-fenced contributions to NSFAS instead of attempting to manage their own systems of disbursing funds to students (effectively their own bursary schemes). Managing disbursement of

funds for study requires proper systems, and it does not make sense to duplicate this function. Ring-fencing contributions will ensure that NSFAS directs SETA money only at programmes that have been prioritised within their sectors. This will make it possible for learners to progress into, for example, a postgraduate programme in a priority field by accessing a bursary. (The current system makes accessing full bursaries very difficult at these levels.)

A greater diversity of funding mechanisms should be utilised to promote the development of programmes to meet supply-side priorities. Starting new programmes is costly and cannot be adequately funded through bursary-style funding. SETAs need to be able to partner with public and private providers in order to fund the start-up costs of programmes and subsidise programmes through periods where learner numbers may not be viable.

This does not mean that SETAs are “cash cows” for educational providers. However, if the specific skills requirements of employers in the short term and of the economy in the long term are going to be met, educational institutions will need support, both financially and in terms of developing insight into industry needs.

Programmes intended to support existing businesses – for training both existing workers and potential new entrants to the labour market – that culminate in either qualifications or awards should be funded by the SETAs using discretionary grants. This is consistent with the current NSDS III framework which emphasises the importance of funding professional, vocational, technical and academic learning for qualifications and awards which are needed in workplaces. Providers could be public, private or even the employers’ own in-house training institutions, provided they have the capacity to provide all or substantial parts of qualifications.

### **8.3.4 Supporting provision that is not directly linked to current sectoral priorities: the National Skills Fund**

The income of the National Skills Fund has been considerable. Until recently, much of it has been unspent, thus generating public criticism. The NSF has experienced a range of problems relating to poor strategic leadership and lack of internal capacity. These problems are being overcome, and the central importance of such a fund continues to be demonstrated. A number of the Department’s strategic goals and objectives cannot be achieved without enabling funding from the NSF. Therefore, the NSF must continue to be responsible for skills development aligned to national development strategies and priorities. It will also be an

important source of funding to enable the linkages between the skills system and the other post-schooling sub-systems that will be put in place.

Beyond the post-schooling system, the NSF will also be a source of funds for wider government strategies such as youth programmes, building small businesses and cooperatives, and rural development. Government departments and agencies will partner with the NSF in this area of work. This includes, for example, Department of Trade and Industry support for small business, the Expanded Public Works Programme, and various community economic and social development initiatives.

The NSF will continue to support non-formal adult basic education through support to public agencies and the many NGOs and non-profit organisations that do excellent and vital work in this area.

### **8.3.5 Supporting research and innovation through the NSF**

The third National Skills Development Strategy has raised research, development and innovation to a strategic level. They are not simply aspects of skills planning, but fundamental to the achievement of a skilled nation, attracting investment and achieving shared growth and development. The NSF is in a good position to support research which cuts across sectors. For example, the issue of beneficiation in mining has been highlighted, as has training within the supply chain. AgriSETA has raised the need to strengthen training along the entire food chain if the rural economy is to be strengthened. The NSF must sponsor research where key opportunities for economic growth and industrial development are identified but do not fall tidily into a single sector or SETA.

Some of the research questions posed by NSDS III are difficult. They impact the way we understand our challenges as a nation, or even how we identify the challenges. For example, how can skills development support the creation of a developmental state? This requires an understanding of the possible role of the state and its various components, and an exploration of different models of state intervention in the economy. Meta-analyses of census and other data on how the poor in rural and urban areas earn their livelihoods are examples of research that can inform us about skills needs and help shape our curricula, especially in community colleges. Such research, both empirical and theoretical, demands the involvement of intellectuals in universities and think tanks; the NSF should provide funding where appropriate to clarify and achieve government's aims with regard to the education and skills development systems.

More and more in this global world, innovation sets a country apart and places it on a positive developmental path. Innovation has been seen as something pertaining to universities and academics, but increasingly it is about applying theory in practical ways in industry. With the increased focus of NSDS III on bridging the gap between study and work, particularly in postgraduate fields of learning, innovation projects can be identified and funded by the NSF to support the wider goals of government.

### **8.3.6 Building the capacity of the public education system to meet skills needs**

There are a number of challenges in the public post-school education system. This is especially so in the colleges, where many lecturers lack industry experience. There is a lack of capacity to

develop the curriculum and materials required to meet industry needs across diverse sectors. Although it will remain primarily the role of government to fund public education institutions, the SETAs and NSF can play an important role in funding skills development capacity and steering funding for programme delivery towards public providers.

## **8.4 Ongoing attention to strategic goals**

### **8.4.1 Changes arising from NSDS III**

A number of important policy shifts in NSDS III are being incrementally addressed and implemented. These include: providing greater levels of access to education and training in rural areas; increasing collaboration between the skills system, government and industry; driving skills development primarily through the public education system, and in particular through universities and TVET colleges; and focusing less on numerical targets and more on outcomes and impact. These policy imperatives will continue to drive the skills development system into NSDS IV and beyond.

Additional challenges have emerged from NSDS III, and two key areas are discussed below. It should be noted that there will be others that cannot be anticipated, and this points to the need for flexibility so that the system can adjust to meet needs as they arise.

### **8.4.2 Workplace learning and work-integrated learning**

Learners exiting universities, TVET colleges and programmes funded by SETAs are not, in general, finding work easily. They are often described by employers as lacking the skills needed. Sometimes this seems to relate to a lack of practical workplace experience. Workplace learning must be seen as an integral part of qualification and programme design.

In the past, over 90 percent of SETA spending has been allocated to programmes delivered by private providers, with public colleges that offer vocational and continuing education and training largely being excluded from programme delivery. While the Department will continue to develop and promote general vocational programmes, it is important at the same time to develop a range of occupationally directed programmes that include significant elements of practical workplace learning. There will be a concerted drive to bring SETAs and TVET colleges together to plan, design, fund and deliver occupational programmes that address scarce skills needs.

There is a need for ongoing evaluation of the range, content and structure of many of the occupational programmes (including the N-programmes) in TVET colleges. Some of the N-programmes include a period of work experience after completion of the formal programme in the college. Often these work placements are unstructured and do not contribute to the outcomes of the qualification; rather, they take the form of compulsory work experience. The possibility exists for the colleges and the SETAs to work together to restructure such programmes as learnerships or apprenticeships, or for the work placement to become a more structured internship.

There are also opportunities for greater collaboration between universities and the skills system. One of the trends that has developed is for SETAs, supported by their industry stakeholders, to develop professional and other higher-level occupational qualifications, and



then to fund their delivery through private providers. In future, universities should engage with industry stakeholders and SETAs to examine how their programmes could be progressively adjusted to fulfil this role.

Ensuring expanded access to training opportunities, with training taking place in both educational institutions and workplaces, is in line with the National Skills Accord signed by representatives of all the NEDLAC partners in July 2011. It commits all the social partners – government,

organised business, the labour movement and communities – to making this a reality. SETAs, individual employers, educational institutions, SAIVCET and the DHET must cooperate to tackle some important challenges. These include increasing access to workplaces for students in vocational and higher education, in the form of various types of work-integrated learning. Also essential is improving and updating the industry knowledge and experience of educators by providing appropriate work-exposure opportunities for TVET lecturers.

As part of the strategy of expanding delivery of skills development through TVET colleges, SETAs will need to work with the colleges and SAIVCET on sector-relevant curriculum and materials, with a specific focus on integrating theoretical and workplace learning. To facilitate the close working relationship that is necessary, SETAs should have a presence – in the form of offices shared by a number of SETAs – in the institutions, starting with the TVET colleges. Depending on the curriculum focus of the particular college, SETAs can assist colleges to develop collaborative partnerships with employers in a number of sectors.

Given the expected needs of the economy, a particularly important form of work-integrated learning is artisan training through apprenticeships or learnerships, which are presently used mainly to produce artisans in the engineering and construction industries. Artisan training has gone through a period of relative neglect but is being revived, with growing support from employers in both the private and public sectors, including the state-owned enterprises. The National Artisan Moderating Body (NAMB) has been established to monitor the quality of artisan training and testing, to assure the quality of trade tests and the trade testing system, and to make recommendations to the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) on the certification of artisans.

The government's National Infrastructure Plan provides a major opportunity to expand the country's skills profile. In all of its eighteen Strategic Integrated Projects there will be a requirement that service providers have a skills plan showing how apprenticeships, learnerships and other occupational programmes will be rolled out during the project. Where skills are sourced from abroad, contracted employers must demonstrate how skills transfer will be achieved and how the project will enable South African capacity to be built. The intention is to use the projects to expand the country's skills base.

An important development in the management of the Strategic Infrastructure Projects is the establishment of Occupational Teams. These teams will bring together representatives

of employers, education and training providers, professional bodies and others such as trade testers and licence issuers. Their purpose is to address problems of curriculum relevance and alignment between institutional (theoretical) and workplace (practical) learning as well as work placement problems at a systemic, national level. The implementation of this concept in the Strategic Infrastructure Projects will be evaluated and extended across vocational and professional training generally wherever appropriate.

### **8.4.3 The public sector as a training space**

The role of the public sector in providing opportunities for workplace learning is particularly important. The government must lead by example in this regard. It must make available opportunities for apprenticeships, learnerships and internships in the public service at national, provincial and municipal level, in state agencies such as the defence force and the police, in public educational institutions and in state-owned enterprises.

The commitment of some state-owned enterprises to expand apprenticeships and other forms of training is encouraging. They have committed themselves not only to meeting their own scarce skills needs, but also to contributing to the national effort to address skills shortages. The DHET and the SETAs will cooperate with the Department of Public Enterprises and the state-owned enterprises to expand provision and to ensure that the state plays a leading role in skills development.

A number of departments (including the DHET) have started recruiting new graduates into learnerships, internships and other programmes, but much more can be done. It is essential that the public sector is opened up as a training space to the greatest extent possible, not only to meet the very significant skills needs of government, but also to ensure that government plays its role in addressing national skills shortages.

## **8.5 Strengthening the institutional capacity of the skills system**

### **8.5.1 Problems affecting institutional capacity**

In order to achieve the priorities set out above, our institutions must be strengthened, and changed where appropriate. A clear and well-defined mandate is the crucial first step in improving their capacity.

One common theme which emerges from various reviews and evaluations of the SETAs is that they have too many objectives. This leads to a diffused focus, and great difficulty in strategic planning. It has also meant that most SETAs have not been able to play their key role of linking education and work. There are also concerns about the way in which SETAs report to the DHET; information is not provided consistently across SETAs in a manner that enables the DHET to properly monitor their performance.

The focus from now on will be on ensuring a clear, simple and focused mandate for the SETAs, and on establishing effective mechanisms to evaluate their performance against this mandate.

### **8.5.2 A tighter focus for the SETAs**

Developing a tighter, streamlined focus for the SETAs is a key step in strengthening them, and should be reflected in their vision, mission, governance structure and strategy. As discussed above, the SETAs will focus on obtaining accurate data about workplace skills needs, as well as supporting providers to deliver programmes necessary in their sectors. The latter will include facilitating cooperation between education and training institutions and workplaces. As the key institutions which mediate between education and work, the SETAs' focus should be on skills development for workers within existing enterprises and the development of a skills pipeline to such workplaces (for example, through promoting and supporting learnerships, apprenticeships or internships).

### **8.5.3 Greater accountability**

Currently SETAs are expected to produce plans within contradictory timeframes. Five-year sector skills plans and annual updates are intended to inform the development of annually produced three-year strategic plans. In future, SETAs will produce only one plan, a strategic plan to support priority skills in their sector. These plans will outline the key priorities for the sector, obtained through sector briefs and engagement with stakeholders. They will indicate how the SETAs' understanding of their sector will inform provision to meet the needs of employers. The strategy should also indicate how they aim to improve their understanding of their sector, and the nature of the provision required on an ongoing basis. The overarching plan will highlight how the SETA will address the medium-term imperatives emerging from the scenarios. This will be updated annually to indicate how the SETA intends to support these medium-term imperatives while responding to immediate shortages. It will also include constraints to effective recruitment, utilisation and development of skills, as in the current system. These strategic plans are a requirement in terms of the Public Finance Management Act, and will be in place for a period of three years, linked to the Medium-term Expenditure Framework.

The strategic plans will form the foundation of the Service Level Agreements which SETAs are required by the Skills Development Act to sign with the DHET each year.

### **8.5.4 SETA governance**

Changes, including to the composition of SETA boards, have been made recently. Although there has been some progress in terms of improved decision making and better oversight of spending, current evidence indicates that boards are still finding it difficult to provide strategic leadership and to position SETAs to make a real difference. Governance bodies should remain focused in future, playing only their required roles and not overstepping them. This will make it possible to reduce the number of meetings, thereby increasing quorums and making it easier for skilled and experienced people to participate.

### **8.5.5 The SETA landscape**

The SETAs have been reorganised a number of times since their inception. In April 2005, a restructuring exercise resulted in the reduction of the original 25 SETAs to 23. Further minor restructuring occurred in April 2011, resulting in most SETAs remaining unchanged, others merging and new SETAs being formed. There are now 21 SETAs under the DHET. The current SETA landscape and NSDS III are expected to continue till 2016. A significant restructuring of the

skills system may well be required at that time, with a further reduction of numbers over the medium to long term. In the meantime, efforts will be made to bring about a greater degree of collaboration through the clustering of SETAs. The key challenges that can be addressed through clustering include: sharing of research within broad economic sectors; collaboration in relation to skills training along supply chains; making effective use of offices located in TVET colleges; sharing of resources at provincial and local level to improve access; the development of common approaches to qualifications and programmes that cut across different SETA sectors; and generally helping the Department and other stakeholders to address the implementation of the National Skills Development Strategy within available resources.

## 8.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation must make it possible to understand the levels of efficacy that are being achieved, and to identify where any blockages in the system may be emerging. This could form part of an information loop into the Human Resources Development Strategy, and specifically the post-school strategy for the country. It should enable a more detailed and informed understanding of the skills deficits and the areas for focused growth linked to the country's needs. This implies the need for a regular monitoring process in which the data is analysed in a meaningful way, and an evaluative process which focuses on specific issues as they arise. It assumes, therefore, that varied sources of data will be available and will be integrated into the monitoring and evaluation framework. This has to take place against defined indicators which will draw on successive National Skills Development Strategies and on the indicators in the Minister's delivery agreement with the President.

There will also be collaboration with Departments in the economic cluster to put in place indicators and measures aligned to the key national economic development plans. The DHET will publish this monitoring and evaluation framework after consultation on what will be measured and how. The national system for skills planning referred to earlier will also provide an important resource for tracking skills development and its impact over time. It is critical that approaches to evaluation are incorporated early in policy development and implementation, so that the necessary data is collected in an on-going manner.

A restructured and refocused National Skills Authority will have its functions concentrated specifically on the monitoring and evaluation of the SETAs. This implies that it will become an expert body with high-level monitoring and evaluation skills.

# 9.

## The National Qualifications Framework, the Quality Councils and an Articulated System

The regulation of post-school education in South Africa is governed by an array of legislation and statutory bodies. Quality Councils oversee qualifications, standards, assessment and certification systems across three key bands of the qualifications system – general, further and higher education. The National Qualifications Framework Act (No. 67 of 2008) provides the overarching context in which all regulation takes place. The NQF provides the context for provision, assessment, certification and quality assurance.

### 9.1 The National Qualifications Framework

#### 9.1.1 Overview

The National Qualifications Framework overarches the whole education and training system in South Africa. It was intended to:

- create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
- facilitate access to mobility and progression within education, training and career paths;
- enhance the quality of education and training;
- accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

The NQF is organised as a series of levels of learning achievement, arranged in ascending order from one to ten. All qualifications and part qualifications offered in South Africa are supposed to be registered on the NQF.

The South African Qualifications Authority is the body with overall responsibility for the implementation of the NQF.

The challenges of the NQF were set out in some detail in the Green Paper, including some options in terms of redesigning or restructuring the NQF and its institutions. The responses to the Green Paper provided contradictory views, but there was general agreement in some areas. After careful consideration the following decisions have been taken.



### 9.1.2 Simplification of the NQF

The implementation of changes which have recently been made to the NQF will be supported, and no further substantial changes will be made. Three sub-frameworks will make up what the NQF looks like in practice – the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework; the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework; and the Trades and Occupations Qualifications Sub-framework. Each sub-framework will have its own nomenclature for its qualification types. There will be a concerted effort to control the proliferation of qualifications. While some overlap and duplication is unavoidable, the registration of large numbers of qualifications that are not used by providers and learners must be avoided.

In mid-2013 there were 11 615 unit standards on the SAQA database, large numbers of which are never used. This type of development is a waste of time and resources. Providers should not feel compelled to develop programmes against unit standards or learning outcomes, nor should any quality assurer insist on their use.

The NQF Act provides for the recognition of part qualifications, which is important for credit transfer and accumulation. There are well-recognised programmes based on unit standards – substantial skills programmes that have legal weight, and allow individuals to do specific work, such as work underground in mines, or do certain work in tourism or banking. These programmes have meaning and value in the workplace, and much time has been devoted to them. They must be recognised by the NQF.

SAQA will continue to provide guidance and leadership on the development of the NQF. Where problems remain, the DHET will ensure an ongoing process of critical engagement and targeted review of aspects within the system, including tackling problems with the NQF that have not yet been resolved.

### 9.1.3 Articulation

It is widely recognised that articulation across the post-school system is poor. For example, at present many universities do not recognise courses taken in other universities, and sometimes courses within the same university are not recognised across departments and faculties. It is true that departments and institutions may have valid reasons for not recognising students' credits. However, in developing and supporting an articulated post-school education and training system, institutions should make every effort to avoid unfair and irrational barriers to acceptance and credit transfer. Students also need somewhere to turn when they feel they have been unfairly denied access, or where credit has been unfairly not recognised. This role could be played by SAQA as part of its function of promoting articulation.

Levels on the NQF will remain and, it is hoped, will facilitate the process of moving between sub-frameworks. SAQA will provide guidance on articulation between the three sub-frameworks, based on recommendations from each of the Quality Councils. SAQA will also conduct research if articulation problems become apparent and, where appropriate, facilitate debate based on research findings.

All role players must work together to eliminate unnecessary barriers. For example, different types of institutions – traditional universities, universities of technology, various types of colleges and SETAs – should work to create bridges between vocational or occupational

programmes and academic programmes in order to promote articulation. It is the duty of all institutions in the post-school system – including the DHET, SAQA, the Quality Councils and the education institutions – to work together to ensure that there are no dead ends for learners. Articulation should be both vertical in terms of moving to higher levels of the NQF and horizontal, catering for movement from, say, a vocational “stream” to an academic one or vice versa.

There is also a need for career guidance and a communications strategy to build an understanding of the importance of foundational learning for planned careers. The DHET will continue to work with various partners to ensure that current career guidance initiatives are continued and expanded.

## 9.2 Quality Councils

The primary bodies with a direct role in governing quality assurance and certification are the Quality Councils. Through their responsibility for setting standards, they are also responsible for curriculum and assessment. There are three Quality Councils – the Council on Higher Education (CHE), Umalusi, and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). They are responsible for: defining the three sub-frameworks of the NQF; quality assuring the provision, assessment and (in the case of Umalusi and the QCTO) certification of qualifications on their respective frameworks; and maintaining a database of learner achievements.

In addition, professional bodies such as the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants and the South African Nursing Council have oversight of qualifications in specified areas, subject to the NQF Act. Many professional bodies exist through legislation which falls under various Ministers, while others do not owe their existence to legislation.

### 9.2.1 Configuration and remit of the Quality Councils

The overwhelming response to the Green Paper from stakeholders has been that the solution to current problems should not be another restructuring. The general consensus is that restructuring would cause further confusion and disruption, and may not achieve the desired improvements. The current structures and remits will therefore remain. However, as discussed above, the three sub-frameworks will be differentiated by types of qualifications and, as such, the Quality Councils may have an extended remit in the sense that they can quality assure qualifications on NQF levels from which they were previously restricted. For example, Umalusi could quality assure Level 5 qualifications on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Framework. Furthermore, educational institutions should not necessarily be limited to offering qualifications in a particular sub-framework. So for example, TVET colleges or community colleges may be in a position to offer programmes on the Higher Education Qualifications Framework, say at Level 5 or even Level 6. These will be quality assured by the appropriate Quality Council. Where there is uncertainty over which Quality Council should quality assure a particular qualification, SAQA must, after consultation, resolve the issue speedily.

There have been some unintended developments since the establishment of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations. The intention was that this body would take on much of the quality assurance work previously carried out by SETAs. However, because of funding constraints and challenges in establishing systems and processes in the QCTO, this function

has remained largely the same as before, now delegated to the SETAs by the QCTO. A concerted effort will be made in the coming years to build the capacity of the QCTO and reduce the quality assurance work carried out by SETAs.

The development of trade and occupational qualifications which are externally assessed and have currency in the labour market is a crucial priority. These should build on the existing trade test and apprenticeship system, as well as qualifications quality assured and certified by SETAs which have gained credibility and respect. A process is under way to resolve the challenges of the NQF with regard to learnerships and apprenticeships (such as where learnerships in trades do not necessarily enable a learner to understand the trade test). In the short term, the focus of the QCTO should be on consolidating credible qualifications offered by SETAs, eliminating ineffective qualifications, consolidating one-year qualifications into more rational packages, and developing new qualifications where necessary, especially for artisans. (Despite a decade of work, no core occupational qualifications yet exist for the twelve basic artisan trades.)

There is support for better coordination across the NQF institutions, for less complexity, and for a greater focus on quality rather than compliance. While stakeholders do not want to see current structures dismantled or merged, this does not mean that they command universal confidence and support. That will need to be earned. Major roles of SAQA should be to harmonise and coordinate the work of the Quality Councils, to ensure that conflicts are eliminated (or at least managed), and to build a well-articulated system.

Finding appropriate systems for curriculum development, and the development and management of assessment and certification, will be an important part of simplifying and improving our quality assurance system. The direction in which this should go is discussed below.

## **9.2.2 Assessment and quality assurance**

### **9.2.2.1 Key challenges**

A key challenge for quality assurance is how to ensure that it is focused where it can make a real impact. We need to be far more targeted and strategic. We also need to ensure that our systems do not stifle initiative, responsiveness and the ability of providers to provide education.

It is increasingly clear that quality assurance and qualifications systems can tend towards bureaucratic implementation which eliminates professional judgement. We must strengthen the professional capacity of all organisations involved in these areas, building on existing strengths, and not underestimating the time it takes to build up capacity. Staff who work in quality assurance need extensive experience in and knowledge of the specialised areas which they quality assure.

### **9.2.2.2 Curriculum**

In higher education, curricula are the responsibility of individual institutions. This is appropriate and should remain so.

For the rest of the post-school system, however, some degree of curriculum centralisation is necessary. In many instances, we have placed far too much responsibility on individual providers for curriculum development. Outside of the higher education system most national qualifications would be improved by having a nationally specified curriculum. However, there is presently insufficient capacity, in government and elsewhere, for curriculum development.

Curricula are often developed through *ad hoc* processes and groups. Our ability to develop curricula nationally would be increased by institutionalising capacity for this. It is vital to ensure that there are state or national bodies which can play this role. The proposed South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training will, once it is established, play a key role in this area.

#### **9.2.2.3 Assessment and certification**

Assessment for universities is institution-based, and moderated through peer-reviewed external assessment systems. Certification takes place at institutional level. Quality assurance looks at the capacity of institutions to manage assessment and certification, among other functions. This system will continue, with a focus on evaluating and supporting the functioning of the external assessment system.

For the rest of the post-school system, strengthening external assessment systems for national qualifications is a priority. The state will continue to assess the NCV and N-courses. It will also take responsibility for the assessment of the National Senior Certificate for Adults. This will enable a substantial reduction in the need for detailed accreditation processes of providers – which in practical terms are never rigorous when large numbers of providers must be dealt with. It will also reduce the need for the complex system of individually registered assessors, moderators and verifiers. When learners in educational institutions write examinations or participate in external assessment, this provides significant information to quality assurance bodies. While it does not provide information on many aspects of a quality learning experience, it does provide far more information than that obtained through most institutional accreditation processes. Quality Councils should use external assessment to reveal poor performance. They must investigate institutions where learners consistently perform poorly, and institute remedial or capacity-building measures. Institutions which continue to be problematic should be closed down where necessary.

The National Artisan Moderating Body will play a major role in developing external assessment for trade and occupational qualifications. It should be absorbed into the QCTO as a separate section or chamber at an opportune time.

#### **9.2.2.4 Recognition of prior learning**

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) remains a key approach to redressing past injustices and recognising competence gained through practical workplace learning and experience. There have been problems in obtaining a common understanding and approach across the post-school system, and so a revised set of guidelines will be produced. The Department will draw on the report of the Ministerial Task Team on RPL to produce these guidelines.

Many institutions have policies and systems in place to assist with the placement of learners who do not meet the formal requirements for entrance but who can demonstrate that they have appropriate knowledge and skills. These systems should be simplified, supported and strengthened. Over the past seventeen years substantial work has been done by many institutions and organisations in the development of policies and systems to recognise prior learning, as well as in researching the efficacy of such policies. The priority is to continue to improve ways in which individuals can receive credits for prior learning towards a qualification. Where appropriate, learners should be able to enrol for assessment without having completed a formal educational programme. This will ensure that workers who have gained experience in the workplace will be able to attain trades and professional certificates.

The implementation of RPL requires a national strategy to ensure that the recognition of prior learning is embedded within the education and training system. There must be a significant improvement in the availability of RPL services across sectors and regions. This strategy must include the establishment of a coordination mechanism for RPL.

### 9.2.2.5 Learning that does not lead to a qualification

There is much learning that does not lead to a national qualification. Such education and training need not be rigorously quality assured, as long as it meets the needs of learners, the relevant government department, private employer or community. The DHET will make it clear to other government departments and donors that non-formal educational provision targeted at specific community needs, as well as on-going professional development, need not always lead to qualifications or be provided through accredited providers.



### 9.2.2.6 Career guidance and advice

There has been significant progress in the development of a national, multi-media advisory service that serves the broad South African population, including those in rural areas, the poor and the disadvantaged. This work will continue to ensure that young people can make informed choices with regard to their studies and careers. It is essential that the DHET develops a close working relationship around career guidance

with the Department of Basic Education to ensure that young people benefit while they are still at school.

# 10.

## Conclusion

This White Paper has set out a vision of a transformed post-school system which is an integral part of the government's policies to develop our country and improve the economic, social and cultural life of its people. Central to these policies is the determination to bring about social justice, to overcome the legacy of our colonial and apartheid past, and to overcome inequity and injustice whatever its origins.

The post-school system that is envisaged in this White Paper is one that will be much larger and more diverse than it is at present, in order to provide for the needs of our people and our society. Although enrolments at both universities and colleges will grow, the main expansion will be at the college level. TVET colleges will cater for the bulk of our post-school youth, as well as for the lower levels of the higher education band (NQF Level 5), a level which could also be offered by universities. An important innovation will be the introduction of a new institutional type – the community colleges. These colleges will absorb the current public adult education centres, continue to offer their programmes and expand their curriculum to include vocational, skills-development and non-formal programmes. Differentiation of both the college and university systems will ensure greater diversity.

The post-school system envisaged here will be integrated in such a way that the different components complement one another, and work together to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of post-school education and training opportunities in South Africa. This will apply to both the educational institutions and the levy-grant institutions (the SETAs and the NSF). There will be easier articulation for students who want to move from one part of the system to another or from one programme to another. This will be ensured by various means, including a recalibration of curricula where appropriate and by the provision of bridging programmes where these can assist.

This White Paper sees a key role for employers in the integration of education and training. This will include a very significant expansion of work-integrated learning and workplace-based learning, including apprenticeships, learnerships and internships. This will involve the private and the public sectors, the latter in the form of government, other public institutions and state-owned enterprises.

The White Paper also envisages a strategic shift in the role of the SETAs in skills planning and in supporting the provision of education and training, building on changes that have already been made over the past three years. Changes to the operation of the National Skills Fund are also envisioned.

Finally, the White Paper has noted that the planned expansion of the post-school system and the improvement in the quality of its services inevitably require the strengthening of all its

institutions – universities, colleges, SETAs, the NSF and the statutory councils. It is also essential that, in order to support the work of these institutions, the capacity of the Department of Higher Education and Training must be reinforced and further developed. Such capacity is required in a variety of areas. The Department will make every effort to ensure that it is a learning organisation, building its capacity on an ongoing basis to ensure that it can carry out its responsibilities effectively and efficiently in order to make its vision a reality.



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