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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1908**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 20/08/2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 17 OF 2021**

**Ms C V King (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

(a) Which (i) universities, (ii) technical and vocational education and training colleges and (iii) sector education and training authorities had certification backlogs by end July 2021 and (b)(i) what are the reasons for the certification backlogs and (ii) on what date will it be cleared?

**NW2136E**

**REPLY:**

**Universities**

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| **Institution** | **University of Mpumalanga** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog bytheendofJuly  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | 560StudentsowingfeestotheamountofR10575321.62 |
| On what date will it be cleared? | Whenthefeeshavebeenpaidintermsoftheuniversity’s policy. |
| **Institution** | **SefakoMakgatho University** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog bytheendofJuly  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | The following are the reasons for the backlog:  1. In terms ofthe university’srules, degreeand diploma certificates shall not be released tostudents until alloutstanding debts havebeensettled.There aretwo categories of backlogs:   Historic (from 2015 to 2020) - 1 690   2021 - 992  **Total - 2 682**  2. TheUniversitydoesnotpostcertificatestostudents toavoidthemgettinglost.Studentsareexpectedtocollect their certificates or todecide for somebody tocollect on their behalf or to collect them using a courier service. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | It will depend on when: students pay their debt; or those who are not owing, come to collect them. |

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| **Institution** | **Rhodes University** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | Duetothevirtualgraduationceremoniesof2020and  2021, students have not collected their parchments or arranged couriering thereof.We are again reminding students ofthis. Some students are yet toenter into an agreement contract with the university in terms of outstanding fees |
| On what date will it be cleared? | Studentsarebeingremindedtoarrangeforcollectionor couriering of parchments. |
| **Institution** | **University of Limpopo** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | All certificates are ready. The challengewas their collectionasitcoincidedwiththethirdwaveoftheCOVID-  19 pandemic. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | Thecertificatesarebeingcourieredtograduates.The process will end by 17 September 2021. |
| **Institution** | **Cape Peninsula University of Technology** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | CPUTSmartGraduationwasconcludedon29June2021. On30June2021,duringlockdownlevel4,whileuniversity staff were requested to work from home, Assessment and Graduation Centre staff were granted permission by the InstitutionalCovid-19Clustertocommencetheprocessof sendingallgraduationcertificatestostudentsviacourier |

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|  | services. CPUT had 7 149 certificates to process. The process involved the following:   1. Onlineconfirmationfromallgraduatesforup-to- date contact information and physical addresses during lockdown level 4. 2. Confirmation from the courier service provider that they will be able to manage the workload. 3. Ensure Covid-19 protocols were met in our workspace.   Update and statistics to date:   1. 5 200 Certificates according to contact information received from graduates were sent successfully. 2. 163Errorswerereceivedfrom theserviceprovider with contact details concerns and no responses at the point of contact. This list is now a prioritytomatch thelist with emails of concern about delayed delivery. Errors are corrected as we receive correct information and courier packages are dispatched. 3. Theserviceproviderreporteddelaysduetostaff shortages for various reasons. We havebeen granted access to generate our own waybills to increase the number generated per day, despite the delays at the service provider. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 September 2021 |
| **Institution** | **Mangosuthu University of Technology** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | ThebacklogrelatestoNSFASstudents,asNSFAShas not settled the debt for all NSFAS students. |

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| On what date will it be cleared? | AssoonasNSFASsettlesthedebts,certificateswillbe issued to NSFAS students. |
| **Institution** | **Central University of Technology** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | Thefirstrelatestooutstandingfees.Secondly,certificates thatweresentvia courierswerereturnedtotheuniversity because the recipients were not at the delivery address. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | Thereisnospecificdateindicatedforclearance.However, Managementisengaging possibleapproaches/strategies toaddress thismatter.Thecampaignwillbeongoinguntil resolved. |
| **Institution** | **UNISA** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | There is a delay in the issuing certificates because of the opening and closure of the university informed by regulations. Currently, autumn certificates are being issued in different regional offices. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | Anticipating the clearing thereof in October 2021. |

**Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges**

TheDepartmenthasmadesignificantstridesregardingthereductionofcertificationbacklogs. AdedicatedtaskteamcomprisingtheDepartment,SITAandUmalusihasmanagedtoreduce thecertificationbacklog(historicalbacklog)by96.81%.All eligiblestudents whowrote examinationsandsatisfiedtherequirements,theDepartmenthasoverthepastyearreleased certificates to colleges within 90 working days after the release of results.

**Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA)**

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| **SETA** | **Agriculture Sector Education and Training Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | The COVID-19 pandemic risk-adjusted strategy alert levels significantly affected the certification process, as documents had to be manually processed. Awaiting training providers to close gaps identified during the verification. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 November 2021 |
| **SETA** | **WholesaleandRetailSectorEducationandTraining**  **Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | W&RSETA did not have an information management system to produce certificates. A service provider has been appointed to assist. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 September 2021 |
| **SETA** | **ChemicalIndustriesEducationandTrainingAuthority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe | The COVID-19 pandemic risk-adjusted strategy alert levelssignificantlyaffectedthecertificationprocess,as |

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| certification backlogs? | documents had to be manually processed. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 November 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Manufacturing, Engineeringand Related Services**  **Sector Education and Training Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | The COVID-19 pandemicrisk-adjusted strategy alert levels significantly affected the certification process. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 September 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Banking Sector Education and Training Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | The backlog was caused by insourcing the hosting of the Learner Management System. The process included the acquisition of Microsoft credits for hosting the system in the cloud. The procurement of the credits has been finalised. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 September 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs? | Some skills development providers closed their businesses before learning achievements were presented for quality assurance and certification of the enrolled learners.Inmostcases,norecordsareavailableforthese |

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|  | learners.  Most learning programmes were extended in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This caused a delay in the completion and certification of learners. The certification award process is underway for learners who successfully completed the programmes. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 December 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Culture,Art,Tourism.HospitalityandSportSector**  **Education and Training Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | Some skills development providers have not loaded the assessmentsoftheirlearners.Thisprocessisrequiredto generate the certificates. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 31 December 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Services Sector Education and Training Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | The printing and issuing of certificates and/or statements of results canonly be performed onsite. The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown restrictions limited office access at various intervals to officials who quality assures, print and issue certificates and/or statements of results.  Notwithstanding, the main reason for the current backlog is due to the Learner Management Information System being down for 3 months from May to July 2021. |
| On what date will it be | 31 December 2021 |

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| cleared? |  |
| **SETA** | **Transport Education and Training Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | The COVID-19 risk-adjusted strategy alert levels had negative implications about certification. Certification is a highly sensitive matter and cannot be completed while working remotely for security purposes. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 31 December 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Energy andWater Sector Education and Training**  **Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | The COVID-19 risk-adjusted strategy alert levels had a negative impact regarding certification processes as trade test centres were closed during certain alert levels, coupled with restricted access of SETA staff to the office impacted the certification process. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 November 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Health andWelfare Sector Education and Training**  **Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | Marko Institute,a skills development provider (SDP) is currentlyuploading theassessmentsontheHWSETA system, specifically for the Child and Youth Care Worker qualification and the Social Auxiliary Work |

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|  | qualification. The SDP currently does not meet the requirementstoapplyforanextensionofscopeastheydo not have a current tax clearance certificate, which is a requirement for this application.  The service provider, National Association of Child Care Workers'(NCCW) taxaccreditationcertificateexpired,and they did not have access to the system after the expiry of theiraccreditation.TheSDPhassincebeenre-accredited, and they are currently uploading the assessments. The due date is three weeks after the completion of the uploadingof assessments by theSDP. Theuploadingof assessments is for Social Auxiliary Services. The date for issuing certificates for Ancillary Health Care and for the NationalAssociationofChildCareWorkerscertificationis  22 October 2021. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 September 2021 |
| **SETA** | **Public Service Sector Education and Training**  **Authority** |
| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | The SETA is withholding the issuing of certificates as the skillsdevelopmentprovideriscurrentlyunderinvestigation for alleged improper conduct. The PSETA has decided to institute an independent investigation into this matter to assess the veracity of the allegations. The outcome of the investigation will determine whether the SETA issues the certificate or not. |
| On what date will it be cleared? |  |
| **SETA** | **Local GovernmentSector Education and Training**  **Authority** |

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| Did youhaveacertification backlog by the end of July  2021? | Yes |
| Whatarethereasonsforthe certification backlogs and | The learner documents were misplaced between the provincial and national offices, which resulted in the delays of trade testing for learners. An internal investigation on thematterwill be conducted. TheSETA will take the necessary disciplinary action against the responsible individuals by imposing consequence management. |
| On what date will it be cleared? | 30 November 2021 |