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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 204**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 11/2/2021**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 1 OF 2021**

**Ms H S Winkler (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

Whether there is a planned revision of curricula offered at technical and vocational education and training centres in light of the fact that many courses offered to equip students with trade skills are more theory-based than focused on practical application and skill, thus effecting graduating students’ employability; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details?

**NW207E**

**REPLY:**

Since 2018, the Department has embarked on a plan to review and update programmes and qualifications offered at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in order to align them with the needs of industry and society. This plan has focused on the following aspects of the curriculum:

1.   Integrating digital skills knowledge into current programmes;

2.   Introducing new programmes in response to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR);

3.   Phasing out of outdated programmes;

4.   Reconstruction of Engineering programmes to make them more responsive to the changing industry environment; and

5.   Revision and updating of subject content.

 **1. Integrating digital skills knowledge into current programmes**

With the support of CISCO Systems, the Department has developed digital skills training, which has been integrated into the National Certificate (Vocational) [NCV] programme. Knowledge of the use of the internet, email, cyber security and databases are examples of digital skills training that have been integrated into the NCV programme.

**2.   Introducing new programmes in response to the 4IR**

The Department has developed a new stream focusing on Robotics in the NCV: Information Technology and Computer Science programme which previously focused on programming and systems development only. This stream will cover subjects such as *Electronic and Digital concepts for Robotics*, *Robotics Fundamentals and Industrial Automation*. The curriculum for this programme is currently being quality assured by Umalusi and is envisaged for implementation in 2022.

**3.   Phasing out of outdated programmes**

In November 2020, the Department published a government notice for public comment on the phasing-out of NATED Report 191 N1 – N3 programmes. These programmes have been identified to be outdated in their curriculum structure, purpose and articulation possibilities within the National Qualifications Framework. The Department has received public comments, which are currently being analysed before final recommendations can be made.

**4.**   **Reconstruction of Engineering programmes to make them more responsive to the changing industry environment**

The Department has collaborated with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) in reconstructing curricula of Engineering Studies programmes to align with industry needs and standards of professional bodies. The programmes that have been prioritised and are currently being reconstructed are in the following fields: Electrical Engineering, Electronics Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering.

This reconstruction commenced in August 2020 and is anticipated to be completed by June 2021. The completion of this process will see a reduction in the offering of the current NATED programmes and a move to occupational programmes, which are more industry-aligned.

**5.   Revision and updating of subject content**

The Department has since 2018 updated curricula in 38 subjects of the NATED Report 191 programmes covering Engineering, Business and Services studies. The implementation of these revised/updated curricula started in January 2021.