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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 77**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 07/02/2019**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 01 OF 2019**

**Mr A P van der Westhuizen (DA) to ask the Minister of Higher Education and Training:**

(1) Whether, with reference to her reply to question 359 for oral reply on 21 November 2018, there are currently any plans in place to expand the curricula of the programmes on offer by technical and vocational education and training colleges; if not, why not; if so, (a) what are the details of the plans and (b) by what date will the new curricula be implemented;

(2) (a) which public technical and vocational education and training colleges are currently offering Mechatronics, Information Technology and Computer Science and (b) what number of students have been enrolled at each level in these programmes in 2016, 2017 and 2018;

(3) what are the reasons for the trends in student numbers in these programmes;

(4) what are the admission criteria for these fields of study at public technical and vocational education and training colleges?

**NW82E**

**REPLY:**

1. (a) The Department has started with the expansion of curricula into occupational programmes in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. A Dual System Pilot Project (DSPP)is currently delivered in two trades qualifications. This followed the approval of a strategy in 2016 of a standardised approach to the implementation of South African Qualifications Authority registered occupational programmes in four colleges, aligned to the dual system model.
2. The Department has already established twenty-six Centres of Specialisation in nineteen TVET colleges offering thirteen occupational qualifications, which includes the training of Bricklayers, Electricians, Millwrights Boilermakers, Fitters and Welders, amongst them. These occupational programmes are now on the register of nationally approved TVET programmes, which means they are funded through the conditional grant and will be offered from 2019 onwards. The expansion into occupational programmes will be phased in over the next five-years taking into consideration the infrastructure, plant, equipment and specialised human resources required to deliver these in colleges.
3. (a)Mechatronics is offered at seven TVET colleges namely, Buffalo City, Capricorn, Ekurhuleni West, False Bay, Gert Sibande, Port Elizabeth and Sedibeng. The Information Technology and Computer Science (IT&CS) programme are offered in thirty-three TVET colleges.
4. The table belowindicates theenrolments in the Mechatronics and Information Technology and Computer Science programmes from 2016 to 2018:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Programme** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** |
| Mechatronics | 1 112 | 1 212 | 1 021 |
| IT&CS | 9 298 | 8 555 | 8 468 |

1. TVET colleges are expected to manage student enrolments in line with the available infrastructure and available funding, given the very high cost of delivering these programmes. Opportunities for Work Integrated Learning are also important considerations in determining student enrolment numbers. Colleges have also reported difficulty with recruitment and retention of staff in these programmes, given the demand for their skills in the private sector.
2. Minimum entrance requirements are aligned to the National Certificate Vocational
[NC(V)] policy whereby students can enrol in the NC(V) programmes having passed an NQF level 1 qualification, i.e. Grade 9, AET Level 4, successfully applied for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or completed the Pre-Vocational Learning Programme (PLP). The minimum entry requirements should, therefore, be guided by and aligned to the NC(V) policy. However, TVET colleges are required to develop additional entrance requirements for students intending to enrol in specialised programmes, such as Mechatronics, where mathematics and physical science are key entry subjects.

The Department is in the process of drafting guidelines *for Additional Admission Requirements* to guide the colleges when formulating their guidelines for additional admission requirements. The recommended points system, which will attach weights to language, mathematics and science in those qualifications/vocational specialisations where these subjects serve as a pre-requisite. Colleges are however cautioned that the points system or additional criteria must not be set unrealistically high or be used as a tool to exclude prospective students from colleges.