Government Gazette
Staatskoerant

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA

Vol. 564   **Pretoria, 22** **June / Junie** **2012**   **No. 35454**

35454

9771682584003

AIDS HELPLINE: 0800-0123-22 Prevention is the cure

CONTENTS • INHOUD

GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 520 OF 2012

HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING INFORMATION POLICY

Department of Higher Education and Training

June 2012

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

CALL FOR COMMENTS ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING INFORMATION POLICY

I, Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, in terms of section 33 of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008); read with section 45(2) of the Further Education and Training Colleges Act, 2006 (Act 16 of 2006); section 35 of the Adult Education and Training Act, 2000 (Act 52 of 2000); sections 3, 6 and 41 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997); sections 4(e) and 25(2) of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act, 1999 (Act 56 of 1999); and section 22 (2) (c) of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998), hereby publish the draft Higher Education and Training Information Policy for comments, as set out in the Schedule. I intend to repeal the National Education Information Policy, published in Notice No. 994 of Government Gazette No. 26710 of 27 August 2004, as amended by Notice No. 677 published in Government Gazette No. 33426 of 6 August 2010, in so far as it relates to the legislation assigned to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, in particular to the Further Education and Training Act and the Adult Education and Training Act.

All interested persons and organisations are invited to comment on the draft Information Policy in writing, and to direct their comments to –

The Director-General, Private Bag X174, Pretoria, 0001, for attention:
Ms M Letho : fax: 012 326 2069; email Letho.Mapaseka@dhet.gov.za.

Kindly provide the name, address, telephone number, fax number and email address of the person or organisation submitting the comments.

The comments on the draft Higher Education and Training Information Policy must be submitted not later than 30 calendar days from the date of publication of this Notice.

Dr BE Nzimande, MP
Minister of Higher Education and Training

Date: ....02/05/12............

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS

AET	Adult Education and Training
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHA	Department of Home Affairs
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
FETCA	Further Education and Training Colleges Act
FET	Further Education and Training
HEA	Higher Education Act
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HETIS	Higher Education and Training Information System
IMIS	Institution Management Information System
INDLELA	Institute for the Development of Learnerships, Employment Skills and Labour Assessment
IT	Information Technology
NAMB	National Artisan Moderation Body
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PSETI	Post-School Education and Training Institution
QC	Quality Council
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
SDA	Skills Development Act
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SITA	State Information Technology Agency
STATSSA	Statistics South Africa

PART I
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

DEFINITIONS

"**adult education and training centre**" means a centre, either public or private, providing adult education and training as contemplated in the Adult Education and Training Act, 2000 (Act 52 of 2000);

"**DHET entities**" refers to those public entities listed in Part A (National Public Entities) of Schedule 3 for the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) that report to the Minister of Higher Education and Training. These are Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), Quality Councils (QCs), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS);

"**Education Information Standards Committee**" means the committee, established in terms of this policy that advises the Director-General with regards to education information standards;

"**education institutions**" means an education institution that is established, declared or registered by law as contemplated by the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008;

"**e-Government**" is defined as the continuous optimisation of government service delivery, constituency participation, and governance by transforming internal and external relationships through technology, the internet and new media;

"**further education and training**" means all learning and training programmes leading to qualifications above the general education but below higher education level as contemplated by the National Qualifications Framework, 2008;

"**HETIS**" is the higher education and training information system including all processes, rules, standards, and responsibilities for information collection and management in the post-school sector;

"**HETIS Officer**" means an official charged with certain responsibilities regarding post-school education and training information in terms of this policy;

"**Institution Management Information System**" means an information system used by an institution to handle administrative, management and planning functions;

"**national data and statistics**" means data and statistics used in the public domain that are sustainable but have not been designated as official by the Statistician-General as contemplated by the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act 6 of 1999);

"**PFMA**" means the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999);

"**students**" means students **and** learners;

5

INTRODUCTION

The importance of education and training information

1.   The effective gathering, dissemination and analysis of information in the post-school education and training system of any country is vital for sound education and training planning, monitoring and delivery. In the case of South Africa, effective use of information can greatly advance meaningful democracy, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the post-school education and training system. The constitutional duty of the state to provide a post-school education and training system that develops individual citizens and the nation as a whole is thus enhanced.

The overall goals of the policy

2.   This policy creates a framework that allows for the co-ordinated and sustainable development of post-school education and training information systems. Two main goals are hereby pursued. The first is the goal of an education and training system where information systems enhance the day-to-day running of post-school education and training institutions and entities and provide better information to the public as a whole, thereby promoting accountability. The second is the goal of a post-school education and training system where information systems yield increasingly valuable data and statistics needed for planning and monitoring purposes, which occurs at all levels from the individual post-school education and training institutions and entities to the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The parts of this policy framework

3.   The main components of the framework laid down by this policy are the following:

    i.   A vision for South African post-school education and training information systems.

    ii.   A framework for establishing and maintaining effective and sustainable standards governing post-school education and training statistics, data and information systems.

    iii. A framework for streamlining the provision of post-school education and training information by the Department of Higher Education and Training, post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities to the public and all role players.

    iv.   A framework for improving the flow of data and statistics between the Department of Higher Education and Training, the post-school education and training institutions and the DHET entities.

Fragmentation in our post-school education and training information systems

4.　　The South African post-school education and training system is characterised by a multitude of information systems, computerised and paper-based or manual, which provide the basis for the many business procedures that the post-school education and training system must engage in. These include the functions of admitting students into post-school education and training institutions, registering students into academic and skills development programmes, managing attendance, achievement and attainment, the management of institutional support and education and training personnel, charging fees, managing bursaries and other income, communicating with students, and so on. In recent years some of these information systems have undergone major transformation, whilst others have remained stagnant. Most role players in the post-school education and training sector, whether employees or students can attest to the fact that good information systems contribute to improved service delivery, or to the fact that poor information systems disempower and marginalise, with the victims usually being the most disadvantaged in society. It is widely recognised that the state needs to be pro-active in ensuring that information systems in the post-school education and training sector are improved in the interests of better service delivery. This requires, amongst other things, the development of and adherence to, effective and adequate national standards governing post-school education and training management information systems.

Problems around the survey approach

5.　　In previous years, it was practice for the erstwhile Department of Education to depend heavily on annual national censuses, also called 'surveys' in gathering information from institutions. Whilst this approach fulfils an important need, it is recognised that this approach is outdated. The approach of the Department of Higher Education and Training is to promote integrated electronic information systems through the establishment of common information standards that are shared, in order to generate data that is comparable and of an acceptable quality, and therefore sufficiently reliable to add maximum value to post-school education and training planning.

The post-school education and training information policy gap

6.　　Attempts to generate information systems standards at the Department of Higher Education and Training have been hampered by the absence of a policy framework that would lay down the structures and procedures to be followed in the generation of such standards. A lack of properly mandated standards has prevented the development of systems, and where systems were developed in the absence of standards; the result has been systems that could not be integrated and/or interfaced with related systems and systems that were not thoroughly informed by the education and training context.

A VISION FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN POST- SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Principles guiding our vision

7. The principles governing the vision for the South African post-school education and training system are the following:

i. The Higher Education and Training Information System (HETIS) must be a well co-ordinated system of education management information sub-systems that facilitate planning and management at the department, institution and entity levels.

ii. The ultimate aim of an information system is to improve the efficiency in the management of the education system, to introduce more transparency in the activities of the Department of Higher Education and Training, and to ensure greater accountability on the use of scarce public resources.

iii. The HETIS must facilitate public access to accurate, timely and relevant information within the legal framework to all role players. Information on education inputs, processes and outcomes at all levels of the system should be accessible to the public, with the exception of personal information where confidentiality should be ensured.

v. The HETIS must be an integrated system, providing data and/or information for use at all levels of the post-school education and training system.

vi. The HETIS must be flexible to accommodate the changes taking place within the post-school education and training system and the new priorities at all levels of the system.

vii. The HETIS must be needs driven with the needs of the different users informing the data to be collected.

viii. The HETIS must be open-ended with input and output at all levels.

ix. Data flow must be bi-directional both vertically and horizontally.

x. Ideally data must be processed, analysed and published close to the collection point.

xi. The system must be simple, accessible, accurate and standardised.

xii. The HETIS must facilitate capacity building, support and training on collection, processing, analysis, dissemination and use of information at all levels of the post-school education and training system.

xiii. There must be mechanisms for co-ordination between the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), post-school education and training institutions (PSETIs), Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and the Quality

> Councils (QCs) to accommodate the diverse needs in establishing a core data set and the use of appropriate and compatible technology.

xiv. The HETIS must link up with other education and training systems, including the relevant systems of the Department of Basic Education, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), the Quality Councils, the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

xv. The HETIS must be able to interface with relevant data sets from external government departments such as the Department of Labour and others.

It is also recognised that with better operational systems in place, education and training planners at all levels would have access to greater volumes of reliable data for planning and other purposes on condition that these operational systems adhered to national standards that ensured compatibility at a national level.

Benefits for post-school stakeholders and participants

---

8. A situation is envisaged in which participants in the post-school education and training system, be they students, parents, educators, lecturers or other employees, will have access to post-school education and training information systems that greatly facilitate good education and training service delivery. Students will have access to reliable information relating to the skills development opportunities and post-school education and training institutions in the post-school system. Information systems will contribute towards the more effective implementation of access, success, efficiency, supply, utilization and admissions procedures for students, and will empower learners with information on the educational and skills development choices available. Essential information on post-school education and training as a whole will be available in the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and in post-school education and training institutions (PSETIs). Essential information on skills development and skills shortages will be available from the Sector Education and Training Authorities. Teaching staff will be in a position to make more informed decisions about their careers and lifelong-learning paths on the basis of better information regarding in-service training and institutions offering employment.

Information systems in the Department of Higher Education and Training, Post-School Education and Training Institutions and DHET entities

---

9. Institutions will benefit from the use of information systems that will facilitate administration, management and planning. Information systems in the PSETIs, SETAs, SAQA, NSFAS and QCs do not need to be part of a single product, but they should be unified by common design and data standards, making interaction between systems possible. The systems of the Higher Education and Training Department will extract data from systems at institutions and entities, which will allow for more effective planning and administration in the DHET.

The need for inclusiveness

10.   Transformation in terms of post-school education and training information systems should be inclusive. Parallel to the development of improved computerised systems and the diffusion of e-Government, should be the ongoing improvement of manual systems in line with the design of computerised systems, so that elements of the education system are not excluded, and the transition from manual to computerised systems can be streamlined.

Improved education management

11.   Planning and monitoring, at all levels from organisational and institutional level to department level, will be improved through the greater availability of accurate and relevant information on the education and training system. This will result in better-informed implementation and resource allocation strategies, which will improve the overall performance of the education system. Through access to this information, legislators and other publicly elected officials will be in a better position to serve their constituencies in education and training related matters.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK THAT INFORMS THE POLICY

Education Legislative Mandate

12.   This policy is closely linked to other legislation and government initiatives, and is governed by the following legislation:

HEA   : Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act 101 of 1997);
FETCA   : Further Education and Training Colleges Act, 2006 (Act 16 of 2006);
AET   : Adult Education and Training Act, 2000 (Act 52 of 2000);
NQF   : National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act 67 of 2008);
NSFAS   : National Student Financial Aid Scheme, 1999 (Act 56 of 1999);
SDA   : Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998);
PAIA   : Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000).

13.   This policy creates a framework that improves the processes by which institutions and the DHET entities provide information. The Minister of Higher Education and Training must monitor and evaluate the standards of education provision, delivery and performance, to a large extent through the use of the DHET statistics. This policy promotes the processes required to ensure that reliable national education statistics are available.

The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000

14.　This policy complements the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000). Whilst the Promotion of Access to Information Act deals mainly with access to individual records, this policy deals mainly with access to data and statistics as a whole. Moreover, where the Act focuses mainly on action to be taken by the state in response to requests for information, this policy focuses to a large degree on the pro-active steps that the department and the post-school education and training institutions and entities must take in order to ensure wide access to information, which will reduce the need for individual requests. This policy directly complements the Promotion of Access to Information Act, by specifying the level of the education system at which specific information is made available in the first instance.

The Statistics Act, 1999

15.　This policy complements the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act 6 of 1999). Section 14 of the Statistics Act deals with the obligation of government departments to work closely with the Statistician-General in, for example, maintaining standards of statistical reporting and co-ordinating the statistical collections of the country. This policy creates a framework for the Department of Higher Education and Training to comply with this obligation in a more organised and effective manner through improved procedures for ensuring the accuracy and proper presentation of education and training statistics.

Batho Pele public service delivery

16.　This policy complements the Batho Pele strategy of Government to improve service delivery to the public. By creating a framework for systems development, this policy will facilitate the improvement of the post-school education and training information systems which will, in turn, improve the lives of those who participate in the post-school education and training sector.

South African Qualifications Authority

17.　This policy complements the initiatives of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to create a National Learners Records Database (NLRD). By specifying that the development of student records should be in line with the NLRD initiative, optimum use of resources in Government and unified data sets are enhanced.

Focus on education and training specific information

18.　This policy complements state regulations and standards governing financial and personnel systems used in all sectors of Government. Whilst the framework presented in this policy may influence the usage of the multi-sectoral financial and

11

12

personnel systems in post-school education and training, the framework is intended to influence design directly where systems are specific to the post-school education and training sector.

PART II

DUTIES OF STAKEHOLDERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

Need to pro-actively respond to the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000

19.   In terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has an obligation to provide information to a variety of interested parties. To comply effectively with this obligation, the DHET must ensure that the most appropriate points of access for particular types of information are made clear to the public. Moreover, the DHET must be pro-active in satisfying the information needs of the public by distributing commonly requested information to potential requesters. Such a pro-active approach can reduce the need to respond to individual requests, and can ensure that more disadvantaged communities, who may normally not make formal information requests in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, are empowered with the information they need.

Information on where to get information

20.   The DHET must make publicly available information of the type contained in Appendix 1 of this policy, which specifies where different kinds of information are most readily available. Moreover, where information requests pertain to one post-school education and training institution or one of the DHET entities, but the information is available at the DHET, it is encouraged that the submission of such requests be made to the DHET. Whilst this will facilitate the implementation of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000), this does not absolve DHET information officers from the obligation, stated in section 20 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, to transfer information requests to other information officers more suited to responding to the request.

Registers of institutions

21.   In order to cater for the information needs of students in the post-school education and training system, the Department of Higher Education and Training must maintain updated registers of public and private post-school education and training institutions. These registers must include the basic contact details of all institutions, the registration number of private institutions, as well as the programmes and language information reasonably required by the information user. The registers must be available in the Department of Higher Education and Training and the registers must also be published on the DHET website.

Operational information to be made available to learners and stakeholders

22.   The Department of Higher Education and Training must also make available to the public, in particular learners and stakeholders, operational information relating to post-school education and training institutions. Considering that this operational information in many cases changes annually for each institution, the DHET may decide not to include this information in the register stipulated in paragraph 21 and may, instead, select another means of communication, on condition that this is adequate for the information needs of the public.

Institution details for use by third parties

23.   Third parties often wish to distribute particular information to the post-school education and training institutions and the DHET entities. The Department of Higher Education and Training must facilitate this by making postal addresses of all institutions and entities and, if possible, telephone numbers available. This information must, if possible, be available electronically on the DHET website. The DHET may not make facsimile or electronic mail addresses of post-school education and training institutions and entities available for the purposes of mass distribution. This is to protect these means of communication and the institutions concerned from abuse.

Information for research purposes

24.   The Department of Higher Education and Training must anticipate the needs of researchers to analyse data on the post-school education and training sector and must be pro-active in preparing standards and typical data files, in particular enrolment data, for use by researchers. This data must be available timeously and in the current term. Such files must adhere to the standards, established in terms of this policy, with regard to definitions and formats. In the case of a researcher requiring data not included in the standard and typical data files, and where the research is not officially mandated within the post-school education system, the DHET must assess the possible value of the research against the departmental resources required to prepare the data, and should respond to the request accordingly.

Standardisation of statistical tables

25.   The Department of Higher Education and Training must include in their annual reports, key statistical tables that contribute to their accountability to their respective legislatures and the public in general. The agreed upon standards governing these tables must be adhered to.

Protection of private information

26.   In providing information to the public, the Department of Higher Education and Training must ensure that procedures exist which prevent the release of information considered private or protected in terms of Chapter 4 of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000).

Warehousing of education and training data

27.   The Department of Higher Education and Training must safely and accessibly store data reflecting the current post-school education and training system, and historical profiles of the post-school education and training system from the past, in accordance with the determined standards. The data that must be stored will include data relating to the following aspects of post-school education and training institutions:

i.   basic details, including names of institutions and training providers;
ii.   curriculum and skills programme offerings;
iii.   personnel details;
iv.   basic student details;
v.   student performance details;
vi.   building and infrastructure details;
vii.   financial records; and
viii.   examination or qualification results.

DUTIES OF POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS AND DHET ENTITIES

28.   According to the applicable legislation, referred to in paragraph 12, it is the duty of post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities to provide information to the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Supplying information to private organisations

29.   Where the provision of information by a Post–School Education and Training Institution (PSETI) involves an activity such as a survey within the PSETI, the institution may only provide the information if the activity does not obstruct the educational process of the institution in any way, and if it does not infringe on the rights of students and employees. If there is any room for doubt in this regard, the principal of the institution must seek advice from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Completion of education census forms

30. The Department of Higher Education and Training administers a number of regular data collections. It is the duty of all heads of post-school education and training institutions and CEOs of DHET entities to complete education data requirements to the best of their ability, in the knowledge that the deliberate distortion of information constitutes fraud. Where an education data request details with regard to the population group, gender or disability status of persons for the purposes of tracking redress of apartheid inequalities, it is the duty of principals and CEOs to comply with the request.

Adequate definitions of terms in data collection tools and systems

31. In order to facilitate the collection of accurate and comparable information from post-school education and training institutions, the Department of Higher Education and Training must ensure that all data collection systems and tools include clear and precise definitions of terms used, to prevent ambiguities and misinterpretations. These definitions must conform to standards in this regard.

Feedback on analysed information to respondents

32. The DHET must take active steps to supply the post-school education and training institutions and entities, with relevant statistical and analytical results of data collection surveys which these participated in. This will make the participation in education censuses more meaningful to institutions and entities, and will encourage future participation.

Need for reliable post-school education and training information

33. For planning and monitoring purposes, it is necessary for data and statistics to be provided on a regular and cyclical basis by the post-school education and training institutions and entities to the Department of Higher Education and Training. The data and statistics must be reliable and in accordance with standards. It is also necessary, on occasion, for the Department of Higher Education and Training to request special submissions of data and statistics from institutions and entities where the information need is not fulfilled by the regular information reporting and submission cycles.

DUTIES OF STUDENTS

34. Students in post-school education and training programmes have a duty to provide personal information to the education institution where this information is required for the normal running of the institution. This information would include, for example, name, date of birth, home address, home language and basic health information, though not necessarily HIV/Aids status.

16

PART III
ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF HETIS OFFICERS

THE DHET HETIS OFFICER

Higher Education and Training Information System (HETIS) Officer

35.   The Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training must designate a DHET HETIS Officer, whose basic functions will be as follows:

i.   to co-ordinate and control the release of Department of Higher Education and Training statistics and data to other government departments, statutory bodies such as Statistics South Africa and international organisations;

ii.   to ensure that statistics and data released according to sub paragraph (i) of this policy, comply with standards in regards to accuracy and presentation;

iii.   to act as the only departmental official, apart from the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training, also known as the information officer in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000, with the authority to classify statistics and data of the DHET as national, in accordance with section 14 of the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act 6 of 1999);

iv.   to act as the only departmental official, apart from the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training, with the authority to approve a data collection project or system, for example a survey of educational institutions, conducted by the Department of Higher Education and Training;

v.   to analyse, report on and make recommendations on an ongoing basis for improvements to the electronic and non-electronic post-school education and training institutions information systems so that the system can contribute to the vision of education information systems explained in this policy;

vi.   to monitor compliance with information systems standards where education information systems are being developed at the national level;

vii.   to promote the adequate standardisation of management information systems used by institutions and entities in accordance with paragraph 50 of this policy;

viii.   to organise regular meetings with all information officers of the PSETIs and the DHET entities in the furtherance of the education information systems vision at the national level;

17

ix.   to ensure that there is adequate communication between information officers of the PSETIs, DHET entities and the Education Information Standards Committee of the DHET to ensure delivery; and

x.   to liaise with the Statistician-General and Statistics South Africa to promote the aims of the Statistics Act, 1999 and to ensure that section 14 of the Statistics Act, 1999, requiring the Minister of Finance to approve the undertaking of a new statistical collection, or the substantial changing or discontinuation of a statistical collection, is adhered to.

HETIS OFFICERS OF THE POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTION AND DHET ENTITIES

Institution and Entity HETIS Officer in the post-school sector

36   Each head of an institution and entity of the DHET must designate an Institution or Entity HETIS Officer, whose basic functions will be as follows:

i.   to co-ordinate and control the release of data to all information users, but in particular the Department of Higher Education and Training, in accordance with the established information reporting cycles, but also in response to any special information request;

ii.   to ensure that data released adheres to quality standards as required by the DHET published standards and requirements;

iii.   to act as the only official, apart from the head of the institution/entity, also known as the information officer in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, with the authority to classify statistics and data of the institution and entity as official in accordance with section 14 of the Statistics Act, 1999 (Act 6 of 1999);

iv.   The HETIS information officer will have the authority to maintain and update education and training records;

v.   To analyse, report on and make recommendations on an ongoing basis for improvement to the electronic and non-electronic information system of the institution or entity so that the system can contribute to the vision of the Higher Education and Training Information System explained in this policy;

vi.   To monitor compliance with national information system standards where the education and training information system is being developed and enhanced in the institution or entity;

18

vii. To collaborate with the other HETIS Officers and the DHET HETIS Officer designated in this policy, in the furtherance of the Higher Education and Training Information System's vision at national level;

viii. To institute sound methodologies to ensure integrity of records by:
   a. ensuring that a business process is developed and adhered to during data processing and migration between systems and data is consistent across systems; and

   b. establishing effective and rigorous record keeping, data verification, data capturing and data handling methodologies and sign-off procedures to ensure clean, accurate, reliable, consistent and quality data.

Relationship between HETIS officers and the Information officer as designated by the Promotion of Access to Information Act

37. The functions of the HETIS officers must be clearly defined to avoid confusion around the relative roles of the information officers as determined by the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000). The functions of information officers, as contemplated by the Promotion of Access to Information Act are mainly related to dealing with individual records and information about the services offered by the organisation. Their functions are less related to statistics, data information systems, and standards. The HETIS Officer may be the head of the data information unit or directorate, if this is considered to enhance effectiveness. It is not a requirement that the HETIS officer carry line responsibility for designing and implementing information systems in view of the fact that the focus of the HETIS Officer could become too broad. However, in the case of line responsibility for information systems residing separately from the HETIS Officer, the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training and the head of the post-school education and training institution or the CEO for the DHET entity must ensure that adequate reporting and communication channels are established between the two line functions to promote functionality.

Availability of HETIS officers

38. Heads of institutions and entities and the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training must ensure that the function of the HETIS Officer can be performed on all working days, even in the temporary absence of the person designated as HETIS Officer. The HETIS officer has to be easily contactable and his/her office's contact details easily available and regularly updated.

Availability of resources for the HETIS Officers

39. The Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training must ensure that staffing norms are regulated such that the HETIS Officer has sufficient staff and resources at his/her disposal in order to perform his/her duties.

Resources required by HETIS Officers

40. There must be adequate resources for the HETIS Officer to perform his/her duties; in terms of funding, human resources and equipment. The duties of HETIS Officers include the following:

   i.   Design and planning of education and training data collection systems in accordance with prescribed standards.

   ii.   Management of data capturing processes, both manual and automated.

   iii. Data analysis, manipulation and dissemination.

   iv.   Assessment of data accuracy and quality.

   v.   Compilation of statistical reports, with statistical and qualitative analysis.

   vi.   Archiving of key historical data in accordance with national standards.

   vii. Systems analysis, including the analysis of the effectiveness and standards compliance of management systems.

Department of Higher Education and Training HETIS Officer and the Statistician-General

41. Section 14 of the Statistics Act 6 of 1999 requires the Statistician-General to ensure the maintenance of national standards in official statistical collections, and to co-ordinate statistical collections. The HETIS Officer in the Department of Higher Education and Training must actively support the Statistician-General in this obligation.

HETIS Officer as designator of national statistics

42. Only data and statistics formally certified as a true record by the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training or the HETIS officer may be regarded as valid. In determining whether data or statistics can be certified as a true record, the HETIS Officer must ensure that a reasonable level of analysis and verification has occurred. The HETIS Officer must be informed of the purpose for

which the data or statistics will be used when determining whether the data or statistics can be regarded as a true record. The HETIS Officer must be guided by generally accepted practice, and general government standards, in particular those issued by the Statistician-General in terms of the Statistics Act 1999. Where problems or possible problems exist in national data or statistics, the HETIS Officer must make this clearly known through adequate explanatory notes. Moreover, the HETIS Officer must clearly state the source of any data or statistics that have been certified as national. Reasonable consistency between different releases of national data and statistics must be maintained.

Informal exchange of data and statistics

43.　　Notwithstanding paragraph 42, the DHET officials should not be precluded from exchanging data and statistics informally where there is no need for the data or statistics to be declared as a true record. This uncertified data has to be referred to as estimates.　However, only data and statistics that have been certified a true record may be used in final reports and in final decisions.

The process of providing data and statistics

44.　　The HETIS officer in the Department of Higher Education and Training must clearly specify what data and statistics are required from post-school education and training institutions and from the DHET entities on a regular basis. Specifications must be sufficiently detailed to minimise ambiguities and misunderstandings and must be stated in terms of standards governing definitions and formats. Dates of submission, determined after consultation, must also be specified. Only the designated HETIS officers or the heads of post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities may officially hand over the requested data or statistics to the DHET HETIS Officer. The HETIS Officer must state formally any conditions regarding the information. Informal exchanges of data and statistics between the post-school education and training institutions and the DHET entities may occur but for preliminary analysis and reporting only, as prescribed in paragraph 44 of this policy above.

Special requests for statistics

45.　　The HETIS officer in the Department of Higher Education and Training may make special requests for additional data and statistics, where these are not covered in the regular cycles of submissions. In making special requests, the DHET HETIS Officer must supply clear specifications for the request, and timeframes that are reasonable relative to the nature of the request. The DHET HETIS Officer will specify the reason for the special request.

21

> *Collaboration between HETIS Officers for development purposes*

46.   The HETIS officers of the DHET, the post-school education and training institutions and the DHET entities must work together to improve the efficiency and value of statistical collections.

> *HETIS Officers' responsibilities in terms of systems development*

47.   All the HETIS officers of DHET, post-school education and training institutions and the DHET entities must actively contribute to the development of education and training management information systems, through the co-ordination of relevant line functions, development work and promoting the compliance of systems with national standards.

> *Efficient utilisation of state resources*

48.   In recognition of the fact that information systems are costly to develop, and the fact that needs across sectors, entities and institutions are often similar, the HETIS Officer in the Department of Higher Education and Training must encourage national systems development projects, to avoid duplication and the inefficient use of state resources.   The HETIS officer thus has to undertake cost-benefit analyses which will inform the development of systems.

> *Evaluation of privately developed information systems*

49.   To facilitate the acquisition of appropriate information systems by the post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities, the HETIS Officer of the Department of Higher Education and Training must assist in the evaluation of appropriate systems, which conform to national standards. The HETIS Officer may also collaborate with the South African Bureau of Standards in establishing a system of certification indicating compliance with national standards.

22

PART IV

EDUCATION INFORMATION STANDARDS

POWERS TO SET STANDARDS

50.   The Minister of Higher Education and Training has the power to determine the standards referred to in paragraph 52 below insofar as they affect the post-school education and training institutions and the DHET entities in accordance with item 1.7 of the Schedule of the Presidential Proclamation 44, published in Government Gazette No. 32367 of 1 July 2009.

Consideration of the broader information systems environment

51.   Processes used to arrive at information standards must reflect the complexity of the information systems environment itself, and of a system of post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities with varying degrees of autonomy. Processes should strike a balance between the urgent need for standards to be generated, the constitutional rights of the post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities and the need for consultation. Moreover, processes should be sensitive to the reality that some post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities have, due to historical reasons, not been in a position to invest as much in information systems as others. In this regard, it must be ensured that processes empower the historically disadvantaged, whilst at the same time valuable lessons gained from systems where considerable investment has taken place, are made to benefit the country as a whole.

TYPES OF STANDARDS

52.   For the purposes of this policy, different types of standards can be identified. There are standards governing:

i.   **descriptors and definitions of education and training terms**
Terminology and classifications used in the administration and planning of the education and training sector need to be uniform across the country. This terminology should be captured in the higher education and training sector data dictionaries, which should also be a point of departure for specifying the inter-relationships between terms that systems designers require, as well as the data field names that would correspond to particular terms;

ii.   **statistical tables.** Key statistical tables produced, for instance in annual statistical reports, must be standardised for higher education and training sector planning to be possible. Standards in this regard should consider and incorporate official and emerging higher education and training indicators for South Africa and international organisations;

iii. **information publications.** In the interest of user-friendliness and comprehensiveness, it is important for certain information publications to be standardised across the DHET, post-school education and training institutions, DHET entities and SETAs, for instance lists of institutions made available to the public;

iv. **unique identifiers.** Identifiers that are unique at the higher education and training sector are required for a range of people and items, for example learners/students, educators/lecturers, skills, occupations, curriculum offerings and institutions. Standards governing the generation of such unique identifiers are required;

v. **data file layout.** Where different datasets exist that must be integrated, the standardisation of data files is essential;

vi. **data coding.** Codes used to refer to attributes must be standardised for data integration to be possible;

vii. **data quality.** The processes of data capturing and cleaning by the DHET, post-school education and training institutions and DHET entities must be governed by minimum quality standards in order to ensure that data accuracy is of an acceptable level;

viii. **platforms of systems.** Minimum standards must be set for hardware and software insofar as this is required for integration of systems and transfer of data;

ix. **performance of systems.** Certain aspects of the performance of systems should be standardised, in particular aspects relating to efficiency, timeliness, quality of data, the protection of privacy and the backing up of data;

x. **communication between systems.** Network protocols must be standardised for the effective transfer of data between systems;

xi. **data archiving.** Minimum standards for the archiving of historical data are required to ensure that individual histories, as well as the history of the system as a whole are available in the future and

EDUCATION INFORMATION STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Functions of the committee

53. The Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training will establish and appoint members to the Education Information Standards Committee to advise him or her in the information standards generation process. The functions of this committee will be to:

i. conduct research into the area of education information standards;

    ii.   co-ordinate consultation on standards between key role players;

    iii.   receive and evaluate written inputs from role players, including members of the public and Information Technology (IT) firms;

    iv.   advise the Director-General on standards to be made official policy after careful consideration of the options;

    v.   be the custodians of the definitive and most recent set of approved information standards for the education system; and

    vi.   make standards widely known and available.

Composition of the committee

54.   The Education Information Standards Committee will consist of between 10 and 15 permanent members and will include representation from:

    i.   the Department of Higher Education and Training;

    ii.   the Department of Basic Education;

    iii.   Statistics South Africa;

    iv.   the Department of Public Service and Administration;

    v.   the State Information Technology Agency;

    vi.   the Information Technology Industry; and

    vii.   DHET statutory bodies.

The Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training may appoint DHET officials to represent the Department of Higher Education and Training in the Education Information Standards Committee. Representation from the post-school education and training institutions and entities will be collective in nature, and individual members will represent interests as a whole and not the interests of their respective entities or institutions. Representation from the Information Technology industry shall not represent the interests of any particular firm, but the industry as a whole. The Education Information Standards Committee is not intended to be a fully representative body with decision-making powers. It is instead a specialist advisory body that makes recommendations to the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Appointment to the Information Education Information Standards Committee should be considered in this context.

Procedures for the committee

55. The Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training must request nominations from the organisations listed in paragraph 54 of this policy in deciding the appointments to be made to the Education Information Standards Committee. The Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training must appoint a chairperson of the Education Information Standards Committee. The chairperson shall determine the frequency of meetings and meeting protocols in consultation with the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Only the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training may terminate membership of the Education Information Standards Committee.

Co-option of members to the committee

56. The Education Information Standards Committee may co-opt members for limited periods in order to obtain certain expertise, for instance expertise specific to a particular education sector, like Adult Education and Training.

Process for generating information standards

57. The research conducted or commissioned by the Education Information Standards Committee must apply international best practice, local education priorities and trends in the information technology industry to influence the standards generating process. Thorough and ongoing analysis of systems and censuses not directly controlled by the education department, but that may influence the development of post-school education information systems must take place.

Consultation and dissemination of information by the committee

58. Regular and adequate consultation must occur between members of the Education Information Standards Committee, but also between the Education Information Standards Committee and other role players. Regular updates of ongoing work must be submitted to the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training.

The committee and role players in general

59. The Education Information Standards Committee must attempt to make its work known to all potential role players, and must ensure that it is easy for role players to submit recommendations regarding information standards. The Committee must respond to every submission received within two months of submission.

Use of industry conventions

60. The standards generated by the Education Information Standards Committee must be understandable, yet should adhere to conventions that are familiar to actors in the systems development industry, considering that these actors will constitute important beneficiaries of the standards documentation.

Format of the standards documentation

61. The standards generated must be documented in a format that makes the process of periodical revisions clear and manageable. The format must, for example, make it clear when previously existing standards have been withdrawn or modified.

Final approval

62. When new standards have been generated that serve the interests of the higher education and training sector, the Minister must officially approve the standards concerned and publish such standards by way of a Notice referring to the latest amended collection of all standards generated in terms of this policy, in a Government Gazette.

Dissemination of approved information standards

63. The Education Information Standards Committee must ensure that the standards documentation becomes as widely accessible as is necessary. Copies of the documentation should be available on a website.

Stakeholder Information Forums

64. In order to enable the participation of all stakeholders of the post-school education and training sector in the process of generating standards, stakeholder information forums may be set up. Each forum will serve a particular related set of institutions or entities such as SETAs, public universities, FET Colleges, quality councils or similar. The role of a stakeholder information forum is to request or suggest information standards to the technical working group of the Department of Higher Education and Training. Stakeholder information forums must be approved by the standards committee and will report to the standards committee via the technical working group.

Technical Working Group

65. In order to ensure that the necessary technical work is undertaken to prepare standards, the Education Information Standards Committee will designate a technical working group, as a sub-committee of the Education Information Standards
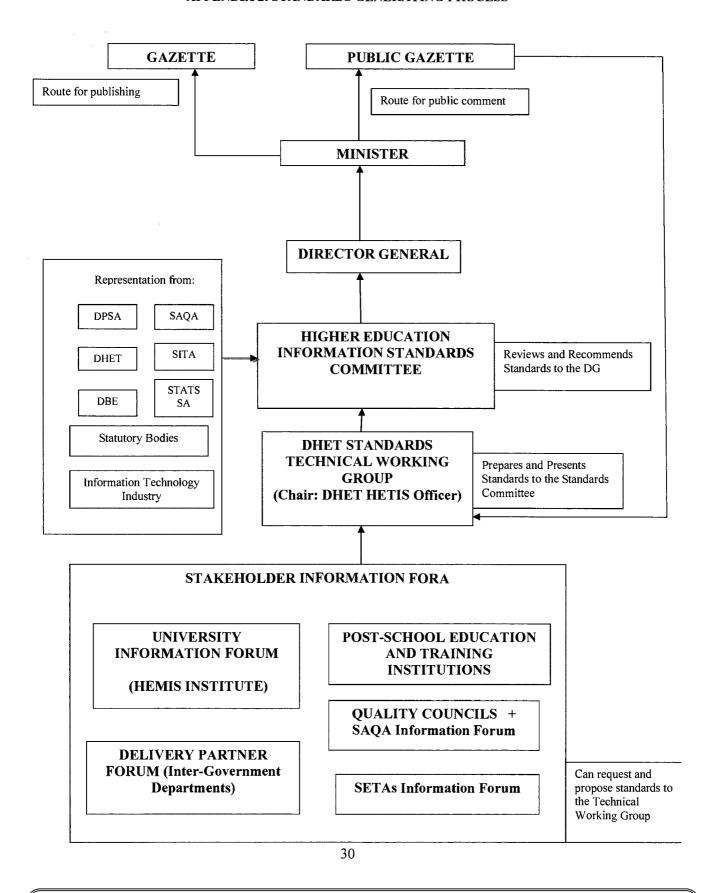
28

Committee. The technical working group will receive requests and proposals for standards, prepare the technical standards and present standards to the Education Information Standards Committee for inputs and recommendation to the Director-General. The technical working group will report directly to the Education Information Standards Committee.

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

	Department of Higher Education and Training	*DHET entities (QCs, SAQA, NSFAS and SETAs)*	*Post-school education and training institutions*
Lists with basic institution or training provider information for students.	✔ *	✔ (subject to sufficient resources)	✔ (subject to sufficient resources)
Operational data on institutions and skills development opportunities for learners and students	✔ *	✔	✔
Standard databases for researchers	✔ *		
Contact details of institutions for use by third parties	✔ *		
Official annual statistical reports for the public in general.	✔ *		

* If one institution/entity information is needed, then the requester is encouraged to contact the relevant institution/entity, even if the Department of Higher Education and Training also keeps the information.

29

APPENDIX 2: STANDARDS GENERATING PROCESS

| GAZETTE | PUBLIC GAZETTE |

Route for publishing

Route for public comment

MINISTER

Representation from:

DIRECTOR GENERAL

DPSA	SAQA
DHET	SITA
DBE	STATS SA

Statutory Bodies

Information Technology Industry

HIGHER EDUCATION INFORMATION STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Reviews and Recommends Standards to the DG

DHET STANDARDS TECHNICAL WORKING GROUP (Chair: DHET HETIS Officer)

Prepares and Presents Standards to the Standards Committee

STAKEHOLDER INFORMATION FORA

UNIVERSITY INFORMATION FORUM

(HEMIS INSTITUTE)

POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

QUALITY COUNCILS + SAQA Information Forum

DELIVERY PARTNER FORUM (Inter-Government Departments)

SETAs Information Forum

Can request and propose standards to the Technical Working Group

30