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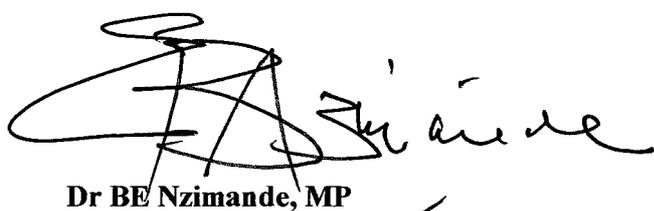
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

No. 11

15 January 2014

WHITE PAPER FOR POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School Education System**

I, Bonginkosi Emanuel Nzimande, MP, Minister of Higher Education and Training, hereby publish the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training as approved by Cabinet on 20 November 2013. This policy statement represents government's vision for an integrated system of post-school education and training, with all its institutions playing their role as parts of a coherent but differentiated whole. Copies of the White Paper may be obtained from the Department's website: www.dhet.gov.za.

**Dr BE Nzimande, MP****Minister of Higher Education and Training**

Date: 09/01/2014

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]¹), 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-frameworks² 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.

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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.
