

**THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION, DR BLADE NZIMANDE,
STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
BUDGET VOTE**

13 May 2021

Programme Director;

Deputy Minister Buti Manamela;

Director General of the Department of Higher Education and Training, Mr Gwebinkundla Qonde;

DDGs Present;

Chairpersons and CEOs of our Entities;

Vice Chancellors and TVET Principals;

Student formations;

Labour Unions;

Members of the media;

Good Afternoon

This past year has been one of the most unprecedented times in South African history. It is most likely the most challenging time the country has faced, post 1994.

The PSET (Post School Education and Training) sector had to operate under these challenging times to implement its vision to have an integrated, coordinated and articulated PSET system for improved economic participation and the social development of youth and adults.

Together with HIGHER HEALTH, – the implementing agency of DHET that champions the health and wellbeing of our students and staff within the PSET - we have ensured a comprehensive response to COVID-19 across the post-school education and training sector.

Specifically, HIGHER HEALTH established various Scientific Technical Task Teams, working with experts, scientists and stakeholders, especially the World Health Organization (WHO), the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), our sister Department of Health, and other agencies.

HIGHER HEALTH built comprehensive programmes, systems, controls and infrastructure by establishing guidelines, protocols and capacity building grounded in science and the latest epidemiological data, for the management of COVID-19 in PSET institutions and centres.

You will recall that I launched the PSET COVID-19 Guidelines as early as April 2020 and subsequently nine sets of different protocols, checklists, and interventions that dealt with:

- (i) overall management of COVID-19 within the sector;
- (ii) screening, testing, contact-tracing, isolation and linkage to care;
- (iii) managing a positive COVID-19 result;
- (iv) routine cleaning for infection prevention;

- (v) mental health and substance abuse in relation to COVID-19;
- (vi) student volunteers and establishment of screening stations at campuses;
- (vii) managing cluster outbreaks;
- (viii) invigilation of tests and exams during COVID-19;
- (ix) managing Gender Based Violence, Stigma and Human Rights.

These protocols played a significant role towards our successful closure of the 2020 academic year, and the start of the 2021 academic year.

To enable our department to achieve its budget speech obligations, we have configured our department into six (6) programmes of Administration, Planning, Policy and Strategy, University Education, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Education, Skills Development and the Community Education and Training (CET).

ADMINISTRATION

For our 2021/22 financial year, the total adjusted budget allocation for our administrative responsibilities amounts to R504 million.

PLANNING, POLICY AND STRATEGY

During the term, we will focus our spending on sound service delivery management and effective resource management within our Department.

In the current financial year, we will continue with the implementation of the Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence in the PSET System in all institutions.

Gender-Based Violence Policy at our universities and TVET colleges. This mandate was given to Higher Health.

In this regard, Higher Health has commenced working closely with universities and TVET colleges towards putting infrastructure, programmes, care and support mechanisms, as well as capacity development of staff and student leadership towards engaging GBV at campuses.

Over the MTEF, we will produce various reports to inform the planning and provisioning of education and training, as well as assisting individuals in making appropriate career and educational choices. These include PSET Monitor, Skills Supply and Demand, Critical Skills to name but a few.

Expanding online learning in PSET

I have identified the need for online, multi-modal and blended modes of delivery to be deployed across the PSET system.

This includes the building of capacity to deliver multi-modal education and training, e-learning materials development and deployment and the development of rigorous support systems to support lecturers and students.

In this regard, we will develop and manage the NOLS (National Open Learning System) that will be accessible to PSET lecturers and students.

Integrated Infrastructure Development support Programme for PSET

In support of the Department's intention to expand access to PSET opportunities, we will be developing and manage an IIDSP-PSET

The Integrated Infrastructure Development Support Programme for PSET Training (IIDSP-PSET) represents an evolution and consolidation of infrastructure support for the public PSET system, and will consolidate and integrate what is currently a fragmented provision of infrastructure development support.

A Multi-faceted and Comprehensive Strategy for Student Housing will be developed and finalised for implementation.

Career Development system

In support of Vision 2030 of the National Development Plan (NDP), which addresses access to education and training of the highest quality, we will continue to coordinate Career Development systems (CDSs) across all spheres of government.

This will provide integrated career development information, advice and guidance services as per the National Policy for an Integrated Career Development System for South Africa (2017) to build an integrated career development system for South Africa which will ensure that all citizens of all ages have access to quality career information and CDSs throughout their lives.

The total budget allocation to implement all these programme in the 2021/22 financial year amounts to R230.7 million.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Through our university branch, we will continue to provide financial support to universities, NSFAS and to national higher education institutions.

Together with our public universities, we will develop and ensure the implementation of enrolment plans for the period 2020 to 2025.

The expansion of the public university system requires a careful and systematic enrolment planning process that is in line with available resources, capacity and funding.

This process will ensure equitable participation that is supported by increased numbers of quality staff, affordable fees, inclusive and sustainable financial aid and improved infrastructure.

In this current financial year, will kick-start the process of establishing the two new universities announced by the President through the development of a feasibility study to establish the nature and scope, as well as location of these new institution.

It is planned that the university of Science and Innovation will be in the Ekurhuleni Metro and the Detective Academy, will be in the North of Pretoria in Hammanskraal.

In order to improve efficiency and success within the public university system, we will also intensify the implementation of the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) to improve student success, and the quality of teaching, learning and research and to support curriculum renewal in universities.

This includes a focus on entrepreneurship development on higher education.

The implementation of the Staffing South Africa's University Framework (SSAUF) within the UCDP, will receive continued support so as to recruit new permanent university academics, while at the same time improving staff demographic profiles.

We will also be able to address the ratio of permanent to temporary staff members, enabling academics to achieve doctorates, building a new professoriate and enhancing higher education leadership management.

The total budget to support this work for the 2021/22 financial year amounts to R81 223.3 billion.

TECHNICAL AND VOCATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Through our TVET Branch we will continue to provide mid-level skills to support the priority sectors targeted by government.

In so doing, it is expected that the critical issue of pervasive youth unemployment, and scarce and critical skills provision will be addressed and mitigated.

The goal is ultimately to produce TVET graduates who are ready for the world of work.

Through our TVET colleges, we aim at improving access and the success of enrolled students to contribute to the employment of youth, and consequently contribute towards combatting poverty and social inequality.

The increase in student enrolments is, however, constrained by fiscal funding to colleges, which sees a levelling off of student enrolments for the MTSF period.

The focus on scaling up occupational qualifications in TVET colleges also requires colleges to seek alternate sources of funding through concrete and sustainable partnerships with various stakeholders.

Attention to student success will be achieved, among others, through student enrolment in the Pre-vocational Learning Programme, improvements in lecturer competencies to deliver vocational education, and a review of college programmes and qualifications to make them more responsive and aligned to government priorities.

I will extensively give a detail account on our achievement in this regard in my budget vote speech this afternoon.

We will be using our Capital Infrastructure Expansion Grant to address the serious backlogs in infrastructure maintenance in TVET colleges, with particular focus on improving the teaching and learning environment.

We intend to significantly transform the conduct of our TVET national examinations across the value chain from setting question papers through to the certification of successful candidates through the use of our new examination system.

This will help us to improve both our provisioning and efficiency in service delivery to students in TVET colleges.

In order to achieve improvement and efficiency in TVET colleges, we will also be strengthen governance standards and regulations, thereby intensify the oversight function of college councils.

Again, in order to improve the governance function in TVET colleges, the effectiveness of our college councils will be closely monitored and evaluated for compliance with their statutory remit.

Furthermore, a system of lecturer development, including continuing lecturer development, is critical to the success of TVET provisioning in colleges and will be vigorously pursued.

Part of our pre-occupation will be the development of entrepreneurial skills, as well as the focus on digital training, aimed at improving the quality of provisioning in TVET colleges.

This will also as strengthen the exit support to graduates for self-employment in the context of a poor labour-absorptive capacity in the economy.

We will also address service delivery for students with disabilities through the establishment of DSUs in four colleges, with the aim of establishing six centres over a ten-year period.

Similarly, based on the need for TVET college students to be actively engaged in the economy, either through employment in the labour market or through self-employment, we will establish more entrepreneurship hubs over the five-year period with the aim of growing these to 25 over a ten-year period.

To achieve all these, we have a total budget of R13 096.2 million for the 2021/22 financial year.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Through the Skills Branch, over the medium-term period, we will promote and monitor the implementation of the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) and the Skills Strategy to support the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP).

However, the four-month exemption in the Skills Development Levy from May 2020 to August 2020, estimated to R6.1 billion together with the present devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic presents probabilities of fewer workplaces being available for apprentice training in the current financial year.

Employers are already enlisting fewer workplace training opportunities.

We will update our Sector Skills Plan (SSP) annually to ensure that South Africa has adequate, appropriate and high quality skills to contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development.

The SSPs will assist the country, among other things, to identify the top ten occupations in high demand in each sector of the economy, as well as the interventions that are required.

These plans will also seek to address the skills identified by the ERRP. The framework will be updated to cover the interventions in the Skills strategy.

Artisan development will continue to be a priority in the planning cycle, as a target of the NDP is that by 2030 the country must be producing 30 000 artisans per annum.

We have declared 2013 as the Year of the Artisan, and later, it declared the period 2014–2024 as the Decade of the Artisan.

These are critical advocacy campaigns that are embedded in the country's artisanal system, especially in inspiring young people to venture into artisanal skills.

The Tracer Study conducted by the Department indicates that 74% of the apprentices who qualified or were found competent in the 2017/18 financial year are employed, while 3% are self-employed.

This suggests that about 77% of artisans entered the labour market after obtaining a qualification.

In comparison to the Tracer Study survey findings in 2016/17, only 61% of artisans entered the labour market after passing their trade tests in the previous period. There is thus a 16% growth in employment for the 2017/18 financial year.

We will also continue to prioritise Work Based Learning (WBL) opportunities through revised Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Department and all 21 SETAs, especially by increasing the number of unemployed learners participating in learnerships.

Various studies, including a study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in February 2014, has found that the majority of apprenticeship and learnership participants (70% and 86% respectively) who completed their qualifications experienced a smooth transition directly into stable employment. For example, 90% of those who completed a learnership reported that they are employed in permanent positions.

In this regard our total budget for the 2021/22 financial year amounts to R307.9 million appropriate through the voted funds to support the work of the Skills Branch. SETAs. and the National Skills Fund will be appropriated R17. 812 863 billion from the Skills Levy.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In relation to expanded access to our Community Education and Training colleges, our advocacy strategy intends to support CET colleges to meet their enrolment targets by attracting more youth into CET opportunities.

The National Development Plan (NDP) requires the CET system to significantly increase its enrolments in appreciation of the challenge of youth who are not in education, employment and training.

As a new institutional type, our Department and CET colleges will use this strategy to market the sector to potential beneficiaries, as well as strategic partnerships, which will assist the CET sector to achieve its founding mandate.

The accreditation of our community learning centres will open opportunities for further study to individuals who could not meet the requirements for entry into TVET colleges and other institutions of further learning.

We will develop entrepreneurship and skills programmes, e.g. digital and other skills programmes, to ensure the development of diverse programmes to provide skills for establishing sustainable entrepreneurships.

We will build capacity of our lecturers to ensure the provision of quality programmes and increase success in the CET colleges.

We will also capacitate student leadership, centre managers and councils to improve the quality of CET provisioning.

All this work will be supported with the total budget of R2 422 billion for the 2021/22 financial year. Having said that our total budget appropriation for the PSET sector in the 2021/22 stands at R115.596 868 billion.

Ladies and gentlemen, this brings me to the end of my statement. Thank you very much for your time. I will now hand over back to the Programme Director.