



**MINISTRY  
HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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**LAUNCH OF THE GREEN PAPER FOR POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING**

**Media Statement by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr  
B.E. Nzimande, MP**

**Pretoria, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

I have the pleasure today to make public the Green Paper on Post-School Education and Training whose release was approved by Cabinet in November 2011.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) was formed in May 2009 as a new department, bringing together all post-school education and training institutions: all higher education institutions, colleges and adult education institutions, formerly with the Department of Education; and the skills levy institutions, formerly under the Department of Labour. This Green Paper aims to conceptualise the nature of the Department and to set out its priorities.

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A Green Paper is not yet government policy. Its purpose is to present emerging thinking in the DHET and invite stakeholders and the general public to contribute their views in order to assist us to strengthen our vision. The comments received will be considered when a White Paper on the post-school system is drafted later this year, for approval and adoption by Cabinet as official government policy. Comments are welcome and will be accepted by my Department until 30 April 2012. This process is a critical step forward in the process of developing a comprehensive and coherent post-school education and training SYSTEM for South Africa.

This Green Paper aims to align the post-school education and training system with South Africa's overall development agenda, with links to various development strategies such as the New Growth Path, the Industrial Policy Action Plan 2, the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa 2010-2030, and South Africa's Ten-Year Innovation Plan. This will allow the department to contribute more effectively to the goal of inclusive economic growth and development, and to contribute fundamentally in reducing unemployment and poverty.

This paper sets out a broad policy for expanding post-school provision to improve access to education and training opportunities, strengthen the institutions to improve education quality, and build a post-school education and training system that is equitable, accessible and affordable to all sections of the population, including free education and training for the poor.

It aims to set an agenda for combating discrimination and providing equal opportunities for education and training for all irrespective of socio-economic status, race, gender, disability or HIV/AIDS status. In addition, it aims to expand opportunities for people in less developed areas, particularly rural areas and informal settlements, to especially cater for the previously oppressed and marginalized South Africans. Its particular focus is the youth who are currently the main victims of unemployment and at a point in their lives where education and training opportunities can make a difference between a life of fulfillment and success AND one of misery and frustration.

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The Green Paper identifies the key challenges facing the higher education and training system and sets out a path for overcoming these. It further provides a vision for a single, coherent, differentiated and highly articulated post-school education and training system. This system will contribute to overcoming the structural challenges facing our society by expanding access to education and training opportunities and increasing equity, as well as achieving high levels of excellence and innovation. Key problem areas which prevent the system from playing its potential role are outlined, and solutions are proposed. In some cases options are presented for discussion.

A major problem in the system as a whole is that provision of post-school education and training is inadequate in quantity, diversity and, in many but not all instances, quality. Approximately three million young people between the ages of 18 and 24 are not accommodated in either the education and training system or the labour market, thus preventing many of them from fully participating in shaping a democratic South Africa as informed citizens. This is an appalling waste of human potential, and a potential source of serious social instability.

By 2030, South Africa ought to have a post-school system that provides a range of accessible alternatives for young people. By 2030, we aim to raise university enrolments to 1 500 000 (a projected participation rate of 23%) as opposed to the 2011 enrolments of 899 120 (a 16% participation rate).

In terms of quality, our universities are the strongest and most stable component of the post-school system. However, even some of these institutions are beset by serious problems and are unable to fulfill our peoples' expectations. They require special interventions. Even in the university system as a whole, many problems remain with regard to access, various forms of discrimination, staffing, curriculum, management, student funding, other forms of student support, and other areas. The DHET will work with the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to ensure increased support for postgraduate study and for senior researchers, as well as a more stable funding model for all educational institutions that conduct research. Improving research capacity will be

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a major focus for universities, with a particular focus on research to meet our developmental objectives.

An important goal of government for the university sector should be to prioritise support to the previously disadvantaged universities, especially those in rural areas. This support will include assistance to improve their infrastructure as well as the quality of their teaching and research. It is essential that, whatever else universities do, in today's South Africa they must be at least able to provide a good undergraduate education to their students. Almost eighteen years after the end of apartheid it is disturbing that some of our universities still can't do even this.

We aim for 4 000 000 enrolments (approximately a 60% participation rate) in colleges or other post-school institutions (both full time and part time), an approximately six-fold increase over the numbers in 2011. These post-school institutions will include a new institutional type, which we are provisionally calling Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs), to address the needs of out-of-school youth and adults. We propose to absorb and transform the existing public adult learning centres into this category of institution and believe that they will serve to strengthen significantly the provision of education and training to adults.

The key area of focus for expansion will be the public further education and training (FET) college sector. The greatly expanded FET colleges sector is envisaged to play the central role in expanding the development of artisanal and other mid-level skills for the economy. Such skills are in extremely short supply and colleges, working together with employers (both public and private), will be our spearhead in tackling this problem. Vocational education at the FET colleges must not be a dead-end; the Green Paper makes proposals to ensure pathways that allow students to move on to university education after completing their vocational qualifications if they wish to do so. A central part of our strategy for the FET colleges is to improve the quality of education they provide, especially by strengthening their management, qualification mix, the capacity of the teaching staff and the levels of student support.

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An important initiative proposed by the Green Paper is the establishment of a South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET) as a key part of a long-term strategy to build institutional capacity. A study will be done soon to further conceptualise and make specific and concrete recommendations for the Institute. The Institute's main function should be to strengthen the vocational and continuing education sector by playing a supporting role to existing institutions, especially the FET colleges and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

The SETAs have a key role to play in strengthening vocational education and skills training and in promoting and funding partnerships between educational institutions and employers. They have a particularly important role to play in promoting the revitalisation of the artisan training system and in building linkages between theoretical education in colleges and universities on the one hand and practical workplace experience on the other. This will build on the National Skills Accord in which government, business and labour have made commitments, to expand the numbers of apprenticeships, learnerships and internships.

A central role in this regard will be made by the state-owned enterprises whose training activities are to be revived to reverse the decline which has taken place since the mid-1980s when they were being commercialised (and some were actually privatised). Government departments and agencies as well as municipalities will also be expected to increase their intake of various types of trainees who are either still studying or have recently completed their studies. All major government infrastructure programmes will be expected to take on trainees in order to develop the country's skills base.

The Green Paper makes proposals to improve the performance of the SETAs, to increase their cooperation with the public post-school institutions and to clarify their role as facilitators of training and the development of the skills of the workforce. The Green Paper also proposes that SETAs must become the pre-eminent experts on the labour market and its need in each sector.

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Another problem area addressed by this Green Paper is the existing regulatory system which is complex and difficult to understand. The regulation of post-school education in South Africa is governed by an array of legislation and statutory bodies. There is duplication, overlap and, at times, incoherence and inconsistency in the functioning of parts of our system. We must overcome these challenges and the Green Paper outlines key proposals and options in this regard. An important starting point is simplifying the National Qualifications Framework; clear options are outlined.

One of the central themes running through the entire Green Paper is the need to build coherence within the post-school system as a whole, between basic education and the post-school system, and between the post-school system and the labour market. There is inadequate information about labour market needs and future growth possibilities, and this makes planning and targeting of provision difficult. The levy-grant institutions – the (SETAs) and the National Skills Fund (NSF) – are poorly coordinated with public provision, and very little of the skills-levy funding has been used to pay for education in the public universities and colleges.

Our educational institutions must work more closely together and support each other. Levy-grant institutions must fund and support provision to much needed programmes in public FET colleges and universities, especially universities of technology. SETAs must also play a crucial role in building relationships between education and the labour market. Improving relationships between education institutions and employers is a priority. The DHET will work to strengthen collaboration between the private and public sectors where appropriate, and between the three spheres of government. It will improve co-ordination between itself and other government departments that are critical to delivering improved post-school education. These include the Departments of Basic Education, Labour, Science and Technology, Trade and Industry, Economic Development and the Treasury.

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The Green Paper also provides for the expansion of distance education, using appropriate ICT and other technologies and methods, as part of expanding access for youth and especially for working adults to improve their qualifications and knowledge.

I believe that addressing the key challenges outlined in the Green Paper will enable us to address ongoing inequalities and raise the quality of post-school education and training. This would also ensure that the post-school system contributes to changing the economy to one that relies more on the value-adding skills of its people than on easily replaceable and cheap unskilled labour.

I also wish to thank President Zuma for his unstinting support in this process, my Cabinet colleagues for their inputs and comments, my special advisor, John Pampallis for leading the team that consulted and drafted this document. I also wish to thank our Director General, senior management and all the staff in DHET for their support, the main researchers and drafters and all other stakeholders who contributed towards the document.

Working together, we can create a post school education and training system to meet the needs of all our youth and adults!

Thank you

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