



Independent

THINKING Lifelong Learning Curves

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EXPLORING THE POST-SCHOOL TERRAIN: A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN INDEPENDENT MEDIA AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE: Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges



THUMBS UP: The ultimate goal of a synchronised and co-ordinated all-inclusive education and training strategy is to improve prospects for employment and career opportunities for many thousands.

KETH LOYNES

TECHNICAL and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Colleges provide education and training opportunities that are responsive to the human resource requirements of a diversified economy.

In doing so, TVET College professionals and students alike are striving for excellence. This becomes very clear when one reads of their accomplishments.

Following the inception of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), it has provided both firm leadership and strategies to establish TVET Colleges as a central force in the provision of relevant skills and competencies.

The education and training offered by colleges forms a vital Post-School Education and Training opportunities alongside universities. This means that there are greater, more diversified education and training options for school leavers to follow.

The target of these initiatives has been the youth of South Africa. The interventions form part of a

synchronised and co-ordinated all-inclusive strategy in which the ultimate goal is to improve prospects for employment and career opportunities for many thousands.

In order to achieve maximum co-ordination and effectiveness, the administration of the colleges, which previously resorted under provincial education departments, has been brought within the administrative ambit of national government under the DHET.

Apart from extensive interventions in every one of the 50 colleges to bring governance, management and financial practices in line with international best practice, the DHET has launched various focused projects and initiatives.

These are aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning practices; the improvement of student retention and pass rates and the health and well-being of students and personnel alike.

The DHET has commissioned research into various key areas such as examining the articulation of college graduates with the workplace as well as other institutions of higher learning.

This has included studies of the

labour market with a view to offering graduates a seamless transition from education and training into the workplace.

The on-going research will continue to inform policies and implementation strategies designed to keep South African college and university graduates at the forefront of an increasingly globalised labour market.

Great attention is given to quality. Colleges offer vocational and occupational courses that are externally quality assured.

The courses are sponsored by the DHET, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAS) and occasionally by private initiatives.

The costs of the courses offered under the jurisdiction of the DHET are 80% subsidised. This means that students are only paying, or receiving bursaries to cover, the remaining 20% of tuition fees.

In this way study costs are kept to the minimum so as to maximise opportunities for access. Poor and academically deserving students at TVET Colleges who meet the criteria have access to DHET bursaries through the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

NSFAS will be funding 205 000 first-time and continuing eligible students at universities and 200 000 students at colleges this year.

This will be achieved by providing students with loans and bursaries totalling R10-billion. Only a few years ago this opportunity did not exist for TVET College students.

In addition to the funds that NSFAS receives from the funds voted by Parliament, the National Skills Fund (NSF) makes further annual allocations aimed at funding the full cost of study towards critical skills programmes.

These are the programmes most needed for the growth and development of the economy. **Related to this, see the list of Occupations in High Demand on Page 2.**

One of the strategies alluded to earlier involves the drive to get school leavers to apply early for admission to study in colleges and universities.

In assisting this, the DHET has a Career Development Services Helpline. You could telephone 0860 999 0123 for advice or send an SMS or "Please Call Me" to 072 204 5056.

The National Career Advice Portal (NCAP) on the url:

<http://ncap.careerhelp.org.za> provides access to career information on career pathways, occupations and relevant education and training opportunities.

In coming months colleges will be hosting Open Days. This is when the public can visit a TVET College and get better acquainted with the types of courses and facilities on offer.

Be on the watch for TVET College Open Days! If you have a son, daughter, relative or friend who will be finishing school at the end of the year, now would be the time to seriously explore the opportunities for further study for them.

There is bound to be a TVET College not too far from where you live. The 50 TVET Colleges operate on more than 264 campuses across South Africa with 12 more campuses planned of which three are currently under construction.

Contact details for TVET Colleges, further general information about the colleges as well as assistance, can be found on the website www.tvetcolleges.co.za

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APPEARING IN ALL THE FOLLOWING PUBLICATIONS

THE **independent** SUNDAY

SUNDAY TRIBUNE

Weekend Argus

AFRICAN INDEPENDENT

Extensive interventions in every one of the 50 colleges aim to bring governance, management and financial practices in line with international best practice