



OFFICIAL GUIDE TO SOUTH AFRICA 2017/18

Education

Basic education

All South Africans have a right to basic education and the Bill of Rights obliges the government to progressively make education available and accessible through reasonable measures. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is responsible for Outcome 1 (quality basic education) of government's Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2014-2019.

The aim of the DBE, which deals with all schools from Grade R to Grade 12, is to develop, maintain and support a South African school education system for the 21st century.

The department continues to focus on:

- accelerating delivery and improving school infrastructure;
- enhancing teaching and learning by ensuring access to high quality learner and teacher support materials; improving grade 12 completion rates;
- providing educational opportunities to learners with severe to profound intellectual disabilities;
- increasing the supply of quality teachers;
- monitoring performance; and providing nutritious meals to learners in schools through the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP).

The NSNP continues to contribute to the NDP's priority of eliminating poverty and supporting food security by providing meals to schools, feeding over nine million learners each year in quintile 1 to 3 schools.

Providing school infrastructure

The DBE aimed to complete remaining infrastructure projects to eliminate backlogs and replace unsafe school structures. It planned to replace 50 inappropriate and unsafe schools with newly built schools, and also provide water to 325 schools and sanitation to 286 schools in the 2018/19 financial year.

School attendance

According to the General Household Survey 2017, nationally, 32,3% of individuals aged five years and older attended an educational institution. Approximately 87,5% of South African individuals above the age of five years who attended educational institutions, attended school, while a further 4,5% attended tertiary institutions.

By comparison, only 2,1% of individuals attended Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. Whilst the percentage in this broad age group has not changed, at peak ages of 7–15 years, attendance is almost universal.

Just over a fifth (21,8%) of premature school leavers in this age group mentioned 'a lack of money' as the reason for not studying, while 18,9% reportedly fell out due to poor academic performance.

Although 9,7% of individuals left their studies as a result of family commitments (i.e. getting married, minding children and pregnancy), it is noticeable that a larger percentage of females than males offered this as a reason (18,5% compared to 0,4%).

Whilst this observation is accurate, the data also suggest that the 'No fee' school system and other funding initiatives are beginning to show improved results. The percentage of learners who reported that they were exempted from paying tuition fees increased from 0,4% in 2002 to 66,0% in 2017.

Provincially, 91,4% of learners in Limpopo and 76,6% of learners in Eastern Cape attended no-fee schools, compared to 48,8% of learners in Western Cape and 48,5% of learners in Gauteng.

There were approximately 14 million learners at school in 2017, of which 5,9% attended private schools. Three-quarters (77,3%) of learners who attended public schools benefited from

school feeding schemes. Furthermore, 68,1% of learners walked to school, while 8,2% used private vehicles.

Generally, the percentage of learners who experienced corporal punishment at school in 2017 has decreased nationally since 2009 and 6,8% of learners reportedly experienced corporal punishment at school in 2017.

Corporal punishment was most common at schools in Eastern Cape (12,7%) and Free State (12,6%). In terms of metros, it was most common at schools in Mangaung (14,9%). Approximately 686 000 students were enrolled at higher educational institutions during 2017. More than two-thirds (66,4%) of these students were black African. However, proportionally this group is still under-represented.

Only 3,4% of black Africans aged 18 to 29 years were studying as opposed to 13,8% of Indian/Asian individuals and 18% of the white population in this age group. Only 3,5% of the coloured population was studying during 2017.

Educational attainment outcomes continue to improve with improved access to educational facilities and services. Among individuals aged 20 years and older, the percentage who attained Grade 12 as their highest level of education increased from 30,7% in 2002 to 43,6% in 2017. Furthermore the percentage of individuals with tertiary qualifications improved from 9,2% to 13,9%.

The percentage of individuals without any schooling decreased from 11,4% in 2002 to 4,7% in 2017. Although results show that there were declines in percentages of persons who had no formal schooling in all the provinces over the period 2002 to 2017.

Whilst functional illiteracy declined from 27,3% in 2002 to 13,7% in 2017, improved access to schooling has led to a significant decline in the percentage of functionally illiterate individuals in the 20–39 age group.

Between 2002 and 2017, the prevalence of functional illiteracy in the age group 20–39 years declined noticeably for both men (17,1% to 6,0%) and women (15,8% to 3,5%). The adult literacy rate, however, lagged behind the national average (94,3%) in provinces such as Northern Cape (89,5%), North West (89,6%) and Limpopo (89,9%).

Enhancing teaching and learning

Ensuring access to high quality learning and teaching support materials, and ensuring they are used effectively, is critical to improving curriculum delivery.

The DBE continues to focus on providing well designed print and digital content to teachers and learners; expanding access to and improving the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) at schools; and providing teachers with essential tools and support.

Interventions in the foundation phase have the most significant impact on learning outcomes in the long term.

The Action Plan to 2019: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2030 emphasises the importance of early grade teaching to increase the number of learners in Grade 3, who by the end of the year, have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies.

The Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS) aims to address the cognitive levels of literacy challenges. The EGRS uses formal impact evaluation methods to investigate new ways to improve reading outcomes in the foundation phase.

It points to the potential value of providing teachers with lesson plans, additional reading materials and on-site coaching, as a way to improve reading in African Languages. Steps were also underway to conduct a similar Early Grade Mathematics Project to investigate cost-effective policy and programmatic interventions to improve Foundation Phase Mathematics.

To promote and improve on the foundational skills of reading, writing and counting, as well

as having the basic necessities in place for quality teaching and learning to take place, the department, in partnership with the National Education Collaboration Trust, rolled out the Primary School Reading Improvement Programme for 11 000 Foundation Phase teachers across all provinces.

The DBE continued its focus on the Read to Lead Campaign, whose mandate is to mobilise society at large to contribute to the improvement of reading abilities of all South African children, in order to ensure that by 2019 all learners are able to demonstrate age-appropriate levels of reading.

To improve the performance of South African learners in international assessments, particularly in mathematics, science and technology, the department aims to increase learner participation and success rates in these subjects by providing ICT equipment, laboratories and related apparatus, workshops and equipment, teacher development, and learner and teacher support materials to 1 000 schools.

The department collaborates with ICT businesses such as Vodacom and Microsoft, and international organisations such as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, to provide professional development for educators.

It will also procure and provide offline e-library solutions to 100 schools and upgrade the Thutong education portal, which offers support for teachers and learners in various subjects.

Expanding access to Early Childhood Development (ECD)

Research confirms that addressing the ECD needs of those aged 0–4 years pays significant dividends. South Africa has, in this regard, made access to comprehensive ECD programmes a very important educational priority.

The ECD programmes are offered at daycare centres, crèches, playgroups, nursery schools and in pre-primary schools. By mid-2018, approximately 42,8% of South African children aged 0–4 years attended daycare or educational facilities outside their homes. The highest attendance was reported in Gauteng (55,5%) and Free State (51,8%). A much lower enrolment was, however, observed amongst children in KwaZulu-Natal (30,9%) and North West (35,5%).

The DBE continues to work with the Department of Social Development in expanding access to ECD. A Sector Plan and the Human Resources Strategy for the Employment of Qualified ECD Practitioners within schools, were developed.

The department has since introduced the National Curriculum Framework for Children from birth to four years, which will assist in regulating and monitoring the curriculum offered at all ECD centres across the country.

The DBE's goal is to increase access to these services so that children, including those with special needs, can be accommodated, over and above improving the quality of the comprehensive package of services offered at these centres.

About one million children are accommodated at various ECD centres in all provinces and thus far, more than 21 000 ECD teachers have been trained.

Improving matric completion rates

The Second Chance Programme intends to increase the number of young people obtaining a matric qualification. In 2018/19, a total 25 000 learners were expected to enrol in the programme, which would offer support in 11 key subjects such as mathematics and science, as well as all home languages.

Face-to-face classes will be extended to 80 venues across South Africa with two teachers per subject, per venue. The plan over the long term is to make the programme virtual through broadcast and video lessons developed by universities and the department.

Support will also be provided at 40 broadcast centres nationally, which will transmit lessons on the OpenView satellite platform to about one million households. All content will also be

available to candidates on DVD.

Online support will be provided on the department's website and Facebook page, and offline support at 82 sites nationally. Learners will be able to access support at community libraries, Vodacom centres and teacher centres across South Africa. Learner and teacher support materials will be printed and distributed to sites and learners on demand.

Support for learners with intellectual disabilities

The DBE has introduced the Learners with Profound Intellectual Disabilities Grant to improve the provision of quality education and support to learners with profound disabilities who are not in schools, and ensure that these learners are incrementally included in schools.

The department focuses on providing access to quality, publicly funded education and support to learners of school-going age with severe to profound intellectual disabilities who are not enrolled in school and whose education is not publicly funded through the grant.

National Integrated Assessment Framework (NIAF)

The annual national assessments, and the department's diagnostic of teaching and learning in the foundation and intermediate phases of schooling, have been discontinued and were replaced by the NIAF in 2018.

The framework aims to address the shortcomings of previous assessments with three complementary tiers of assessment (systemic evaluation, diagnostic assessment and summative assessment).

The department will focus on systemic evaluation, which will be conducted with a sample of learners in grades 3, 6 and 9 for a three-year cycle, and will monitor learner performance and report on the quality of learning outcomes.

In 2019/20, the department plans to conduct the school monitoring survey, a national survey in public schools that monitors progress towards the achievement of key goals and indicators in Action Plan 2019.

This plan details the direction the basic education sector will take to achieve the goals set out in the NDP and Outcome 1 (quality basic education) of government's 2014-2019 MTFS.

The survey will provide the sector with updated information on the indicators and delivery agreement of the plan.

Curriculum and Policy Statement (CAPS)

CAPS is a single, comprehensive and concise policy document which has replaced the Subject and Learning Area Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all the subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12.

Role players

Provincial departments of basic education

The DBE shares a concurrent role with the provincial departments for basic schooling and ECD, but it is the responsibility of each provincial department to finance and manage its schools directly. District offices are the provincial departments' main interface with schools.

South African Council for Educators (SACE)

The core functions of SACE are registration, promotion and professional development of educators, as well as setting, maintaining and protecting the ethical and professional standards of educators.

Umalusi

Umalusi is responsible for developing and maintaining a sub-framework of qualifications for the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Subframework (NQF Level 1 – 4) and the quality assurance of these qualifications. The Xhosa name means “herder” or “shepherd.”

Programmes and projects

Learning and teaching support material Educational portal

Through the Thutong Portal (www.thutong.doe.gov.za), the DBE aims to lead the drive to improve learning in the country through appropriate use of technology.

The Thutong Portal is the online point of entry to a comprehensive array of free educational resources, policy information, and interactive services concerning all aspects of the South African schooling sector. It provides relevant information and services about the South African school curriculum, teacher development, school administration and management.

Thutong – meaning “a place of learning” in Setswana – features a searchable database of web-based curriculum resources for various education sectors, grades and subjects.

School fees and exemption

School fees are set at annual public meetings of school governing bodies (SGBs), where parents vote on the amount to be paid.

Parents who cannot afford to pay school fees can apply to the SGB for conditional, partial or full exemption from paying school fees. Schools must not charge school fees for orphans.

The right not to charge school fees will be limited to the schools that have been declared no-fee schools. The names of the no-fee schools, which are determined based on the economic level of the community around the school, will be published in a provincial gazette.

Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiative (ASIDI)

The objective of ASIDI is to eradicate the backlog in schools without water, sanitation and electricity, and to replace schools constructed from inappropriate material such as mud, and asbestos to contribute towards levels of optimum learning and teaching.

Higher education and training

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) derives its mandate from the:

- Higher Education Act of 1997, which provides for a unified national system of higher education
- National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act of 1999, which provides for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students attending public higher education and training institutions, and the subsequent administration of such loans and bursaries
- Continuing Education and Training Colleges Act of 2006, which provides for the regulation of continuing education and training, the establishment of governance structures for and the funding of public TVET colleges and community education and training colleges, the registration of private colleges, and the promotion of quality in continuing education and training
- Skills Development Levies Act of 1999, which provides for the imposition of skills development levies
- Skills Development Act of 2008, which enables the creation of the National Skills Agency; the establishment of the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations; and the regulation of apprenticeships, learnerships and other matters relating to skills development
- National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act of 2008, which provides for the NQF, the South African Qualifications Authority and quality councils, for the issuing and quality assurance of qualifications required on the sub-frameworks of the NQF.

The NDP envisages that by 2030, South Africans should have access to a post-school education system that empowers them to fulfil their potential. Outcome 5 (a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path) of government's MTSF gives effect to this vision, stating that graduates of the post-school system should possess the skills and knowledge that allow them to meet the current and future needs of society and the economy.

Outcome 5 also highlights the need to expand access to programmes that address the labour market's need for intermediate skills and include a practical component.

The DHET is responsible for post-school education and training in universities, colleges and adult education centres.

The objective of the Post-School Education and Training function is that all South Africans have equitable access to relevant and quality post-school education and training.

New interventions continue to emerge and mature in support of integration in the post-school system. These include the Central Applications Service, the Career Development Services, and the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training, which will provide support for curriculum development and staff professional development in the TVET and community college sub-systems.

Institutions of higher learning

South Africa's higher education landscape comprises the following institutions:

- Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- Central University of Technology, Free State
- Durban Institute of Technology
- Mangosuthu University of Technology
- National Institute for Higher Education, Northern Cape
- National Institute for Higher Education, Mpumalanga
- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
- North West University
- Rhodes University
- Sol Plaatje University, Eastern Cape
- Tshwane University of Technology
- University of Cape Town
- University of Fort Hare
- University of the Free State
- University of Johannesburg
- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- University of Limpopo
- University of Mpumalanga
- University of Pretoria
- University of South Africa
- University of Stellenbosch
- University of Venda
- University of the Western Cape
- University of the Witwatersrand
- University of Zululand
- Vaal University of Technology
- Walter Sisulu University, Eastern Cape
- Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training

TVET comprises vocational, occupational and artisan education and training as offered by

TVET colleges. This band of education and training is also referred to as 'post-school', meaning that it refers to education and training that takes place after leaving school, even if only with a Grade 9 completed.

The only age restriction for a person wishing to study at the TVET level is that the person should be 16 years or older. There are 50 registered and accredited public TVET colleges in South Africa operating on more than 264 campuses spread across the rural and urban areas of the country.

The Centres of Specialisation Project contributes towards building capacity of the public TVET College system to deliver trade qualifications with employer partners.

Following a period of intensive research, the DHET established 13 trades that are particularly in short supply.

The department has contracted with four industry associations – the Steel and Engineering Industries of Southern Africa, the Retail Motor Industries, the Southern African Institute of Welding and the Institute of Plumbers of South Africa – to help upgrade two colleges per trade with a total of 26 colleges.

Role players

South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

SAQA is a statutory body that oversees the development of the NQF by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the registration of organisations. It also oversees the implementation of the national framework by ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions.

Council on Higher Education (CHE)

The CHE is an independent statutory body to advise the Minister, monitor trends in the higher education system and assure and promote the quality of higher education.

The CHE also has the mandate to audit higher education institutions, accredit programmes offered, develop a higher education qualifications framework and set standards.

Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)

The primary functions of the QCTO are to design and develop occupational standards and qualifications and to submit these to SAQA for registration on the NQF, establish and maintain occupational standards and qualifications, ensure the quality of occupational standards and qualifications and learning in and for the workplace, promote the objectives of the NQF, liaise with the National Skills Authority (NSA) on the suitability and adequacy of occupational standards and qualifications, and on the quality of learning in and for the workplace.

Sector education and training authorities (SETAs)

SETAs continue to strengthen and deliver relevant priority skills to South Africa's labour market, with particular emphasis on artisan development, apprenticeships, learnerships, internships and bursaries; and partnerships with TVET colleges, universities and the market to provide work experience opportunities

SETAs are mandated by the Skills Development Act of 1998 to implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve skills in the South African workforce; provide learnerships that lead to a recognised occupational qualification and fund skills development.

The authorities derive their objectives directly from the third National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which aims to: increase access to occupationally directed programmes; promote the growth of public TVET colleges; address low levels of youth and adult literacy and numeracy skills; and encourage the better use of workplace-based skills development.

These objectives are in line with Outcome 5 (a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path) of government's MTSF 2014-2019.

National Skills Authority

The NSA is an advisory body to give guidance to the Minister of Higher Education and Training on:

- policy, strategy, implementation and NSA allocations
- liaising with SETAs about policy, strategy and sector-skills plans
- implementing the NSDS
- reviewing the accounts and balance sheet of NSA annually
- receiving and using information from the Skills Development Planning Unit.

National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

The NSFAS is responsible for providing loans and bursaries, developing criteria and conditions for the granting of loans and bursaries to eligible students, raising funds, recovering loans, maintaining and analysing a database of funded students, undertaking research for the better use of financial resources and advising the Minister on matters relating to student financial aid.

In December 2017, government announced the implementation of fully subsidised free higher education and training for poor and working class South African students, starting with students in their first year of study at public universities. The NSFAS established the Departmental Bursary Scheme for Poor and Working Class Students in universities.

In February 2018, the Minister of Finance announced substantial new funding of R33.020 billion over the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) to enable the new Departmental Bursary Scheme to be implemented.

The funding will support approximately 84 000 First-time Entry students from families earning up to R350 000 per year, as well as ensure that all senior NSFAS qualifying students from families earning up to R122 000 per year are supported through grants rather than loans.

In addition, the Minister of Finance announced new funding for university subsidies amounting to R2.445 billion in 2018/19 and R11.309 billion over the MTEF. This will increase the subsidies to the university system provided through the Department from 0.68% of gross domestic product (GDP) to 1% of GDP by 2022/23.