



Pocket Guide to South Africa 2008/09
EDUCATION

The right to education is enshrined in South Africa's Bill of Rights, not only for children but also for adults.



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Formal education in South Africa is categorised according to three levels – General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education (HE) structures.

South Africa has a single national education system, which is organised and managed by the national Department of Education and the nine provincial departments.

Statutory bodies include the Council of Education Ministers, Heads of the Education Department's Committee, General and FET Quality Assurance Council, South African Qualifications Authority, Council on HE, South African Council for Educators, National Board for FET, Education Labour Relations Council and the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS).

Quality Improvement, Development, Support and Upliftment Programme (QIDS-UP)

QIDS-UP is a five-year special intervention programme that prioritises 15 000 primary schools serving the poorest communities. The focus of the programme is to improve school infrastructure, supply curriculum resources and teacher and school management support towards improving learning outcomes. The programme also seeks to address the impact of poverty in schools.

Greater emphasis is placed on improving school infrastructure.

In 2008/09, 1 000 schools in seven provinces were improved (renovations, water and fencing) at a cost of R76,5 million. During 2008, 11 000 schools received reading books, including reading books in indigenous languages for 2 200 schools.

A manual on school self-evaluation and improvement to support school managers was delivered to schools in October 2008.

The National Learner Unit Record Information and Tracking System will track the movement of learners from Grade R to Grade 12 between schools and provinces. When a learner is registered on the system, he/she is assigned a unique national learner tracking number that will remain with the learner throughout his/her schooling career. By May 2008, the system had been implemented incrementally in ordinary and special schools and will be fully operational in all provinces and schools by March 2010.





By September 2008, 58% of public ordinary schools were declared as no-fee schools, benefitting more than five million learners in 14 264 schools.



Policy

Schooling is compulsory between the ages of seven and 15. All learners are guaranteed access to quality learning. There are two types of schools: independent (private) and public.

At public schools, parents vote on the level of school fees. Poor parents are given exemption or reductions.

Learners

By mid-2007, the South African public education system had 12,3 million learners, 387 000 educators and about 26 592 schools, including 400 special-needs schools and 1 000 registered private schools. Of all schools, 6 000 were secondary schools (grades 8 to 12) and the rest were primary (grades 1 to 7) schools.

Learners attend school for 13 years. The first year of education, Grade R or reception year, and the last three years are not compulsory. Many primary schools offer Grade R, which can also be completed at nursery school.

In 2008, Grade 12 learners wrote the first National Senior Certificate based on the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS). A number of 589 912 learners enrolled for the NCS examinations. The pass rate was 62,5%.

Curriculum development

The NCS aims to develop the full potential of all learners as citizens of a democratic South Africa.

It seeks to create a lifelong learner who is confident and independent; literate, numerate and multiskilled; and compassionate, with a respect for the environment and the ability to participate in society as a critical and active citizen.

The NCS is available in all 11 official languages and in Braille, in keeping with the Constitution, which grants parity of esteem to all languages.



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It requires learners in grades 10 to 12 to do four compulsory subjects, namely two official languages, Mathematical Literacy or Mathematics and Life Orientation. In addition, learners must select three approved subjects.

The NCS has been implemented incrementally.

Further Education and Training

South Africa has 50 multisite-campus FET colleges.

Each new college operates under a single governing council appointed to oversee effective and accountable management across and within the various FET college campuses and sites.

The recorded increase in student intake, the development of new programmes and increased participation in learnerships bear testimony to the potential for growth in this sector.

The FET College Financial Aid Scheme has commenced for students at Level 2 of the National Certificate (Vocational) and was extended to students on levels 3 and 4 in 2008 and 2009 respectively. These bursaries are administered by the NSFAS on behalf of the Department of Education.

The third and final year of recapitalisation of the FET colleges began in April 2008. Detailed plans from all 50 FET colleges for the expenditure of R795 million on infrastructure, equipment and human resources have been submitted and approved by Cabinet.

Some R397,5 million was transferred to colleges in May 2008.

FET provides learning and training from National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels 2 to 4, or the equivalent of grades 10 to 12 in the school system, and a FET Certificate (FETC) in General Vocational and in Trade Occupational, on NQF levels 2 to 4 in FET colleges. The FETC replaced the existing Senior Certificate in 2008.

Educators are required to register with the South African Council of Educators (SACE) before they are employed by any authority. The SACE has a register of about 500 000 educators, of whom 22 000 are registered provisionally.





Higher Education transformation

According to a strategic plan for HE, enrolment at HE institutions will rise from 15% to 20% of school leavers within 15 years.

Within five years, enrolments in the humanities will decline, while those in business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology (SET) will rise.

In 2008/09, the Department of Education's budget totalled R18,5 billion, of which R15,1 billion was transferred to HE institutions as block grants or earmarked funds (for the NSFAS, foundation programmes, infrastructure, or efficiency allocations).

The National Plan for HE seeks to expand enrolment by setting a target of a 20% participation rate by 2015.

It proposed a shift in the balance of enrolments to a ratio of 40%: 30%: 30% in the humanities: business and commerce: SET, respectively, over the period 2001 to 2010.

The HE landscape consists of the following institutions:

- University of the Witwatersrand
- University of Cape Town
- University of Stellenbosch
- Rhodes University
- University of the Western Cape (which incorporated the Dental Faculty of Stellenbosch University)
- University of Zululand
- University of Venda
- University of the Free State (which incorporated the QwaQwa Campus of the University of the North and the Bloemfontein Campus of Vista)

By May 2008, seven million learners in 18 039 schools had access to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) and there were 6 390 food gardens in schools.

A total of 18 305 monitoring visits were made to schools by province and district officials. Some 1 630 community-based service-providers were providing food supplies to schools. About 26 408 food handlers were working on the programme and receiving an honorarium ranging between R300 and R500 per month. In 2007/08, the NSNP was allocated a budget of R1,152 billion, of which 100% was spent by 31 March 2008.





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- North West University (which incorporated the Potchefstroom University for Christian HE and Vista Sebokeng Campus)
- University of Pretoria (which retained its name after incorporating the Mamelodi Campus of Vista University)
- University of South Africa (which retained its name after merging with the Vista University Distance Education Campus and Technikon SA)
- Tshwane University of Technology (from the merger of the Pretoria, North West and Northern Gauteng technikons)
- Durban Institute of Technology (from the merger of Natal Technikon and Technikon ML Sultan)
- Central University of Technology (formerly Technikon Free State)
- Mangosuthu Technikon
- University of Johannesburg (from the merger of the Rand Afrikaans University with Technikon Witwatersrand, which incorporated the Soweto and East Rand campuses of Vista University)
- University of Limpopo (from the merger of the Medical University of South Africa and the University of the North)

The Kha Ri Gude (meaning “let us learn”) mass literacy campaign was officially launched in February 2008. Government will spend R6,1 billion over five years to enable 4,7 million South Africans to achieve literacy by 2010.



The campaign is aimed at reducing adult illiteracy by:

- mobilising potential learners, educators and other support personnel to participate in the campaign
- developing learner and educator-support material
- setting up relevant systems at national, provincial and district level to facilitate national implementation of the campaign
- establishing and maintaining a database of 4,7 million learners and 40 000 educators over the campaign period.

By August 2008, progress included the:

- enrolment of 360 000 learners
- recruitment and training of volunteer educators, 2 800 supervisors and 150 co-ordinators.

In the same month, blind unemployed matriculants were trained to teach basic Braille literacy to the visually impaired.



- Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (from the merger of the University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth Technikon and Port Elizabeth Campus of Vista)
- University of Fort Hare (which incorporated the East London Campus of Rhodes University)
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (from the merger of the Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon)
- Vaal University of Technology (formerly Vaal Triangle Technikon)
- Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science (from the merger of the University of Transkei, Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon)
- National Institute for HE, Northern Cape
- National Institute for HE, Mpumalanga.

The Dinaledi schools are mainly located in historically disadvantaged communities. The Dinaledi initiative is part of the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition and focus on Mathematics and Science.



In 2008, 300 Mathematics and Science textbooks were delivered to 488 Dinaledi schools. The number of Dinaledi schools was increased to 500 as part of government's effort to double the number of Grade 12 Mathematics passes to 50 000 by 2009.

