

# HIGHER EDUCUCATION AND TRAINING



## POCKET GUIDE ON THE COMPLETION OF THE 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR & THE START OF THE 2021 ACADEMIC YEAR



**#SaveLives #SaveTheAcademicYear**

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



## THE COMPLETION OF THE 2020 ACADEMIC YEAR & THE START OF THE 2021 ACADEMIC YEAR

### PLAN

#### WHAT TO DO

##### UNIVERSITIES

###### The 2020 Academic Year

While many institutions have completed the formal teaching programmes for the academic year, some are still finishing academic programmes, and providing catch-up opportunities for students. In some institutions, assessments and practicals are still to be completed in some programmes, and in others, supplementary examinations are underway. All institutions are following different academic plans to account for different programme requirements and different conditions. Ten institutions have already completed all teaching and learning activities, including the examinations in 2020, and are just finalising special examinations. The remaining sixteen institutions are completing the academic year at different times and in different forms, depending on their own academic timetables, and while utilising various methods to support students to complete. All institutions are urged to continue to communicate their detailed programmes with all their stakeholders, particularly with students, prospective students, parents and employees, so that they remain informed at all material times on the roll-out of the institutional programme for proper decision making. Through the support of all stakeholders, we should successfully complete the academic year by the end of February for the vast majority of institutions and by March for all institutions.

###### Enrolment planning and management of the 2021 process

All institutions have aligned the start of the 2021 Academic Year for first time entrants with the availability of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) National Senior Certificate examination results. The Department will work closely with institutions in preparing the system for the opening of the 2021 academic year which will take place between early-March and mid-April this year.

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##### TVET COLLEGES

The approved 2021 Academic Calendar still applies and will be adhered to. Students will return in a staggered manner, on 25 January 2021 and on 1, 8 and 15 February 2021. Remote learning support will be in place for students who will return in February 2021. The return of trimester students will be prioritised given the compressed study time for these students, and N5 and N6 students will return before N4 students. This will allow for walk-ins to be better managed. Presently colleges with the systems in place are continuing with online registrations. For the remainder, colleges have put systems in place to observe all COVID-19 protocols to avert the spread of infections. More information will be communicated to colleges in the coming week following consultations about the return of staff and students, especially in COVID-19 hotspot areas.

##### COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Community Education and Training Colleges completed the 2020 academic year, which culminated in the examination and assessment that ended at the end of November 2020. The process of marking of the student scripts by all nine provinces is underway. To ensure the safe return of staff and students to the centres, and also informed by the DBE's revised academic programme, the CET colleges' 2021 Academic Calendar will change accordingly with lecturing and support staff reporting at their centres on 1 February 2021. The teaching and learning programme will start on 15 February 2021.

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##### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) have resumed with their activities especially with regards to the workplace-based learning activities, e.g. between the first and second quarter of 2020, the learnerships intake increased from 3 432 to 10 984; skills programmes from 710 to 5 815; student placements from 756 to 3 000. For artisan development, trade testing continues within a limited scope in compliance with the adjusted alert level 3 regulations.

##### HIGHER HEALTH

During the lockdown over 100,000 students, across our campuses, continued receiving HIV services, and contraceptive support. Thousands of young women received access to reporting and subsequent GBV support services, and the HIGHER HEALTH 24-hour student helpline for Mental Health and GBV established in August 2020, has to date managed more than 5 000 crisis calls.

This year the HIGHER HEALTH team began retraining all our institutional and campus COVID-19 task teams in order to respond to the pandemic. Further rigorous training on campus has started for frontline workers, student and staff volunteers so they can be redeployed across our campuses to manage COVID-19. HIGHER HEALTH will also work with each institution to strengthen daily screening of staff, students and any service provider entering our campuses.

We have capacitated and developed over 30 000 campus-based frontline institutional staff and student volunteers. Among them are residence officers (on-campus, off-campus and private accommodation), management, student support services, campus security and the cleaning staff. This existing capacity will be directed to assist as we deal with the second wave through the re-establishment of screening stations

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close to campus entrances. These in-person resources are supported by the HIGHER HEALTH digital screening tool, HealthCheck, which provides a digital passport to students and staff on a daily basis. This tool assists with early detection, isolation (before leaving home/residence), and decreased congestion at security gates. Thus far over 7.7 million screenings have been done by over 1.6 million students and staff since its launch in early June 2020.

#### NSFAS APPLICATIONS PROCESS

NSFAS recorded over 750 000 applications for the 2021 academic year, which is a significant increase of approximately 185 000 applications on the 2020 applications, and shows a high level of demand for funding support and access to higher education and training opportunities. The evaluation of applications process commenced in December 2020 and is well underway, and is due to be completed in mid-February, which will be in time for funding decisions to be communicated in time for students registering for the new academic year.

#### LAPTOPS

NSFAS is engaging with service providers to develop the implementation process, including specifications, ordering, order turnaround times, delivery, payment terms, warranty, support and maintenance. At the same time NSFAS is finalising the implementation guidelines for universities and TVET colleges, which will be consulted with institutions before implementation. NSFAS aims to complete these processes over the next few weeks, and once that is done, they will communicate specific dates to the institutions. It is anticipated that NSFAS will be able to start the rolling out the first batch of devices for delivery when the 2021 academic programme resumes in March.

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##### DATA

As the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system, working in collaboration with the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies, we will soon resume negotiations with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) for a long-term solution to the provision of data for students within the PSET system. The DHET will be engaging with the MNOs, inter alia, MTN, Telkom and Vodacom, Cell C etc. with the intention that data becomes accessible to students. We will also ensure that the zero-rating of educational websites remains a critical point. Lastly where students cannot be granted data and connectivity in areas with poor network infrastructure, we will be working towards innovative mechanisms for ensuring that they access teaching and learning support material.

*Read Minister Blade Nzimande's full statement from the briefing  
of 18 January 2020 on [www.dhet.gov.za](http://www.dhet.gov.za)*