

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NO. 1177

06 NOVEMBER 2020

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACT NO. 16 OF 2006 AS AMENDED/ NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK ACT NO. 67 OF 2008, AS AMENDED**CALL FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES TO TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) COLLEGES PROGRAMMES.**


I, Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, in terms of section 41D(3) read with 41B(4) of the Continuing Education and Training Act, 2006 and further read with section 8(2)(b) of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008, hereby call for public comments on the proposed changes to TVET colleges programmes as set out in the Schedule below.

All interested parties, persons and/or organisations are invited to submit their comments in writing and same must be directed to:

The Director-General
Department of Higher Education and Training
Private Bag X174
PRETORIA
0001

For the attention of: Mr T Vele, E-mail: vele.t@dhet.gov.za

Comments must clearly reflect the name, address and contact details (i.e. telephone and email address) of the person or organisation submitting the comments. Comments should reach the Department of Higher Education and Training within 21 working days of the publication of this Notice.


Dr BE Nzimande, MP
Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation
Date: 6/11/2020

SCHEDULE

PROPOSED CHANGES TO TVET COLLEGES PROGRAMMES

Background

The White Paper on Post School Education and Training (2013), sets a clear mandate for TVET Colleges as the primary institutions for delivery of mid-level skills. In terms of this mandate TVET colleges must produce graduates who will:

- enter employment;
- be self-employed; or
- pursue further studies

The TVET landscape has historically only centred on the Report 191 (NATED) qualifications, which largely shaped how these institutions were structured and how they operated. The introduction of the National Curriculum Vocational (NCV) in 2007 marked a shift in the status quo, however intentions to phase out the NATED programmes were abandoned and over time the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Branch has struggled to position and define the purpose of TVET colleges, which were expected to meet competing demands and expectations. This resulted in a range of qualifications being offered which became difficult to understand by industry and students alike, and became more complex with the introduction of what is commonly called 'occupational qualifications' registered on the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF). In addition it is a challenge to manage the scale of national examinations in the college sector, and this has raised many quality issues around student assessments and certification.

Several discussions have been held at various forums around the preferred and necessary focus of TVET colleges, including the implications of the range of qualifications offered and the burden on the national examinations system. Much of this is documented in the National

Plan for Post-School Education and Training (PSET), in its 14th iteration, dated 24 April 2019.

The rapid changes to the skills needed by the South African and global economies as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution necessitates the TVET sector to align its programme offerings and curriculum accordingly. In this regard, a position paper which proposes changes to the programmes offered by TVET colleges was developed by the Department of Higher Education and Training and approved by the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

Proposed changes

1. Phasing out of N1 – N3 programmes

With the phasing out of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) for Colleges from 2020 (see *Repeal of policy and transitional arrangements for the National Senior Certificate (Colleges) programmes – NATED 190/191*), completing the four N3 engineering subjects, together with Business English and Sake Afrikaans no longer enable students to qualify for an NSC equivalent qualification. The absence of the NSC for Colleges therefore limits the N3 certificate progression and articulation opportunities. There are now at least four other routes that students can follow in preparation for Artisan Trade Tests in the absence of the N2 certificate. The alternative routes are as follows:

a) A Technical trade theory programme quality assured by a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) deemed to be equivalent to

NQF level 3; or

b) A Relevant Engineering NCV Certificate with seven subjects at NQF level 3; or

c) The Technical Grade 11 with Mathematics, Science, Language and one related trade theory subject; or

d) A Relevant (directly related to the trade theory subjects) N6 Certificate or National Technical Diploma (T, S or N stream.)

The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations has registered occupational qualifications at NQF level 4 in the same Engineering fields as the N1 – N3 programmes. The occupational qualifications registered by the QCTO are structured with compulsory workplace components which is beneficial to students and more aligned to the industry needs.

Based on the above, it is proposed that:

- N1, N2 and N3 programmes be phased out over the next three academic years namely 2021, 2022 and 2023.
- From 2022 no new N1, N2 and N3 students be enrolled but examinations will still be offered for the remaining two years. This will give students that are in the pipeline more opportunities to complete the N1 – N3 qualification.
- The QCTO registered occupational qualifications in the relevant Engineering fields to be phased in in TVET Colleges to replace the N1 – N3 programmes as from 2022.

2. Convert the National Certificates (Vocational) into a single 3 year qualification

Take-up of the NC(V) in the last few years has been declining. However, the NC(V) remains a very useful qualification for those students who did not complete Matric, and who either cannot or do not wish to return to school to complete Matric. It offers strong learning foundations to enable academically motivated students to pursue higher levels of vocational learning even beyond the TVET college system. The NC(V) has also been found to provide a vocational avenue to students who passed Grade 12 but did so very poorly and cannot access other learning opportunities. The NC(V) offers quality education and training to students who have chosen a vocational pathway and wish to pursue studies in line with their choice, without forfeiting the broader learning foundations that are important for higher learning opportunities. Although the qualification does not require compulsory workplace experience, it has substantial practical learning infused into the core curricula. NC(V) levels 2

and 3 do not have specific destinations for students to market themselves, hence the Levels 2 and 3 certificates by themselves have little market value.

Based on the above, it is proposed that:

- Some of the NC(V) programmes be rationalised based on poor take-up (as reflected in student enrolments over the last 3 years);
- The NC(V) be changed/converted to a single 3-year qualification with an external examination only at the end of the 3rd year at Level 4 from 2024. A phased-in approach to internalising the examinations should be followed for levels 2 and 3, while level 4 will remain externally examined.
- No external examination for levels 2 and 3 to be conducted from 2024

3. NATED Engineering Studies N4 –N6 programmes and the National N Diploma

Take-up of Engineering Studies at N4-N6 is incongruent with the historical take-up of N1-N3, which suggests that the majority of students who complete N3 do not progress into N4. Entry into N4 requires the National Senior Certificate or an equivalent as the entry requirement. Nonetheless there is a purpose towards the National N Diploma, which is made up of N4-N6 (3 trimesters) and 24 months of work experience, even though issues around its curriculum have been raised. The curriculum needs to be updated to ensure that deeper and current technical knowledge as well as a campus based practical component are incorporated into the engineering programmes. There are National N Diplomas in Engineering Studies that still have relevance and can serve a purpose to those students with the NSC, provided the student has technical subjects which will allow for progression into the N4 Engineering studies.

Based on the above it is proposed that:

- All the N4, N5 and N6 programmes be changed from trimester to semester programmes (6 months) with additional curriculum components to keep up with industry changes
- the experiential learning requirement for the National N Diplomas in Engineering Studies be changed from 24 months to 18 Months
- the students enrolled on the Trimester based National N Diploma during the transition period to be allowed to complete the 24 months experiential learning accordingly
- the above changes be phased in from 2024