

Budget Vote Speech by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande, MP
8 May 2013

Context:

For the 2013 Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) the department's budget (excluding direct charges) increases at an annual average rate of 7.8% over the 3 years, from R31.6 billion in 2012/13 to R39.5 billion in 2015/16.

Colleges:

Top priority is to expand and improve the quality of further education and training colleges, soon to be renamed Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

R2.5 billion set aside for capacity building and programme expansion to focus on:

- Expansion of enrolments (R2 billion) - establishing 12 new FET college campuses and significantly upgrading two existing campuses. The first student intake for these additional campuses will be in 2014.
- Building institutional capacity (R365.5 million).
- Upgrading of equipment (R192 million).

FET College Turnaround Strategy in place to focus on building college capacity in:

- Management.
- Governance and leadership.
- Financial management.
- Human resource management.
- Teaching and learning.
- Student support services.

Additional DHET interventions in colleges:

- Appointed 48 Chartered Accountants as Chief Financial Officers at FET Colleges
- Appointed 20 Human Resources Specialists to support clusters of colleges to set up human resource systems, procedures and policies in each college.
- Create management, governance and leadership stability in FET Colleges by filling all vacant senior management posts, appointing college councils, and electing student leadership.
- Transfer of authority over FET College management staff from the Provincial Departments of Education to the DHET with effect from 1 April 2013.
- A Policy on the Professional Qualifications for Lecturers in Technical and Vocational Education and Training has been finalised and will be gazetted within the next month. This policy will establish a coherent set of qualifications for college lecturers.
- Partnership with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) to improve the FET curriculum, make it more relevant to the world of work and facilitate articulation into HE.

- Huge investments in NSFAS funding to ensure greater access to education and training opportunities for 702 430 poor and academically capable young people.
- An FET College-based Mathematics and Science Foundation Programmes that will enable young people to take up university studies in the engineering, science and technology fields. This programme is to be piloted from next year.

A Ministerial Committee to be set up to advise Minister on how best to fund the TVET System (FET Colleges) and envisaged Community Colleges, both from the fiscus and levy funds.

2013 is the Year of the Artisan which is a national advocacy programme to elevate the status of artisans and further build a strong skills base in South Africa.

Adult education and training:

Creation of a new institutional type, to be known as Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges:

- The present Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) will in time be absorbed into the CETCs.
- Additional facilities and staff will be provided.
- The offerings will be extended to provide vocational or community oriented programmes.

DHET will identify selected centres during 2013 to pilot the first Community Colleges in 2015.

Universities:

12% growth in the university enrolments from 837 779 in 2009 to 938 200 in 2011 which is in line with the aim to increase the total enrolments to 1.62 million by 2030 as envisaged by the National Development Plan.

Overall the number of university graduates for this period has also increased by 11%.

Continue to prioritise the expansion and strengthening of teacher education for all education sub-sectors, including pre-schooling, schooling and post-schooling. Plans are progressing to open new teacher education college campuses under the jurisdiction of existing universities.

The numbers of postgraduate outputs increased at a higher rate than the overall graduation rate. Research Masters graduates increased by 26% and Doctoral graduates increased by 15% from 1 373 in 2009 to 1 576 in 2011. Need to make a special effort to significantly expand the number of South Africans with higher degrees.

R177 million for research development has been allocated to all 23 universities to develop the research capabilities of university staff, especially for those institutions with low numbers of staff with Masters and Doctorate degrees.

Need to make it the norm for academics to have doctorates – universities need to guard against awarding professorships to individuals who have virtually no previous academic experience and sometimes no higher degrees.

Teaching and learning are at the heart of our university system. In the coming financial year, programmes will also be initiated to support the academic and professional development of lecturers in universities.

An amount of R575 million has been allocated to all universities for teaching development grants to assist in improving graduate outputs and R205 million for foundation programmes to improve the success rates of students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds.

Preparing a submission to Cabinet to phase in fee-free university education.

Report from the Ministerial Committee on the Review of Funding of Universities will be published soon. DHET will model the various recommendations and develop a revised funding framework before the end of this financial year.

Allocation to NSFAS for 2013/14 amounts to R5.769 billion. This includes R3.693 billion for loans and bursaries to universities and R1.988 billion for bursaries for Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges.

R6 billion allocated to universities over the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 for infrastructure, including amounts aimed at overcoming backlogs in historically disadvantaged institutions.

DHET has engaged with the Public Investment Corporation (PIC) and Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to make available additional funding for student accommodation.

R2.1 billion has been earmarked for the development of two new universities over the next three years. Both universities will open their doors in 2014 in selected academic programmes, using existing buildings.

Medunsa campus is being separated from the University of Limpopo to establish a new comprehensive university of health and allied sciences. This will include veterinarian science and dentistry.

Have successfully established a Central Application Clearing House (CACH) mechanism as a first phase towards the establishment of the Central Application System (CAS). The service managed to advise prospective students of the various educational opportunities within the post-school system and helped direct them to available spaces in the system.

Launched the “Apply Now!” campaign to create awareness of career options and the application procedures to be followed.

A draft Policy on Student Housing in Public Universities has been gazette for public comment. This will require universities to improve student housing in many areas such as governance, maintenance, admission for first years and also set minimum standards for a proper living and learning environment for students across the sector.

Oversight Committee on the Transformation of South African Universities to investigate allegations of “sex for marks” and provide Minister with recommendations.

Need to eradicate the physical, information and communication barriers, which may prevent persons with disabilities from participating fully in the learning experience. Funding set aside to enable institutions to accommodate the needs of all persons with disabilities and to fully support such learners with financial aid.

Mitigation of HIV and AIDS and TB remains a priority and Higher Education HIV/AIDS (HEAIDS) is driving the "First Things First" programme in universities to extend HIV/AIDS testing and TB screening. This is also being introduced in FET Colleges

Good progress being made in the establishment of a National Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences.

The work of the Advisory Panel on African languages is at an advanced stage. The panel is expected to submit its report on strengthening the study of African languages and developing them as languages of scholarship.

Linking education and the labour market:

Practical experience during training (or in some cases immediately afterwards) increases a student's chances of finding employment.

DHET has established a dedicated Unit on “Work Integrated Learning Partnerships and Innovation” to engage with employers in both the private and public sector as well as with SETAs to promote and institutionalise work integrated learning.

New SETA Grant Regulations came into operation on 1 April 2013 and require SETAs to target funding towards structured workplace learning and experience, promoting partnerships between education and training institutions and employers.

National Skills Fund has reached a stage where its annual disbursements are on par with annual income. All of the Fund's R7 billion historic reserves have been earmarked for specific skills development projects of national priority such as:

- Improving infrastructure; and
- Programmes for expanding capacity and improving quality in the production of skills in engineering, medical and veterinary sciences, renewable energy, various trades and rural development.