

The following matter forms part of the Environmental Scan for October 2018:

Department of Higher Education (DHET)

1) National Student Financial Aid Scheme on a new service centre

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/nsfas-service-centre-18-oct-2018-0000>

On 18 October the Deputy Minister of higher education and the Administrator of NSFAS officially opened the new service centre in Wynberg Cape Town to speed up the application process and assist with queries. It is equipped with the latest technology.

2) Deputy Minister Buti Manamela: Decolonising Knowledge, Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/deputy-minister-buti-manamela-decolonising-knowledge-teaching-and-learning-higher-education>

Decolonisation is:

“...commonly understood as the undoing of colonialism”.

“..when colonised people invoke their histories, worldviews, and indigenous knowledge systems to theorise and imagine alternative possibilities, including a different curriculum”.

“...the comprehensive transformation or change of the curriculum and institutional cultures to primarily reflect and promote African context”.

Deputy Minister Manamela spoke about the strides being made at both institutional and DHET level to decolonise knowledge, teaching and learning, but more needs to be done in this regard.

3) Deputy Minister Buti Manamela bids farewell to students departing for China, 15 Oct

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/deputy-minister-buti-manamela-bid-farewell-students-departing-work-intergrated-learning>

76 hospitality students departed on 15 October 2018 to participate in a 12 month Work Integrated Learning programme in China. Initiated by CHATHSSETA to assist TVET college students from rural areas in particular, with an opportunity to gain experience and on their return a better chance of employment.

4) Regulations for the quality assurance of private colleges for continuing education and training, offering qualifications registered on the general and

further education and training qualifications sub-framework, and the accreditation of private assessment bodies

https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/41970_gen633.pdf

5) Deputy Minister Buti Manamela concludes two day decade of the artisan campaign in Northern Cape

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/deputy-minister-buti-manamela-concludes-two-day-decade-artisan-campaign-northern-cape-12>

Deputy Minister Buti Manamela visited Toyota, MEAPSA Solar and Kalkpoort Soutwerke to encourage these employers to partner with TVET colleges and avail their workplaces as training spaces for artisan learners, exposing them to the latest technologies.

This is part of the National development plan to train 30 000 artisans by 2030 in order to advance the economic development agenda.

6) Department of Higher Education Annual Report 2017/2018

https://www.gov.za/sites/default/files/DHET%20Annual%20Report%202017_2018.pdf

7) Deputy Minister Manamela hosts youth colloquium on skills for the future

<https://www.gov.za/speeches/deputy-minister-buti-manamela-hosts-youth-colloquium-skills-future-5-oct-4-oct-2018-0000>

As part of a BRICS Future Skills Competition where youth from all BRICS countries compete in a variety of skills, the Deputy Minister addressed the youth on skills needed to meet the demands of the 4th Industrial revolution

8) National Qualifications Framework Amendment Bill

<https://www.parliament.gov.za/committee-notice-details/84>

This is for information purposes as the date for public comment has passed.

SAQA

1) Annual Integrated Report 2017/2018

http://www.saqa.org.za/docs/rep_annual/2018/SAQAAR2017-18.pdf

CHE

1) Briefly Speaking (7)

<http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/publications/BrieflySpeaking%207%20International%20Rankings.pdf>

International rankings: What can we learn from them?

Ranking systems are used by universities, students, parents and funders, to track rankings, which may influence decision-making and spending. However, this publication..."explores the different criteria of four international ranking systems in order to understand what these systems say about South African Institutions".

The four ranking systems are as follows:

- Times Higher Education

- Academic Ranking of World Universities (formerly Shanghai Jiao Tong Rankings)
- Quacquarelli Symonds
- University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP)

The criteria used by the ranking institutions include the following:

- Academic Reputation
- Employer Reputation
- Faculty/student ratio
- Citations per faculty
- International faculty ratio and international student ratio
- Teaching and Learning environment
- Research
- Research output
- Number of articles
- Journal article impact total

The study suggests that South African institutions tend to perform better "... in terms of research performance and reputation than in terms of an assessment of the teaching environment. In addition, "...URAP includes 18 South African universities in its assessment of the top 12% of institutions worldwide".

2) Call for Public Comment: Draft Doctoral Degrees Qualification Standard

http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/Doctoral%20Degrees%20Qualification%20Standard%20-%20Draft%20v%209%20Public%20Comment%20%283%29_0.pdf

The CHE announced the publication of the draft qualification standard statement for the Doctoral degrees, providing the public an opportunity to comment prior to approval. The Da Vinci Institute submitted comments by due date (14 October 2018).

3) CHE Newsletter

http://www.che.ac.za/media_and_publications/che-newsletters/che-newsletter-quality-matters-volume-1-issue-no10-septembe-0

The Newsletter includes the following matters:

a. **Partnership, Liaison and Advocacy**

The CHE CEO met with the board members of the South African Technology Network (SATN) where the progress of non-aligned programmes and the turnaround times in processing applications for programme accreditation was discussed. "SATN expressed the concern about whether the CHE would be able to assist institutions to meet the December 2019 deadline for non-aligned programmes, given

the CHE's resource and capacity constraints. A view expressed was that the Minister should be requested to extend the deadline by a year so that institutions would have sufficient time for internal processes finalising the development of new programmes to replace the ones that are not aligned to the HEQSF".

b. **Conferences and workshops**

The CHE attended the BRICS Network conference in Cape Town. "The objective was to provide a platform for the BRICS countries,to explore possibilities for leveraging the cooperative force of BRICS UN to enhance scientific knowledge in ... six thematic areas, namely: Energy; Computer Science and Information Security; Ecology and Climate Change; Economics; Water Resources and Pollution Treatment; and BRICS Studies.

c. **Upcoming conference: Council on Higher Education Quality Promotion Conference 2019**

The aim of the conference is to provide a platform for sharing experiences, lessons and good practices, as well as for raising issues and stimulating dialogue on the need to maintain academic integrity across the higher education sector. Four staff members from The Da Vinci Institute will be attending this Conference.

d. **Building trust for better movement across SADC: August update on the SADC Qualifications Framework (SADCQF)**

This article provides an update on the developments on the implementation of SADC's Qualification Framework.

"Implementation of the SADCQF entails implementing the following programmes: 1) Governance; 2) Development and alignment; 3) Verification of qualifications; 4) Quality Assurance; 5) RPL, articulation and CAT and 6) Advocacy and Communication".

"Progress has been made..., aligning NQFs to the SADCQF, ensuring that qualifications meet regional QA standards, establishing a mechanism for verifying SADC qualifications and furthering RPL, CAT and articulation. To ensure the sustainability of the SADCQF and strengthen SADC countries, various funding models are being considered".

e. **National Advisory Council on Innovation symposium and launch of the 2017 South African Science, Technology & Innovation indicators report, 28 June 2018**

The report highlighted the following:

- “Mobile technology uptake in South Africa is high, which provides opportunities for innovation in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, but cheaper broadband is needed”.
- “South Africa’s performance on a number of global indicators (such as innovation and competitiveness) has declined, although some of this has more to do with perceptions of the country”
- “..concerns with basic education, especially with regards mathematics and science, and the carry through effect of these, raising concern about increased expenditure at the tertiary level rather than at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) level.

It was concluded that these findings should be used to make recommendations to government.

f. **The Quality Assurance Promotion & Coordination (QAPC) Directorate hosts meeting with Wiley Academy**

An opportunity to increase the annual research output of the country through an online platform called the Wiley Research Academy was presented. “The programme is offered widely across the globe and has potential to increase the annual research output by providing professional e-learning training to both scientists, and early career and mid-career researchers, including those who aim to be peer reviewers”.

The Academy provides eBooks, journals, and backfiles on their Wiley Online Library platform. “The e-learning tool was developed to allow all researchers and scientists that have a need for training to access the programme anytime, anywhere and from any device at their own leisure. It was further explained that the training programme aims to enhance scientific writing skills, thereby increasing the likelihood of research articles being accepted for publication in high profile journals, and avoiding publication in ‘predatory journals’.

g. **Programme Accreditation Evaluation Trainer Workshop**

An evaluator training workshop was held from 24 to 26 July 2018. A new evaluation template has been developed but still linked to the Criteria and minimum standards

h. **Institutional Audits Pilot update**

The following institutions were approached with the view of piloting an Institutional audit:

- University of Venda (UNIVEN)
- University of Free State (UFS)
- Vaal University of Technology (VUT)
- Central University of Technology (CUT)

- Regent Business School,
- Richfield Graduate Institute of Technology
- Boston City Campus and Business College

and the following appointed:

- Vaal University of Technology,
- University of Venda, and
- Boston City Campus and Business College.

“Preparations for the pilot audits by the participating institutions are currently at various stages of development. A list of possible auditors has also been compiled, and from the list the required number of auditors will soon be appointed. The pilot audits are scheduled to be conducted in March 2019”.

HELTASA

1) Large scale research study on use of National Benchmark Tests (NBTs)

<http://heltasa.org.za/he-watch-september-2018/>

Although the NBTs are generally used for admission purposes, this was never their intended use. They were developed to identify performance in programmes such as medicine and engineering because of the fine gradations.

A research project this year explored the predictive validity of NBTs and the analysis of the data indicated that NBTs have strong diagnostic value.

The implications are that the study supports the use of information from NBTs to diagnose and inform curriculum development.

USAf is planning a workshop on the use of NBTs for diagnostic purposes and curriculum development in Johannesburg on 6 November 2018.

Harvard Business School

1) From DBA to PhD

<https://www.hbs.edu/doctoral/program-overview/Pages/history-of-excellence.aspx>

HBS will be transitioning from the DBA to a PhD in Business Administration. The designation is more in line with the content of the programme.

University World News

1) What contribution has internationalisation made to HE

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=2018101009394672>
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“University strategic plans, national policy statements, regionalisation initiatives, international declarations and academic articles all indicate the centrality of internationalisation in the world of higher education”.

“Economic and political rationales are increasingly the key drivers for national policies related to the internationalisation of higher education, while academic and social/ cultural motivations are not increasing in importance at the same rate. Because of the more interdependent and connected world in which we live, this imbalance must be addressed and recalibrated”.

2) South Africa is wasting billions on ‘soft’ degrees

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20181013062744714>

Sunday Times reported that money meant for the National Skills Fund is being used to fund university students instead. A total of 6.56 billion has been taken from the fund to keep the ‘no increase’ and ‘no fees’ promises made by government.

3) Online MOOCs battle against traditional mindsets

<http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20181003160049490>

Although MOOCs make tertiary education more accessible, accessibility to fast internet services, inadequate ICT human capacity and lack of electricity create barriers. In addition, there is the preference for in-campus education and face-to-face methods of instruction.