

DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION: PROPOSED WAY FORWARD



FET Round Table TOWARDS FINDING
9 April 2010 RESOLUTIONS IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH
STAKEHOLDERS

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD FOR FET ROUND TABLE

1. PROPOSED STEPS TO STABILISE THE SECTOR IMMEDIATELY – BY END APRIL

1.1. Conclude labour negotiations re ensuring that FET College employees' (lecturers and support staff) conditions of service are normalized, particularly in line with the principles of the OSD, by end April

This is absolutely necessary to stabilise the sector. The Round Table should note that these discussions are being taken forward in the ELRC and will be driven at the highest level.

1.2. Strengthen capacity of DHET to:

1.2.1. Support the transition

1.2.2. Support the work of the Steering Committee (research and secretariat)

1.3. NBFET Audit (to be undertaken by HSRC) to commence and to feed information into work streams as it becomes available, and appropriate benchmarking

2. WORK STREAMS TO HAVE RECOMMENDATIONS READY FOR AUGUST SUMMIT

2.1. WORKSTREAM 1: MODELS OF AUTONOMY

2.1.1. Principles proposed:

2.1.1.1. We must not compromise on:

2.1.1.1.1. the capacity of Colleges to be responsive to the differentiated contexts and challenges that they face

2.1.1.1.2. the obligation of the developmental state to give direction

2.1.1.1.3. the imperative of addressing inequalities and developmental needs across the system

2.1.1.2. Levels of autonomy:

2.1.1.2.1. Can be differentiated across the system

2.1.1.2.2. Must be determined by capacity

2.1.1.2.3. Can be structured progressively along a developmental path

2.2. WORKSTREAM 1: POLICY AND LEGISLATION

2.2.1. Following on the work on differentiated models of autonomy

- 2.2.1.1. Propose how this can be captured in differentiated models of the employment relationship
- 2.2.1.2. Propose legal mechanisms to facilitate this differentiated model
- 2.2.1.3. Propose mechanisms for the 'employer' to change to accommodate the differentiation required
- 2.2.1.4. Proposals for a management plan for the gradual transfer in line with capacity and readiness

2.2.2. Review the governance structure of Colleges to strengthen governance

- 2.2.2.1. Immediate audit of Councils to assess if any need to be strengthened by full implementation of sections (4)(b) and (5) of the Act:

(4) The council of a public college consists of-

- (a) the principal;
- (b) five external persons appointed by the Member of the Executive Council;
- (c) one member of the academic board elected by the academic board;
- (d) one external member representing donors;
- (e) one lecturer of the public college, elected by the lecturers of the college;
- (f) one member of the support staff of the public college, elected by the support staff and
- (g) two students of the public college, elected by the student representative council of the public college.

(5) The chairperson, vice-chairperson or other office-bearers of the council may not be students or members of the staff of the college, but the secretary may be a member of Staff

(6) The council must, in consultation with the Member of the Executive Council, appoint four additional external persons with financial, human resources and legal skills as members of the council.

- 2.2.2.2. Where Colleges are not compliant, immediate steps to be taken to correct.
- 2.2.2.3. Recommendation to legal team re any legal work to strengthen governance, e.g. MEC/ Minister appointing the Chair.

2.2.3. Ascertain whether all regulations (national and provincial) as contemplated in the FET Act are in place

- 2.2.3.1. A general review of the implementation of the Act is needed.
- 2.2.3.2. Where regulations are not in place propose models of necessary guidelines as 'best practice' for consideration by MECs through their policy making processes.

2.2.4. Resolve timeframe for Colleges to be an exclusive national competence

- 2.2.4.1. This matter is being urgently considered in DHET HEDCOM and MINMEC.
- 2.2.4.2. Legal work stream to ensure information flow from HEDCOM/ MINMEC to stakeholders

2.3. WORKSTREAM 3: PROGRAMMES

- 2.3.1. Reach a determination (in consultation with industry bodies) for gazetting which N courses will be supported in 2011 in addition to the NCV.
- 2.3.2. Develop recommendations regarding the introduction of the 'accelerated NCV' for those who have completed the NSC.
- 2.3.3. Longer term work will be undertaken (see 3.2 and 3.3), noting that the review of NCV after every 3 years is now due in 2010.

2.4. WORK STREAM 3: IMMEDIATE PLANNING FOR 2011 ACADEMIC YEAR

- 2.4.1. Determine what funding support is possible (in particular for N Courses from SETA/NSF funding, and other government skills development initiatives such as land reform and rural development, food security et cetera).
- 2.4.2. Finalise the basis of the budget distribution to Colleges for the 2011/12 financial year.
- 2.4.3. Support Colleges with enrolment and staff planning where necessary.

2.4.4. Urgently fill all vacant posts—

2.4.4.1. This may include ‘seconding’ back from PDEs suitably qualified staff (who are among the estimated 36% of staff who left) who can remain in employment of the state whilst we sort out the governance/employment issue.

2.4.5. Collaborative consideration of leaner recruitment and selection.

2.5. WORKSTREAM 4: FUNDING

2.5.1. Establish a credible baseline for funding of the sector from the Provincial Equitable Share.

2.5.2. Establish what complementary funding can be available to institutions from 2010.

2.6. WORKSTREAM 5: EXAMINATIONS

2.6.1. Make proposals as to what needs to be done to avoid the delayed results of 2009.

2.6.2. Anticipate difficulties and find solutions.

2.6.3. Agree on the best date to release results.

2.7. WORKSTREAM 6: COMMUNICATIONS

2.7.1. Communicate with roleplayers and stakeholders in the sector regularly to build trust and confidence.

3. INTERVENTIONS TO SUPPORT MEDIUM- TO LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENT IN THE FET SUBSYSTEM

3.1. Mission and Vision

The following questions must be addressed:

- How do we get the right young people into Colleges in the short to medium and long term?
- Are there ‘gaps’ in the whole education system which are being inappropriately ‘plugged’ by Colleges? If so, what better ways are there to fill these gaps?

3.2. Programme and Curriculum Work

A Curriculum Development Project to strengthen Occupational Training and Articulation

It is proposed that the Steering Committee engage with a process of examining the role of FET colleges in the qualification pathways for occupational competence, including trades for artisans. This process will have to integrate with work being done by a range of key stakeholders in artisan training. It will also have to relate to the work of the QCTO, SAQA and both HEQC and Umalusi. It will be pursued in the COSE project (outlined below) and will be a subject of interest for the Technical Working Group of the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC).

The DHET proposes a *Collaboration for Occupational Skills Excellence (COSE)* project which will initially address the crisis with regard to scarcity of artisans and simplify the routes towards trade tests. This will entail addressing some of the following challenges:

- the schism between theory and practice, especially at levels up to and including trade qualifications;
- the proliferation of learnerships that relate to a single trade or occupation;
- the difficulties in creating funding partnerships between SETAs and FET colleges, which have meant that the currently under-resourced public provider system operates alongside a burgeoning, levy-resourced private provider system.; and
- the difficulty that FET college graduates face to secure work experience.

COSE will also, over time, explore the broader development of PIVOTAL (Professional, Vocational and Technical as well as Academic Learning) programmes, which embrace both an institutional and a workplace/community dimension, such as professional engineers and social workers and rural extension officers. The project's central purpose is to streamline the roles and functions of delivery agents to optimise the education and training pipeline in the most scarce ten to fifteen intermediate-level occupations (such as trades and occupations at an equivalent level).

In pursuit of simple, accessible progression pathways from trade to paraprofessional and beyond, the COSE Project will explore an approach with the following characteristics:

- A 'practice to theory' approach to acquiring relevant skills, knowledge and values should be adopted, with the theory component deepening as the work required becomes more complex. This applied, exploratory approach to learning is pedagogically sound and has historically been helpful for learners who found 'high theory' difficult to understand in the decontextualised environment of the classroom or lecture room. The approach will also mitigate

the risks associated with ‘theory light’ or ‘theory free’ skills development approaches which have prevented many skills development graduates from accessing ‘theory-based’ programmes at higher education institutions.

- There is an urgent need for incremental programmes with clearly mapped steps to qualifications above NQF level 4; opportunities for part-time or block release study are also needed for the many potential learners who cannot afford the opportunity cost of full-time study.
- A limited number of key occupations (principally but not exclusively trade occupations) will be selected that are in demand and require both institution-based and workplace learning. Advisory groups comprising all key partners (industry-based stakeholders, occupational experts, educationists, among others) will provide oversight, ensuring that for each selected occupation there is adequate planning for the design and delivery of key aspects of the value chain of training, such as curriculum (including theory, practice and workplace learning), progression, trainer qualifications and upgrading, partnerships between institutions and workplaces, funding partnerships and funding flows (noting the latest NSDS III proposals).

In addition, networks of provider faculties (incorporating FET colleges, universities of technology and other universities where appropriate) will partner with occupation-specific experts nominated by the SETAs – as proposed by the QCTO – to serve as reference groups, although smaller expert groups will be responsible for hands-on planning and design functions. The QCTO ‘Quality Development Partner’ model will be adapted for this purpose. The collaboration of professional bodies will be sought, and partnerships with other Quality Councils will also be necessary – it cannot be assumed that occupational qualifications are the exclusive responsibility of the QCTO. Multiple exit points and maximum articulation will be key goals pursued by COSE, which will straddle development activities ranging from the architecture of qualifications to programme implementation – for example, the project will include provision for the upgrading of lecturers and facility upgrading for the delivery of the targeted occupational programmes.

A crucial design task for COSE will be the mapping of curricula to identify existing content that is relevant to the selected occupations and related qualifications. This content may be found (in very different degrees) in pre-vocational programmes of the National Senior Certificate, in the general vocational programmes of the NC(V), in learnerships and in the NATED Report 191 programmes that are currently being phased out. This task is of particular importance for a variety of reasons:

- The mapping will help to communicate to learners and potential learners the routes that lead into the new occupational qualifications without unnecessary duplication of learning effort. Linked to this, opportunities for exemption will be identified. The mapping exercise will be an invaluable element in the provision of vastly improved career guidance to learners.
- Providers will be given a clear picture of how their current offerings may be a contribution (and to what extent and with what modifications) to the new qualifications.
- Business and industry will also benefit from the mapping by understanding the progression routes, the likely duration and modalities of study required in different scenarios and opportunities for private sector support – in particular but not only opportunities to provide workplace experience.

Another important task will be the mapping of current demands in the economy with respect to likely future demands, including a visioning process to identify what occupational qualifications should ideally be provided in the future and which modes of provision will best facilitate access and progression for future generations of learners.

In short, COSE will both prefigure and fast-track the larger-scale work of the QCTO in key high-priority occupations and will dovetail into (and indeed may shape) the long-term development processes of the QCTO and its relationship to the other two Quality Councils. This incremental approach to the occupational qualifications policy process will be invaluable for industry, where alarm bells have been sounding for some time with regard to the need to develop and implement the Occupational Qualifications Framework, and for the many learners and potential learners in desperate need of meaningful, accessible study opportunities that lead them out of the trap of low-level jobs and unemployment. COSE is a vital initiative in the context of the opportunities for integration of education and training created by the formation of the DHET, and it is envisaged that the project will be steered at the highest level.

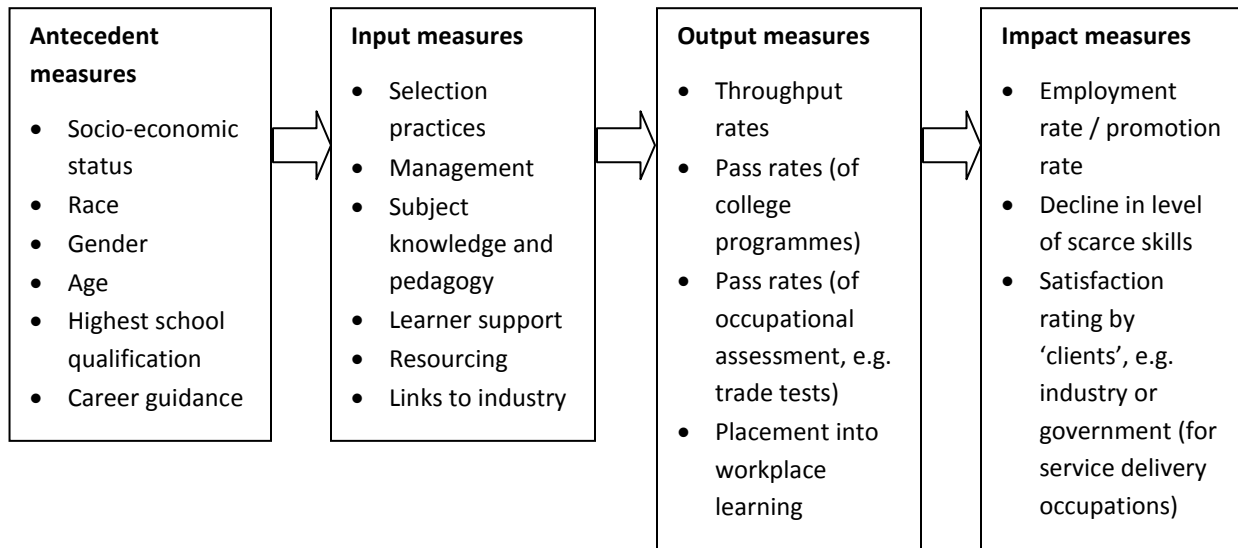
3.3. Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation of College Effectiveness

3.3.1. Introduction: Improving the evidence to support decision making

Substantial public and private sector resources have been invested in the colleges system over the past decade. However, it is clear that there is insufficient knowledge about how this investment is used and the benefits of the investment for college students and for the economy. Such knowledge is an

important element in the development of an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework that supports effective planning and budgeting. Given the important developments in the legislative and policy environment of colleges it is important to take stock of the effectiveness and impact of these changes, to identify gaps in our knowledge, and to assemble the information and analysis needed for the development of an increasingly effective colleges system.

Measures of college effectiveness can be constructed as follows:



The National Plan calls for large-scale expansion of FET College enrolments over the next five years, but colleges may not be able to cater for this growth in enrolment or ensure that it translates into improved impact. As it stands, college performance appears to be weak. Although we know that work placements make a significant difference to the impact of training, there is a need for a larger body of evidence to indicate which factors impact on performance and what interventions are needed to manage and improve performance on an ongoing basis. A comprehensive understanding of the range of measures and how they relate to one another would provide the basis for more effective interventions to enhance quality and output.

3.3.2. Linking the M&E System to Collaborative Planning

The participation of role-players and stakeholders in the utilization of research for planning and budgeting is crucial, and there must be strong links between research (as part of a M&E system) and

planning. The importance of a research framework is paramount – we must pilot and refine a research framework in the form of a set of key studies that efficiently generate useful data against key indicators, moving away from the current paradigm of discrete research studies towards the development of a FET research framework that is directly linked to the planning and budgeting functions. This will support a highly focused, knowledge-based paradigm of transparent, collaborative planning and budgeting.

Initial development and implementation of the proposed research framework will require the following steps.

Step one: Initial development of an overarching framework for conceptualising, measuring and monitoring college effectiveness (inputs and outputs), using internationally tried and tested tools and methods (with adjustments for the South African context). This will require a comprehensive international literature review of best practice in targeted countries.

Step two: Test the efficacy of the framework through a qualitative investigation into what makes colleges work (i.e. getting to know the internal workings of colleges and the value they add to ensure that the framework is sufficiently nuanced). This will involve fieldwork in a sample of college campuses across the country.

Step three: Refine the framework on the basis of the findings of the qualitative study and workshopping it with stakeholders.

Step four: Commence (in April 2010) application of the framework through the following activities (not necessarily sequential)¹

1. Unpack and analyse the 2009 examinations database and, in particular, make sense of the throughput and output rates and develop a methodology for analyzing these.
2. Undertake a baseline stakeholder perceptions survey: the roles and mission of colleges; how well colleges operationalize their mission; changes needed.

¹ It is understood that certain data will be needed for the DHET to issue new guidelines to colleges by August of this year, in preparation for the 2011 academic year. An August target date would also coincide with the MTEF funding cycle. Therefore, although the studies cited as examples cannot be completed by that target date, the methodology and research timeframes would need to accommodate some of the more immediate data needs of the Department. Similarly, in certain cases only interim findings will be available for presentation at the FET Summit.

3. Conduct a study of 'colleges in context' (local and regional labour markets and the current and potential roles of colleges).
4. Conduct a national study on educator supply, utilisation and development.
5. Conduct a complementary campus-level study to collect evidence on other input measures, besides educators, such as learner support, resourcing and management, and develop a composite dataset on the system, with disaggregation by campus. This will involve a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures.
6. Implement tracer studies of 2009 NCV students to assess employability and measure employer/student satisfaction.

Step five: Develop a composite baseline of the FET college subsystem. The results of the above studies will be combined into an overall report on the state of the subsystem. This will form the baseline from which the M&E system would begin to operate.

Throughout the research process, there will be iterative engagement with stakeholders through the Summit Steering Committee and working groups in order to get input into the framework and the findings. The final stage in the development of the M&E system will be to refine the methods and technologies, ensure that it is user-friendly for all concerned and embed it within the FET subsystem.

3.3.3. Conclusion

- The DHET recognises that planning in the FET sector is currently insufficiently evidence-based, and immediate studies are proposed that will contribute to building a sound research-based platform for planning and budgeting.
- Ownership and understanding among all roleplayers and stakeholders of research that supports FET planning and budgeting is crucial.
- A collaborative approach to the development of a planning-oriented M&E system is needed to generate sound short- and long-term strategies for enhanced access, quality and relevance.