

# DOCUMENT FOR DISCUSSION: CHALLENGES FACING THE FET COLLEGE SUBSYSTEM



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

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CAT	Credit accumulation and transfer
CHE	Council on Higher Education
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
COSE	Collaboration for Occupational Skills Excellence
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
ETDP SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority
FEDUSA	Federation of Unions of South Africa
FET	Further education and training
FETCEO	Further Education and Training Colleges Employers' Organisation
FETI	Further Education and Training Institute
FTE	Full-time equivalent
GDP	Gross domestic product
HE	Higher education
HEI	Higher education institution
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information System
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
HRDSA	Human Resource Development South Africa
HSRC	Human and Social Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ISAT	Integrated summative assessment task

IT	Information technology
JET	JET Education Services
JIPSA	Joint Initiative on Priority Skills Acquisition
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
MIS	Management information system
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NAPTOSA	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
NATU	National Teachers' Union
NBFET	National Board for Further Education and Training
NBI	National Business Initiative
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
NEET	Not in education, employment or training
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
PED	Provincial Education Department
PQM	Programme qualification mix
PSES	Post-school education system
QA	Quality assurance
QCTO	Qualifications Council for Trades and Occupations
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SACPO	South African Colleges Principals' Organisation
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union

SAOU	Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysersunie
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SATN	South African Technology Network
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UCT	University of Cape Town
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UoT	University of Technology
UWC	University of the Western Cape
Wits EPU	Education Policy Unit of the University of the Witwatersrand

## **PURPOSE OF THE WORKING DOCUMENT AND ROUND TABLE**

The intention of the DHET in presenting this working document to the Round Table is to provide a rigorous basis for debate that is informed by an analysis of the challenges in the sector. This analysis has been developed in discussion with key stakeholders and has been richly informed by these perspectives.

The Round Table has three key purposes:

1. To identify challenges in the FET sector and to agree on what needs to be done in the immediate, medium and long term to support FET colleges to function as high quality institutions that can respond to national education and training challenges. The Round Table must identify what knowledge is needed in order to better understand the nature of these challenges, and agree on a process towards acquiring this knowledge and making sense of it.
2. A second document to be presented at the Round Table will propose processes and work streams to address these challenges and similarly invite debate on these proposals. Principles must be established with maximum support of all stakeholders to guide this work.
3. The Department will propose that the work needed to support these proposals will be taken forward by an inclusive high-level steering committee, supported by a technical working group, which will report back to a summit of all FET stakeholders in August 2010.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **New Challenges**

There are expectations that Further Education and Training (FET) colleges will occupy a critical space in the national post-school education and training landscape. Key policy speeches of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, the Minister of Finance, and the President have indicated this clearly.

The 2009 Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (27 October 2009) signaled several key foci:

- A shift of the function to national government
- Quality improvements including increased success and throughput
- Increased enrolment of youth and adults
- Closer alignment with skills development strategies and funding including training partnerships and work placement
- Increasing apprenticeships and learnerships

#### **MEDIUM TERM BUDGET POLICY STATEMENT**

The funding of further education and training (FET) colleges is shifting to national government. Government will continue to provide resources for both quality improvements and higher enrolment. However, closer alignment with the funding arrangements contained under the skills development levy is required so that FET colleges can access more of these funds and business can make greater use of the colleges.

##### *Strengthening Further Education and Training Colleges*

Building on the recapitalisation of FET colleges, government is taking steps to enhance access to these institutions and the quality of courses they provide. The goal is to increase the number of young people and adults accessing continuing education at these technical and vocational centres, in a way that supports an inclusive growth path.

FET attendance and access have improved, but quality requires attention. Government's two core commitments in the period ahead are to consolidate the institutional base for FET colleges in partnership with the skills training system, and to address the gap in the capabilities of school leavers to successfully pursue further education and skills training while improvements are introduced to the basic education system. Key outputs over the next five years include:

- Increasing participation rates in national certificate for vocational education (NCV) – the alternative matric offered at FET colleges – to 20 per cent of youth aged 18-24 who are not attending other educational institutions.
- Boosting the number of industrial and related apprenticeships and learnerships in scarce skills areas to a cumulative 350 000. Improving NCV subject pass rates to 70-80 per cent and completion rates to 60-70 per cent.
- To improve responsiveness to the needs of the economy, programme offerings will be expanded, training partnerships with industry will be funded through SETAs, partnerships with employers will be established and a work-placement programme for graduates of FET colleges will be set up. Quality interventions include initiatives to improve management capacity, materials development and the introduction of formal qualifications for lecturers.

The President's State of the Nation Address of 11th February 2010 reiterated these themes with particular emphasis on expansion of access in the context of the need to develop a skilled and capable workforce to support growth and job creation.

Colleges are well positioned to contribute to the acute middle-level skills crisis – this is precisely the domain of FET colleges. Colleges are currently distributed across all nine provinces and have wider geographic reach than universities. The unit cost of FET college education should be lower than that for universities and a significant increase in access can be achieved with less investment than a corresponding increase in university enrolment. Increased FET access would have the social benefit of including young people currently not in education, employment or training (NEET) in opportunities to participate by studying in work-oriented programmes.

### **Are FET colleges ready to meet these expectations?**

The FET college subsystem is poised, in its new location in the post-school education and training system, to be a significant locus of delivery of vocational and continuing education and training with strong links to industry in order to meet critical skills shortages. It is also the subsystem that is the most fragile as a result of the complex and incomplete transitions it has experienced in recent years. Colleges have been through multiple and overlapping processes of change over the last ten years. Many of these changes have not enjoyed universal support amongst stakeholders, and many policies have not yet had any impact on the goals they were intended to address. Indeed, some have had unintended consequences. Where new policies have not been supported, they have sometimes not been implemented as intended.

Implementation of ambitious policies has been crippled by unforeseen implementation failures.

Special attention is necessary in consolidating the repositioning of the sector and building the confidence of industry and of the public in the capacity of FET colleges. All stakeholders will agree with SACPO that vigorous debate is needed to define the ideal FET college and that where necessary enabling legislation and strategies must be adopted as a matter of urgency. If the colleges are expected to respond to expanded enrolment and an expanded mandate, their capacity must be progressively enhanced to enable them to do so appropriately and efficiently.

## **The National Plan for Further Education and Training Colleges, 2008**

Recognizing the importance of the sector, the National Plan for FET of December 2008 committed government to increasing youth and adult participation in FET colleges to 1 million enrolled students by 2014. Expansion of access whilst multiple transitions are managed is a serious challenge requiring intensive and comprehensive support. The National Plan envisaged that the sector would:

- be differentiated and responsive to geographical and sectoral challenges;
- offer high quality and relevant programmes at multiple sites of learning supported by appropriate infrastructure, equipment and ICT support;
- address low retention and throughput rates through quality support interventions;
- tailor institutional practices of teaching and learning to the needs of the underprepared young people who seek further education and training opportunities; and
- have strong linkages with industry that support workplace opportunities for students to gain the necessary work experience as part of their qualification requirements.

The governance transition in FET colleges has happened at multiple levels and the transition is not complete. At the institutional level, in order to create greater institutional responsiveness and flexibility, colleges have been made the employer of all academic and support staff who were previously in the employ of Provincial Education Departments. This change has major implications for conditions of service. It has not been universally supported and has left some volatility in the system. The capacity to support the employer function is not universal across colleges in the sector.

At the system level, it is the intention that FET colleges should become part of the national post-school education and training system and be governed and funded nationally. It is intended that they will no longer be a concurrent competence. This will require flexible and sound working relationships between national and provincial government during the transition.

These challenges require that FET college policy and plans be carefully examined by all role-players and stakeholders. Many are arguably aspirational, are not universally supported, and are still in the process of implementation. How improved quality and expanded access are to be achieved is not yet spelled out in terms of targeted investment strategies.

A well planned and well managed transition is required towards a high-quality FET college system with expanded access. This requires that resources be deployed in a targeted manner with sound evidence-based priorities. At present data are not adequate, and what is available is not analyzed in sufficient depth. Management information that exists is not well utilized for modeling and planning.

### **A COLLECTIVE PROCESS TO ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES**

An honest and robust assessment of current challenges must be undertaken with all stakeholders, followed by a short-term investigation and planning process to address and resolve the challenges identified in which all stakeholders participate. The set of actions and processes agreed to in this Round Table will result in a set of short- to medium- term proposals and costed action plans for longer-term work which will be presented to a broader FET Summit in August. The plan will be presented to the Minister and where he considers that changes in policy, funding and legislation may be needed to effect the plan actions will be taken to the appropriate fora. Some recommendations may be taken into the collective bargaining process.

In preparation for this Round Table, a series of consultations was held with individual stakeholders to gauge their respective views on FET college issues and prepare the ground for the engagement. The outcomes of these consultations have been incorporated into the present document, and the Department is grateful for the positive and extensive engagement.

The steering committee and working groups delegated by the Round Table participants will prepare for a larger FET Summit in August 2010, to be convened by the DHET, at which the results (or interim results) of the work streams and a composite baseline of the sector will be presented. The stakeholders will have rigorous facilitated discussion on the results and seek agreement on the targeted interventions needed to address the issues that emerge. The FET Summit will also generate resolutions on the way forward for a monitoring and evaluation

system and the structures and processes needed to make it an effective foundation for planning. Ultimately there should be broad ownership of these resolutions and a collective commitment to supporting their effective application in policy, planning and budgeting.

The post-Summit report of the Steering Committee will make clear recommendations for actions (both immediate and long-term) which will be forwarded to the Minister.

In summary, the outcomes of the Round Table in April will be:

- A collective understanding of, and agreement on, what needs to be done in the short-, medium- and long-term to address current challenges
- Ownership of the process to develop this by key stakeholders and role-players
- A FET Summit Steering Committee to guide processes leading to the Summit

The outcomes of the FET Summit later in 2010 will be:

- A consensual basis for policy, planning and delivery in the FET college sector
- Recommendations for actions (both immediate and long-term) to be forwarded to the Minister of Higher Education and Training

## STAKEHOLDERS AND ROLEPLAYERS

The range of stakeholders and role-players who are essential to agreement on the way forward is broad and there is no existing forum which currently captures the complexity of role-players. No policy can succeed without the support of both those that must implement and those that must benefit from it.

Broad categories of stakeholders that should be part of this process include:

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>ROLE AND COMPOSITION</b>
Statutory Structures	1. National Board for Further Education and Training (NBFET)	Members are appointed by the Minister on the basis of their experience and expertise
	2. South African Council of Educators (SACE)	Professional body regulating professional matters for Educators
	3. Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)	The ELRC hosts and facilitates the negotiations of the FET Chamber
	4. National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)	
	5. National Skills Authority	Employers, trade unionists, civil society and provider institutions. (Beneficiaries of Skills Development)
Employer	6. Further Education and Training Colleges Employers Organisation (FETCEO)	College Councils are now the employers of all staff employed at Colleges (except the College principals). The Councils have established a voluntary organisation which acts as the employer for purposes of collective bargaining
Employee	7. Independent Teacher Unions (Including	

	NAPTOSA, SAOU, NATU)	Employees' organisations representing academic staff at FET colleges and represented in the bargaining chamber for FET colleges
	8. South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)	
Professional Bodies	9. Higher Education South Africa (HESA)	A voluntary organisation representing the Vice Chancellors of all universities
	10. South African College Principals Organisation (SACPO)	A voluntary organization representing the interests of government and colleges in respect of leadership, governance, management and teaching and learning
	11. South African Technology Network (SATN)	A voluntary organisation representing the Vice Chancellors of all Universities of Technology (UoT). UoT potentially have a particular relationship with Colleges because of an overlap of programme offerings in terms of the HEQF
Users	12. Business represented by BUSA	Business and labour have interests in the quality and quantity of FET college graduates to meet the skills needs of society and of the economy
	13. Labour, represented by COSATU and FEDUSA	
	14. Sectoral Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)	Colleges are an important provider of training to SETAs. The ETDPSETA is the relevant SETA for the college sector
NQF Structures	15. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)	
	16. Umalusi	The quality council responsible for the general and further education and training qualifications sub-framework
	17. Qualifications Council for	The quality council responsible for the

	Trades and Occupations (QCTO)	occupations and trades qualifications sub-framework
	18. Council on Higher Education	The quality council responsible for the higher education qualifications sub-framework
State	19. Provinces	Constitutionally, colleges are currently a concurrent function of national and provincial governments the FET Act gives particular governance and administration authority to provincial education departments (PEDs)
	20. Portfolio committees, (National Assembly, National Council of Provinces, and Provincial Legislatures)	Portfolio committees have oversight and law-making responsibilities in respect of FET colleges
Academics and researchers	21. Wits EPU 22. UWC, FETI 23. HSRC 24. JET 25. UKZN 26. UCT	A range of academics and researchers are actively engaged in developing knowledge in relation to the work of FET colleges

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

The success of the Colleges will depend on strong collaborative relationships on a number of axes, including:

- collaboration between colleges and industry, following the example set by Technical Skills Business Partnership, including—
  - support for curriculum development to ensure that curricular content is accurate and up-to-date
  - support for learner recruitment and learner guidance
  - participation in college governance
  - assistance with college-level quality assurance
  - development of lecturer capacity
- stronger relationships among SETAs and between SETAs and colleges;
- close cooperation among the Quality Councils, given the complex nature of current and future qualifications offered at the colleges;
- stronger links between colleges and higher education institutions;
- closer relationships among all stakeholders to support effective policy formulation and planning, noting that the structure and composition of the NBFET may be inadequate and that a more comprehensive model for stakeholder collaboration and cooperative governance is needed.

## KEY CHALLENGES

The current challenges facing FET colleges include:

1. Competing visions of the mission, purpose and scope of the colleges
2. Lack of clarity about appropriate programmes for the sub-system
  - 2.1. Links to workplace
  - 2.2. Articulation with Universities of Technology
3. Funding
4. Size and shape of the FET college subsystem
5. System and institutional governance
  - 5.1. Uncertainty about the time-scale for the transition from a Provincial to a National function
  - 5.2. Incomplete implementation of the provisions of the FET Act
  - 5.3. Weaknesses in institutional governance
  - 5.4. Problems associated with the College Council being the employer
6. Dimensions of college effectiveness
  - 6.1. Management and leadership capacity
  - 6.2. Quality of teaching and learning
  - 6.3. Links to workplace
  - 6.4. Qualifications of lecturers
  - 6.5. Sociology of learners and learner support
  - 6.6. Enrolment planning and management
  - 6.7. Equipment and infrastructure
7. System Support
  - 7.1. Quality assurance
  - 7.2. FET colleges management information system and connectivity

These issues, which also incorporate key levers to unlock the potential of FET colleges, are elaborated below.

## **1. Mission, Purpose and Scope of FET Colleges**

The central challenge underpinning many of the other challenges identified is the issue of the mission, purpose and scope of FET colleges, or as the South African Colleges Principals Organisation (SACPO) expresses this: *What is the ideal college?*

There are several expectations of the college system dominating public discourse and these arise from historic realities and current challenges. The extent to which these differing expectations can be reconciled within a differentiated system will be critical to resolution of the tensions arising from competing demands. These demands are framed by three key social and political realities:

- More young people must be absorbed into social participation through learning and skills development opportunities
- Many young people have not attained an adequate standard of basic education to enable them to proceed with post-school learning pathways
- Whilst we anticipate an increase in the labour absorption capacity of the economy, many young people will remain unemployed and post-school education and training systems must facilitate learning and experience that will equip young people for self-initiated productive activity

### **1.1. Competing expectations**

What are these differing, and possibly competing, expectations? FET colleges (previously known as technical colleges) have been through major changes over the last two decades. Their shifting identity has had major implications for institutional stability and their mission may have become less clear to the public. Their names have changed through processes of amalgamation and their qualification and programme structures have changed. These identity changes present a 'branding' challenge as government seeks to promote the colleges as 'institutions of choice' to address specific work-based skill needs.

In the new education and training landscape, the colleges are part of the post-school education and training system. Young people will be encouraged to complete their schooling in the basic education system, including in the technical high schools. The post-school education system is not conceptualised as a post-secondary system because we understand that the conception of 'post-school' is a challenge of a particular type in a society which is still grappling with the enduring consequences of apartheid education. Too many adults have not had opportunities to achieve anywhere near their full potential, and too many young people have no 'school-leaving' qualifications of any value.

A strategic priority of the Human Resource Development South Africa<sup>1</sup> (HRDSA) is to ensure that all adults (unemployed and employed) have access to education and training opportunities that will enable them to acquire a minimum qualification at level 4 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This will mean that we must 'raise the base' by providing learning opportunities to those who have not achieved Grade 12 equivalence (NQF level 4), some of whom may wish to study further but currently do not meet the entry requirements for doing so.

The numbers for whom we need to 'raise the base' are large and will include the 40% (annual average) of Grade 12 students who fail the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examinations. Public and private investment is not consummated by satisfactory completion of basic education measured by failure in the NSC for an average of 280 000 Grade 12 leavers annually. Cloete (2009) has estimated that education and career progression has ended in a *cul de sac* for 2 million young adults who have gone to school but have not successfully completed 12 years of schooling.

In responding to this need to 'raise the base', opportunities must be provided for young people and adults to achieve NQF level 4 equivalence. For some this will mean completion of the National Certificate (Vocational) (NC(V)). For others it will mean the completion of a specially tailored adult matric, and for others it will mean the completion of a trade. This was indicated as a priority in the State of the Nation address in 2010:

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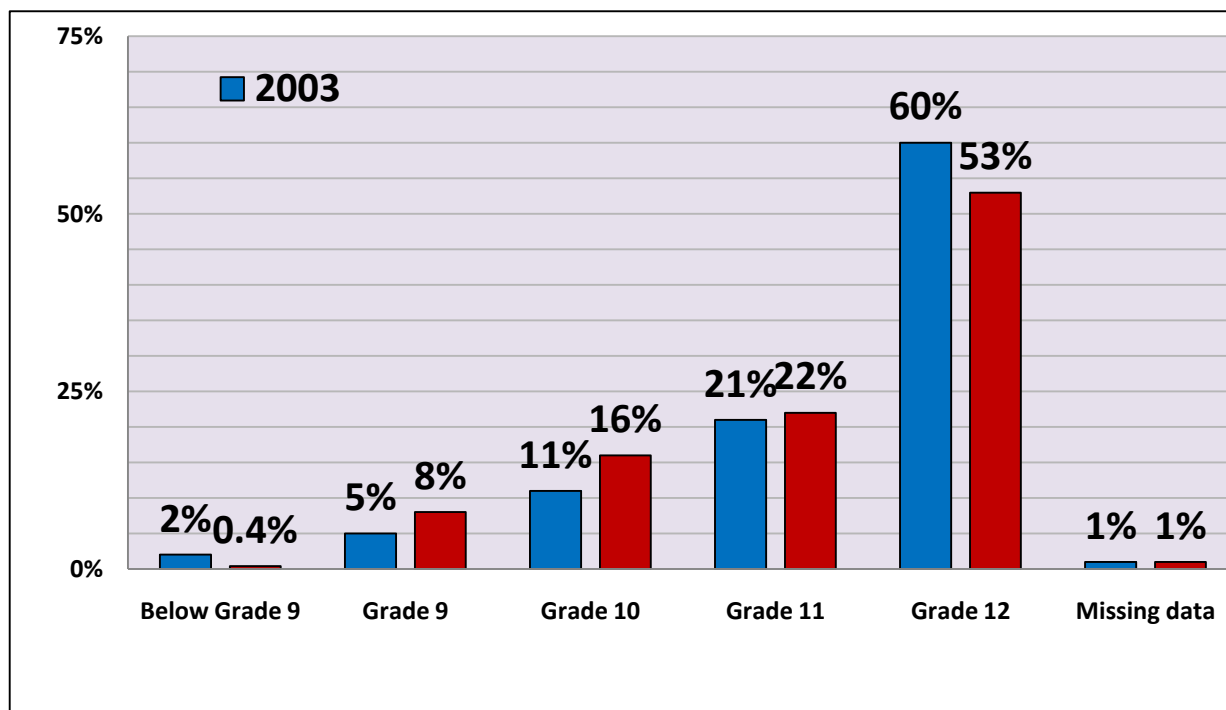
<sup>1</sup> The HRDSA to be chaired by the Deputy President will be launched on 30<sup>th</sup> March, 2010

‘We therefore plan to increase the training of 16-25 year olds in further education and training facilities. This will enable us to provide a second chance at education, for those who do not qualify for university.’

The colleges must also provide the institutional learning opportunities for those in work-based learning programmes and provide not only a general vocation orientation, but also occupationally specific education and training that, for example, links directly to artisan training. This intention was captured in the National Plan for FET Colleges, which envisaged the colleges as being accessible to economically active youth and adults outside of the school system who wish to improve their skills, gain access to better jobs or progress to higher education. Colleges are expected to meet the need for middle-level skills by providing the theoretical qualification component of artisan and other occupational training requirements. This is an expectation of both government and industry. Historically, the technical colleges provided an institutional base for the formal theory component of artisan training. As will be discussed, this function is not perceived to be performed currently in the public FET Colleges, and the private sector has increasingly assumed this function.

Colleges have sometimes been presented as an alternative institution for the completion of school, and young people have moved directly from Grade 9 to colleges resulting in a lowering of the mean age and the age range of learners. This has presented pedagogic and pastoral challenges. Data collected by Gewer suggests that the FET college ‘class’ has shifted to younger learners between 2003 and 2009, with a spread of age from adolescence to adults. It must be remembered, however, that Standard Seven was historically the norm for entering college. The rising level has been a measure of the decline of apprenticeship opportunities.

**Highest school qualification for college students 2003 and 2009 (Source: Gewer, 2010)**



Finally, there is an expectation that colleges will provide training to the employed and unemployed on short courses to enable them to learn technology and income-generating skills, For the unemployed this will mean participation in programmes linked for example to the Expanded Public Works Programmes or rural development.

**TABLE 1: Typology of ‘clients’ of the FET college system**

**1. Meeting the need for middle-level skills by providing the theoretical qualification component of artisan and other occupational training requirements**

**2. Expanding access to post-school education and training for Youth and Adults:**

*2.1 Young people who have a Grade 12 ‘pass’ (NSC) but who wish:*

To pursue a vocational education (i.e. who want to be trained in one of the targeted middle-level skills cited under (1) above.

To qualify for entry into University

*2.2 Young people who have not passed Grade 12 (NSC), either because:*

They have written the exams and failed

They left school before completing the Grade 12 (or earlier) and have not secured an apprenticeship or learnerships

They have left school at grade 9 to enter the NCV route at a College

*2.3 Adults who wish to:*

Obtain a Grade 12 (Adult matric or MCV)

Access skills training and further education (i.e. who want to be trained in one of the targeted middle-level skills cited under (1) above.

## **1.2. Historic and current realities**

What are the social, economic and political realities which frame these competing expectations?

### **1.2.1. Persistent inequalities and quality challenges**

Patterns of inequality in education quality and outcomes are persistent and resistant to change. Education performance still replicates patterns of poverty and privilege. Quality improvements across the system are not being achieved on the scale we had wished despite our best efforts. Indeed, we are not meeting the targets we have set ourselves for learner performance in our national systemic reviews of Grades 3 and 6, nor does our performance compare favourably with international equivalents – not even in the region. Other countries in SADC with lower GDP and less expenditure on education are achieving better education outcomes.

In the school system:

- Of those learners who completed Grade 9, just fewer than 90 percent reach Grade 10; about three-quarters reach Grade 11 and only between 55 and 60 percent reach Grade 12.
- Only slightly more than 46 percent of the 1980 to 1984 birth cohort who started Grade 1 eventually reached Grade 12.

These figures represent, in hard economic terms, major systemic inefficiencies and a waste of resources. The waste of human potential is the greater and more serious failure.

### **1.2.2. Youth unemployment**

Large numbers of young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The absorption capacity of both the labour market and post-school educational institutions leaves too many young people 'on the outside looking in' with no sense of how they can find their way to acquire skills or gain employment. The best figures currently available for the 18- to 24-year-old group (a total of 6,758,366 young people) indicate that 42.5% (2,872,196) of youth aged 18-24 are not employed and not studying.

Young people and the less skilled have been the most affected by the fall in the employment rate of 2009 which is now at 24.3% and is the highest it has been for five years. Work-seekers are entering the labour force at a rate greater than job creation. At the same time, we are not producing the skills required to expand the economy and compete in the world market<sup>2</sup>. We are asked to assist in removing the structural impediments to faster job creation by ensuring that further education and training programmes provide the real-world skills needed by public and private sector employers<sup>3</sup>.

Unemployment figures for this age group indicate that those younger than 35 account for 73% of the unemployed (Budget Review 2010 p. 42). High unemployment of youth takes place in a labour market context where skilled employment growth in the period 2004-2009 was on average more than twice the growth in semi- and unskilled job growth (Budget Review 2010 p. 43).

### **1.2.3. Participation of youth in education**

In 2007, as many as 24,7% of youth aged between 18 and 24 were still in school. Only 4% were at FET colleges (public and private), and 5.4% were in universities (public and private). The table below provides an indication that no more than 10% of young people in this age group are

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<sup>2</sup> National Treasury, Budget review 2010/11 p. 37

<sup>3</sup> Ibid page, 38

in the higher education and training system. If we wish to absorb more young people into colleges and universities, then there must be an urgent development of capacity in the system to absorb increased numbers whilst at the same time addressing the quality challenges. There will also need to be an urgent development of modes of learning that increase participation within available resources.

**TABLE 2:**

**Attendance at education institutions by youth 18 – 24 years, 2007<sup>4</sup>;<sup>5</sup>**

Age	Primary school	Secondary school	College	University	ABET	Other	Total attending an educational institution	Total Population in age cohort
18	0.0%	58.4%	3.5%	4.2%	0.0%	1.0%	67.1%	100.0%
19	0.0%	42.6%	5.0%	6.5%	0.0%	0.9%	55.1%	100.0%
20	0.0%	27.2%	5.6%	6.9%	0.0%	2.6%	42.3%	100.0%
21	0.0%	18.0%	4.6%	7.1%	0.0%	1.9%	31.6%	100.0%
22	0.4%	11.7%	3.9%	5.9%	0.0%	0.7%	22.5%	100.0%
23	0.4%	6.8%	2.9%	4.1%	0.0%	0.6%	14.8%	100.0%
24	0.3%	4.5%	2.2%	3.1%	0.0%	0.4%	10.6%	100.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>24.5%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>5.4%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>35.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>4</sup> Dr Charles Sheppard, NMMU, Dr Nico Cloete, CHET, 2009. **Scoping the Need For Post-School Education.**

<sup>5</sup> Notes: (Charles Sheppard, email communication 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2010):

- a) College data is from the 2007 community survey and includes private provisioning.
- b) The participation in universities is the headcount of everyone enrolled at a HE institution regardless of the course load.
- c) The percentage of 5.4% attending a HE institution is only for the 18 to 24 year olds. This excludes all HE students younger than 18 and older than 24. If one looks at the total group almost half of HE students fall out of this age range. If we use the actual 18 to 24 year olds from HEMIS and assume the 2007 CS total of 6,758,366 18 to 24 year olds the percentage goes slightly up to 6.2%. of 18 – 24 year olds.

The Medium Term Budget Policy Statement (2009) made expansion of FET colleges a priority and set a NC(V) enrolment target of 20 per cent of youth aged 18-24 who are not attending other educational institutions. This would mean an NC(V) enrolment of 574 439. However, if the mission and purposes of the college sub-system are clarified, it may be that some of the expansion that is needed for both personal aspiration and economic and social needs might be met through programmes other than the NC(V). The Budget Review (2010/11) indicated that

‘A review of the curriculum in consultation with business and labour may be required to ensure a better match between training and skills’. (p.50)

This is a major issue on which the Round Table and its follow-up processes must give guidance towards the FET Summit.

It is urgent that the mission of FET colleges be clarified in the immediate and long term. In the short to medium term, the stability of the sector must be of utmost concern.

## 2. Lack of Clarity about Appropriate Programmes for the Sub-system

The multiple expectations for FET colleges and competing missions have played out in the development of programmes for the colleges. Prior to the creation of a single Ministry of Higher Education and Training in 2010, the location of colleges in the Education Department and skills development and artisan training in the Department of Labour in effect resulted in separate pathways for artisan training in particular with wholly inadequate interfacing of these systems. Public FET colleges have not been perceived as serving the needs of industry, and industry has not been responsive to the needs of colleges. Government intends to work urgently on strengthening linkages between skills development and public FET colleges.

In the long term, as the quality challenges in basic education are addressed, the high demand for NQF level 4 programmes that are a response to these weaknesses will give way to greater emphasis on post-school occupational training.

### 2.1. Artisan Training Pathways

Artisan training has emerged as a critical concern of industry and of government. Minister Nzimande has indicated in his budget speech that he will,

...be taking a special interest in driving artisan training in this financial year. I will work intensively with the initiatives that are under way to strengthen artisan training. We will increase the numbers and the quality of skilled artisans, particularly in priority trades, through a synergy of strengthening FET colleges, SETAs work and business initiatives.

The Skills Development Act of 2008 provides four alternative paths to the trade test required to qualify as an artisan:

#### THE FOUR TRACKS TO TRADE TESTING

(Skills Development Amendment Act, Act 37 of 2008)

<p>2D (2) A person may apply to undergo a trade test in respect of a trade if—</p> <p>(a) that person has completed <b>a learnership</b> relevant to that trade; or</p> <p>(b) that person has satisfied the relevant requirements of <b>an apprenticeship</b> in respect of that trade; or</p>
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(c) an accredited trade test centre has certified that the person has acquired **sufficient prior learning** related to that trade; and

(d) that person has completed **any other learning programme resulting in an occupational or vocational qualification inclusive of prescribed work experience** that entitles such person to undergo the relevant trade test.

Of the four routes, only the last one makes specific reference to an 'occupational or vocational qualification', the previous three make no such reference. This stands in sharp contrast to the traditional route to the trade test (outlined in the Manpower Training Act, 1981 (as amended)) where all apprentices were required to complete at least an 'N2' qualification before being permitted to take the trade test. This is discussed further below:

## 2.2. The NC(V) and N courses

For many years the six-level NATED Report 190 and 191 (usually abbreviated to N1, N2, N3, N4, N5, N6) courses have been the base theoretical qualification for entry into a trade, and were widely taught at FET colleges (and their predecessors, the technical colleges).

The National Certificate (Vocational) at levels 2, 3 and 4 of the NQF was introduced in 2007 to solve the problem of poor quality and low relevance of N programmes and the chronically short supply of work placements available to private students, as well as the low technical and cognitive skills of FET graduates. According to Duncan (2009)<sup>6</sup>:

The NC(V) is a comprehensive curriculum. Its fourteen fields of study relate to a broad range of economic activities, including agriculture, arts and culture, business and commerce, communication and languages, computational work, construction, education and training, engineering and manufacturing, health and social services, hospitality and tourism, IT, law and security, nature conservation, personal services and technology. Its requirement that all

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<sup>6</sup> Duncan, K. (2009). *The current state of the FET college sector in South Africa*. Paper presented at the Colloquium on the State and Role of FET Colleges in South Africa held at Johannesburg Central College, 5 December 2009.

programmes of study incorporate such fundamentals as language and mathematics, and its greater attention to the integration of theory and practice than the NATED courses that it is replacing, mean that it probably prepares students better for the long-term skills demands of a changing workplace and economy.

Implied in the rationale for introducing the NC(V) is an assumption that the existence of the NC(V) is a consequence of weaknesses in the basic education system, and the fundamentals of numeracy and literacy in particular. It must be assumed that the NC(V) in its current form will be required for as long as the basic education system is not producing school leavers who do not have an adequate skills base to enter occupational learning programmes. These aspects of the current programme should not be a permanent feature of the post-school education and training system, but may be necessary for the next 10 years. This was acknowledged in the Medium Term Budget Statement, 2009. One of the two key commitments of government for FET colleges, is

‘to address the gap in the capabilities of school leavers to successfully pursue further education and skills training while improvements are introduced to the basic education system’.

### **2.3. The Transition from N to NC(V) Courses**

The National Certificate (Vocational) at levels 2, 3 and 4 of the NQF was introduced in 2007, and a process was undertaken to phase out the NATED Report 190 and 191 (N courses). A fundamental error may have been to present the NCV as a replacement for the N courses, when in fact these programmes could be seen as serving different purposes. The shift from the N programmes to the NC(V) programmes is evident in shifting enrolments, and was sealed in the funding of Colleges<sup>7</sup>. The Report on the Conduct of National Examinations 2009 (Department of Higher Education and Training) itemizes student entries from 2001 to 2009 and provides figures for both NC(V) and Report 191 (N) programmes. These figures reflect numbers of students that were entered into the FET colleges’ examination system.

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<sup>7</sup> See paragraph 11(c) of the Norms and Standards for funding of FET Colleges

These figures are inclusive of the examination entries for foreign examination centres such as Swaziland, Namibia, Germany and Saudi Arabia. Section 5.1.2 of the report presents the following table of enrolment figures (including national and international students) from 2006 to 2009:

**ENROLMENT IN N COURSE AND NC(V) 2006 - 2009**

<b>Programme</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Report 191 (N courses)	523 852	498 768	456 657	397 314	<b>1 876 591</b>
Estimated N enrolments	209 540	199 507	182 662	158 925	<b>750 634</b>
NC(V)		26 451	67 512	122 921	<b>216 884</b>

The NATED Report 190 and 191 (N Courses) reflects the totals of the examination entries in different programmes and those of NC(V) reflect the number of full-time equivalent students (FTEs) through the years. In order to provide an enrolment comparison, the NATED Report 190 and 191 course enrolments have been divided by 2.5 to give an estimate of students enrolled as this is the typical number of N courses undertaken by an individual in a year – this yields the entries in the table above in the row ‘Estimated N enrolments’.

In 2008 it was envisaged that the National N Certificate (N4-N6) and National N Diploma qualifications offered at FET colleges would be phased out by 2012 and 2014 respectively (date of last examination), and the Minister of Education published a notice to this effect in December 2008. In December 2009 the Minister of Higher Education and Training approved an extension of this phasing out process by two years. This means that in terms of current policy the last enrolments for N4, N5 and N6 programmes would be in 2011, 2012 and 2013 respectively, with the last examinations permitted in November 2012,

2013 and 2014 respectively. The last date for the award of the National N Diplomas would be December 2016, not December 2014 as originally envisaged.

This extension means that colleges have been permitted to continue to register students for N courses where there is demonstrable industry support. This step was taken to accommodate the urgent needs of some industries, but it was not intended to delay the urgent revision of N-type courses essential for artisan training by developing new occupational qualifications under the auspices of the QCTO.

The DHET proposes to undertake a rigorous process in 2010 to assess which N courses have the necessary support to be offered at specific colleges across the country, and will amend planning frameworks accordingly while urgent curriculum work is undertaken.

Some of these N courses (the N4, N5 and N6 programmes) are above NQF level 4. Although student enrolments in these N courses have apparently declined, the N4-N6 courses nevertheless represent a useful pathway for students from the FET college sector, as well as adult learners only able to study part-time, to enter higher education. This was particularly true for students in fields such as Engineering and IT, where the Universities of Technology in particular would often recognize such learning for admission to diploma programmes. The DHET will examine these and other ways of establishing linkages for students between FET colleges and higher education programmes.

#### **2.4. A mixed reception to the shift from the N courses to the NCV**

While it appears that there is some support for the NC(V) as a qualification route for the large number of young people who have no matric, however the implementation of the programme has been undermined by a range of practical problems. The concerns that have been raised about the structure of the NC(V) include:

- The public cost of offering a three-year qualification at NQF level 4 to students who already have attained this level. Calls have been made for accelerated pathways for young people who have a NSC pass.

- The absence of systemic connection to both the workshop and workplace learning, even though (as Duncan points out) ‘the curriculum explicitly calls for such experience and despite the fact that it poses significant educational, legal and logistical challenges’. Many hold the view that FET colleges cannot train to the level of the trade test.
- It is the view of many that whilst the NC(V) has a superior knowledge base to the N courses, its modality is insufficiently flexible and inaccessible.

As the NC(V) was phased in, so the N courses were to be progressively phased out. Several concerns have been raised about the NC(V) as the ‘replacement’ of the N courses:

- The NC(V) is inflexible and does not accommodate part-time or modularised learning for part-time students.
- Its current content is an inadequate base for trade testing and workplace requirements in some occupational areas – particularly engineering.
- Strong views exist that the curricula of the NC(V) are not aligned to the needs of industry. In particular the curricula need to be reviewed to bring them into alignment with the trades. This may result in learners requiring shorter, high quality programmes that constitute integral parts of apprenticeships, and incorporate current business initiatives. This would respond to a concern of business that an initiative is needed to produce high quality programmes that reduce the time of apprenticeships.

Implementation difficulties in relation to the NC(V) have included that most college lecturing staff were used to offering the N Courses, which had no practical requirement. This is because these courses were historically linked to employment as an apprentice. To overcome this serious deficiency in the NC(V) curriculum, the practical component of each of the vocational subjects combines into a continuous assessment regime conducted throughout the year and practical integrated summative assessment tasks (ISATs) at the end of each year. College lecturers and students have had to adjust to this essential component of vocational training. This has resulted in some challenges during the past examinations as a result of lack of experience among lecturers regarding the dynamics of ISAT as well as negligence of students regarding the requirements of ISAT.

A strong view has emerged that the N programmes which support artisan training must be revitalised. Whilst many hold the view that the N courses were fundamentally outdated and lagged behind applied disciplinary knowledge, there are voices in industry arguing that the N courses should not have been abandoned, but should be modernised and in many industries they are still a vital component of artisan training.

## **2.5. Links to workplace**

The expansion of work placement opportunities is an urgent priority. Research undertaken by Dr Anthony Gewer (2009) has shown that there is a 'strong and significant relationship between work experience during studies and subsequent employment'. He also found that colleges are currently ill-equipped to help students find this experience – and given that this experience is not required by the NC(V), their incentive to do so is weak. However the Skills Development Amendment Act (2008) states that a person who has completed an NC(V) or 'any other learning programme resulting in an occupational or vocational qualification' must complete a period of 'prescribed work experience' before they are entitled to sit a trade test (Skills Development Amendment Act, Act 37 of 2008, Section 2D(2)(d)). If learners want to progress to become artisans, work placements are essential.

The Minister of Higher Education and Training has made the development of a policy response to this problem a priority, and he required SETAs to address this challenge in the 2010/11 service level agreements. SACPO has proposed that this challenge be addressed by designing a system-wide partnership framework with the SETAs, who have a countrywide network of firms and grant levers. The current situation whereby each SETA must formulate individual relationships with each college is clearly inefficient. The DHET shares this view and believes that with careful planning it will be possible to use levy funds (including possibly a portion of those historically committed to Workplace Skills Plan grants) to incentivize firms to guarantee a far greater number of workplaces for college students and to sponsor more thorough-going oversight of students when so placed. It is also possible that together new vehicles can be designed to energize the partnerships between colleges and the world of work in other areas too – such as the alignment of learning programmes with the learning that takes place on

working sites, the upgrading of lecturer skills and the equipping of college workshops. The public service also has a vital role to play and the DHET is investigating the possibility of massively expanding 'youth service' as a vehicle for 'structured work experience'.

The National Skills Development Strategy is the legal mechanism whereby the skills levy grant system is steered and it is therefore very timely that the next NSDS, NSDS III, is currently being developed. The DHET has undertaken to present a draft proposed NSDS to the National Skills Authority in April, whereafter the social partners will interact on it. It is anticipated that the final strategy will be finalised at about the same time as the proposed FET Summit. Aligning the NSDS III, and its associated grant levers, with proposals to strengthen the colleges is clearly in the national interest. The COSE project described below intends to pioneer the alignment of college and workplace learning programmes for an initial selection of priority occupations.

## **2.6. Articulation and Quality Assurance**

The Further Education Training Institute (FETI) has recommended that the DHET formally conduct a comprehensive project to strengthen the FET college system through increased HE-FET college collaboration and by expanding the present mandate of FET colleges within the broader context of establishing a coordinated, flexible and differentiated Post School Education System (PSES) in SA.<sup>8</sup> They have argued that closer relations with Universities of Technology, colleges and SETAs would assist the development of colleges. Both SACPO and the South African Technology Network (SATN) have expressed a willingness to embark on this partnership.

SETA accreditation would also need to be reviewed and addressed. SACPO has proposed that the processes of programme approval across SETAs be standardized, and that colleges which are already accredited by one or more SETAs should be fast-tracking in the short term with accreditation extended across other SETAs, and that those colleges that do not qualify should

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<sup>8</sup> These proposals were made by Joy Papier and Rolf Stumpf in a presentation: Increasing educational opportunities for post-NQF 4 learners in SA through the FET college sector at a Seminar: *Responding to the Educational Needs of Post-School Youth* hosted by CHET and Wits EPU on 23 November 2009.

be supported to meet the requirements. The launching of the QCTO potentially provides solutions to this problem, but these have yet to be elaborated.

This is an important recommendation, given the current 'great uncertainty about what opportunities for further education will follow on from the NC(V), which currently only goes up to NQF level 4 whereas the old NATED courses went up to level 6' (Duncan, 2009<sup>9</sup>). As Duncan goes on to point out:

Most universities and universities of technology (UOTs) seem to be reluctant to register NCV graduates for level 5 courses in 2010 because of apparent gaps between the output competences targeted by the NCV and the entry requirements for university-level courses. Ideas about accrediting FET colleges to offer some higher education courses in partnership with universities and UOTs have been mooted but nothing concrete has emerged yet.

Duncan notes certain exceptions to this general situation:

Two NCV programmes – Finance, Economics and Accounting and Information Technology and Computer Science – have been assessed by Higher Education South Africa as being of a higher standard than comparable National Senior Certificate courses and should therefore qualify students for entry into university. On the other hand, the Engineering Council of SA has identified major deficiencies in the NCV's Engineering and Related Design programme as a basis for further study in engineering.

In this regard it is important to note the 'Minimum Admission Requirements for Admission into Higher Certificate, Diploma and Degree Programmes Requiring a National Certificate (Vocational)' which were gazette at the end of 2009. There is also a need to consider the implications for progression from more occupationally specific programmes as well.

A framework document would need to be developed advancing HE-FET institutional collaboration, which would include: a framework guiding credit accumulation and transfer

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<sup>9</sup> Duncan, K. (2009). *The current state of the FET college sector in South Africa*. Paper presented at the Colloquium on the State and Role of FET Colleges in South Africa held at Johannesburg Central College, 5 December 2009.

(CAT), memoranda of understanding between the three Quality Councils, the development of a Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) framework for participating colleges, an improvement in the quality of FET college academic staff which could be taken forward by the development of staff exchange programmes between HE and FET institutions. This would require clarity regarding the effect of enrolment planning in HE on HE-FET collaboration and the provision of earmarked funding in HE and FET college systems to promote cooperation.

The FETI proposal suggests several models for the strengthening and expanding of the FET college system. Two of these models (and a third) are outlined below:

**Model (a): Limited number of FET colleges given right to offer Higher Certificates (and possibly Advanced Certificates)**

The selection of which FET colleges would participate might be based on a set of stringent criteria such as those listed below:

- Must offer corresponding NC(V) programme
- Limited number of Higher Certificates for each FET college
- Must have existing staff exchange programme with HEI
- Minimum % of academic staff of FET college must have M+4
- Higher Certificates only on one campus of FET college
- Record of sound financial management of FET college
- Funding level of Higher Certificates at FET colleges
- QA by HEQC, certification?
- Admission requirement: Grade 12 or NCV4 'equivalent'

**Model (b): Greater number of post NQF Level 4 trade and occupationally oriented programmes**

This model would allow a percentage higher than 30% but lower than 50% of post NQF Level 4 trade and occupationally oriented programmes for selected FET colleges.

The selection of participating FET colleges could be based on criteria such as:

- Involvement of SETAs
- Admission requirement set as at least NC(V) Level 4
- Articulation with HE qualifications
- Quality assurance done by the QCTO

This would result in the following college typology and quality assurance framework for a strengthened and expanded FET college system:

- a) Some FET colleges would only offer NC(V) with quality assurance by Umalusi.
- b) Some colleges would offer NC(V) plus post NQF Level 4 trade and occupationally directed programmes with quality assurance by Umalusi and QCTO.
- c) Some colleges would offer NC(V) plus post NQF Level 4 trade and occupationally directed programmes plus HE programmes. Quality assurance would be by Umalusi, QCTO and HEQC.
- d) Some colleges offer NC(V) plus limited HE programmes with quality assurance by Umalusi and HEQC.

### **3. Funding Models and Implications for Planning and Enrolment**

In order to address persistent complaints of underfunding from the FET college sector, the former Department of Education launched an investigation late in 2008 (completed early in 2009) into the adequacy of the funding norms for NC(V) programmes only – funding for N courses was specifically excluded from this investigation. The conclusion drawn by a team of external experts was that even if only NC(V) programmes were considered, the funding base used by the DoE was deficient in a number of respects which were outlined in the ensuing report. One of the very important findings of the report was that the present funding arrangements often resulted in the provinces funding FET colleges on the basis of what remained in their Education Vote after all other needs had been met rather than in terms of an objective set of norms and standards.

Finally, many potential students are dissuaded from seeking admission to FET colleges for financial reasons. While it would be reasonable for an employer in industry or business to bear some (or all) of the tuition fees for their employees who are furthering their studies at FET colleges, individual learners who are not in an employment relationship are unable to pay the fees set by the colleges. Ways of supporting such learners to a greater extent than is possible under the present provisions of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme will need to be devised.

The National Plan for Further Education and Training Colleges of December 2008 was followed by the introduction of programme-based funding geared to the NC(V). The National Norms and Standards for Funding of Colleges provided for the funding of NC(V) enrolments only.

Several problems have been experienced which have seriously disrupted institutions.

Firstly, the intention in the National Plan was that planning would proceed on the basis of a college 'programme mix' indicating a choice of programme offerings which would guide student enrolment planning, and would be driven by funding as a key steering mechanism. It was implied that planning regarding the appropriate mix of staff would follow in order to meet the human resource requirements of the programme mix. It is our understanding that, on the whole, this did not take place at the institutional level because of the complex changes in institutional leadership and governance and because of latent resistance to the loss of the N courses. An already weak human resource base was further compromised by poor planning at institutional level and limited mechanisms to re-skill lecturing staff.

Secondly, the policy goal of a mix of programme offerings requires complementary funding, but the mechanisms by which this diversity of offerings was to be achieved are not addressed in the funding framework. The funding of N courses was excluded from the Norms and Standards for Funding of Colleges. Colleges which believed that the offering of the N courses was an appropriate response to the needs of industry did not receive funding for these courses. Colleges with relatively larger N enrolments have not had the resources to employ the necessary staff, which has had a major impact on the functioning of colleges. In KwaZulu Natal, the enrolment for NC(V) in 2010 is 22 424 and the enrolment for N Courses is 12 361. In some

Colleges, N enrolments surpass NC(V) enrolment: Umgungundlovu has registered 1 223 NCV students and 1 349 N students; Mtshasana College has enrolled 861 NC(V) students, and 1 541 N students. Colleges have had to provide staff for their enrolled students while staff salaries outside of the NC(V) framework have been excluded - the number of students on the NC(V) determine the number of posts that can be funded using the Funding Norms.

The Medium Term Budget Policy Statement gave an important signal in relation to funding arrangements:

... Closer alignment with the funding arrangements contained under the skills development levy is required so that FET colleges can access more of these funds and business can make greater use of the colleges.

SACPO has proposed that the NSF and SETAs should prioritise FET colleges as their first choice training sites for learnerships, apprenticeships (including NC(V) and NATED), skills programmes and special programmes and projects. This will require intensive processes to improve quality and responsiveness within a redress-based framework of action.

The DHET is formulating optimal financing arrangements whereby private funds, voted funds and levy funds can all be made to serve the goal of efficient and effective delivery of these education and training programmes. This will be contingent on quality delivery of relevant programmes.

#### **4. Size and Shape of the College Subsystem**

The university, vocational college and skills subsystems have been planned with insufficient integration of the holistic needs of the economy across these sectors as interrelated components of the post-school education and training system. In order for the vocational college subsystem to be relevant to national development, it must be in alignment with long-term development requirements. The role of the HRDSA will be key, as will effective co-planning with the Planning Commission, and key partner departments such as DST, DTI, the National Youth Development Agency and Rural Development and Land Reform. A robust interface and ongoing engagement with employers is also critical.

The post-school system must be supported by an institutional base that is diverse and differentiated as well as conceptualized as an integrated and coherent whole in which meaningful learning pathways are developed across institutional and workplace education and training modalities. The differentiation of the system must recognise the unique role and identity of the subsystems – both universities and colleges, and the further differentiation of mission and purpose of institutions within these subsystems. For FET colleges various types of differentiation will be possible, and among others we may want to consider sectoral and occupational differentiation. Funding frameworks and integrated or coordinated planning/management systems will be developed to steer towards these differentiated goals for the post-schooling system.

Support must be provided to individuals as they navigate transitions between subsystems and between basic and post-school education and training. A high quality, integrated and responsive career guidance and information system will support the goals of the Department of Higher Education and Training in relation to equity, access, success rates and overall human resource development.

In terms of the size and shape of the FET college subsystem in particular, enrolments are inequitable across provinces relative to population, and disproportionate to both skills demands and the aspirations of young people and adults to pursue post-school education and training opportunities. There is consensus in government that access to colleges needs to accelerate markedly in the immediate few years.

The National Plan of December 2008 set the following targets for the proposed expansion of student enrolment in the public FET Colleges

**National Plan (2008) enrolment in public FET<sup>10 11</sup>**

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<sup>10</sup> The data reflected above refers to FTE approximations, particularly for the NATED programmes. For 2010, only the first trimester/semester has been considered for N3-N6 which are programmes that have a legitimate examination during 2010. The steady decline in the Ns is consistent with the phase out.

Year	Planned enrolment NCV	Actual enrolment NC(V)L2-4	Actual enrolment NATED 1-6	Total College Enrolment
2007	25000	26 451	199 507	225 958
2008	60000	67 512	182 662	250 174
2009	120000	102 667	120 334	223 001
2010	177000	126 127	32 843* (82017)	208 235
2011	256000			
2012	371000			
2013	538000			
2014	800000			

Relative to higher education enrolment, FET enrolment is disproportionately low. The headcount enrolment in public higher education was 761 000 in 2007 while college enrolment was 25 000 (or 3.3% of the size of university enrolment), and was projected to be 816 000 in 2010 while the target college enrolment was 177 000 (21.7% of the size of university enrolment). The massive expansion planned between 2011 and 2014 may see college enrolment matching the enrolment of universities, but massive investment is necessary to make this a reality.

#### HEADCOUNT ENROLMENTS: UNIVERSITY

YEAR	ENROLMENT
1996	574,771
1997	569,814
1998	559,309
1999	553,800
2000	578,134
2001	627,277
2002	667,182
2003	705,255
2004	744,478
2005	735,073
2006	741,380

<sup>11 11</sup> All data must be regarded as provisional. The state of information on FET Colleges does not currently provide firm figures. This is an urgent priority of DHET

2007	760,889
2008	799,490
2009	811,638
2010	816,000

Source: HEMIS Database 8 March 2010 (2009 Provisional data, 2010 enrolment planning target)

#### COLLEGE ENROLMENT RELATIVE TO UNIVERSITY ENROLMENT

Year	College	University	Total	Ratio College: University
2007	225 958	760 889	986 847	1:3.4
2008	250 174	799 490	1 049 664	1:3.2
2009	223 001	811 638	1 034 639	1:3.6
2010	(208 235)	816 000	1 073 439	1:3.9

The figures for enrolment in colleges in 2010 (will be provided) but the provincial allocations per province in the 2010/11 illustrate the disparities between the grant allocations (reflecting enrolment distributions) and the percentage of the national age group (xy – yy) per province

#### Further Education and Training Colleges Conditional Grant 2010/11 relative to distribution of Youth per Province

Province	Grant R000	% of Total Grant	% of Youth Aged xxx
GP	833160	22.38%	
KZN	642561	17.26%	
EC	555208	14.91%	
WC	446512	11.99%	
LP	435854	11.71%	
FS	256703	6.90%	
MP	285563	7.67%	
NW	214999	5.78%	
NC	52101	1.40%	
	3722661	100.00%	

A discussion on the size and shape of the college subsystem must consider differentiation within the subsystem to accommodate specialised niche or comprehensive institutions of excellence, and respond to regional developmental needs and labour market demand. It would need to examine economies of scale and assess which college campuses are currently at a sub-optimal size to be effective and efficient.

## **5. System and Institutional Governance**

### **5.1. Uncertainty about the time-scale for the transition from a Provincial to a National function**

It is generally agreed that Colleges will become a national function. In May 2009, the President appointed two Ministers for Education at national level: the Minister of Higher Education and Training; and the Minister of Basic Education.

Further education is provided for in the Constitution, section 29(1), which makes it a fundamental right for any person to have access to further education which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible. Schedule 4 of the Constitution further makes education at all levels, excluding tertiary education, a functional area of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence. The Further Education and Training Colleges Act, 2006 (Act 16 of 2006) assigns specific powers and functions to the Executing Authorities responsible for FET college education within the two levels of government.

A meeting of the Council of Education Ministers in July 2009 considered the position on FET colleges as a concurrent legislative competence between the Minister of Higher Education and Training (Minister) and the nine Members of the Executive Council (MECs) responsible for education in a province and recommended that FET colleges should be made an exclusive national competence but acknowledged that this can be achieved only through an amendment to Schedule 4 of the Constitution.

This amendment is needed as section 40 of the Constitution stipulates that the different levels of government are distinctive, interdependent and inter-related. Constitutional judgments (the National Education Policy Bill and Gauteng School Education Bill) made it clear that the Constitution protects the concurrent legislative powers by requiring that the different level of government must respect the competence to legislate in the functional area and cannot negate the principle of concurrent legislative authority by absorbing all powers and functions to a specific level of government and leave the other level of government with no powers to perform. The FET Act cannot be amended to have the effect of giving an exclusive competence to the Minister, even if all provincial MECs agree to that amendment. Such an amendment would make the FET Colleges Act unconstitutional and unenforceable.

The Minister was requested to approach Cabinet to request approval that the process to effect such a constitutional amendment is explored and that preliminary drafting proposals can be coordinated with the Minister of Justice. At the Cabinet Committee Meeting held on 16 February 2010, the Cabinet Committee decided that the Department of Higher Education and Training must assess if there are any measures or processes identified in the Review Report of Constitutional Changes which have implications for this request.

A progress report was given to the Council of Education Ministers of 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2010. CEM again indicated the strong wish of Provinces for the Colleges to move from a provincial function to a national function as soon as possible.

This places the sub-system in an invidious position of ambiguity.

The Department concluded arrangements with Treasury to manage the budget of Programme 5 of the Provincial Departments of Education as a Schedule 4 Conditional Grant as of 1 April 2010. This arrangement will be kept in place until the process of moving the FET Colleges from a provincial competence to a national competence has been completed. In the Medium Term Budget Policy Statement of 2009, the Minister of Finance announced that the funding of FET colleges will shift from provinces to national government. The equitable share baseline was adjusted by about R3.4 billion a year to reflect this shift, and a new conditional grant was created through which funds will flow to FET colleges. This amount was later adjusted to

accommodate possible improvements in conditions of service for college lecturers negotiated in the ELRC chamber.

Some provinces have reported that there was no adjustment to the equitable share baseline for colleges to sustain recapitalisation initiatives, as directed by National Treasury, or to reverse erosion of spending on colleges from provincial budgets during the recapitalisation process. Intensive work will need to be done to establish a credible baseline for the funding and upkeep of cutting-edge technology and infrastructure in the colleges that is fit for purpose and aligned with growth targets. This will need to be taken forward in the conditional grant framework.

The changes in funding in provinces over time provided in the table below must be interrogated so that an appropriate baseline is set for future budget years. This will include a review of the framework for the education allocation of the Provincial Equitable Share of the national fiscus.

#### **FUNDING FOR FET COLLEGES BY PROVINCE 2005/6 – 2008/9**

##### **WITH MTEF PROJECTIONS 2010/11 – 2011/12**

<b>R million</b>	<b>2005/06</b>	<b>2006/07 Outcome</b>	<b>2007/08</b>	<b>2008/09 Pre- audited outcome</b>	<b>2009/10</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>
					<b>Medium-term estimates</b>		
Eastern Cape	168	222	322	413	485	509	532
Free State	120	162	181	198	202	227	241
Gauteng	327	442	534	591	751	784	822
KwaZulu-Natal	318	373	480	712	564	585	620
Limpopo	136	178	241	277	348	383	396
Mpumalanga	121	168	207	206	223	256	272
Northern Cape	34	42	45	49	46	47	47
North West	61	116	98	191	191	201	209
Western Cape	168	271	317	367	358	381	403
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,452</b>	<b>1,974</b>	<b>2,425</b>	<b>3,005</b>	<b>3,168</b>	<b>3,373</b>	<b>3,542</b>

<b>Percentage growth (average annual)</b>	<b>2005/06 – 2008/09</b>	<b>2008/09 – 2011/12</b>
Eastern Cape	35.0%	8.8%
Free State	18.3%	6.7%
Gauteng	21.8%	11.6%
KwaZulu-Natal	30.9%	-4.5%
Limpopo	26.8%	12.6%
Mpumalanga	19.4%	9.7%
Northern Cape	13.0%	-1.7%
North West	46.3%	3.1%
Western Cape	29.7%	3.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>27.4%</b>	<b>5.6%</b>

*Source: National Treasury provincial database*

### **Division of Revenue Act: Conditional Grant 2010/11**

The requirements of the Conditional Grant are stipulated in a grant framework. The basic requirements are that the funds will be utilized for:

- Enrolment of NC(V) Programmes as set out in college enrolment target planning.
- Enrolments in Report 191 programmes in line with the Report 191 phase-out policy.
- Expanding ICT for teaching and learning towards connectivity norms.
- Continue implementing MIS systems for the delivery of transversal MIS services.
- Implementation of the Funding Norms for FET Colleges.
- Refurbishment, maintenance and repairs of infrastructure and equipment to support the delivery of approved programmes.

The implementation protocol has not yet been signed by any province.

Alternative legal routes are being explored with urgency to facilitate the transfer of the legal and administrative functions for FET colleges from Provinces to DHET as a matter of urgency. The Round Table must proceed on the assumption that whilst this transition is managed, the committed support of Provinces and the DHET is critical to reduce ambiguities and ensure clear communication with stakeholders.

The DHET Council of Education Ministers will meet on May 7<sup>th</sup> to consider progress in finding legal mechanisms to facilitate the rapid transfer of the function, and the effective cooperative governance of the colleges during the transition process.

## **5.2. Incomplete implementation of the provisions of the FET Act**

A perception exists that not all Provinces have implemented all the provisions of the FET Act which require the MEC to take action. An audit of the extent to which the actions contemplated in the Act have been carried forward is being undertaken by HSRC on behalf of NBFET. The Audit might include:

Has the MEC:

- **STRATEGIC PLANS AND ANNUAL REPORTS**

- Approved the strategic plan of the College every year (30 days before the commencement of the financial year)?
- Received an annual report in respect of its performance and use of its available resources?
- Determined the manner in which the annual reports should be published?
- Did the annual reports cover:
  - a report on the overall management and governance of the college?
  - a report on the overall performance of students on the programmes offered by the college?
  - a duly audited statement of income and expenditure?
  - a balance sheet and cash flow statement?
- Reported to the provincial legislature regarding any non-compliance?

- **COUNCIL**

- Appointed five external members of the Board?
- Concurred with the appointment of four additional external persons with financial, human resources and legal skills as members of the council?

- Are at least 60 per cent of the members of a council must be external persons not-
  - students or support staff of the public college?
  - employed by the Member of the Executive Council?
  - employed by the college?
  
- **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**
  - Determined policy for the composition, manner of election, term of office, functions and privileges of the student representative council?
  
- **FUNDING OF PUBLIC COLLEGES**
  - provided sufficient information to public colleges regarding funding to enable the colleges to prepare their budgets for the next financial year?
  
- **FINANCIAL RECORDS AND STATEMENTS OF PUBLIC COLLEGES**
  - Determined the manner of
    - keep records of all its proceedings?
    - keeping complete accounting records of all assets, liabilities, income and expenses and any other financial transactions of the public college as a whole, of its substructures and of other bodies operating under its auspices?
    - implementing internal audit and risk management systems which are not inferior to the standards contained in the Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 35 No. 1 of 1999)?

### **5.3. Weaknesses in Institutional Governance , Management and Leadership**

Governance and management capacity in the FET college sector is very uneven. The inadequacies were highlighted by the recent transfer of college staff (with the exception of the principals) from the employ of the provinces to the colleges. This change caused an exodus of college lecturers who did not have confidence in the Councils as an employer and preferred to stay in the employment of the State. The Unions have suggested that the exodus may have

been as high as 36% of staff employed at Colleges which represents a massive loss of experienced staff at a time of curriculum and governance transition.

There are tensions in the current dual accountability of college principals, who have a performance agreement with the state (or should have, this is largely unimplemented) but need to respect the strategic priorities set by the college council.

More generally, there are signs that some FET colleges are ill prepared for the management of the opportunities and challenges which greater institutional autonomy brings. This is particularly the case with respect to funding and managing different, and sometimes contesting, income-generating opportunities.

SACPO has called for the review of college governing council structures and expressed a view that:

- The existing status of college councils in respect of employer status, accountability to MECs as per appointment conditions, composition of councils, funding of colleges and council roles and responsibilities in this regard, eligibility of membership etc, are some of the serious flaws in the current system.
- Tensions and contestations of turf between many external council members and college management, both at college and national (FETCEO) levels must be addressed to bring clarity, harmony and coherence in college cooperative governance requirements.
- Develop customised governance practices for FET Colleges building on the King III report, and similar work governance frameworks.

As is the case with higher education, programmes aimed at equipping the councils of FET colleges to carry out their new governance responsibilities will be required. Critical skills are particularly needed in the councils of rural colleges. In particular, councils will have to be equipped to distinguish between their governance responsibilities and the operational responsibilities of management. Clear guidelines for the governance and management of the colleges need to be developed, and programmes to strengthen college management,

governance and leadership must be delivered on the basis of these guidelines. Mechanisms for sharing best practice among college managers and governors must also be created to sustain the impact of these programmes.

#### **5.4. Problems associated with the College Council being the employer**

The shift with the employer from the State to the College Councils was meant to provide a governance structure flexible enough to accommodate the flexibility required for maximum responsiveness of individual colleges.

It has had major unintended consequences which have more than any other factor destabilized the system massively. These include:

- The loss of key staff who chose to remain in the employ of the State
- Staff who became employees of the College Council have not benefited from the multiple condition of service benefits negotiated in the ELRC for teachers
- The negotiation processes to address conditions of service of staff employed by College Councils must be led in a collective bargaining process by FETCEO which is a voluntary organisation of people who agreed to serve on College councils as a civic duty. The Department of Education provided support and a special chamber was created in the ELRC. The process was further complicated by the fact that the substantive technical information is held in the provinces.

## **6. Dimensions of College Effectiveness**

### **6.1. Quality of teaching and learning**

Success and completion rates are inadequately understood, but are generally accepted to be poor. An urgent project to analyse these, establish baselines (differentiated across subject areas and localities) and develop intervention mechanisms will be undertaken. These interventions will include an analysis of curriculum and institutional support with a view to developing a plan to improve teaching and learning through improved institutional practices supporting effective teaching and learning and developing stronger student support systems.

Pass rates in FET colleges are not currently available in a form that facilitates analysis. Section 6.2 of the Report on the Conduct of Examinations 2009 gives the statistics on the overall performance per province and public FET College respectively in both the Report 191 and NC(V) programmes. This report provides information regarding enrolments, the number of students that wrote and the pass rates per college per province.

The average national pass rates for 2009 were<sup>12</sup>:

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Pass Rate</b>
N - General Studies	59.4%
N - Natural Sciences	43.5%
NC(V)	59.7%

These data must be subjected to more in-depth analysis to provide information regarding (for example): performance in specific subjects nationally and across colleges; cohort progression, including the numbers of courses that learners are ‘carrying’; quality of passes; relative performance of students across different colleges and campuses; overall passes from year to year and extent of repetition; and articulation into higher education and the world of work as a means of channeling and managing youth and adult aspirations as mid-level income jobs grow scarcer and scarcer.

A better understanding of the phenomenon of non-completion is also needed. If the difference between the number of students that enrolled and those who wrote the exams is indicative of drop-out rates, the Report on the Conduct of Examinations 2009 provides the following information regarding drop-out from college programmes:

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<sup>12</sup> All data must be regarded as provisional. The state of information on FET Colleges does not currently provide firm figures. This is an urgent priority of DHET

<b>Programme</b>	<b>Drop-Out Rate<sup>13</sup></b>
General Studies	13.8%
Natural Sciences	15.8%
NC(V)	29.4%

## **6.2. Qualifications and Experience of Lecturing Staff**

In addition to presenting assumptions about funding and infrastructure expansion to support the growth that is envisaged in the sector, the National Plan for FET Colleges acknowledges that “There is little chance of improving the quality of educational provision unless the curriculum development process is linked to a national strategy of training college lecturers and ensuring that there is a coherent framework of lecturer development.”

A survey of Information Technology (IT), Construction and Engineering lecturers undertaken by the NBI in 2009 showed that:

- Nearly 26% of the respondents reported technical qualifications at NQF levels 2-5, and most of these (78%) have no pedagogical qualification.
- Just over two-fifths (41%) reported technical qualifications at NQF levels 6-8, but more than two-thirds of this group of lecturers do not possess any pedagogical qualifications and only one in ten have pedagogical qualifications at NQF levels 6-8.
- A further 33.5% of respondents reported having no technical qualifications; however, this group was relatively well qualified in pedagogy (nearly 20% had pedagogical qualifications at NQF levels 5-8). The highest proportion of respondents with no relevant technical qualifications was found among lecturers in IT (48%), followed by construction (38%) and engineering (29%).

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<sup>13</sup> <sup>13</sup> All data must be regarded as provisional. The state of information on FET Colleges does not currently provide firm figures. This is an urgent priority of DHET

- Across the three fields, only between 8% and 15% of the respondents reported pedagogical qualifications at NQF levels 6-8. The educators in the sample with the highest pedagogical qualifications were in the age band 40-49 – more than one-fifth of these reported pedagogical qualifications at NQF levels 6-8, which amounted to double or more the proportion in the other age categories.

There are potentially serious shortfalls in both the pedagogical and technical qualifications of college lecturers. However, the importance of the apparent shortfall in subject-related qualifications may vary across fields and subjects, and this needs to be investigated in some detail. In addition to examining the current state of lecturer qualifications, it may also be important to consider incentives for professional development, rewards for improved teaching competence and clear discipline-specific career paths. The NBI study cited includes the following recommendations:

- The very high rate of projected enrolment growth requires a managed transition to a high-quality FET system, including a carefully targeted investment strategy to ensure that weaknesses in lecturer development are identified and prioritized. Funding for higher education institutions that can provide relevant lecturer training with a disciplinary focus should be ringfenced to ensure maximum benefits for the FET sector.
- A study of lecturer supply, utilization and demand is urgently required to support the planned enrolment growth in the FET sector through detailed research and careful projections per field and per college. The study should include consideration of the age and qualifications of the current lecturer population and their training needs per discipline, as well as how to ensure future recruitment of competent lecturers into the sector.

Additionally, SACPO has recommended that:

- there is a need to define the different types of employees at colleges and define norms and standards for conditions of service for each type of employee; and
- staff development need to be costed and funded.

Lecturers generally either have technical qualifications or pedagogical qualifications but it is not the norm for lecturers to have both.

- Over 50% of respondents in Engineering and Construction are or have been at one time registered artisans
- on average 87% of these respondents have maintained their artisan status.
- However, only 30% of engineering lecturers have had recent industry-based work experience (i.e. in the last 3 years).

#### LECTURER INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Last / most recent year of experience	All 3 fields	Construction	Engineering	Information technology
2009-2008	26%	28%	22%	40%
2007-2006	12%	20%	8%	22%
2005-2004	8%	10%	8%	7%
2003-2002	7%	6%	7%	11%
2001-2000	7%	5%	8%	4%
1990-1999	21%	12%	25%	11%
Before 1990	14%	15%	16%	0%
Year not specified	5%	4%	6%	5%
<b>Valid total</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=394)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=81)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=258)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=55)</b>

(Source: Gewer, 2009)

Curriculum reforms must be grounded in the expertise of teaching staff. Both the content and pedagogical knowledge of FET lecturers has in general not kept pace with curriculum changes

and developments in industry. Institutional practices supporting effective teaching and learning are inadequate. Processes are in place to fast-track responses to these deficiencies, and systemic interventions are urgently needed

### **6.3. Learner recruitment**

Learner recruitment has a clear impact on throughput rates in the sector. There is a clear correlation between selecting the appropriate learner and the ability of the learner to succeed in the NCV. Work needs to be done to develop a common tool to support learner selection, and this needs to be linked to recruitment and career guidance.

### **6.4. Sociology of learners and learner support**

#### **Transitions School or Unemployment to College**

There are concerns about the support available to young people, particularly those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, in making choices around post-school education and training. Recent data suggests that young people are reliant on parents and families to guide them in this regard. However, due to the poor availability of information or poor understanding of the options available within what are often first generation families, these youth are effectively left to make these choices on their own. Gewer (2009) found that 'while parents and families provided moral, emotional and particularly financial support, there was little support in the form of information or career guidance'.

These choices are also defined by financial affordability and geographical locality. Many of the learners in colleges (around 60%) are reliant on financial aid despite the relative affordability of the NC(V), which has obvious implications for its expansion. There are also high levels of migration to major urban areas based on the belief that these urban colleges offer higher quality and there is more chance of finding employment.

#### **Transitions: College to Work**

Colleges are particularly weak in preparing learners for the workplace or in creating opportunities for learners to access the workplace. This exacerbates the disadvantage

experience by learners from poor environments, in that access to the workplace can assist in overcoming the negative effect of limited social networks. Colleges can play an important role in helping students from socio-economically deprived environments to gain access to employer networks that can enhance their prospects for meaningful employment.

Gewer (2009) found that if young graduates persevere in the labour market and gain some work experience they have a reasonable chance of eventually accessing a qualification related job. However, if they have work experience during studies, the chance of finding first time employment increase significantly. His research showed that the two most common modes for finding employment were family/social networks and advertisements. While the primary mode for finding employment was through family/social networks, responses to advertisements were more likely to result in a job that was related to their qualification and they were more likely to be using their skills and knowledge acquired during studies. Poor access to finance was the main reason for taking on employment that was not related to what they studied.

### **Academic Support**

Learner support within the college appears to be limited, and where such support exists it is not being optimally utilized. There is limited capacity to offer more than the bare minimum of counseling and support services, and both career guidance and academic support are weakly conceptualized and applied.

**Table: Province from which respondent originates, by province of FET where respondent is studying**

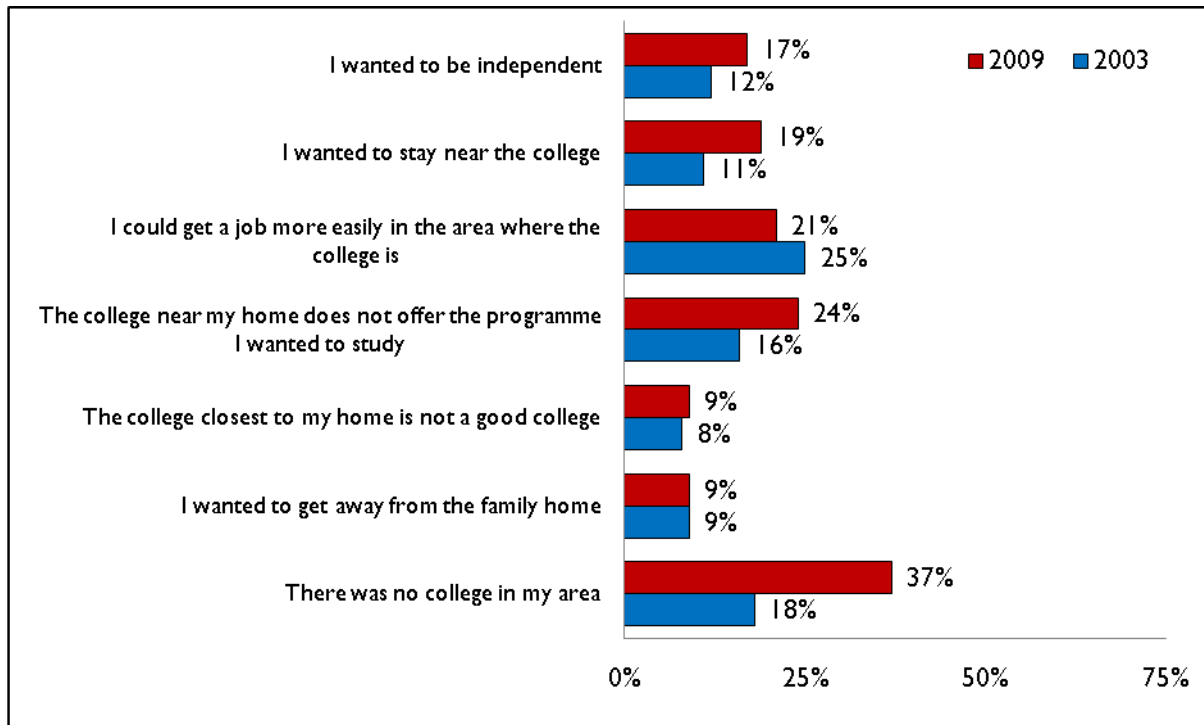
Province of origin	Province where FET college is located				Total
	Gauteng	KwaZulu-Natal	Limpopo	Western Cape	
Eastern Cape	3%	3%	0%	13%	3%
Free State	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Gauteng	59%	2%	1%	2%	21%
KwaZulu-Natal	3%	92%	1%	1%	10%
Limpopo	19%	0%	94%	0%	47%
Mpumalanga	9%	0%	4%	0%	5%
North West	3%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Northern Cape	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Western Cape	0%	0%	0%	79%	10%
Other country	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%
Not specified	1%	1%	9%	2%	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=3461)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=912)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=4282)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=1230)</b>	<b>100%</b> <b>(N=9885)</b>

(Source: Gewer, 2009)

### Migration patterns (2003)

Region	% Migrated to this region
Gauteng	55% (of which 57% from LP)
Durban Metro	11% (of which 51% from EC)
Cape Metro	31% (of which 69% from EC)
Limpopo	6% (of which 38% from MP)

### Reasons for Migrating



(Source: Gewer, 2009)

There are important implications in the above for understanding the nature of difficulties experienced by students, such as place of residence, travel, accommodation, proximity of family support, guidance, pastoral care and mentoring.

## 7. System Support

### 7.1. Equipment and infrastructure

Despite the Government's three-year programme aimed at recapitalizing infrastructure at FET colleges, there has been mixed success largely due to uneven application by the provinces where, in some cases, infrastructural grants were accompanied by a decrease in recurrent grants leaving the affected FET colleges in parlous situations.

FET colleges also argue that their facilities, largely shaped by the earlier technical college model, do not allow them to easily absorb larger student groups and force them into having undesirably low student:staff ratios. This phenomenon has to be investigated further. In addition the NC(V) programme approach demands simulated work or practical learning at the FET college campus and many colleges claim that they do not have the specialized facilities where practical learning can be simulated successfully. Such simulated learning is very equipment-intensive and presents a further challenge to FET colleges that needs to be better understood. It may be necessary to adopt more cost-efficient models of practical learning, with, for example, Engineering programmes being offered on one campus only in order to avoid the duplication of very costly simulated learning laboratories. This would mean using other campuses for other less cost-intensive purposes.

## **7.2. FET colleges management information system**

One of the challenges in the sector is the lack of data. Central to the establishment of data capacity is the current DHET initiative to provide colleges with a reliable centrally hosted management information system. Of even greater importance is the need to interpret management information and share the analysed data with all roleplayers and stakeholders to support more effective planning and budgeting in the FET college subsystem. A framework for measuring and monitoring college effectiveness, built on a strong foundation of knowledge about the context and positioning of colleges in relation to the broader post-school education and training system, is presented in a separate document – ‘The Way Forward’.