South Africa

Revised version, October 2006.

**Principles and general objectives of education**

All policies, laws and programmes introduced by the Ministry of Education since 1994 have aimed at transforming the national system of education and training. The mission statement of the Department of Education declares that: ‘Our vision is of a South Africa in which all its people have equal access to lifelong education and training opportunities, which will contribute towards improving their quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic society. This statement points the way toward a system that is freed from discrimination and inequality, and united on a foundation of opportunity and democracy.

Education rights are provided in section 29 of the Constitution (1996) as follows: (i) everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education, and to further education which the State, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible; (ii) everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where that education is reasonably practicable; and (iii) everyone has the right to establish and maintain, at their own expense, independent educational institutions that: do not discriminate on the basis of race; are registered with the state; and maintain standards that are not inferior to standards at comparable public educational institutions.

The main goal is to enable all individuals to value, have access to and succeed in lifelong education and training of good quality.

**Current educational priorities and concerns**

The fundamental policy framework of the Ministry of Education was set out in the first White Paper, *Education and training in a democratic South Africa: first steps to develop a new system* (1995). While transacted in the first months of the Government of National Unity, it took as its starting point the 1994 education policy framework of the African National Congress (ANC). After extensive consultation, negotiation and revision, it was approved by the Cabinet and has served as the principled basis and reference point for the Ministry’s policy and legislative development.

The vast organizational process of de-commissioning the apartheid education structures, creating the national and nine provincial departments of education, transferring institutions, staff, offices, records and assets, was accomplished without a breakdown in education delivery.

In the new national Department, a systematic transformation process has been undertaken since 1996. It has proceeded through three continuous phases. The first phase concentrated on change management, the review of systems, and organizational culture. The second phase has focused on changing systems and procedures to
improve performance and outcomes, teamwork, and customer-focused service. The third phase will emphasize staff development.

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996 was designed to inscribe in law the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education under the new democratic (interim) Constitution, and to formalize the relations between national and provincial education authorities in the new system. The Act spells out directive principles for policy, as well as the consultative processes the Minister must observe in determining policy or legislation. The Act establishes the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) and the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), and determines their functions in the national and provincial policy processes and the co-ordination of the new system. The NEPA makes the national Department responsible for monitoring the extent to which provincial departments uphold their responsibilities under the Constitution and the law, but creates a co-operative process to identify and remedy any default.

The integration of education and training was a prime policy goal of the ANC Alliance before the 1994 election. The establishment of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was considered an essential expression of a national learning system where education and training would be accepted as equally important and complementary facets of human competence. The NQF was seen as a powerful vehicle to promote wider access to learning and greater mobility of learners across the system. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act of 1995 embraces all levels and sectors of the national learning system. It is largely an enabling measure, according major responsibility for developing and implementing the NQF to the highly representative SAQA Board, and it makes participation in the NQF voluntary. These attributes have ensured overwhelming acceptance.

As far as Early Childhood Development (ECD) is concerned, the Department of Education has focused most of its work on developing policies and implementation programmes for the reception year (Grade R), the first year of the proposed ten years of compulsory education. The Interim Policy for ECD was released in 1996. Subsequently, the Department developed the National ECD Pilot Project to develop and test systems and models of educational provisioning for the 5–6-year-olds, with a view to phasing in the reception year. The White Paper 5 on ECD which establishes a national system of provision of Grade R for children aged 5, was launched in May 2001. The medium-term goal is for all children entering Grade I to have participated in an accredited Grade R programme by 2010. The White Paper also focuses on expanding ECD provision, correcting imbalances, ensuring equitable access, and improving the quality and delivery of ECD programmes. These interventions aim to break the cycle of poverty by increasing access to ECD programmes, particularly among poor children. The programmes are implemented with other departments.

In May 2006, the Department of Social Development in collaboration with UNICEF published the Guidelines for ECD services, a product of a long and intensive consultation process. The document focuses on ECD services aimed at interventions and programmes for parents and/or primary caregivers as well as community-based services and ECD centres. These Guidelines were developed to facilitate the Department of Social Development’s mandate towards ECD in South Africa. They also refer to important core aspects in the early childhood phase of life such as
nutrition, health care, environmental safety and early education and learning. It remains, however, the role and mandate of other departments to provide guidance and information on their contributions and mandates towards young children through policies, guidelines and other methods of communication.

Under the South African Schools Act of 1996, special attention is given to an information and advocacy campaign to ensure compliance with the Grade I entry age (i.e. children must start primary education in the year when they turn 7). The consolidation of the new Grade I curriculum, the introduction of the new Grade II curriculum, intensive teacher development on the new pedagogy, and implementation of the new assessment policy, are intended to ensure that the problems of under-age enrolment and high repetition rates in Grade I will be drastically reduced.

In 1998, the Department of Education, in collaboration with the provincial departments of education, began the phasing in a new outcomes-based curriculum, named Curriculum 2005. In line with the emerging requirements of the NQF, a curriculum policy document for Grades R–IX (i.e. the compulsory general education and training programme) had been released in 1997, and an assessment policy document in 1998.

The new framework was adopted after extensive consultation and research, and represents a radical break from the apartheid past. Apartheid education was dominated by pedagogical doctrines based on theories of racial and religious determinism. By contrast, the basis of outcomes-based education (OBE) is that learning as essentially an interactive process between and among educators and learners, with the learner at the centre of the process, and the teacher serving as facilitator. It places strong emphasis on co-operative learning, especially group work on common tasks. The goal is active, lifelong learners, with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.

Expected levels of performance—which are part of the new assessment policy—are being developed for the foundation phase (Grades R–III) and the senior phase (Grades VII–IX) of general education and training. The programme is being monitored, and the Department intends that systemic evaluation of learner attainment will take place at Grades III, VI and IX. The curriculum, and the new pedagogy associated with OBE, has been widely welcomed, but extreme budget pressure in 1997 compelled provincial education departments to reduce textbook orders and teacher development programmes.

The quality and availability of suitable learning support materials (LSM) is an important prerequisite for the successful introduction of the new curriculum framework, pedagogy and assessment. However, since the 1997/98 provincial budget crisis, the funds available to provinces for ordering LSM have drastically declined. Problems have been experienced at many points in the book supply chain. It has become apparent that the control of inventories, durability of materials, and retention of books in schools are important issues to be managed by provincial departments and school leadership teams.

identifies four central features that underpin the new FET system (i.e. Grades X–XII). These take the form of new approaches in governance, programmes and qualifications, quality assurance and funding. The overall goal is to establish the foundation for building capacity and systems across all levels of FET in order to effect the desired programmatic, institutional and cultural changes that are necessary to achieve a flexible and responsive FET system. In terms of organizational development, the strategic objective is to establish and strengthen governing structures, initiate institutional reorganization, build the Culture of Learning, Teaching and Service (COLTS) and undertake human resource capacity building that is outcomes specific. In terms of learning and teaching, the strategic objective is to set up appropriate national structures for managing the introduction of responsive learning programmes and qualifications, assessment, flexible modes of learning, effective learner support and articulation to the needs of communities, higher education and the workplace.

Policies emanating from Department of Labour are playing an increasingly important role in ensuring an effective transition from education and training to the world of work. The introduction of the Skills Development Act (1998, amended in 2003) and more recently the National Skills Development Strategy 2005-2010 (NSDS), have been designed to address the incongruity of skills shortages in some sectors of the economy and existence of a large number of unemployed job seekers who do not have the necessary skills or experience to work. The main objectives of the strategy include: developing a culture of high-quality, lifelong learning; fostering skills development in the formal economy to increase productivity and foster employment growth; stimulating and supporting skills development in small businesses, and promoting skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives. The policy is funded by a skills development levy on registered employers, most of which can be reclaimed by conducting appropriate training. The levy also funds the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) which are key partners in the implementation of the NSDS. These sector-specific training authorities are responsible for incorporating accredited learning into real-world working sites.


The Constitution guarantees equal access to basic education. This has necessitated the identification of values and principles which should drive national policy for the reorganization and development of the education and training system. Therefore, the key principles that underpin education policy development articulate both the government’s political commitment to basic education provision, and a creation of an enabling environment to enhance the transformation process. These principles are:
- **Equity and redress**, especially in the equitable provision of finances and resources. It is essential to redress imbalances generated through historical inequalities in education provision, including the promotion of gender equality and the advancement of the status of women. Ways have been found to encourage children to attend schools that formerly excluded them. To an appreciable degree, schools have opened their doors and, where necessary, expanded their educational programmes to accommodate all children, irrespective of race and/or culture. The implementation of early childhood development programmes needs to be targeted to all communities, but especially those communities where this facility has never been available before and those where significant proportions of children in Grade I are under-age.

- **Access to basic education opportunities for lifelong learning.** Improving access to basic education has two main components. Firstly, capacity must be expanded. Secondly, there is a need to understand and, where possible, address the barriers that prevent some children from attending school. Long distances to school and lack of transport, hunger, disability, lack of parental guidance, inability to pay school fees, etc., are all factors that may prevent children from enrolling and effectively participating in school.

- **Quality**, in terms of providing learners with learning opportunities of an acceptable standard. The achievement of basic education for all has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. Any suitable definition of basic education needs to embrace not merely the proportion of eligible children attending school, but also the nature and quality of schooling offered. The implementation of the compulsory phase implies not merely securing formal attendance at school, but also ensuring that sufficient and quality material and human resources are made available to schools. For example, the government must ensure that educators are well prepared to facilitate the learning process. The Ministry of Education considers the provision of quality free education as a public responsibility to be largely funded by the state at an affordable and sustainable level. This implies, nonetheless, that certain education costs are to be borne by parents and learners.

- **Efficiency**, to ensure optimal value for the considerable financial resources the State and the private sector must invest in education.

- **Democratic participation** in the governance and management of education institutions.

- **Sustainability of development initiatives**, so that they will contribute to overall transformation in the long term.

- **Relevance** of education to the needs of the economy and individuals’ vocational aspirations, as well as broader social and cultural values.

To a large extent, these key principles have influenced the determination of targets and priorities within the broader education transformation agenda. Likewise, the organizational, legislative and governance frameworks of education put in place
since 1995 are in keeping with these principles. While it is recognized that policy implementation is still in its infancy, a sound foundation for building an appropriate education system for the twenty-first century has been laid within the current legislation and policy frameworks.

The Plan of Action for Improving Access to Free and Quality Basic Education for All (EFA), published by the Department of Education in June 2003 (DOE, 2003), follows the release of the report titled *Review of the Financing, Resourcing and Costs of Education in Public Schools*, released in March 2003. That report analyzed key aspects of the schooling system as well as the major achievements since 1994, and outlined recommendations for a better schooling system. The Plan of Action focuses on priority programmes such as: expansion of ECD services; budget programmes in education; independent schools; special schools (subject to a transformation process following the *Education White Paper 6* of 2001); further education and training colleges; and adult basic education and training. The Plan groups strategies and activities according to three inputs: (a) personnel inputs and the curriculum; (b) non-personnel non-capital inputs, including adequate learner support materials (LSMs), furniture, and equipment; and (c) school infrastructure and the question of access to schools, in particular scholar transport. The need for free and quality EFA implies that: public funding of schools, especially where learners are poor, must be sufficient to cover the cost of all the basic inputs required for a quality education; schooling must provide all learners with meaningful knowledge and skills that will empower them to take part fully in the economic, political and cultural life of the country; and no learners, especially those of compulsory school-going age, should experience any economic, physical or other barriers to attending school.

Despite the major achievements and progress made, there still are challenges that threaten the attainment of the goal of quality education for all, including: the poverty and unemployment rates which are still considerably high and encourage dropping out, low achievement and exclusion of the poor; the mismatch between the skills of the graduates and the needs of the labour market; the lack of maturity of systems of implementation, monitoring, evaluation especially in terms of resource allocation and administrative structure; the problems of coordination of various skills development agencies as well as the government in ensuring coherent quality programmes in ECD, adult basic education and vocational education; the impact of HIV & AIDS on society and how these impact on education and training; and the challenges of infrastructure degradation and maintenance, especially in many rural and farming communities, as well as the transport and travel of learners to and from rural schools. (DOE, 2005).

The recent National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (2006) draws on the work of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education, which was appointed in 2003 and reported to the Minister of Education during 2005. The Committee conducted a wide-ranging study and consulted extensively with key stakeholders. The policy considers teacher education in terms of two complementary sub-systems: initial professional education of teachers, and continuing professional teacher development. The overriding aim of the policy is to properly equip teachers to undertake their essential and demanding tasks, to enable them to continually enhance their professional competence and performance, and to

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The Constitution—Act No. 108 of 1996, drafted in terms of Chapter 5 of the interim Constitution of 1993—requires that education be transformed and democratized in accordance with the following values: human dignity; the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms; non-racism and non-sexism. The democratization of education includes the idea that all stakeholders (parents, educators, learners and members of the community) must participate in school activities.

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act No. 58 of 1995 provides for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and for the establishment of the SAQA. The NQF establishes an integrated national framework for learning achievements, aiming at enhancing access and mobility as well as quality in education and training. In accordance with the Act, the NQF consists of eight levels grouped into three broad bands: (i) general education and training (NQF Level 1, including adult basic education and training Levels 1–4); (ii) further education and training (Levels 2–4); and (iii) higher education (Levels 5–8).

The National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 spells out directive principles for policy, as well as the consultative processes the Minister of Education must observe in determining policy or legislation. The Act also established the Committee of the Heads of Education Departments and the Council of Education Ministers, whose main function is to promote a national education policy which takes full account of the policies of the government, the education interests and needs of the provinces, and the respective competence of Parliament and the provincial legislatures.

The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 replaced Education Acts based on the principle of separate provision of education for the different ethnic groups (‘apartheid’) and asserts that all learners have a right to access basic and quality education without discrimination of any sort. The Act has paved the way for a single, non-racial school system. It provides for two types of schools—public and independent schools. A significant change introduced by the Act is that the previous differentiation of state-funded schools no longer exists, and now these schools are all referred to as public schools. The Act also provides for conditions of admission for learners to public schools and for the governance of all public schools.

The Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997 provides for the establishment of a single national coordinated higher education system. The key features of a single coordinated system are: (i) a programme-based definition of higher education, i.e. all learning programmes leading to a qualification beyond Grade XII, or NQF Level 4; (ii) introduction of a national and institutional planning process linked to a new funding formula that would enable the higher education system to be steered to meet national development goals; (iii) democratization and reform of the governing
world Data on Education. 6th edition, 2006/07

structures of higher education institutions, including the establishment of institutional forums, representing stakeholders, to advise the councils of institutions on all aspects of institutional policy and governance; (iv) incorporation of colleges offering higher education programmes into the higher education system; and (v) establishment of a regulatory framework for the registration of private providers of higher education programmes. The Act also provides a statutory basis for the Council on Higher Education. The Higher Education Amendment Act No. 63 of 2002 clarifies and brings legal certainty to labour and student matters regarding the mergers of public HE institutions. It provides clarity on the authority to take the decision to merge and to give a name and physical location to a new institution.

The Further Education and Training Act No. 98 of 1998 provides for: the establishment, governance and funding of public further education and training institutions; the registration of private further education and training institutions; and quality assurance and quality promotion. The purpose of this Act is to establish a national coordinated further education and training system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based further education and training. This Act, together with the Ministry of Labour’s Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 (amended in 2003) and the National Skills Development Strategy 2005–2010 (March 2005), represent the legislative basis for a progressive re-orientation of further education and training towards the needs of the society and the economy, and a major re-conceptualization of funding sources for the sector.

The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 provides for the employment of educators by the state, and the regulation of conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of educators. This Act clarifies a number of areas of the law that have caused confusion in the past, especially with respect to the identity of the employer, and the definitions of misconduct and incapacity. The Act also provides a statutory basis for the South African Council for Educators.

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) Act of 2000 establishes that all teachers have to register with SACE in order to practice as qualified teachers.

The Adult and Basic Education Training Act No. 52 of 2000 regulates adult basic education and training (ABET) and provides for: the establishment, governance and funding of public adult learning centres; the registration of private adult learning centres; and quality assurance and promotion in adult basic education and training.


According to the Schools Act of 1996, school attendance is compulsory for all children between 7 and 15 years of age.
Administration and management of the education system

The Ministry of Education was established in May 1994 to deal with education and training at the national level. It is assisted by the Department of Education. Education at all levels—excluding tertiary education—is listed as one of the functional areas of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence (Schedule 4, Part A of the Constitution). Thus, Parliament may pass a law with regard to any level of education, and provincial legislatures may pass a law with regard to any level of education, except higher education.

In terms of the Constitution, the national Department of Education is responsible for matters which cannot be regulated effectively by provincial legislation, as well as for matters that need to be coordinated in terms of norms and standards at the national level. Relations with the nine provincial departments of education are guided by the national education policy, within which the provincial departments have set their own priorities and implementation programmes.

The Council of Education Ministers, consisting of the Minister of Education, the Deputy Minister and the nine provincial Members of the Executive Council for Education, meets regularly to discuss matters related to the national education policy, share information and views on all aspects of education in the country, and coordinate actions on matters of mutual interest. The Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM) consists of the Director-General of the Department of Education, the Deputy Directors-General, and the heads of the provincial departments of education. The functions of HEDCOM include: facilitating the development of a national education system; sharing information and views on national education; coordinating administrative actions on matters of mutual interest; and advising the national Department on a range of specific matters.

The provincial departments of education are the examining authorities for the School Certificate examination, but the Minister of Education is publicly accountable for the quality of education. In consequence, the Department of Education has undertaken the monitoring of the examination, and has provided professional support to ensure credibility and uniformity across the provincial departments. In 1998, a National Policy on Senior Certificate examinations was completed. It is within the framework of this policy that provincial departments have developed their management plans and regulations.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) was appointed in June 1998. The CHE is an independent statutory body, responsible for advising the Minister of Education on all aspects relating to the transformation and development of higher education in South Africa. The CHE is also responsible for accreditation, quality assurance and quality promotion through a permanent sub-committee—the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC).

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is a body of twenty-nine members appointed by the Ministers of Education and Labour. The members are nominated by identified national stakeholders in education and training. The functions of the Authority are essentially twofold: (a) to oversee the development of the

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
National Qualifications Framework (NQF), by formulating and publishing policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications and for the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards and qualifications; and (b) to oversee the implementation of the NQF by ensuring the registration, accreditation and assignment of functions to the bodies referred to above, as well as the registration of national standards and qualifications on the framework. It must also take steps to ensure that provisions for accreditation are complied with and, where appropriate, that registered standards and qualifications are internationally comparable.

The Authority is required to perform its tasks after consultation and in cooperation with all bodies and institutions responsible for education, training and certification of standards which will be affected by the NQF. It must also comply with the various rights and powers of bodies in terms of the Constitution and Acts of Parliament. In 1998, SAQA published the National Standards Bodies (NSB) Regulations whereby provision was made for the registration of national standards bodies and standards generating bodies. These bodies will be responsible for the generation and recommendation of qualifications and standards or registration on the NQF. The Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) Regulations were also published in 1998 and provided for the accreditation of ETQA bodies. These bodies will be responsible for: accrediting providers of education and training standards and qualifications registered on the NQF; monitoring provision; evaluating assessment and facilitating moderation across providers; and registering assessors.

The National Skills Authority, established under the Skills Development Act 1998, advises the Minister of Labour on the national skills development policy and strategy, and liaises with Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) on the national skills development policy and the National Skills Development Strategy (2005–2010).

The Department of Social Development is one of the government departments that have to ensure that young children are taken care of in the best way, in particular within the framework of ECD services and programmes. Other government departments that work with the Department of Social Development include the Departments of Education, Health, and Justice as well as local municipalities.

The National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development was formally established as a Directorate in the Chief Directorate National Institute for Lifelong Learning and Development in 1998. The Centre supports the Department’s mission of quality lifelong learning and training for all, through a number of projects that will culminate in a policy framework on lifelong learning development. The Centre’s research and development projects support policy formulation and implementation, and contribute to a reflexive and rigorous approach to transformation, equity and increased performance in the education system.

The Centre for Educational Technology and Distance Education was established in the national Department of Education in 1994, but could start functioning only in January 1996 with the appointment of the Director and other staff.
The Centre undertakes research and development work on technology enhanced learning, school libraries, educational broadcasting and distance education, with a view to supporting developments in the field of education.

Certificates for the vocational programmes offered by technical colleges and other training institutions were awarded by the South African Certifications Council (SAFCERT), established according to Act No. 85 of 1986 in order to ensure that all certificates awarded by the Council represent the same standard of education and examination. The functions of SAFCERT have been incorporated into those of the new Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), which was constituted in June 2002 on the basis of the General and Further Education Act of 2001. The Council ensures that education-and training-providers have the capacity to deliver, and also assesses qualifications and learning programmes to ensure that they conform to set standards. The Certification Council for Technikon Education (SERTEC) was established to ensure that comparable standards of teaching and examination are adhered to by all technikons. The SERTEC awards certificates to successful candidates at technikons that comply with the examination requirements, norms and standards.

The National Board for Further Education and Training, appointed in 1999, provides advice on the implementation of the White Paper on further education and training (White Paper 4), which establishes the government’s policy for post-compulsory education and training.

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) has been established to act as the guardian of the professionalism of teachers. All teachers have to register with SACE in order to practice as qualified teachers. The SACE has laid down certain criteria which have to be met before a teacher can be registered and it has a code of conduct with which teachers have to comply.

The South African Universities Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA, formerly the Committee of University Principals) is a statutory committee that considers policy initiatives and other matters of common interest to the universities. The Advisory Council for Universities and Technikons (AUT) brings together representatives of the SAUVCA and of the Committee of Technikon Principals, experts from commerce and industry, statutory institutions, and the public sector. It advises the Minister of Education on a wide range of matters, including student subsidies, course development, and the allocation of programmes to universities and technikons.

According to the South African Schools Act (1996), the governing body of a public school must: promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school; adopt a constitution and develop the mission statement of the school; adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school; support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions; determine times of the school day consistent with any applicable conditions of employment of staff at the school; administer and control the school’s property, and buildings and grounds occupied by the school; encourage parents, learners, educators and other staff at the
school to render voluntary services to the school; and recommend to the Head of Department the appointment of educators and non-teaching staff.

The membership of the governing body of an ordinary public school comprises the principal, co-opted members and elected members. Elected members shall comprise a member or members of each of the following categories: (i) parents of learners at the school; (ii) educators at the school; (iii) members of staff at the school who are not educators; and (iv) learners in the eighth grade or higher, elected by the representative council of learners at the school.

According to the Further Education and Training Act (1998), every public further education and training institution must establish a council, an academic board, a student representative council and such other structures as may be determined by the council subject to the approval of the Member of the Executive Council.

### Structure and organization of the education system

#### South Africa: structure of the National Qualifications Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NQF Level</th>
<th>Bands</th>
<th>National Qualifications Framework Structure</th>
<th>Types of Qualifications and Certificates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Higher Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Doctorates, further research degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Higher Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Higher Degrees, professional qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Higher Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• First Degrees, Higher Diplomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Higher Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Diplomas, Occupational Certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Further Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• School/College/Training Certificates/Mix of units from all (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Further Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• School/College/Training Certificates/Mix of units from all (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• School/College/Training Certificates/Mix of units from all (NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Senior Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Intermediate Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Foundation Phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Pre-school / ECD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• ABET Level 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• ABET Level 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• ABET Level 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General Education and Training Band</td>
<td></td>
<td>• ABET Level 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pre-school education

Although some of the provincial departments of education provide pre-primary education, the scale is still limited and the field of early childhood development (ECD) is dominated by the private sector. Where departmental provision exists, it usually caters to children from the age of 3. The Department of Education has focused most of its work on developing policies and programmes for the reception year (Grade R)—the first year of the proposed ten years of compulsory education—designed for the 5-6-year-olds. The current programme to expand Grade R into all public primary
schools, following the *Education White Paper 5* (2001), will result in compulsory schooling that begins in Grade R and ends in Grade IX.

**Primary education**

General Education and Training (GET) is compulsory and covers Grades R–IX. GET corresponds to Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and is divided into three phases: foundation (Grades R–III), intermediate (Grades IV–VI) and senior (Grades VII–IX). As a rule, children start primary education in the year when they turn 7. Primary education is divided into junior primary (Grades I–III) and senior primary (Grades IV–VI).

**Secondary education**

Lower secondary education (Grades VII–IX) is the last stage of compulsory education and will lead to the General Education and Training Certificate. Further Education and Training (FET), or senior secondary education (Grades X–XII), is not compulsory and corresponds to NQF Levels 2–4. At the end of Grade XII (the former Standard X), students sit a public examination leading to the Senior Certificate (in the future, the FET Certificate). Technical secondary education is offered by technical centres, high schools and vocational schools. Programmes generally last three years, leading to the N3 Certificate.

Tertiary and higher education correspond to Levels 5–8 of the NQF and include all learning programmes leading to the award of a qualification more advanced than the Senior Certificate (or the FET Certificate). Institutions of higher education include colleges, technikons and universities. Most colleges of education offer a three-year programme leading to the Diploma in Education (four years of study in the case of higher diplomas). Nursing colleges and hospital schools of nursing offer four-year courses leading to a diploma. Agricultural colleges offer one-year certificate, two-year higher certificate and three-year diploma courses. Technikons offer a variety of programmes in the technical and professional fields, leading to a national certificate (one-year course), a national higher certificate (two-year course), a national diploma (three years of study) or a national higher diploma (four-year course). Technikons also offer bachelor’s (four-year course), master’s and doctoral degree programmes in technology. Master’s degrees (*Magister Technologiae*) usually require a minimum of one year of study, the doctorates (*Laureatus in Technology/Doctor Technologiae*) at least two years. Universities normally award a bachelor’s degree after three or four years of study (five years in the case of veterinary medicine and architecture; six years in the case of medicine and theology). An honours degree requires one additional year of study. A master’s degree is obtained after one or two years of study. The minimum time for completing a doctorate is two years.

According to the proposed school calendar for public schools for the year 2001, the school year consists of forty-one weeks (196 school days) divided into four terms.
The financing of education

In terms of budgetary arrangements introduced since 1996, approximately 85% of budgetary expenditure on education is at provincial level; the remaining 15% is allocated to the national level.

Of all the social services education consistently has received the largest share of the national budget, with the bulk of this money allocated to the provinces. Only a small part of it remains with the national department, most of which goes to the higher education sector. Expenditure on education increased from 33.51 billion of Rands (R) in 1995/96 to R44.1 billion in 1997/98. The proportion of the total national budget allocated to education has virtually remained constant between 1995 and 1998, averaging 22%. The highest percentage allocation to education (22.8%) was in 1996/97. Similarly, the percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocated to education was highest in 1996/97 (7.5%).

Since 1997/98, the Minister of Education has had no direct influence on the allocation to provincial governments. In that year, provincial governments were allocated an ‘equitable share of national revenue and for the first time were responsible for dividing their own budgets. A crisis overtook provincial education departments, most of which overspent their budgets as personnel costs rose steeply for a combination of reasons. The national and provincial treasuries enforced severe cutbacks and controls. Provincial education budgets suffered severe distortions from which most have not yet recovered.

In 1997, the Department of Finance introduced the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), as part of its reform of the budget process. The main features of the MTEF are: (a) three-year forward estimates of expenditure; (b) a focus on outputs and outcomes of government spending; (c) a co-operative approach to expenditure analysis and planning; (d) more detailed budget information to promote understanding and debate; and (e) political ownership of budget priorities and spending plans.

In 1997 and 1998, an Education Sectoral MTEF Review Team, representing national and provincial finance and education departments, has undertaken significant analyses of provincial education spending patterns and policy priorities.

The 1997 report included an analysis of cost drivers, a computer model of education spending, and strong recommendations on the necessity to curb enrolment bloating and to control personnel costs through improved management practices. The government was warned that no effective improvement in education attainment could be expected unless efficiency savings were directed toward measures for qualitative improvement. Local empirical research was required to determine the best combination of investments to stimulate enhanced learning attainment. The national and provincial education departments have taken these proposals seriously and acted on many of them. For example, in 1998 the Minister published the admission policy and age-grade norms for public schools, and the assessment policy, which are aimed at reducing out-of-age enrolment and excessive repetition.
The 1998/99 provincial budget process involved greater participation and realism, as far as personnel budgets were concerned. However, the 1998 Review Team concluded that the 1998/99 provincial education budgets, as a whole, were neither financially nor educationally credible. Although, on average, education takes up 40% of provincial budgets, 90% of education budgets is spent on personnel costs. This ratio needs to be reduced over time to 80:20, in order to ensure that the correct level of investment is undertaken in non-personnel functions, including programmes to improve quality and expand access. The Review Team set an intermediate target of 85:15, and proposed a package of measures to shift funding progressively to non-personnel functions, while retaining educationally defensible staffing levels. These matters were discussed in detail with the national teachers unions, as part of a consultation process on the education budget which should become routine.

In the 1998/99 financial year, education was allocated a budget of R43.7 billion. This amount includes R6 billion for universities and technikons and R37.7 billion for college and school education. About 70,000 students benefited from the government’s National Student Financial Aid Scheme.

In October 1998, Parliament approved an extra allocation of R200 million for textbooks to provincial education departments. The money was allocated to the provinces according to the education component of the equitable shares formula, which took into consideration the size of the school-age population and the number of pupils enrolled. In the same month, the Minister of Education announced new National Norms and Standards for School Funding in terms of the South African Schools Act. These norms became national policy on 1 April 1999 and will apply uniformly in all provinces. It is aimed at achieving equity in the distribution of resources.

The norms entail provincial education departments directing 60% of their non-personnel and non-capital resources towards the poorest 40% of schools in the province. All provinces will have to compile a list of schools based on physical condition and relative poverty of the community and the school. The schools will then be divided into five categories, based on needs. The poorest 20% will receive 35% of resources, while the richest 20% of schools will receive 5% of the resources available to provincial education departments.

Between 2001 and 2004, the country spent on education an average of 5.5% of GDP. Despite major wage increases for teachers in 1996, there was a decline in public school budgets between 1997 and 2001 at an annual rate of 1.5%. (Chisholm, 2004).

Public funding for education inputs such as infrastructure, textbooks, and nutrition programmes reflect an average increase of about 7% per year in spending from R46.7 billion in 1999 to just under R60 billion in 2002/03. Education reform has reduced inequality in spending per learner by 60%, owing to the progressive Norms and Standards for School Funding, which came into effect in April 1999 which ensure that the poorest learners receive seven times more of non-personnel funding per head than the least poor in a province, contributing to intra-provincial equity. The norms and standards are being revised with an emphasis on allocating more funds to the poor. (DOE, 2005).
In the 2004/05 financial year, R75.862 billion was allocated to education. This amount included R9,908,545 for higher education institutions and R65,192,026 for college and school education. Conditional grants amounting to R960.8 million were allocated to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) and the HIV & AIDS Programme in 2004/05. Responsibility for the NSNP was shifted from the Department of Health to the Department of Education with effect from 1 April 2004. The funds allocated for this Programme were to be used to serve daily meals to five million learners at 15,000 schools for the period April 2004 to March 2005. An amount of R912 million has been recommended for 2005/06 and R937 million for 2006/07. By August 2004, the Programme was reaching about 85% of the 15,000 targeted schools.

The educational process

Pre-primary education

The White Paper 1 (1995) acknowledges that ‘the care and development of young children must be the foundation of social relations and the starting point of human resources development strategies from community to national levels. Early childhood development (ECD) is defined as: ‘an umbrella term which is applied to the processes by which children from birth to 9 years of age grow and thrive, physically, mentally, emotionally, morally and socially.’ The Department of Education encourages an integrated cross-sectoral approach to child development that includes health, nutrition, education and psycho-social factors.

In 1994, the National Department of Education created an Early Childhood Development Directorate responsible for developing an ECD policy framework and planning and mobilizing resources in support of large-scale provision of ECD. The National ECD Pilot Project was launched in 1997 after the announcement of the Interim National Policy on ECD in 1996. The ECD Pilot Project has reached 2,800 non-governmental ECD establishments serving approximately 70,000 of the most disadvantaged learners. About 3,000 practitioners received fully accredited professional training and orientation in the new curriculum for the reception year.

An audit of over 23,000 ECD centres and service-providers was conducted in 2001, which revealed that the ECD field was dominated by the non-governmental sector. Where departmental provision exists, it usually caters for children from the age of 3 years to school-going age. It is estimated that about 90% of children under the age of 9 do not have access to ECD prior to attending school. The White Paper 5 on ECD (2001) establishes a national system of provision of a reception year (Grade R) for children aged 5 years. The medium-term goal is for all children entering Grade I to have participated in an accredited Grade R programme by 2010. The White Paper 5 also focuses on expanding ECD provision, correcting imbalances, ensuring equitable access, and improving the quality and delivery of ECD programmes. These interventions aim to break the cycle of poverty by increasing access to ECD programmes, particularly among poor children. The programmes are implemented with other departments, in particular the Department of Social Development which has a responsibility to ensure that conditions are created for the optimum development of all children and their families through the provision and support of appropriate services. ECD centres must be registered with municipalities and their activities are

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.iberunesco.org/)
controlled by the provincial education departments. Regulations are applicable to public as well as private pre-primary schools.

The Department of Local Government and local authorities such as local municipalities have a clear constitutional and legislative mandate towards service provision of ECD services, especially as far as these facilities are concerned. The Regulations to the Child Care Act 1983 require the local municipality to be involved in the early childhood facilities and that it should give its approval of the establishment or continuation of an early childhood facility, as a condition of registration of such a facility. Many local municipalities also have bylaws that regulate and monitor day-care facilities and child minding (up to six children taken care of by a private person in an informal early childhood programme). The Child Care Act 1983 makes provisions for places of care which include: ECD centres/crèches, playgroups, after-school centres or a combination of the three. ECD centres must be registered with the provincial Department of Social Development.

The Department of Education sets goals for the Grade R, takes care of the accreditation ECD providers, and participates in inter-sectoral programmes for pre-Grade R provision (0-4 year-olds). It launched the programme for incorporating Grade R into the formal schooling system in 2001. The admission age for Grade R was lowered by the Ministry to children aged four turning five before 30 June of each year, which subsequently also lowered the age of entry into compulsory education at Grade I.

The SACE Act 2000 provides for the registration of ECD practitioners. In terms of the Act, all educators must be registered before they can be responsible for the care and education of children. When ECD practitioners are registered, they undergo professional development sponsored by the Council and are subject to the Code of Ethics. All practitioners must be trained and must receive ongoing training in ECD and the management of programmes and facilities for young children. Training of caregivers should include training on HIV and AIDS. The minimum qualification of practitioners is the registered Basic Certificate in ECD, National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 1 of the South African Qualifications Authority. This qualification entails basic knowledge and skills about child development from birth to 6 years of age. The practitioner must at this level demonstrate how to facilitate growth and skills development in early childhood development programmes. ECD centre supervisors should have a minimum qualification of the National Certificate in ECD at NQF Level 4. Supervisors should demonstrate a theoretical and practical knowledge and experience in managing ECD centres. They should have management skills that enable them to tackle the various daily responsibilities at a centre, as well as communicate, liaise and meet the needs of all stakeholders at an ECD centre.

The expansion of the Grade R to 5-year-olds in publicly funded ECD programmes has increased participation from 273,499 in 2000 to 386,539 children in 2004. Funding for ECD has increased to R538 million in 2004/05 compared to R12 million in 1995. To improve the quality of the ECD programmes in the country, materials have been developed and distributed and 4,500 practitioners have been trained nationwide. According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, in 2003 the gross enrolment ratio at the pre-primary level (Grade R) was 33%, and the net enrolment ratio was estimated at 16%.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
As mentioned, the Department of Social Development in collaboration with UNICEF released the *Guidelines for ECD services* in May 2006. The document focuses on ECD services aimed at interventions and programmes for parents and/or primary caregivers as well as community-based services and ECD centres.

**Primary and lower secondary education**

Formal education in South Africa can be categorized into sectors and levels. The sectors, which are closely linked to particular levels, are public ordinary school education, independent school education, special school education, technical college education, teacher training, and technikon and university training. A public school may be an ordinary public school or a public school for learners with special education needs. The levels are pre-primary, primary, secondary and higher education.

As mentioned, general education and training (GET) is compulsory and covers Grades R–IX. GET corresponds to Level 1 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and is divided into three phases: foundation (Grades R–III), intermediate (Grades IV–VI) and senior (Grades VII–IX). As a rule, children start primary education in the year when they turn 7. Primary education is divided into junior primary (Grades I–III) and senior primary (Grades IV–VI).

From 1 January 2000, a new school admission policy is being implemented, which will prevent under-age and over-age pupils from attending public schools. It is estimated that some 35% of pupils are either under-age or over-age.

Basic activities during the junior primary phase involve learning to read, write and calculate, and the development of language proficiency. A start is made to learn one additional language. During the senior primary phase, learning activities concentrate on reading and oral proficiency in the mother tongue and second language, mathematics, history, geography, general science, and practical skills such as needlework, woodwork or art.

The Department of Education’s language policy stipulates that pupils have a right to be taught in a language of their choice, and states that they must inform the school which language they wish to be taught in when applying for admission. Schools, in turn, are expected to take their requests into account. According to the policy:

- only the eleven official languages may be used for instruction (Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana, Siswati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga);
- from Grade III onwards, all pupils will have to study the language they are taught in, and at least one other approved language;
- language may not be used as a barrier to admission;
- governing bodies must stipulate how their schools will promote multilingualism;

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
failing a language will result in failing a grade.

In 1997, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in primary schools was 96.5% and the net enrolment ratio (NER) was 87.1%. There are large variations in enrolment ratios by province, with the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal having the highest gross enrolment ratios (111.9% and 101.7%, respectively), and the Northern Cape having the lowest (76.5%). The average learner-educator ratio in public primary schools is 35:1. Learner-educator ratios vary substantially by province, ranging from 40:1 in KwaZulu-Natal to 25:1 in the Western Cape (data refer to 1997). According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2003 the GER was 105% and the NER was 89% (95% according to national estimates; see DOE, 2005). The number of out-of-school youth who should be in compulsory schooling has nearly halved since 1996 from 945,000 to 581,000 for 7-15 years. (DOE, 2005).

National and official data on repetition and drop-out rates are not available. The Monitoring Learning Achievement survey (1999) revealed that about 17% of Grade IV pupils have repeated one or more grades. Repetition rates are higher among boys than girls.

The document Curriculum 2005: Lifelong learning for the Twenty-first century (1997) provides the policy framework for early childhood development, GET, further education and training (FET, Grades X-XII) and adult basic education and training (ABET). The eight learning areas that should form the basis of all education up to the FET Certificate are: Language, Literacy and Communication (LLC); Mathematical Literacy, Mathematics and Mathematical Sciences (MLMMS); Natural Science (NS); Technology; Human and Social Science (HSS); Economic and Management Sciences (EMS); Arts and Culture (A&C); Life Orientation (LO).

Each learning programme has specific outcomes and each specific outcome has three to four assessment criteria. The assessment criteria include range statements and performance indicators.

Critical outcomes are broad, generic cross-curricular outcomes which are intended to ensure that learners gain the skills, knowledge and values that will allow them to contribute to their own success as well as to the success of their family, community and the nation as a whole. Specific outcomes refer to the specification of what learners are able to do at the end of a learning experience, and include skills, knowledge and values, which inform the demonstration of the achievement of an outcome or set of outcomes. The specific outcomes are not grade specific.

Each specific outcome has three to four assessment criteria against which a learner is assessed to have achieved the specific outcome. The criteria indicate, in broad terms, the observable processes and products of learning which serve as culminating demonstrations of the learner’s achievements. Assessment criteria are explained and detailed in the performance indicators. Each assessment criterion is described in terms of range statements which indicate the scope, level, depth and parameters of the achievement. They include indications of the critical areas of content, processes and parameters of achievement the learner should engage with to reach an acceptable level of achievement. The range statements provide guidelines but make provision for multiple learning strategies, for flexibility in the choice of specific...
content and process and for a variety of assessment methods. They therefore do not restrict learning to specific lists of knowledge items. Each assessment criterion also has performance indicators which provide details of the content and processes that learners should master as well as details of the learning contexts in which the learner will be engaged. They allow statements of the quality of achievement, that is, whether the achievement is at the level required or whether the learner has surpassed this level.

Finally, Expected Levels of Performance are written for each learning programme by grade. They are expected to inform parents, educators and learners in transparent and rigorous ways what is considered quality work and what to aim for and whether their performance or products measure up to valid and credible standards nationally.

The policy document *A resume of instructional programmes in public schools* (Report no. 550, 1997) contains the programme requirements for current school education. At this stage, it has only a maintenance function and will be gradually replaced by the new curriculum policy. According to this document, in Grades II–IV decisions on a learner’s promotion are to be based on the two core instructional offerings, i.e. mathematics and the approved language. The promotion requirements for Grades V and VI are satisfactory levels of achievement in the approved language and mathematics, and any other two of the remaining compulsory examined instructional offerings, i.e. general science, geography, history and an additional official language.

In Grade VII, a learner must pass four instructional offerings at the following levels: 40% in an approved language (at first or second language level); 40% in one of the following: the other approved language, an additional language, mathematics, general science or geography/history; 40% in one other examination instructional offering; and 35% in one other examination instructional offering. For Grades VIII and IX, a learner must pass five instructional offerings at the following levels: 40% in an approved language (at first or second language level); 40% in one of the following: the other approved language, an additional language, mathematics, general science or geography/history; 40% in one other examination instructional offering; and 35% in two other examination instructional offerings.
### General Education and Training (Grades R–IX): guidelines for the weighting of learning programmes (1997)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning programme</th>
<th>Suggested time allocation (in %)</th>
<th>Foundation (Grades I–III)</th>
<th>Intermediate (Grades IV–VI)</th>
<th>Senior (Grades VII–IX)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language, literacy and communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematical literacy, mathematics and mathematical sciences</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural science and Technology</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural science</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human &amp; social science, Economic &amp; management sciences</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human and social science</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and management sciences</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and culture, Life orientation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and culture</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible time</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### General Education and Training: time allocation according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Indicative time allocation</th>
<th>Breaks (weekly hours)</th>
<th>Contact time (weekly hours)</th>
<th>Non-contact time (weekly hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foundation and Intermediate</td>
<td></td>
<td>5h</td>
<td>25h</td>
<td>10h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (Grade VII)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5h</td>
<td>26h30m</td>
<td>8h30m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior (Grades VIII and IX)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5h</td>
<td>27h30m</td>
<td>7h30m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DOE, 2001. *Both contact and non-contact time will be used for the implementation of the Revised National Curriculum Statement. This will increase time and space for both learner-teacher interaction and learner participation. There will also be increased opportunities to develop learners physically, emotionally and socio-culturally through sport, music and arts during the non-contact time.*
### General Education and Training, Foundation phase (Grades I–III): suggested time allocation according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning programme</th>
<th>Time allocation (in percentage)</th>
<th>Time allocation (in weekly hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13h15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8h45m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100% 35h

*Source: Ibid. Suggested time allocations in terms of weekly hours include both contact and non-contact time, i.e. the whole school time.*

---

### General Education and Training, Intermediate phase (Grades IV–VI): suggested time allocation according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning programme</th>
<th>Time allocation (in percentage)</th>
<th>Time allocation (in weekly hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10h30m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciences and Technology</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6h15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences (history and geography)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills, Economy and society</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3h30m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and culture</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2h45m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 100% 35h

## General Education and Training: Senior phase (Grades VII–IX): suggested time allocation according to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning programme</th>
<th>Time allocation (in percentage)</th>
<th>Time allocation (in weekly hours)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Languages</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6h15m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4h23m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social sciences (history and geography)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4h12m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2h45m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic and management sciences</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2h45m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life orientation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2h45m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and culture</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2h45m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>35h</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ibid*

*Note: Human rights, education and environmental education are cross-curricular areas. Life skills (Life orientation) includes health promotion, personal and social development, physical development and movement, and orientation to the world of work. Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are seen as part of one integrated curriculum framework. Schools must offer at least two official languages. A school may offer other languages (either official or foreign) and other learning areas, in addition to the compulsory ones. National Learning Time is defined as the learning time that it is conceived it would take an average learner to meet the learning outcomes. It includes classroom contact time and individual learning time.*

## Senior secondary education

Further education and training (FET) will include learning programmes that will be registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 2–4 and that will correspond with the present Grades X–XII in the school system and N1–N3 in the technical college system.

The provincial education authorities are responsible for funding and running FET in schools and colleges, while the national Ministry has overall policy responsibility and responsibility for norms and standards. The Department of Labour, other government departments/authorities and private providers including companies, are also important role players. Many of the institutions in the FET band offer programmes which extend downwards into GET or upwards into higher education. Almost no provider offers only FET. Providers in the FET band, then, do not fall neatly, for the purposes of governance, into a single FET category. FET is provided directly or through distance education by: public schools and colleges, independent schools and colleges, and on-the-job trainers. Various providers are involved in this band of education and training, such as: senior secondary schools; technical colleges; non-governmental organizations (NGOs); regional training centres; private providers; private colleges and training centres; private companies; industry training centres; and community colleges.

According to the Ministry's vision, the future FET system will be an open learning system, responsive to the needs of individuals and communities, and contributing to the development of the country's human resources. The mission of FET is to foster intermediate to high level skills, lay the foundation for higher

*Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)*
education, facilitate the transition from school to work, develop well-educated, autonomous citizens and provide opportunities for lifelong learning through the articulation of learning programmes.

The Green Paper on further education and training (1998) proposes a number of important changes to the senior secondary phase of formal schooling. The development of the NQF, the implementation of an outcomes-based approach to education and training, and the shift in learning and teaching frameworks from content-driven to programme-oriented models as outlined in Curriculum 2005 now need to be extended to the senior secondary phase.

A new qualifications structure is proposed. It will be based on a more flexible combination of fundamental, core and elective learning credits, with the aim of linking education and training, and theory and practice. The new structure will offer greater breadth—in terms of mathematical and communicative literacy—and depth, in terms of core and elective learning which links learners more closely to the needs of higher and lifelong learning, and to work and career development. Closer integration of education and training in the FET band will also be promoted by encouraging institutional co-operation and joint curriculum development between senior secondary schools, FET colleges, and private and enterprise-based providers of education and training. Such initiatives will expose young learners to a range of learning options which cut across the traditional divisions between academic and vocational learning, and between classroom or college-based and workplace experience. In short, what the Ministry envisages is a new, broad-based curriculum which encourages linkages between schools, colleges, higher learning institutions and work.

The Ministry has already established a Curriculum and Qualifications Task Team, which will be responsible for re-conceptualizing and rewriting the subjects, learning programmes and instructional frameworks for senior secondary schools and technical colleges. This initiative will provide the basis for a new, integrated curriculum which will broaden the range of career options for learners, and which will be more relevant and responsive to the real employment prospects and higher education opportunities that exist beyond FET. Colleges will be encouraged to forge partnerships with employers and with other FET institutions, such as schools and training centres, in order to expand the range of learning opportunities that they provide and career paths to which they grant access.

The South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) has identified twelve organizing fields within the NQF. These organizing fields are based on the integration of fundamental disciplines and areas of study, and on the identification of key occupational clusters. The Ministry recognizes these organizing fields as the basis for the development of curricula, learning programmes, unit standards and qualifications for FET. The twelve fields are: Agriculture and nature conservation; Culture and arts; Business, commerce and management studies; Communication studies and language; Education, training and development; Manufacturing, engineering and technology; Human and social studies; Law, military science and security; Health sciences and social services; Physical, mathematical, computer and life sciences; Services; Physical planning and construction.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
The development of FET qualifications, learning programmes and curricula involves two processes: the development and registration of qualifications and unit standards; and the development of curriculum frameworks, learning programmes and learning materials.

In the current school system, continuous assessment takes place in Grades X and XI. This includes mid-year examinations, and examinations at the end of each year. Examination papers are set and scripts marked internally by teachers. Continuous assessment relies largely on the competence and professionalism of the teachers. Assessment in Grade XII is conducted through external provincial examinations. In these public examinations all learners in a province write the same externally moderated examination paper in each subject. Examination scripts are marked and moderated by a staff comprising a chief examiner, examiners and an external moderator.

In the case of the technical colleges, all examinations (from N1 to N6), are set by the national Department of Education, which administers the examinations on behalf of the provincial departments of education. In some cases, however, the national examinations are marked internally by college staff, using a national marking scheme. The Ministry believes, in the interests of consistency, that the latter approach should apply to all technical college instructional offerings at N2, N4 and N5 levels, until existing technical college programmes are replaced by new curricula, learning programmes, qualifications and assessment policies.

Under the new outcomes-based approach a student’s FET learning programme will consist of a particular set of unit standards. Each unit standard will clearly state the specific outcomes to be assessed and the assessment criteria. Students will know what they are expected to show or demonstrate and how their knowledge and skill will be assessed. Their learning activities will be designed so that they can master the required outcomes to the required assessment standard. The public examination will sample the competencies acquired at the assessment levels indicated in the unit standards. This will be recorded as a performance measure that indicates to both the student and society that the standards have been met and the degree to which they have been met. The negative and stereotypical concept of ‘failure’ will be replaced with the positive notion of progress towards the achievement of standardized outcomes, where the student will be regarded as ‘in progress’ or ‘partially complete’. Nonetheless, learners will be given credit for those outcomes that they have attained. Common standards and fairness will be ensured through the marking of scripts by the learner’s lecturer or teacher, according to a provincial or national marking scheme.

In the case of schools, assessment measures would have to be improved to provide reliable and valid information and to ensure the appropriate progression of learners. This could include a form of external assessment in support of school-based continuous assessment. This could be done either through an external examination which is marked by teachers according to a common marking scheme, and which is externally moderated, or through an annual national or provincial examination in all or some learning areas.

The Senior Certificate examination plays a critical role in the current education system. It is the culmination of twelve years of schooling, serves as the
entrance into higher education, and remains the only publicly available index of learning attainment. Conducting examinations is a provincial responsibility. The national Department of Education is not directly involved in the administration of examinations. It does, however, have a monitoring function to ensure that national standards are maintained.

The first provincial Senior Certificate examination run on a non-racial basis was written in 1996. The number of candidates who wrote the examination was 518,032. Of these, 278,958 candidates passed the examination, the national pass rate being 63.9%. In the 1997 Senior Certificate examination, the number of candidates who wrote the examination was 559,233. In comparison with 1996, there was an overall increase in the performance of candidates of 7.9% (41,201 candidates). The 1997 examination results, however, show a significant decline in the performance of candidates. The pass rate was 47.4%, a decrease of 6.5% when compared with the 1996 results. In total, 14,692 fewer candidates passed the examination.

During 1998, the Department of Education carried out a project on improving the performance of candidates in the Senior Certificate examination, as a result of which provincial departments implemented a range of support programmes for teachers and candidates.

Seven of the nine provinces showed an improvement in pass rate. However, the national average pass rate was below 50%. The three largest provinces (KwaZulu-Natal, Northern and Eastern), with 55% of the candidates, had a combined average pass rate of 43%.

The 1999 Senior Certificate examination was written by 748,452 candidates in 5,558 examination centres throughout the country. In total, approximately 1,500 subject based question papers were set, and approximately eight million question papers were securely delivered from the point where they were printed and packed to the examination centres. The marking of these eight million scripts was completed at fifty-six marking centres by 38,512 markers.

Nationally, there were 563,893 full-time candidates who registered for six or more subjects and 511,474 candidates finally wrote the examination. This implies that 52,419 candidates who registered for the examination did not write the examination. In terms of the number of candidates who wrote the Senior Certificate examination in 1999, there was a decrease of 8% (39,555). In terms of part-time candidates (236,978), there was also a decrease of 12,011 candidates who registered for the Senior Certificate examination. However, it is a matter of concern that in certain provinces between 50% and 80% of these candidates did not write the examination.

The examination results show a slight decline in the performance. An improvement in the pass rate from 47.4% to 49.3% was seen in 1998, and 1999 has recorded a slight decrease in the pass rate from 49.3% to 48.9%. Of the 511,474 candidates who wrote the Senior Certificate examination, 67.6% (345,722) registered for the Senior Certificate with university endorsement and only 18.4% of the candidates passed.
The pass rate in all the languages is extremely high, ranging from 88.7% to 100%. All of the languages recorded a pass rate of above 95%. Afrikaans recorded an overall pass rate of 88.7% and English an overall pass rate of 89.8%, an increase of 0.7% when compared to 1998. The performance in English as second language and Afrikaans as second language is not as high as the performance in the other language papers.

When the performance in biology, mathematics and physical science is compared, it is noted that mathematics has the lowest pass rate (43.4%). This refers to the combined pass rate for higher and standard grade. The national pass rate for mathematics in 1996 was 49.5%, and it dropped in 1997 by 3.2% to 46.3%. In 1998, it dropped further by 4.2% to 42.1%. However, there has been an increase in national pass rate for mathematics from 42.1% in 1998 to 43.4% in 1999. Physical science has the highest pass rate (63.9%), followed by biology (52.2%).

**Assessing learning achievement nationwide**

The South Africa Monitoring Learning Achievement (MLA) survey was conducted in August 1999 under the auspices of the Department of Education. The main objective of the survey was to obtain information on learning achievement and outcomes at the primary school level and to determine factors that impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

A 2% nationally representative stratified random sample of 400 primary and combined schools was drawn, targeting Grade IV pupils, their parents, principals and educators. Competency instruments for assessing literacy, numeracy and life skills learning were administered to Grade IV learners, yielding about 11,000 completed instruments. In addition, structured questionnaires were administered to parents, principals, educators and learners to solicit information on the management of schools, calibre of educators, profile of learners and the socio-economic environment of the school community.

The majority of surveyed pupils (47.1%) obtained scores for the literacy task that range between 25% and 50%. A very small proportion of the learners demonstrated a high level of competency in the literacy task, with only 12.8% of pupils obtaining 75% or higher. About 13% of the learners achieved very low levels of performance (i.e. scoring less than 25%). On average, Grade IV pupils scored 48.1% in the literacy task. Performance levels vary substantially by province. Western Cape and Gauteng have the largest proportion of learners that obtained 75% or higher, resulting in high average performance scores—60.9% and 60.7%, respectively. Mpumalanga, on the other hand, had the poorest performance in the literacy task, with an average score of 33.2%. In this province nearly a third of the Grade IV pupils obtained scores that are below 25%. No significant gender differences in the levels of performance.

A large proportion (44%) of Grade IV pupils scored below 25% in the numeracy task, while only about 2% obtained scores in the 75-100% range. The average score obtained for the numeracy task is 30%, which is much lower than the average literacy score. Gauteng and Western Cape Grade IV learners obtained the highest average numeracy task scores (36.5% and 37.9%, respectively), while
Mpumalanga pupils obtained the lowest score (22.6%). Nearly two thirds of Mpumalanga learners obtained scores that are below 25%. As with the literacy task, there are no significant gender differences in the levels of performance.

More than half of Grade IV learners (54%) obtained scores that are between 25% and 50% in the life skills task, while a very small proportion (6%) obtained 75% or more, the average being 47.1%—very similar to that of the literacy task. Average performance scores for the life skills task vary by province though the differentials are as large as those on the literacy task. The Western Cape (55.7%) and Gauteng (54.1%) have the highest scores, whereas the Free State has the lowest score (33.7%).

Generally speaking, the performance of Grade IV learners in all the three tasks is poor.

**Higher education**


In 1998, for the first time in the history of South African higher education, all universities and *technikons* were required to develop three-year rolling plans which, in future, will form the basis for funding decisions. Another landmark in 1998 was the establishment of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The CHE, as a statutory advisory body, is playing a key role in helping to reshape the higher education landscape. In 1999, the CHE established the Higher Education Quality Committee (HCQE) to oversee quality assurance within the system. In addition, in 1998 the Department of Education initiated the process of incorporating colleges (education, agriculture and nursing) into the higher education system.

Institutions of higher education include colleges, *technikons* and universities. In January 1996, there were twelve agricultural colleges, seventy-three hospital schools of nursing, thirty-two nursing colleges, 112 colleges of education, 150 technical colleges, fifteen *technikons* and twenty-two universities in the country. Universities and *technikons* are autonomous institutions, meaning that their respective councils are fully responsible for their management. The determination of the conditions of service for educators at universities or *technikons* is not prescribed by the government. Universities are established by private Acts of Parliament.

Agricultural colleges offer one-year certificate, two-year higher certificate and three-year diploma courses. Technical colleges offer post-school vocational education. In general, students are school-leavers requiring career-oriented training, adults wanting to improve their qualifications and persons retraining for another vocation. Instructional programmes are developed in terms of seven broad vocational fields: engineering, business studies, business language, arts, agriculture, utility industries and social services. Certificates for the programmes are issued by the South African Certification Council. A number of technical colleges have accreditation agreements with *technikons*, thus enhancing the mobility of technical college students.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
to tertiary education at a technikon. Part-time classes are provided for people interested in acquiring useful skills such as gardening, cookery and needlework. Language courses are also offered.

Nursing colleges and hospital schools of nursing offer certificate programmes and four-year courses leading to a diploma. It is a legal requirement that all institutions offering four-year course in nursing be affiliated to universities. No such requirement exists for the hospital schools of nursing.

Most colleges of education offer a three-year programme leading to the Diploma in Education (four years of study in the case of higher diplomas). A number of colleges have entered into agreements with universities, enabling joint endorsement of the certification of teachers. As a result, students may obtain credits towards a university degree in respect of courses included in their Diploma of Education. Some colleges of education offer a Bachelor of Primary Education degree which is conferred by a university.

Technikons offer a variety programmes in the technical and professional fields, leading to a national certificate (one-year course), a national higher certificate (two-year course), a national diploma (three years of study) or a national higher diploma (four-year course). Technikons also offer bachelor’s (four-year course), master’s and doctoral degree programmes in technology. Master’s degrees (Magister Technologiae) usually require a minimum of one year of study, the doctorates (Laureatus in Technology/Doctor Technologiae) at least two years.

Universities normally award a bachelor’s degree after three or four years of study (five years in the case of veterinary medicine and architecture; six years in the case of medicine and theology). An honours degree requires one additional year of study. A master’s degree is obtained after one or two years of study. The minimum time for completing a doctorate is two years. Universities also offer a large number of certificate and diploma programmes.

Starting in 2004, the HEQC has embarked on its first six-year cycle of audits at public and private HE institutions. The audits will focus on the quality of the core functions of learning, research and community engagement in HE institutions. As part of this process, the HEQC completed a re-accreditation exercise of Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes in 2004, during which 37 MBA programmes offered by 18 public and nine private HE institutions were evaluated in a stringent peer review process. The review included MBA programmes offered by universities and technikons, as well as by local and foreign HE institutions operating in South Africa. The outcome of the review resulted in ten MBA programmes not being accredited, 12 receiving conditional accreditation, and six receiving full accreditation.

According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2003 there were 717,793 students enrolled at the tertiary level for an estimated gross enrolment ratio of 15%. Teaching staff was estimated at 43,023 teachers.
**Special education**

The majority of disabled people in South Africa have had no or little access to educational provision. This situation exists because in the past very little provision was made for the establishment of schools for learners with special needs and government policy prevented them from attending mainstream schools. Where this policy was not enforced, disabled children could often not attend mainstream schools because of inaccessible buildings, transport problems and poor teaching facilities. It is estimated that over 50% of disabled children are out of school. Children with disabilities living in rural areas are particularly adversely affected.

At the beginning of 1997, the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) were established by the Minister of Education.

The NCSNET and NCESS were appointed to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs and support services in education and training in South Africa. The comprehensive definition of the scope of ‘special needs and support’ resulted in the joint investigation of the NCSNET and NCESS which covered all levels (or bands) and all aspects of education. A joint report, *Barriers to learning*, was presented to the Minister in November 1997 and published in February 1998.

Based largely on the report, the Department of Education has drafted a *Green Paper for learners with special needs*, and undertaken further consultations on the proposed policy with national stakeholder bodies. The Green Paper proposed changes to the provision of education and training so that the system becomes more responsive and sensitive to learners with special needs. In accordance with the *Education White Paper 6 (Building an inclusive education and training system)*, released in July 2001, future provision of education will be provided in full-service schools, special schools as resource centres, or in ordinary public schools. The White Paper outlines a twenty-year plan for developing an inclusive education and training system across all bands of education. The expansion programme entails a phased conversion of 500 primary schools into full-service schools over a twenty-year period. Donor funding totalling R65 million has been secured from the Swedish International Development Agency. Special schools will be converted into resource centres, and full-service schools will be established together with district-based support teams. In the short term, 30 full-service schools and 30 district support teams are being established.

According to the *Education White Paper 6* only about 64,200 learners with disabilities or impairments are accommodated in about 380 special schools. This indicates that, potentially, 280,000 learners with disabilities or impairments are unaccounted for.

**Private education**

According to the Constitution, everyone has the right to establish and maintain independent educational institutions that: (i) do not discriminate on the basis of race; (ii) are registered with the State; and (iii) maintain standards that are not inferior to

standards at comparable public educational institutions. Independent or private institutions are those educational institutions that are not operated by a public authority, whether or not they receive financial support from such authorities.

It is estimated that in 1995, out of a total of 26,730 primary, secondary and combined schools (including special education schools), 552 were independent schools—not including special schools and schools in the province of Eastern Cape. According to the *South Africa Survey 1998*, published by the South African Institute for Race Relations, in 1996 the total enrolment in all independent schools (primary, secondary and combined) amounted to 389,213 learners. The total number of educators was 15,627.

Prior to 1994, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) played a crucial role in the provision of basic education. However, their role has substantially diminished after the 1994 democratic elections when most funds—which were previously directly channelled to them by international funding agencies—were channelled to the government through bilateral and multilateral agreements. Notwithstanding, NGOs still play an important part in the provision of basic education, particularly in addressing education needs in the sectors of early childhood development, adult basic education and training, and further education and training.

No detailed study on private higher education establishments is available. Many institutions regard information as confidential. However, recently a study on the level of expenditure on training in the private college sector was commissioned by the National Training Board and since completed by the Education Policy Unit (EDUPOL)—a unit within the National Business Initiative. The study focused on all institutions which are members of the three formal associations in the sector, i.e. the Association of Distance Education Colleges, the Association of Private Colleges of South Africa, and the Correspondence Colleges Council (CCC). The EDUPOL survey found that in 1995 an estimated 241,000 students enrolled in training programmes at these colleges. Training is predominantly undertaken through distance education—principally through correspondence—and is predominantly in commercial subjects. Special reference is also made to private colleges not affiliated to formal associations enrolling approximately 7.5% of the private sector college students. According to the survey, there were about 147,500 students enrolled in private colleges at the tertiary level in 1995.

**Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure**

The School Register of Needs Survey (SRNS) was conducted by the Department of Education in 1997 as part of its commitment to equity in education provision and to improving the quality of teaching and learning. The SRNS provides a frightening picture of neglect and deprivation in the South African education system. While privileged and relatively well-equipped schools exist, the vast majority of learners continue to be educated in conditions of extreme neglect in terms of infrastructure, geographic location, services provided, equipment and resources available, learning environment, and the quality of teaching and learning.
The SRNS indicates that in 1996 about a quarter (25.3%) of primary and combined schools have no access to water within a walking distance and 11% of schools get their water from dams and rivers. The majority of primary and combined schools (56.2%) have buildings that are not wired and have no electricity supply, at least 13.5% have no toilets, and nearly half use pit latrines.

About 62% of schools have adequate stationery and only 49% have adequate textbooks, 73% have no learning equipment, and 69% have no materials. Nationally, about 57,500 classrooms are needed with shortages in three provinces being very high—Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Northern Province. Provision of libraries is a luxury, with 72% of schools having no media collection and 82% no media equipment. Over 2,000 schools have buildings which are in need of serious repair. Between 44% and 47% of schools in KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and Eastern Cape and Northern Cape have no sports facilities. Less than half of schools in KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Mpumalanga have facilities for specialized subjects in secondary schools.

Educator/classroom ratios are alarming as where the ratio exceeds one, it means that teachers have to share classrooms or teach in shifts. The most affected provinces in this regard are the Northern Province, with a ratio of four educators per classroom, and North West—three educators per classroom. The SRNS also indicates that of the country’s 27,864 schools, 69.9% are primary, 19.6% are secondary, 9.4% are combined and 1% are special schools. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal provinces have the greatest share of primary and combined schools—23.4% and 18.7%, respectively.

Research studies conducted nationally under the auspices of the President’s Education Initiative (PEI) project in 1998 found that textbooks were generally available at schools although not always effectively and sufficiently used. The PEI studies also found that very few educators use textbooks in their classes in any systematic way. This was the case even when textbooks were available at schools.

Since 1994, under the Reconstruction and Development Programme, programmes led by the President have tackled the backlog of school facilities. These are known as the National School Building Programmes. The Departments of Finance and Education have been collaborating in finding a budgetary solution to the problem of accumulated classroom backlogs in predominantly rural provinces. Many provinces still face a shortage of classrooms and the Department of Public Works estimates that the elimination of classroom shortages could cost to the government nearly 3 billion rands (R). Between 1994 and 1996, R1.3 billion was allocated to school building and rehabilitation. The rate of implementation has varied from province to province. Most have concentrated on situations where schools operate with virtually no buildings in order to provide a physical campus for every school. Derelict and dilapidated schools have also been targeted.

SchoolNet South Africa was established in 1998 to support educators and learners in the application of information and communication technologies by providing leadership experts and developing effective partnerships in the areas of Internet connectivity and appropriate technology, human resource development and capacity-building, content and curriculum management and development, as well as

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
advocacy and marketing. The Draft White Paper on e-Education was approved in August 2003. It sets out government’s approach to an ICT environment in education. The government wants to ensure that every school has access to diverse and high-quality communications services. The goal is to ensure that every learner is ICT-capable by 2013 (able to use ICTs confidently and creatively to help develop the skills and knowledge they need as lifelong learners), and that all schools are connected to the Internet by that time. The need for teacher-training and ICT equipment is recognized, which will require additional resources from provincial budgets and other innovative sources.

The National School Nutrition Programme was funded to the tune of over R838 million in 2004/05 from an amount of R460 million in 1999 enabling the programme to reach 5 million learners in 16,000 schools. There has been some considerable improvements with the learner/classroom and learner/educator ratios getting closer to the of 1:40 and 1:35 at primary schools and secondary schools respectively compared to 1:60 and 1:80 that were inherited particularly from the former Bantustans. (DOE, 2005).

Adult and non-formal education

In South Africa there are some 1.5 million adults who have had no education at all. A further 4.6 million adults aged 15+ have had education below Standard V (Grade VII) level only. According to Statistics South Africa, a significant proportion (19.3%) of the population in the age group 20 years and above has never been to school. The prevalence of no schooling is highest in the Northern Province (36.9%), the proportion being about four times as much as that of the Western Cape and Gauteng provinces (6.7% and 9.5%, respectively), which have the lowest prevalence. No schooling is much higher in rural areas (52.5%) than in urban areas (14%).

According to the 1996 Census data, about 83% of persons aged 15–24 are functionally literate (i.e. having the equivalent of a Grade VI qualification). Functional literacy in the age group 15+ is substantially lower (about 67%), which is an indication that younger people have had more opportunities to access education. The Northern Province has the lowest functional literacy rate (59% of people in the age group 15+).

The government’s policy for Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) must be understood within the overarching goal of building a just and equitable system which provides good quality education and training to adult learners throughout the country. The term ABET ‘subsumes both literacy and post-literacy as it seeks to connect literacy with basic (general) adult education on the one hand, and with training for income generation on the other hand. According to the Department of Education, ABET ‘is the general conceptual foundation towards lifelong learning and development, comprising of knowledge, skills and attitudes required for social, economic and political participation and transformation applicable to a range of contexts. ABET is flexible, developmental and targeted at the specific needs of particular audiences and, ideally, provides access to nationally recognised certificates.’

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
In September 1995, the document titled *A national adult basic education and training framework: Interim guidelines* was adopted as interim policy by the Minister of Education. On this basis, the Department of Education was able to launch its *Ithuteng* (Ready to Learn) Campaign in 1996 as the first pilot ABET programme nationwide. About 130,000 learners were recruited at ABET Levels 1 and 2 as part of the Campaign. Since then, more than 500,000 learners have been reached. Most importantly, the process has delivered two key outcomes: a common vision for adult basic education and training, and agreed curriculum goals.

The current socio-economic context for potential and existing learners—especially for adult basic education and training programmes—reflects extreme inequalities in levels of income, high unemployment and overwhelming poverty. The lowest 20% of income earners access 1.5% of the national income as compared with the wealthiest 10% of households which receive 50%. Between 36% and 53% of South Africans fall below the poverty line. Roughly 33% of the coloured population live in poverty compared with 2.5% of Asians and 0.7% of whites.

The policies of former governments fragmented education and training into different ethnic and racial sub-systems with unequal allocation of resources. This resulted in poor quality education in black schools and the condemnation of millions of adults to illiteracy, effectively limiting the intellectual and cultural development of the country as a whole. Apartheid state adult education provision was largely a second chance schooling system, based on a primary or secondary school curriculum unsuited to the needs of adult learners.

In 1995/96 a total of 335,481 adult learners were participating in ABET programmes throughout the country. A major indicator of government’s commitment to adult education is the ratio of expenditure on adult education as compared with overall education expenditure. However, evidence from the 1995/96 financial year suggests that the ratio is still very low. The majority of provinces spent less than 1% of their overall education budgets on adult education and only two provinces spent more—Mpumalanga (2.2% or R33 million) and Gauteng (1.1 % or R51 million).

The new education and training system in South Africa emphasises the formal articulation of education and training through the National Qualifications Framework. In the context of adult learning, however, it is important that lifelong learning encompasses both the formal and the non-formal or informal, developmental approaches to lifelong learning. This is essential in order to ensure that learners can use the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes learnt through ABET in their daily lives.

The envisaged institutional infrastructure for ABET has the following components: (i) National and Provincial Education and Training Councils are being planned to co-ordinate the wide range of interests in the education and training sector; (ii) ABET sub-councils are viewed as an essential mechanism to mobilise support and resources for the sector’s ongoing development; (iii) the National Institute for Lifelong Learning Development and its provincial counterparts will interact with the ABET (sub-) council(s) to build an adequate institutional infrastructure for ABET, through partnerships and co-ordinating committees at different levels of the Department of Education. The status of ABET and qualitative improvements has been
enhanced through the inclusion of ABET practitioners in the Employment of Educators Act of 1998, the implementation of the new outcomes-based curriculum, and the training of adult educators.

According to recent national estimates, the literacy rate for the adult population (15 years and above) increased from 67% in 1996 to 89% in 2004. There has been an increase in literacy rates for the 15-24 year olds from 83% in 1996 to 98% in 2004. This increase and difference between adult and youth literacy indicates that youth have had more opportunities to access basic education compared to adults. There are, however, significant provincial, racial and gender disparities in illiteracy rates that still exist. (DOE, 2005).

**Teaching staff**

The number of institutions offering teacher education is quite considerable. The 1995 National Teacher Education Audit revealed that there were 100 colleges (of which five in the private sector) offering teacher education programmes, and eleven colleges (of which three in the private sector) providing distance teacher education courses. Total enrolment amounted to 150,380 students. In addition, there were twenty universities providing contact teacher education through their departments, faculties or schools of education, and one university—the University of South Africa—offering distance teacher education courses. According to the Audit, the twenty-one universities had a total of 28,954 student teachers. Of this number, 20,743 students were involved in pre-service teacher education, 6,279 in in-service courses and 1,930 in advanced studies in education—master’s and doctoral degree programmes. Five out of the fifteen existing technikons also offered teacher education, catering for 1,846 students.

The Higher Education Act of 1997 incorporates teacher education into higher education removing colleges of education from provincial control and enabling the emergence of a single national system of qualifications for professional educators. Most colleges of education offer a three-year programme leading to the Diploma in Education—four years of study in the case of higher diplomas. The college sector trains almost all the primary teachers, and in the rural areas almost all of the primary and secondary teachers.

Universities offer a range of first degree courses that are normally followed by a one-year post-graduate teaching diploma programme. This type of programme is designed specifically to train secondary teachers. Integrated four-year teaching degree courses—such as the B Paed and B.A.(Ed)—are offered at a number of universities, usually in association with a college of education. The degree of Bachelor of Primary Education is specifically designed as an integrated teaching degree.

Recently, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of Further Diploma in Education (FDE) programmes offered by colleges, universities, and technikons. FDE programmes follow a teaching qualification and are usually taught on a part-time basis or through distance education. They offer teachers the opportunity to improve their qualifications and to specialize in a particular field. The pass rate in most FDE courses is significantly higher than distance education degree programmes and
concern has been expressed regarding the standard, relevance and appropriateness of some FDE courses.

Most educators in South Africa are employed by the departments of education as teachers in the schooling system. Their conditions of employment are spelt out in the Educators Employment Act, the Labour Relations Act, and in the Personnel Administration Measures. In addition, conditions of employment are negotiated on an on-going basis in the Education Labour Relations Council.

The Department of Education determines whether or not a qualification fulfils the criteria laid down in the Evaluation of Qualifications for Employment in Education (1997). The Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) is based primarily on the number of recognized prescribed full-time professional or academic years of study at an approved university, technikon or college of education and taking into account the level of school attained. The evaluation of the REQV is a complex process because not all qualifications are recognized as relevant. An educator may have three different qualifications, but only one of these may be recognized as being relevant to employment in education. Given that the evaluation of an educator’s qualifications determines his or her salary, the criteria for recognition of a qualification are of significance.

The REQVs are categorized as follows:

- **REQV 10**: Grade XII and no training.
- **REQV 11**: Grades VIII-XI plus two years of training.
- **REQV 12**: Grade XII and one or two years of training.
- **REQV 13**: Grade XII and three years of training.
- **REQV 14**: Grade XII and four years of training.
- **REQV 15**: Grade XII and five years of training.
- **REQV 16**: Grade XII and six years of training.
- **REQV 17**: Grade XII and seven years of training.

Educators are considered unqualified if they have a REQV 10 qualification, under-qualified if they have a REQV 11 or 12 qualification, and appropriately qualified if their qualification falls within the REQV 13–17 range.

In 1997, about 74% of primary school educators were appropriately qualified. The percentage of unqualified and under-qualified educators was lowest in the Western Cape (10%) and Gauteng (12%) provinces, while North West (34%), KwaZulu-Natal (33%) and Free State (31%) had the highest proportion. The utilization of unqualified and under-qualified primary school educators is a common phenomenon, particularly in rural schools.
According to the Education Labour Relations Council Resolution no. 7 of 1998, educators in primary and secondary schools are expected to work a minimum of 1,800 actual prescribed hours per year. All educators should be at school during the formal school day, which should not be less than seven hours per day, except for special reasons and with the prior permission of the principal. The seven hours per day includes breaks and the periods in which the learners are not at school.

The time allocated for teaching in respect of different post levels differs according to the size of the school. In smaller schools principals and their deputies are required to do more teaching than in large schools. The actual hours must therefore be established in relation to the curriculum needs of the school, the timetable and existing staff. In general terms, the following may be considered as guidelines in determining the scheduled teaching time:

*Primary school*: Post level 1: between 85% and 92%; Post level 2: between 85% and 90%; Deputy principal: 60%; Principal: between 10% and 92%, depending on the post level (principals at post level 1 are expected to teach 100% of the scheduled teaching time).

*Secondary school* Post level 1: between 85% and 90%; Post level 2: 85%; Deputy principal: 60%; Principal: between 5% and 60%, depending on the post level.

The South African Council for Educators (SACE) has been established to act as the guardian of the professionalism of teachers. All teachers have to register with SACE in order to practise as qualified teachers. The Council has laid down certain criteria which have to be met before a teacher can be registered and it has a code of conduct with which teachers have to comply. A teacher who is found guilty of breaching the code of conduct can be cautioned and/or penalized and/or de-registered.

The *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Rural Education* (2005) highlighted specific challenges facing teachers in rural schools. The report noted a shortage of qualified and competent teachers, problems of teaching in multigrade and large classes, under-resourced school facilities, and limited access to professional development programmes for teachers.

According to the *National Policy Framework for Teacher Education* (DOE, 2006), in 2006 there were 386,595 teachers employed by the Departments of Education of whom 19,407 (or 5%) were in independent schools. Of those in public institutions, 173,850 were in primary schools, 111,865 in secondary schools, and 53,988 in combined, intermediate or middle schools. In addition, there were 15,954 Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) educators, 7,392 teachers working in special schools and 7,363 in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. Some 24,118 teachers in public schools (or 7%) were employed by school governing bodies. In terms of qualifications (public schools), in 2005 some 53% of teachers were at REQV 14 and above, 38% at REQV 13, 6% at REQV 12, 2% at REQV 11, and 1% at REQV 10.

The national learner/teacher ratio in public ordinary schools was 32.8 in 2005 (35.2 if teachers contracted by school governing bodies are excluded). Two-thirds of all teachers are women but men are still disproportionately represented in promotion.
posts and school managements. There has been a significant decline in the enrolment of student teachers over the past decade, although this trend has reversed in the past two years, with over 6,000 new teachers expected to graduate at the end of 2006. The perceived causes of diminishing interest in the profession are the poor public image of the profession and its status, particularly among young people, uncertainty about where new teachers would be placed after qualification, a competitive employment market, challenging working conditions, and changes with respect to the award of service linked bursaries to student teachers.

Since all initial teacher education is the responsibility of higher education, the qualifications structure for teacher education is subject to the Minister’s policy on qualifications in terms of the Higher Education Act 1997. This policy is expressed in the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF), which provides the basis for integrating all higher education qualifications into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). A four-year B.Ed degree, which includes the equivalent of one full-time year of supervised practical teaching experience in schools, is the standard qualification for students wishing to teach in any learning area, subject and phase. An Advanced Diploma will be offered to graduates with an appropriate first degree who wish to teach. This will replace and be equivalent to the current Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) and the Higher Diploma in Education. An option to increase the uptake of new recruits into the classroom would be to introduce a new, three-year teaching Diploma. Within a context of institutional differentiation, universities may be allowed to offer this qualification, although students would be required to complete a fourth year before qualifying as a teacher. The future of the National Professional Diploma in Education (NPDE) and the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) will be reviewed, based on an assessment of need and value.

Despite a huge effort and the commitment of resources by schools, Provincial Departments of Educations, Universities, NGOs, community-based organizations, teachers’ unions and faith-based organizations that have been applied to in-service education, current provision remains fragmented and un-coordinated and therefore makes a rather limited impact. The report of the 2003 TIMMS Study showed that South African teachers have extensive development opportunities, but the evidence of poor learner performance shows that these have limited impact.

In the new Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system it is intended that the South African Council for Educators (SACE), as the statutory body for professional educators, will have overall responsibility for the implementation and management of the CPTD. The PD points method is an internationally recognized technique used by professional bodies in many fields to acknowledge their members’ continuing professional development. Each teacher will be expected to earn PD points by choosing professional development activities that suit their own requirements and that have been endorsed by SACE. Some CPTD activities will be compulsory and others self-selected. The relevant education department will pay for compulsory activities, which may be at national, provincial, district, or school level. Teachers themselves will pay for self-selected activities though provincial bursaries will be available in priority fields of study.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
Educational research and information

The mission of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) is to facilitate problem solving and enhance decision making through research excellence in the human sciences. The HSRC pursues its mission by conducting research in the following main areas: economic and social analysis, education and training, and democracy and governance. The programme ‘Education and Training Information Systems supports and enhances decision making, planning, research, monitoring and policy development in education and training by maintaining and analyzing education and training databases. Its main beneficiaries are education planners, decision makers, managers, service providers and physical planners. For 2000/2001, the programme includes the following projects: education database; adult basic education and training (ABET) survey; labour market skills development programme; and the survey of public adult learning centres.

The objective of the National Research Foundation (NRF) is to support and promote research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary research facilities, in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of science and technology.

The NRF is undergoing a transformation and the new structure is taking shape. The NRF Research Support Agency (RSA) has launched several new programmes and activities. The focus area ‘Education for the Knowledge Era seeks to encourage educational research from a variety of perspectives, for example, systemic and functional aspects; issues of context and development; issues of curriculum and content and theories and practice of cognition and learning. The primary aims of this focus area are to: (i) analyze and research the history and role of education in South Africa, its systems, theories, developments, outcomes and workable solutions; (ii) develop conceptual frameworks, appropriate tools and indicators in terms of sustainable and equitable educational policy and practice in South Africa; (iii) develop new educational and cognition theories engendered within the local context but with global significance; and (iv) research appropriate ways to eradicate the shortcomings in the teaching of language, science, technology and mathematics.

Sources


Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)


Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)


**Web resources**


Council on Higher Education: [http://www.che.ac.za/](http://www.che.ac.za/) [In English. Last checked: October 2007]