



new universities news update

This News Update is compiled by the New Universities Project Management Team established by the Department of Higher Education and Training to manage the planning for the new universities in Mpumalanga and the Northern Cape. If you have a query or comment, please send an email to:

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Stakeholder Engagement Intensifies

The process of stakeholder consultation has intensified since President Jacob Zuma announced on the 5th of July 2012 that the new universities for Mpumalanga and Nelspruit will be located in Nelspruit and Kimberley respectively.

Since then the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) published and sent the Development Framework for New Universities in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga (hereinafter referred to as the Development Framework) to interested and affected stakeholders on 8th August 2012. The document communicates the government's vision for the new institutions. At the same time it called for suggestions from the public on proposed names for the new universities.

The DHET is committed to actively engaging with interested and affected parties to ensure broad stakeholder support and also to meet its obligations in terms of the Administration of Justice Act (PAJA) 3 of 2000. The PAJA gives effect to section 33(3) of the Constitution that provides that everyone has the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair. When administrative action materially and adversely affects the rights of the public, an administrator may give effect to procedurally fair administrative action by, among other procedures, follow a notice and comment procedure in terms of Section 4(1)(b).

The DHET, in accordance with the PAJA, dully invited interested and affected stakeholders for public comment on the Development Framework. The invitation to comment on the Development Framework was sent to 78 individuals at 41 different institutions. In addition, the Development Framework was published in the Government Gazette of 23 August 2012, inviting the general public to comment. Stakeholders were given a period of 6 weeks to make submissions by the deadline of 18th September 2012.

The DHET had received 22 responses. Sixty-nine percent of respondents suggested names for the universities and 35% commented on the Development Framework. These submissions were made by respondents from universities (36%), government (23%), and individuals with no institutional affiliations (33%). The remaining respondents were community based organisations and initiatives.

The proposed names submitted for the new universities are:

Mpumalanga Province	Northern Cape Province
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GULA ra vutlharhi 2. Sunrise University 3. University of Mpumalanga 4. The People's University of Mpumalanga 5. The Mpumalanga University of Excellence 6. New Dawn 7. New Horizon 8. Mpumalanga University 9. Dr EJ Mabuza University of Excellence 10. Mbombela University 11. Umcebo Welwati University 12. Mpumalanga University of Technology 13. Inkhululeko University of Mpumalanga 14. The University of Mapulaneng 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University of the Northern Cape 2. Robert Sobukwe 3. Sol Plaatje 4. Solomon Plaatjie University 5. The University of Kimberley 6. Pixley Ka Tsaka Seme

Four themes emerged from the analysis of the stakeholder submissions. Firstly, many of the respondents **commended** government for this initiative to expand the higher education system; establishing these institutions as comprehensive residential universities; and emphasising the need to develop a distinct Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) for the new universities.

Secondly, respondents **counselled** government on the priorities for the new institutions, including that the universities concentrate on technology-focused undergraduate programme; adopt cutting-edge e-learning and blended approaches; focus on foundation phase teachers teaching in African languages and producing engineering technicians.

Thirdly, respondents **cautioned** government against duplication of existing programmes, about the complexity of multi-campus institutions, and the need for establishing disciplinary foundations on which to grow applied areas.

Finally, a few respondents expressed **concerns** about the viability of the new institutions and where funding and human resource capacity will be sourced from.

The first round of one-on-one stakeholder consultation with priority stakeholders has commenced. Meetings and workshops have been held with the National Institutes for Higher Education (NIHEs) in the two provinces, the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and Land Administration in Mpumalanga (DARDLA) and the University of the Free State.

The consultation process will be further expanded in the coming months to include all universities offering programmes in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces.

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Academic Architecture Taking Shape

The academic architecture for the new universities is taking shape, especially with regard to the start-up programmes for 2014. A healthy tension exists between the start-up requirements for 2014 and the development of longer-term niche programmes for the respective institutions. It is therefore, important that decisions taken to make the 2014 start-up possible should be in line with, and contribute to, the development of unique academic positioning of these institutions within the system of higher education in the country.

Each university is situated in a distinct academic context so that the Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) needs to be designed in a manner that embodies the degree programmes, certificate and diplomas as well as specialist programmes relevant to unique requirements of each institution. This unique imprint is becoming increasingly visible in the unfolding academic programme for each university.

Preliminary investigations provided a framework in which to develop the detailed PQM for each institution. In the case of Mpumalanga, the following fields of study and qualification types are pertinent:

- Agriculture with areas of specialisation in natural resource management, nature conservation, plant and animal sciences, forestry and wood sciences and technology as well as wild life management;
- Engineering specialising in industrial and manufacturing, agricultural, chemical and computer systems engineering;
- Health Sciences and related clinical sciences with a strong linkage to the Nursing college and other health professions;
- Computer science focusing on programming, information science and data processing and business system analysis;
- Management, economics and finance fields with areas of specialisation in logistics management, local government; and
- Teacher education with an initial focus on foundation phase teaching expanding over the longer term to include all phases.

Specific CESM Categories with defined fields of study have been identified as possible programmes for the new university. The initial focus for 2014 is the start-up of the B Agric (Extension) and the B Ed (Foundation Phase). This footprint will expand to potentially include a ND Wildlife Management, ND Hospitality Management, ND Tourism, B Pharm, B Nursing and H Cert Emergency Medical Care in 2015. This is in addition to the introduction of a B Sc Agric.

In the case of the Northern Cape, the preliminary investigations identified the following fields of study and qualifications:

- Information technology and computer sciences with possible areas of specialisation on systems administration, networking and LAN/WAN or Web management;

- Engineering and applied sciences with a possible focus on manufacturing, diamond technology, renewable or alternative energy;
- Agriculture with a focus on agro processing, agricultural business technology and agriculture mechanisation and food science and technology;
- Management studies with a possible focus on business management / hospitality management / tourism management;
- Health sciences with an initial focus on nursing; and
- Humanities with areas of specialisation in teacher education, indigenous languages, heritage studies and art.

The preliminary CESM categories and fields of study for the university in the Northern Cape are the ND Information Technology (Intelligent Industrial Systems) and ND Tourism Management for the 2014 start-up, followed with the ND Retail Business Management, H Cert Emergency Medical Care, B Nursing and ND Agriculture in 2015.

Academic champions have been identified to assist in the development of these programmes, while specific universities have been identified to serve as partners for the development of these programmes. A discussion with the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) has been initiated to determine the requirements for accreditation of the programmes.

Partnerships with existing universities operating within relevant fields will be negotiated over the coming months to ensure that quality assurance issues are addressed and human resources are recruited and developed to enable the effective small scale start up of programmes in 2014, and that the longer term development trajectory leads to sustainability and excellence.

Preparing the Institutional Design

A team of senior leaders drawn from universities across the system has been constituted to develop a set of comprehensive and integrated policies and procedures for the new universities that will enable these institutions to “hit the ground running” once the Interim Councils have been appointed. This set of policies and procedures will serve as guidelines and frameworks for ensuring high quality teaching and learning through well designed academic programmes which form the basis for the research and community engagement activities of the universities. The guidelines are broad in scope and deal with, among other areas of work, the following:

- Institutional governance
 - Office of the Registrar
 - Student governance
 - Academic programme
 - Human resources
 - Information and communication technology (ICT)
 - Finance
 - Library and information sciences
 - Facilities management
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Spatial and Physical Planning

Several significant spatial and physical planning activities took place during this period. Workshops with the local authorities impacted by the establishment of the new universities in Kimberley and Nelspruit were conducted, in particular to ensure that these authorities include the development of the universities in their future plans and to assess the available infrastructure and services to support the development of these institutions.

The first of the Workshops was held in Sol Plaatje Municipality over 4 days. As the seat is centrally located adjacent to Central Business District (CBD), the New Universities Project Management Team (NU-PMT) met with the Municipal Manager and his Technical Department Executive Directors on Tuesday 17th September 2012. The Municipal Manager confirmed that in essence the bulk service improvement strategies currently underway, and to be completed in 2013, would have capacity to handle the gradual influx of 5,000 full-time students over the next 12 years. This meeting was followed with a series of technical meetings. The Executive Directors of Strategic Economic Development Planning (SEDP), Infrastructure and Community Services and their senior staff were extremely helpful in reviewing the current status quo on the properties designated for incorporation in the seat of the new University in the Northern Cape with regard to the service infrastructure and the capacity to support the intervention into bulk services of the greater Sol Plaatje area; the systems in place to maintain environmental health; and the provision of parks and recreation. The Sol Plaatje Mayoral Committee was again extremely supportive of the New University and offered several suggestions for the development at a feedback session set up to brief the committee.

Although the university in Mpumalanga is located just outside of Nelspruit, it will have to be serviced by the Mbombela Municipality. The NU-PMT met with the Mbombela Municipality Executive Directors and their staff on Wednesday 10th October 2012 to explore the current Urban and Rural Management Strategies and Development and Bulk Services Infrastructure. Several meetings were held to discuss town planning, roads and storm water, electrical supply and water supply and sanitation. As the Mbombela Municipality is heavily engaged in social development to the east and the private sector is developing the northern sector, the intervention of 15,000 full-time students over the next 12 years will require some bulk service planning in conjunction with other developments in close proximity to the Lowveld College of Agriculture site.

Further to these meetings with the Municipalities the NU-PMT has also been engaging the National, National Regional and Provincial Public Works departments to discuss the disposal of land held by the DPW to the New Universities.

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Planning Verification Studies Underway Following the Award of Tenders

Work has commenced on a range of studies that will move the physical planning forward on both of the new universities.

Eighteen different tenders were advertised with tenders closing on the 31st August 2012. Three of these closed in Johannesburg (Database IT Management, Landscape Architecture and Cost Consulting) and the remainder in Nelspruit and Kimberley including:

- Town Planning
- Civil Engineering
- Electrical Engineering
- Environmental Impact Assessments
- Geotechnical Engineering
- Heritage Assessment (Kimberley only)
- Land Surveying
- Traffic Engineering

The work has commenced and will be largely completed on the 5th December 2012. A total of 189 tenders were received and evaluated. Tenders were evaluated on pre-determined criteria with points awarded for price, quality and empowerment preference rating.

Two of the tenders were adjudged to be invalid as all tenders submitted in this category were assessed as non-responsive. These tenders are being re-advertised and are not expected to cause any delay to the spatial planning process.

Of the 6 tenders awarded to the highest scoring bidders in Mpumalanga, 4 were also the highest scoring in terms of empowerment preference and 2 were second highest in this category. Three of the 6 winning bidders have offices based in Nelspruit, 1 in Polokwane and 1 in Johannesburg.

Of the 7 tenders awarded to the highest scoring bidders in the Northern Cape, 5 were also the highest scoring in the empowerment preference category and 1 was the second highest in this category. Four of the successful companies have offices based in Kimberley, 1 in Bloemfontein and 1 in Pretoria.

The picture is similar for the three tenders which closed in Johannesburg, with 2 of the 3 tenders also scoring highest in the empowerment preference category.

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Towards the Proclamation of the New Universities

Five requirements need to be met for the new universities to be formally proclaimed. A name for the university must be decided, the type of institution needs to be specified, the physical address and the seat of the university need to be stated and an Interim Council should be appointed.

The new universities will be comprehensive universities as reflected in the *Development Framework for the Establishment of New Universities in the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga Provinces* (hereinafter referred to as the Development Framework). The address and seat of the new universities have been established for both the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga provinces.

A number of proposals on the name for each university have been received in response to the invitation for public comment on the Development Framework for the new universities. A final decision on the name for each university will be taken by the Minister Nzimandi for the purposes of gazetting the universities.

A public call for nominations to the 5-person Interim Council for each university will be issued before the end of 2012. The DHET will review the nominations against the criteria in order to appoint appropriately qualified nominees to the Interim Councils for the new universities.

It is anticipated that the proclamation of the new universities will take place early in the new year.