

## **2023 SO FAR** *(By Mr P Nkai – Vocational Programmes Manager)*



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We are halfway through 2023 and dedicated efforts continue to ensure that the academic year is a successful one and that all academic goals and objectives are met. At this time of the year, an academic mid-year review is held to determine the performance trajectory of the college in relation to set targets, with thoughtful intentions of perpetual improvement. Furthermore, it is at this time of the year that planning for the new academic year (2024) commences to ensure that projected enrolments are determined on time and that planning for needed resources is also in place. Critical to 2024 planning and preparation is the direction the college wishes to take with regards to its Programme Qualification Mix (PQM).

### **College Programme Qualification Mix**

The PQM of a college needs to be relevant and responsive. It must have a healthy relationship with the economic environment of the country. When the economy of our country demands certain skills and abilities, the college must be producing students that have the required skills in demand as an output. In this way, students from the college will be able to seamlessly assimilate into the country's labour market, or be able to create their own employment by pursuing entrepreneurship. The college must discuss its PQM, following a study of the Critical and Scarce Skills Annual Report from the DHET. Central to PQM discussions at the college, are the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR), which require a new way of thinking when considering the PQM. The college must also offer programmes that will ensure that students acquire 4IR-related skills in artificial intelligence, robotics and cyber security, amongst others.

To ensure the relevance of our PQM, the college has started phasing out programmes that are considered to lack the capacity to equip students with critical and scarce skills, such as the R191 Human Resources Management programme. In finalizing this move, the college considered how students who have completed this programme struggle with securing work placement for the purposes of experiential learning, and graduating with an N Diploma. The market is thoroughly saturated with HRM candidates, which does not help our students in the long run. The college continues to consider other programmes which have outputs similar to that of the HRM programme, for the purpose of phasing out these programmes. It is also the intention of the college to offer an increased number of ICT-related programmes available from both the ministerially-approved (DHET) programmes menu and the occupational programmes menu accredited by the QCTO. In this regard, the College plans to introduce the new NCV ICT programme in coding and robotics at a number of our campuses in 2024.

### **Improving student performance through lecturer placement in industry**

Work-integrated learning (WIL) is an umbrella term for any purposefully designed learning programme that integrates theoretical knowledge with authentic practice in the workplace. The purpose of WIL is to improve employability and develop competence, i.e., the ability to apply knowledge and skills in accordance with the demands of the workplace. The WIL for lecturers in the TVET College Sector is extremely important as it provides lecturers with an opportunity to keep abreast of changes within their fields of expertise and prepares students for employability through the provision of knowledge, skills and workplace experience relevant to their field of study. WIL also ensures that students are trained by lecturers who have current knowledge of the industries they prepare students for.

The intent of lecturer placements is also to strengthen the participation and relation between industry partners and TVET Colleges to build capacity within lecturers and to increase TVET College lecturers' knowledge and understanding of the latest developments and skills required in the various sectors. To date, we have secured Memorandums of Understanding with ABSA and the MICT SETA amongst others, for the purposes of WIL for lecturers. In July 2023, eleven lecturers used their college winter recess to visit the MICT SETA offices and their partners for industry exposure, and first-hand experience of company operations. This exposure to industry and business have not only shown lecturers how technology can enhance and assist with teaching and learning in the college, but also what new programmes can be offered that will enable students to find employment in related industries upon completion of their studies.

### **Technology in the classroom**

It should go without saying that in 2023, technology should be standard in every classroom. The use of technology in the classroom has long been proven to augment teaching practices such that effectiveness and efficiency is improved, resulting in the improvement of both lecturer and student performance. To this effect, the academic unit has sought to support the implementation of

technology in the classroom by implementing a training roadshow aimed at improving the digital literacy skills of all lecturers. This initiative will ensure that lecturers continue using technology effectively and efficiently in teaching practices, while also learning how to use educational applications to offer different teaching modes, including remotely. It is the intention of the college to introduce additional technological resources in classrooms to cultivate lively teaching methodology and to reinforce learning successfully.

### **Looking to the future**

The 4th Industrial Revolution must be consciously considered while pursuing the future of economics in our nation and beyond. The college has already introduced online instruction, but wants to broaden its reach. Our lecturers have received training in 21<sup>st</sup> century digital transformation skills and all of them have access to laptops and data so that they can investigate ways and means to give instruction through technology. At the Brits Campus, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Centre has been established to train both students and some of our staff members in this area. Our college continues to be a Huawei ICT Academy, providing some of our students with opportunities to access relevant 4IR skills programmes every year. Additionally, the DHET has challenged the college to start providing QCTO-recognized on-demand skills programmes that will enable students to immediately work or launch a small business upon completion. The college plans to heed this challenge in the 2023/2024 academic years.

The future does indeed appear bright, and as a TVET College that is in a position to help the nation close its significant skills gap, it is our responsibility to provide students with relevant programmes that will enable them to integrate successfully into the nation's economy, either as needed labour or as business owners. The college continues to adjust its strategies to ensure that this goal is achieved.