

South Africa

INSTITUTION TYPES

Types of higher education institutions:

University

University of Technology (former Technikon)

College (Further Education and Training Colleges, Nursing, Technical Colleges)

Comprehensive University

CREDENTIALS

School leaving and higher education credentials:

Senior Certificate

Matriculation Endorsement

National Certificate

National Higher Certificate

National Diploma

National Higher Diploma

Bachelor's Degree

Bachelor Honours Degree

Bachelor of Technology

Postgraduate Diploma

Master's Degree

Master of Technology

Doctorate

Doctor of Technology

STRUCTURE OF EDUCATION SYSTEM

Pre-higher education:

Duration of compulsory education:

Age of entry: 6

Age of exit: 15

Structure of school system:

Primary

Type of school providing this education: Primary School

Length of programme in years: 6

Age level from: 6 to: 12

Junior Secondary

Type of school providing this education: Junior Secondary School (first year still placed under primary school)

Length of programme in years: 3

Age level from: 12 to: 15

Certificate/diploma awarded: General Education and Training Certificate

Technical Secondary

Type of school providing this education: Technical Level Secondary School

Length of programme in years: 2

Age level from: 15 to: 17

Certificate/diploma awarded: Senior Certificate 1-3 years (depending on N programmes followed)

Senior Secondary

Type of school providing this education: Senior Secondary School

Length of programme in years: 3

Age level from: 15 to: 18

Certificate/diploma awarded: Senior Certificate

School education:

Primary education lasts for six years, divided into junior primary and senior primary. Until now, secondary school lasted for five years, the first year of the junior secondary phase being followed in primary school. At the end of junior secondary (three years), pupils are awarded the General Education and Training Certificate. At the end of the senior secondary phase (lasting for three years), pupils sit for the Senior Certificate Examination. The 1996 Constitution confirms the right to basic education and that the Government must progressively make further education (i.e. the senior secondary phase preceding higher education) available and accessible through reasonable measures. Compulsory education lasts for nine years (until age 15), followed by non-compulsory further education. In the senior cycle, students may study subjects either at Higher Grade, Standard Grade, or Lower Grade. N courses are also offered to some technical school and college candidates. A Senior Certificate is awarded by the UMALUSI (previously called the SA Certification Council) following externally moderated examinations on completion of senior secondary school. Technical secondary education is provided by technical centres and secondary and vocational schools. Matriculation endorsements are also offered by this Council to students who have satisfied the ministerially approved overlay on the Senior Certificate. Provision is also made for further education colleges through the Further Education and Training Act. Technical high schools may, inter alia, offer courses leading to Senior Certificates with matriculation endorsements, which statutorily constitute the minimum general admission

requirement for access to universities. Universities of Technology (former Technikons) require Senior Certificates but not necessarily with matriculation endorsements.

Higher education:

The higher education system consists of Public Universities, Universities of Technology, Comprehensive Universities (offering both University of Technology and University programmes) and a College sector. The Higher Education Act (December 1997) provides for the appointment of a Registrar of Private Higher Education Institutions and a number of private institutions have registered or are in the process of registering in terms of these provisions. The South African universities offer Bachelor's, Bachelor's Honours, Master's and Doctorate Degrees, as well as Undergraduate and Postgraduate Diplomas. Course work is structured in modules, with students registering in a unit/credit system. Universities and Universities of Technology, as autonomous institutions, are subsidized by the Department of Education, and provide training at the post senior certificate level. University of Technology courses lead to National Diplomas and Certificates and, as from 1995, to Degrees with a minimum duration of four years. The Higher Education Act stipulates that higher education at Universities, Universities of Technology and Colleges comes directly under the responsibility of the national government, whilst further education colleges report to the nine provincial governments.

Main laws/decrees governing higher education:

Decree: Higher Education Act *Year:* 1997

Academic year:

Classes from: January *to:* December

Language(s) of instruction:

Afrikaans, English

Stages of studies:*Non-university level:*

Higher technical/vocational studies are provided by Technical Colleges, Universities of Technology and Comprehensive Universities. Apprenticeship training for technicians is offered by Further Education and Training Colleges. Apprentices study for the National (Technical) Certificate (N training). N-3 courses can also be taken as credits for the Senior Certificate. The programme consists of three parts (N-1, N-2, N-3), each lasting for four months, six months or a year, depending on the course concerned. The N-training is a pre-senior Certificate level and the N-3 credits are considered for the Senior Certificate (with pass in English and Afrikaans) for entry to Universities of Technology and National Certificate studies, but not for university studies. Most tertiary-level vocational programmes lead to a three-year National Diploma as basic qualification. Universities of Technology also provide vocationally oriented education and training in a variety of disciplines leading to, amongst other Diplomas, first and advanced Degrees. Diplomas at technical-vocational level lead to BTech, MTech and DTech Degrees. There are other types of specialist colleges, such as Nursing Colleges and Agricultural Colleges, which do not offer Degree studies unless offered in cooperation with Universities or Universities of Technology. In such cases, the Degree-awarding institution/authority's name will appear on the Certificate.

University level studies:

University level first stage: First stage

The Bachelor's degree is awarded by Universities, Comprehensive Universities and Universities of Technology. Universities and Comprehensive Universities award the Bachelor's degree after three to six years of study: Humanities, Commerce, Science - 3 years; Agriculture, Law, Engineering, Pharmacy and Education, four years; Veterinary Medicine and Architecture, five years; Dentistry, five-and-a-half years; Medicine and Theology, six years. Students in Humanities, Commerce and Science wishing to proceed to a Master's degree are required to take a Bachelor's (Honours) degree, which is awarded after a further year's study. Universities of Technology award the Bachelor's degree of Technology (BTech), which is a one-year degree following a diploma that includes one year of practical training. Universities also confer a Professional Bachelor's degree after four years.

University level second stage: Second stage

The Master's degree is awarded by Universities, Comprehensive Universities and Universities of Technology. This degree requires a minimum of one to two years' research after the award of an Honours degree in the case of universities, and a Bachelor's degree in the case of Universities of Technology. The Master's degree in Technology (MTech) may be obtained at least one year after the BTech. This is an advanced qualification comprising taught subjects and research, or only research. The thesis must relate to an industry-specific problem. Some university Master's degrees, e.g. the Master's degree in Business Leadership (MBA), are partly taught and partly research degrees, where the thesis must relate to an industry or subject specific problem.

University level third stage: Third stage

Doctorates and research degrees are also awarded by Universities, Comprehensive Universities and Universities of Technology. They are conferred to holders of Master's degrees after a minimum of two years' study. A Doctor in Technology (DTech) is awarded after successful completion of a thesis at Universities of Technology. This degree is research-based and studies last for at least two years. It comprises an advanced research project.

Other types of studies:

Training of pre-primary and primary/basic school teachers

Teacher Colleges have been transferred to the National Department of Education and certain Universities run three-or four-year Diploma courses qualifying holders to teach in primary schools. This also applies to some universities of technology. The general admission requirement for Diploma studies at any of these colleges is a Senior Certificate with pass marks in one of the two languages of instruction (i.e. English and Afrikaans).

Training of secondary school teachers

Degree-level courses for secondary school teachers are offered by all universities, comprehensive universities and universities of technology. A Senior Certificate with a matriculation endorsement or a Certificate of complete or conditional exemption is required for university study, whilst universities of technology have different requirements (usually Senior Certificates and further requirements as stipulated in their joint statute).

Training of higher education teachers

Forty per cent of academic staff obtained their highest qualification at the University in which they are employed, 30 per cent at another South African University and 30 per cent at a foreign University.

*Non-traditional studies:**Distance higher education*

Distance teaching, which is mainly by correspondence, provides courses for about 35 per cent of enrolled students. The University of South Africa (UNISA) offers correspondence courses, either in English or in Afrikaans, for Bachelor's degrees and Postgraduate qualifications, provided such Bachelor's degrees include an in-service training component. Course work is structured in modules. A maximum of ten years is allowed to obtain a Bachelor's degree, an additional year for an Honours degree, three years for Postgraduate qualifications, two further years for a Master's degree and two years for a Doctorate. The degrees are considered to be equivalent in standard to those awarded by other Universities.

NATIONAL BODIES

Responsible authorities:**Department of Higher Education and Training**

Minister: Blade Nzimande

Private Bag X893

Sol Plaatje House, 123 Schoeman Street

Pretoria 0001

Tel: +27(12) 326 0126

Fax: +27(12) 323 5989

WWW: http://www.education.gov.za/about_doe/HigherEducationminister.asp

Council on Higher Education - CHE

Chief Executive Officer: Cheryl de la Rey

P.O. Box 94

1 Quintin Brand Street

Persequor Technopark

Brummeria

Pretoria

Tel: +27(12) 349 3840

EMail: admin@che.ac.za

WWW: <http://www.che.ac.za>

Role of national body: Advises the Minister of Education on strategic issues in higher education, performs quality assurance functions, disseminates information on higher education.

Higher Education Quality Committee - HEQC

PO Box 13354, The Tramshed
Pretoria 0126
Tel: +27(12) 392 9100
Fax: +27(12) 392 9110
EMail: admin@che.ac.za
WWW: <http://www.che.ac.za/heqc/heqc.php>

Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training - UMALUSI

Chief Executive Officer: Mafu S Rakometsi
Post Net Suite 102
Private Bag X 1
Queenswood 0120
Tel: +27(12) 349 1510
Fax: +27(12) 349 1511
EMail: info@umalusi.org.za
WWW: <http://www.umalusi.org.za>

Role of national body: Quality assurer in the general and further education and training bands of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

Higher Education South Africa - HESA

PO Box 27392
Sunnyside
Pretoria 0132
Tel: +27(12) 481 2842
Fax: +27(12) 481 2843/50
EMail: admin@hesa.org.za
WWW: <http://www.hesa.org.za>

International Education Association of South Africa - IEASA

President: Fazela Haniff
PO Box 65099
Reservoir Hills
Durban 4090
Tel: +27(31) 260 3077
Fax: +27(31) 260 2136
EMail: aieasa@ukzn.ac.za
WWW: <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/ieasa/>

Role of national body: Non-profit organization created to respond to international educational trends.

Southern African Regional Universities Association - SARUA

CEO: Piyushi Kotecha
P O Box 662
Wits 2050
Tel: +27(11) 717 3951/2

Fax: +27(11) 717 3950

E-Mail: info@sarua.org

WWW: <http://www.sarua.org>

Role of national body: SARUA is an association for the public universities in the SADC region. SARUA aims to promote, strengthen and increase higher education, training and research through expanded inter-institutional collaboration and capacity building initiatives across the region and promote universities as major contributors towards national and regional socio-economic development.

ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Admission to non university higher education studies:

Name of secondary school credential required: Senior Certificate

For entry to: Universities of technology, further education and training colleges, and other colleges.

Alternatives to credentials: Senior Certificate with N-courses obtained at technical colleges or technical high schools.

Admission to university-level studies:

Name of secondary school credential required: Senior Certificate

Minimum score/requirement: Pass marks in two Higher Grade languages, two additional Higher Grade subjects, at least a further Standard Grade subject and a minimum aggregate of 45 % for six subjects.

For entry to: Universities.

Alternatives to credentials: Certificate of exemption from the matriculation endorsement required as issued by the Matriculation Board on behalf of HESA or a conditional admission certificate issued by a university of technology.

Entrance exam required: Matriculation endorsements are required for admission to first degree studies at university level and senior certificates for first degree studies at university of technology or college level.

Foreign students admission:

Admission requirements: Prospective students coming from a non-South African schooling system must, for benchmark purposes, hold qualifications that must be at least equivalent to the local system. For university studies, candidates apply to the university which will forward the application to the Matriculation Board which issues a certificate of exemption in terms of other specified provisions. Conditions must be satisfied on completion of degrees in the case of foreign conditional exemption certificates.

Entry regulations: Students must hold a valid passport, a duly completed B1-159 application form that is available from the Department of Home Affairs, a standard letter of provisional acceptance to a South African institution, a letter of motivation and proof that the student is in a situation to pay the tuition fees and has adequate means of support.

Language requirements: Students must be proficient in English or Afrikaans.

Application procedures:

Apply to individual institution for entry to: Institutions of higher education

RECOGNITION OF STUDIES

Quality assurance system:

A Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) functions within the Council on Higher Education. It promotes quality assurance in higher education, audits quality assurance mechanisms and accredits higher education programmes.

Bodies Dealing with Recognition:

South African Qualifications Authority - SAQA

Executive Officer: Samuel Isaacs

Postnet Suite 248

Private Bag X06

Waterkloof 0145

Tel: +27(12) 431 5000

Fax: +27(12) 431 5039

EEmail: saqainfo@saqa.org.za

WWW: <http://www.saqa.org.za/>

Deals with credential recognition for entry to institution: Yes

Services provided and students dealt with: To oversee the development of the 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;

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.

Higher Education Quality Committee - HEQC

Executive Director: Lis Lange

PO Box 13354, The Tramshed

Pretoria 0126

Tel: +27(12) 392 9100

Fax: +27(12) 392 9110

EEmail: admin@che.ac.za

WWW: <http://www.che.ac.za/heqc/heqc.php>

Role of national body: Promotes quality assurance in higher education; Audits the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions; Accredits programmes of higher education.

Higher Education South Africa - HESA

Chief Executive Officer: Duma Malaza

PO Box 27392

Sunnyside

Pretoria 0132

Tel: +27(12) 481 2842

Fax: +27(12) 481 2843/50

EEmail: admin@hesa.org.za

WWW: <http://www.hesa.org.za>

Role of national body: Umbrella body for South African public higher education institutions.

References to further information on foreign student admissions and recognition of studies:

Title: Study SA - The guide to South African tertiary education - 4th edition

Publisher: International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA)

STUDENT LIFE

Main student services at national level:

National Student Financial Aid Scheme - NSFAS

Chief Executive Officer: Pragasan Naicker

Private bag X1

Plumstead 7801

Tel: +27(21) 763 3232

EEmail: info@nsfas.org.za

WWW: <http://www.nsfas.org.za>

Student expenses and financial aid:

Home students tuition fees: Minimum: 4,000 (Rand)

Maximum: 25,000 (Rand)

Reference to further information on the higher education system:

Title: Guide to Higher Education in South Africa

Publisher: HSRC Publishers

Title: Guide to Distance Education in South Africa

Publisher: HSRC Publishers

Year of publication: Year: 0

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND EXCHANGES

Principal national bodies responsible for dealing with international cooperation and exchanges in higher education:

Higher Education South Africa - HESA

PO Box 27392
Sunnyside
Pretoria 0132
Tel: +27(12) 481 2842
Fax: +27(12) 481 2843/50
EMail: admin@hesa.org.za
WWW: <http://www.hesa.org.za>

International Education Association of South Africa - IEASA

PO Box 65099
Reservoir Hills
Durban 4090
Tel: +27(31) 260 3077
Fax: +27(31) 260 2136
EMail: aieasa@ukzn.ac.za
WWW: <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/ieasa/>

GRADING SYSTEM

Usual grading system in secondary school:

Full description: Marking is alphabetical or expressed as a percentage. The usual pass mark in all higher grade subjects is 40% (with 2 exceptions). The pass mark in all standard grade subjects is 33%.

Highest on scale: A 80-100%

Pass/fail level: E 40-49%

Lowest on scale: F 33-39%

Main grading system used by higher education institutions:

Full description: Classification at some universities: 1st class (75-100%); 2nd class division 1 (70-74); 2nd class division 2 (60-69); 3rd class (50-59); fail (below 50). Other universities only distinguish: Distinction (75-100%); Pass (50-74%).

Highest on scale: 1st class

Pass/fail level: 3rd class

Lowest on scale: F

NOTES ON HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Data for academic year: 2007-2008

Source: IAU from Higher Education South Africa (HESA), South Africa, 2007

Bodies updated in 2009