



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

A NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS UNIVERSITY TEACHERS



Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. What is the Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers?	3
3. The purpose of the Framework	3
4. Where will the Framework be used within the higher education system?	4
5. The rationale for the Framework.....	4
6. Principles underpinning the Framework.....	5
7. Imperatives for action.....	6
8. Creating an ecosystem to enhance academics as university teachers	8
9. Continuous professional development for university teachers and professional leadership/support for teaching along the career continuum	11
10. Enabling implementation of the Framework.....	13
10.1 A national coordinating committee	13
10.2 Advocacy and positioning	13
10.3 Resourcing.....	13
11. Acknowledgements.....	14

Tables

Table 1: Enacting the action imperatives at multiple levels of the higher education system	8
Table 2: Career-stage-appropriate teaching development activities	12

Figure

Figure 1: Action imperatives for the enhancement of academics as university teachers.....	7
---	---

Abbreviations

CHE	Council on Higher Education
CHEC	Cape Higher Education Consortium
CPD	Continuous professional development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
EU	European Union
HELTASA	Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa
OER	Open education resource
SA	South Africa
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UCDG	University Capacity Development Grant
UCDP	University Capacity Development Programme
USAf	Universities South Africa

Foreword

Universities in South Africa play a pivotal role in giving expression to the rights and values in the country's Constitution and Bill of Rights, which include improving student access and success and developing contextually-responsive curricula that promote transformative values, attitudes and actions in higher education.

Effective undergraduate and postgraduate student learning requires a scholarly and professional approach to teaching. Academics are appointed primarily for their disciplinary expertise and research capacity and it is not reasonable to assume that they will automatically be well-equipped to carry out this task. It is therefore essential that, across the career continuum from emerging academics to established professionals, there are development opportunities for university teachers and teaching support professionals, including those in teaching leadership roles. Equally important is the need to recognise, affirm and reward good and experienced teachers, drawing on their capacities and accommodating their aspirations.

A guiding document, neither regulative nor prescriptive, the National Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers (the Framework) does not seek to impose a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. It has been developed in the context of the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) and is intended to support effective implementation of the teaching development element of the UCDP. In particular, it is intended to strengthen the development of university teachers within the staff development component of the programme.

The Framework should thus be viewed as an elaboration of the focus on strengthening university teaching through the UCDP.

The purpose of the Framework is to consolidate and build on activities and resources that are currently dispersed; provide a stable, long-term base for national initiatives; raise the status of university teachers and teaching; identify where targeted funding and interventions are needed to develop and strengthen university teachers across the higher education system; and align institutional strategies with national transformation imperatives. This will enable teaching development initiatives across the sector to have maximum impact.

University teachers must be the main beneficiaries of the initiatives proposed in the Framework. When this happens, teaching teams, departments and programme delivery will all be strengthened, and student learning enhanced.

The Department of Higher Education and Training looks forward to working with universities and other role-players to give effect to the Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers.


MRS GNM PANDOR, MP
MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
DATE: 1-11-2018

1. Introduction

From 24 to 26 May 2017, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) jointly convened a national workshop in Port Elizabeth on strengthening university teaching. It was supported by the Dialogue Facility, a strategic partnership between the European Union and South Africa. Delegates from 25 of the 26 country's public universities, mostly their Directors of Teaching and Learning and staff involved in professional development, took part in the workshop. The aim was to explore how to create structural, systemic ways to improve the quality of university teaching and thus student success.

Drawing on their own experience and on presentations about national and regional initiatives to promote quality university teaching¹ in South Africa and in three European countries, the workshop participants discussed the state, status and recognition of university teaching in South Africa. The main ideas put forward were captured in a document titled "Towards a national framework for strengthening university teaching in South Africa"; this formed part of the workshop report.² The participants agreed that, through collaboration between key role players, the document should be developed as a national framework for strengthening teaching in South Africa's universities. This Framework is the outcome of the collaborative process.

2. What is the Framework for Enhancing Academics as University Teachers?

The Framework is an agreed representation of current and envisaged university teacher development, presented in a way that shows how the individual parts contribute to the whole. It describes agreed-upon activity areas essential for the system and shows how teacher development activities map onto the Framework at multiple levels from institutional to national.

Intended to relate to its present context, it is expected that the Framework will evolve over time.

3. The purpose of the Framework

The purpose of the Framework is to guide collective efforts throughout the higher education system to promote academics' abilities, and recognition, as teachers through improved coordination and integration, greater collaboration and consistent and equitable access to opportunities at different stages of their professional careers.

The Framework also has an advocacy role intended to focus attention on nurturing, supporting and developing academics as university teachers.

The Framework identifies leverage points - labelled 'imperatives for action' - in the system. In a range of ways at the various institutions, the UCDP and the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) are leading enablers of the imperatives. It is expected that additional resources, including those that the

¹ Teacher quality' and 'teaching quality' are contested constructs, and it is understood that the meanings that they are ascribed are context dependent.

² <http://www.che.ac.za/content/workshop-improving-effectiveness-university-teaching>

institutions themselves can allocate, will help with developing academics as university teachers and with ensuring the sustainability of actions taken and gains made.

4. Where will the Framework be used within the higher education system?

The Framework will be used at multiple levels. At national level, it will be used by the DHET to develop national strategies that support the development and recognition of academics as teachers, and to guide the allocation to universities of resources for teacher development.

Other national role players such as the CHE, the Teaching and Learning Strategy Group of Universities South Africa (USAf), the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) and regional structures such as the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) have important roles to play in assisting academics to develop their teaching skills and enabling teaching support professionals and university leaders and managers to support and promote good teaching. The Framework can help them to define, align and coordinate their activities with the national focus on this important area.

At the institutional level, it will guide universities in developing and implementing strategies to enhance academics' teaching skills; aligning their strategies with those at national level; and maximising the impact of initiatives across the sector.

5. The rationale for the Framework

The Framework responds to the following issues:

- **National patterns of student success:** these must improve, particularly at undergraduate level but also at postgraduate level. Student success is a complex issue. One important factor affecting it is academics' ability to teach in ways that respond to students' learning needs. Given high student dropout and low throughput rates, responsive pedagogy is a necessity and not a choice.
- **The large number of activities intended to develop and strengthen university teaching already in the system:** these are often fragmented or 'siloes'. Attention to strengthening teaching varies significantly between universities as do choices about how it should be addressed. University teaching at institutional, regional and national level can be strengthened through improved coordination.
- **The transformation taking place in the South African university system:** this is about addressing inequality and improving quality. Academics as teachers are required to be change agents within this process. However, many feel marginalised, silenced or threatened by the demands for change or unable to respond to the evolving environment.
- **The status assigned to teaching compared with research at universities:** rather than being equally valued as interdependent activities, teaching and research are often in competition for resources and recognition. Recognition of competence as a researcher is much more visible across the university system: for example, through rewards for research outputs, fellowships and research ratings. This

highlights the need for nationally-agreed-upon ways of recognising competence in university teaching.

- **Development for professional staff who provide professional support for teaching:** a range of professional staff at universities support the development of academics as teachers and they must also be able to benefit from professional development opportunities.

6. Principles underpinning the Framework

The following principles underpin the Framework:

- **Good teaching is a vital contributor to student learning and success:** good teaching responds to its context; builds on students' knowledge and experience; respects, actively engages and is accessible to and appropriate for the students enrolled; and helps them to develop their understanding of the discipline and their discipline-related skills and ways of thinking. Good teaching can inspire students and encourage them to develop and to pursue new aspirations.
- **Universities that place students at the centre of their work are characterised by a pedagogy of care and are underpinned by a strong social justice agenda:** good understanding of their students' needs and aspirations should lead universities to become welcoming and not alienating environments.
- **The work of an academic involves being a teacher and a researcher:** these roles should not be in competition. Both are equally important and interdependent, and need to be developed, valued, rewarded and incentivised. Teaching must be research-informed.
- **Good teaching is grounded in a deep understanding of a discipline:** the basis of academics' work is knowledge, with their identities embedded in discipline as knowledge learners, producers and disseminators. Fluid and hybrid, academic identity changes as work foci and values, and external influences, change; as a career progresses; and as academic disciplines evolve. Academics work across knowledge areas in different ways at different points in their careers.
- **Improving university teaching and learning must take into account the needs of academics at all levels, of teacher leaders and of professional support staff:** the demands made on university teachers, and the social requirement that they must respond to change over time, underline the need for continuous professional development.
- **Professional development activities for university teachers and the professionals who support teaching development need to be available across the career continuum:** a career-long learning approach to teaching development needs to be adopted.
- **Whilst adequate resources are essential, the greatest barrier to good teaching is ideology:** ideology antithetical to good teaching can manifest in a number of ways including mindsets and practices that do not value teaching as an intellectual activity; deficit views of students that regard them as passive recipients of knowledge from experts; and negative views of academics as incompetent teachers. Teaching development is as much about cultural change as it is about developing good pedagogical practices.

- **The teaching role is often more fully embodied in a team than in an individual:** teaching development activities should enable team, as well as individual, development. Collegiality and openness to peer review are important enablers of teaching.
- **Teaching can be advanced when the discipline and the people involved identify and address their own teaching development needs:** discipline- or subject-based communities of practice have an important role to play in strengthening university teachers and teaching.
- **Professional development cannot be imposed but must be undertaken by the person concerned:** university teachers have agency. When they take responsibility for their own development, real change is possible. Teaching development is more strongly enabled through reflection and collaborative interaction than by external prescription.
- **A recognition and reward system can contribute positively to teaching development:** such a system includes promotions and performance appraisal criteria that take into account, and reward, teaching quality and that provide opportunities for professional development and access to resources.
- **Time needs to be allocated to professional development activities:** these should be viewed as part of workloads.
- **Teaching development professionals need be able to develop their own capacity and careers:** resources and opportunities must be made available for this.

7. Imperatives for action

The Framework identifies six imperatives for enhancing academics as university teachers. These intersect in multiple ways and cannot be seen in isolation from each other. The imperatives are:

1. Enable continuous professional development (CPD) for university teachers.
2. Establish and maintain university teacher development structures, organisations and resources.
3. Ensure that academics are recognised and rewarded for the work that they do as university teachers.
4. Advance university teaching through leadership development.
5. Promote knowledge production and knowledge sharing about university teaching and learning.
6. Develop expectations of academics in their role as university teachers.

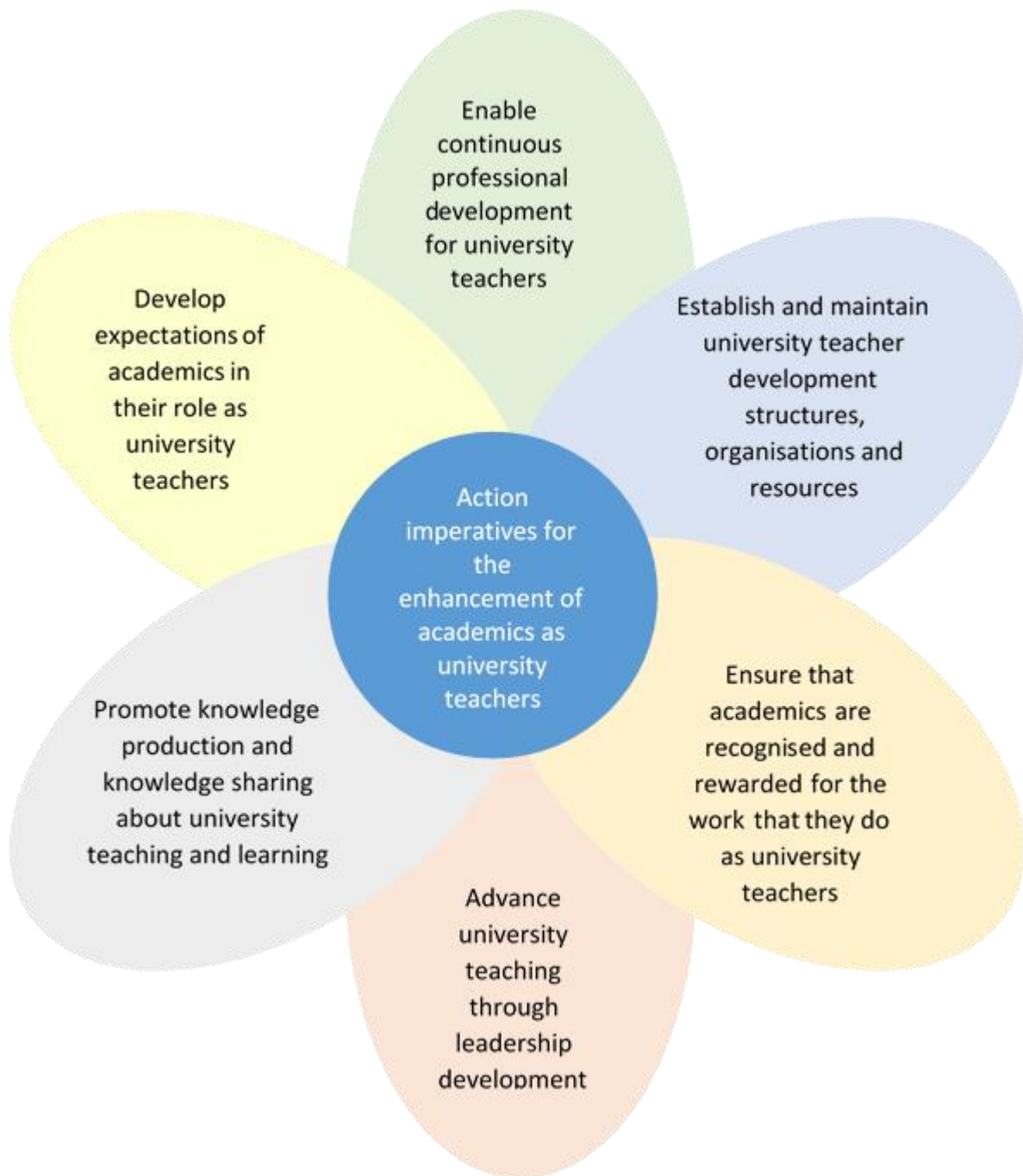


Figure 1: Action imperatives for the enhancement of academics as university teachers

IMPERATIVES FOR ACTION						
	Enable continuous professional development (CPD) for university teachers	Establish and maintain university teacher development structures, organisations and resources	Ensure that academics are recognised and rewarded for the work that they do as university teachers	Advance university teaching through leadership development	Promote knowledge production and knowledge sharing about university teaching and learning	Develop expectations of academics in their role as university teachers
Institutional Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Universities have a CPD Framework in place. •Induction to the teaching role is provided for new academics. •Teaching development seminars, workshops, and symposia, institutes etc. are held. •Academics are supported to enroll for and complete career-stage appropriate teaching and learning development short learning programmes and qualifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Universities have appropriately staffed and resourced Teaching and Learning Centres that are able to coordinate and support teaching development activities. •Professional staff that support teaching and learning enjoy appropriate conditions of service and career advancement prospects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promotion policies at universities include consideration of teaching quality. •Teaching excellence awards systems are established at various levels at universities, such as institutional, faculty and school. •Well-regarded university teachers are offered extended opportunities to improve their teaching knowledge and practices through, for example, teaching sabbaticals, teaching scholarships, exchange visits and retreats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Professional staff who support teaching and learning have access to appropriate professional development opportunities. •Appropriate development opportunities are provided for university staff responsible for the administrative leadership of the teaching function: for example, Heads of Department. •Academics recognised for their teaching expertise play a leadership role in enhancing teaching at various levels within their institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Research Chair positions in teaching and learning are created at institutional level. •Capacity development for researching teaching and learning is enabled at the institutional level. •Research projects on teaching and learning are supported at the institutional level. •Various forums are available at the institutional level at which knowledge on teaching and learning is shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Academics' employment contacts/performance agreements contain formal institutional and contextually appropriate expectations/specifications for the teaching function. •Teaching is regularly evaluated, including through self, student and peer review mechanisms.
Inter-institutional and Regional Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regional collaborations between universities are in place to develop and deliver teaching development-focused short learning programmes and full qualifications •Regional teaching and learning symposia and conferences take place. •Inter-institutional mentoring of academics at various career stages is available. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Academics recognised for their teaching expertise serve as resources for other institutions in enhancing teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Teaching and learning knowledge-sharing symposia are held at the regional level. •Collaborative research projects are undertaken. 	

IMPERATIVES FOR ACTION						
	Enable continuous professional development (CPD) for university teachers	Establish and maintain university teacher development structures, organisations and resources	Ensure that academics are recognised and rewarded for the work that they do as university teachers	Advance university teaching through leadership development	Promote knowledge production and knowledge sharing about university teaching and learning	Develop expectations of academics in their role as university teachers
National Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are national collaborations between universities to develop and deliver teaching development-focused short learning programmes and full qualifications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National earmarked grants to are allocated to universities for teaching development for the medium term (3 planning cycles of 3 years each) up to 2030 to enable planning stability. • A pool of funds is available at national level to support collaborative activities to address national teaching development priorities. • There is support for the development of open education resources (OERs), accessible across the university system, for the development of university teachers, • There is support for HELTASA to enable it to become sustainable in the long term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-profile national teaching awards programme is implemented. • Nationally recognised university teachers are supported to develop and offer professional development opportunities for other teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A national widely-recognised and prestigious Teaching Advancement in Universities (TAU) fellowships programme is implemented, and university teachers with a demonstrated record of teaching prowess and the potential to play leadership roles in this area are supported to work towards achieving fellowships. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected priority national collaborative teaching and learning research projects are supported. • At least one national teaching and learning conference is held each year. • A national OER repository that is a central clearing house for hosting quality resources related to university teaching is established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A high-level set of principles describing good quality university teaching³ is developed, at a suitable level of aggregation, to enable description and application across multiple and diverse contexts, and to inform and guide the range of other teaching development activities undertaken across the system.

³ Input from institutions on the draft of this document proposed that these descriptions should be developed, and variously referred to them as ‘threshold standards’, ‘professional attributes’ and ‘core teaching competencies’.


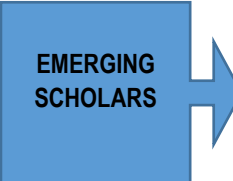




9. Continuous professional development for university teachers and professional leadership/support for teaching along the career continuum

The demands made on university teachers and teaching, and the imperatives that they must respond to, change over time. Currently, major issues requiring engagement and effective responses through teaching include higher education transformation; improving access and success through blended learning; curriculum decolonisation; the Fourth Industrial Revolution; and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- Academics' ability to use **blended learning** approaches in their teaching has the potential to improve student success if used responsibly and with a focus on quality.
- In relation to **curriculum decolonisation**, university teachers as curriculum designers and implementers need to have a good understanding of the interplay between knowledge and power and the ability to ask, 'What knowledge?', 'Whose knowledge?' and 'Who and what are served?' through the knowledge contained in and taught through the curriculum.
- Characterised by rapid advances in technologies such as robotics, virtual reality, cloud technology, Big Data, artificial intelligence and the internet of things, the **Fourth Industrial Revolution** is blurring the boundaries between the physical, digital and biological and between education and work. There are increasing demands that graduates should leave universities with what are described as 21st century skills of creativity, media and technology literacy, flexibility and disciplinary depth and the ability to think critically, show leadership, innovate, collaborate, communicate and take part in life-long learning. The implications for how people live, interact, teach, learn and work are enormous. So too are the implications for professional development of university teachers.
- The aim of the seventeen **SDGs** is to address a range of global problems including poverty, inequality, unemployment and climate change. Whilst quality education is a particular focus of SDG 4, education, including higher education, contributes significantly to achieving the other sixteen Goals. Universities and the academics who teach in them have an important role to play if the SDGs are to be achieved.

Academics, teaching leaders, teaching support professionals and university leadership and management should be able to benefit from career- stage-appropriate teaching development opportunities that will enable them to respond to these and other imperatives. The table below shows some of these opportunities.

Table 2: Career-stage-appropriate teaching development activities

					
<p>Target group →</p> <p>Possible Activities</p> <p>↓</p>	<p>Outstanding postgraduate students who show an interest in following an academic career</p>	<p>Newly appointed academics and academics in the first few years of their careers</p>	<p>Academics who have settled into their roles and have developed significant teaching and research capacity</p>	<p>Academics who have moved out of a direct teaching role or, in addition to teaching, have taken up academic and/or professional leadership positions</p>	<p>Administrators who make management and resource decisions that affect university teachers and teaching</p>
Orientation programmes for tutoring, mentoring and supporting teaching staff	✓				
Induction into the academic role, including the teaching role		✓			
Development of scholarly teaching capacity through workshops, courses and programmes		✓	✓		
Participation in teaching awards programmes		✓	✓	✓	
Involvement in the scholarship of teaching and learning		✓	✓	✓	
Participation in teaching fellowship programmes			✓	✓	
Opportunities for teaching sabbaticals			✓	✓	
Participation in workshops, courses or programmes focused on supporting and leading teaching			✓	✓	
Exposure to research, case studies and study visits which show how institutional success can be enhanced through strengthening and raising the profile of teaching					✓

10. Enabling implementation of the Framework

Implementing the Framework will require a number of enablers.

10.1 A national coordinating committee

A national coordinating committee will be needed to advise on implementation of the Framework at national level and on monitoring its implementation at other levels. The committee should include representatives of DHET, CHE, USAf and HELTASA as well as nominated university representatives. It should have clear terms of reference endorsed by the leadership of the organisations represented on it.

DHET will secure the resources for the committee to function effectively.

Monitoring the implementation of the Framework will include receiving and reviewing annual reports from universities on how it is being interpreted and implemented at institutional level. An annual overview report, with the main purpose of sharing practices across the sector, will be developed.

As well as supporting and monitoring implementation of the Framework, the committee will advise on university teaching development priorities that can be addressed through nationally-supported collaborative projects. The committee will play an oversight role in relation to implementation of such projects.

10.2 Advocacy and positioning

The Framework will only find traction in the system if it is endorsed at the appropriate levels and is positioned as part of the national higher education strategy. Efforts will be made to include it as a strategy in the National Plan for Post-School Education and Training and there will be a campaign to create public and sector awareness about the importance of high-quality teaching at universities.

10.3 Resourcing

Implementation of the Framework will require dedicated funding. This will include funding already available through the University Capacity Development Programme; that the other national organisations driving implementation of the Framework can secure; that is allocated by the universities; and from partnerships with donor organisations and the private sector.

With a view to their contributing to the implementation of the Framework, concerted efforts will be made to put in place partnerships with stakeholders who have an interest in good teaching and in student success at universities.

11. Acknowledgements

The contributions to the development of the Framework by the following people and organisations are gratefully acknowledged:

- The European Union, through the SA-EU Dialogue Facility, for financial support for a national workshop.
- The Council on Higher Education, which partnered with the Department of Higher Education and Training in organising the workshop.
- The delegates who attended the national workshop on strengthening university teaching in Port Elizabeth from 24 to 26 May 2017.
- The members of the national working group established to take forward the recommendations from the workshop and who assisted with drafting the Framework:
 - Dr K Behari-Leak, University of Cape Town
 - Dr C Boughey, Rhodes University
 - Ms M Cakwe, Department of Higher Education and Training
 - Prof A Cliff, University of Cape Town
 - Prof R Dhunpath, University of KwaZulu-Natal
 - Prof D Grayson, formerly Council on Higher Education and currently University of the Witwatersrand
 - Dr W Green, Department of Higher Education and Training
 - Dr J Makua, Mangosuthu University of Technology
 - Dr K Masha, University of Limpopo
 - Dr L Mlilo, Council on Higher Education
 - Ms K Naidoo, University of Johannesburg
 - Dr N Toni, University of Fort Hare

Department of Higher Education and Training

**123 Francis Baard Street
Pretoria
0001**

**Website
www.dhet.gov.za**

Call Centre Information

0800 87 2222

Email: callcentre@dhet.gov.za

**Private Bag X174
Pretoria
0001
Tel + 27 12 312 5911**



**higher education
& training**

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

