



**MINISTRY
HIGHER EDUCATION,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

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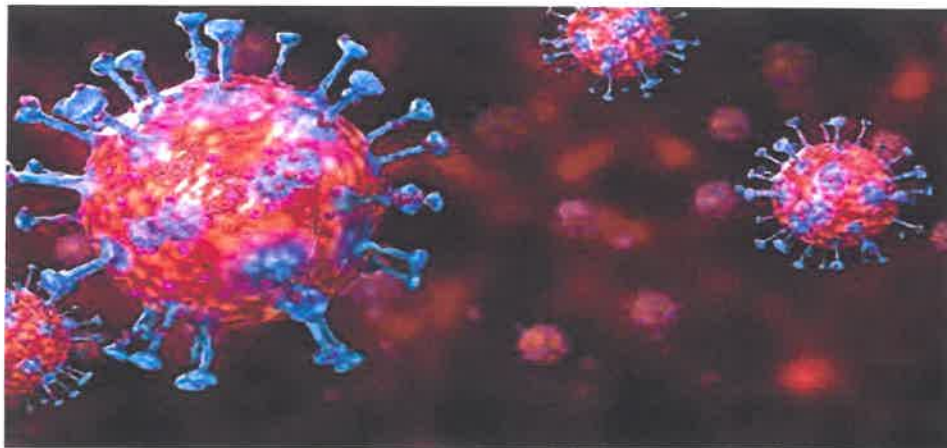
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To: SETA Chairpersons and Administrators

Cc: Chief Executive Officers

Directive No. 04/2020

SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITIES COVID-19 GUIDELINES



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AA:	Accounting Authority
DHET:	Department of Higher Education, Science and Technology
NT:	National Treasury
DPSA:	Department of Public Services and Administration
SETA:	Sector Education and Training Authority
COVID-19:-	Corona Virus Disease 2019
PFMA:	Public Finance Management Act, 1999
QCTO:	Quality Council for Trade and Occupations
SAQA:	South African Qualifications Authority
AGSA:	Auditor General of South Africa
SDPs:	Skills Development Providers
WSP:	Workplace Skills Plan
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CFO:	Chief Financial Officer
ETQA:	Education, Training and Quality Assurance

PREAMBLE

These Guidelines are issued in compliance with the Disaster Management Act (Act No.57 of 2002) and related Regulations. Any word or expression or provision to which the meaning has been assigned, shall have such a meaning as long as it is consistent with this Act, related Regulations and Directives issued by the President, the Cabinet and the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, from time to time.

INTRODUCTION

1. The World Health Organisation (“**WHO**”) declared the Coronavirus COVID-19 Outbreak to be a pandemic.
2. President Cyril Ramaphosa declared a national state of disaster in our country due to the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak.
3. President Cyril Ramaphosa further announced the enforcement of a nation-wide lockdown for twenty-one (“**21**”) days with effect from midnight of Thursday 26 March 2020 until midnight 16 April 2020.
4. The Department of Public Service and Administration (“**the DPSA**”) issued Guidelines for the containment/ management of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) in the Public Service.
5. Regulations in terms of the Disaster Management Act, (Act No.57 of 2002) were published in response to the declaration made by the President..
6. These guidelines are developed to assist the twenty-one (21) Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) with their responses and management of the containment of the COVID-19 among their employees, offices, learners and stakeholders.

PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED BY ALL SETAs

SETAs must follow the guidelines as set out by the National Department of Health and the World Health Organisation with regard to both precautionary measures undertaken to prevent the spread of the virus in their workplaces as well as protocols to be followed in the event of any possible infections at their offices and amongst their employees, learners and stakeholders.

Below is a list of resources to be consulted:

- Coronavirus Hotline Number: 0800 02 99 99.

- National Department of Health <https://www.health.gov.za>
- National Institute for Communicable Diseases : <https://www.nicd.ac.za> National Institute of Occupational Health : <https://www.nioh.ac.za> National Health Laboratory Service : <https://www.nhls.ac.za>
- World Health Organisation: <https://www.who.int>

SETA TASK TEAM

The Accounting Authority/Administrator shall ensure, through the CEO, the establishment of a COVID-19 Task Team. The Task Team shall, amongst other things, be responsible for the implementation of the guidelines set out by Government and the Minister.

They must accordingly provide up-to-date status reports on business continuity for the SETA.

The Task Teams, through the Chief Executive Officers, shall report weekly to the Department regarding COVID-19-related plans, interventions, activities and/or developments in their respective SETAs.

STEPS TO BE IMPLEMENTED IMMEDIATELY

The following measures will be implemented immediately in response to the situation presented by COVID-19 and will be in force until further notice by the DHET and/or the Minister of Higher Education and Training, and Science and Technology:

1. Human Resources

During the period of the national state of disaster and the nation-wide lockdown, all SETA staff shall work from home. SETAs must ensure that staff are equipped with the necessary tools to be able to carry out some of their functions at home.

The SETAs are required to pay their employees in full during the period of lockdown. Should the lockdown be extended beyond 16 April 2020 further communication will be made to the SETAs with regard to the remuneration of their staff.

Should a SETA employee be diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus during the lockdown period, the relevant SETA's sick leave policy shall be applied.

Any SETA employee who falls ill through exposure at the workplace will be paid through the Compensation Fund and any other applicable policy of the SETA.

Any employee of a SETA who is tested positive for the virus must report this to the SETA and the required authorities for actioning. The SETA must then report same to the DHET.

Further measures must be put in place to ensure complete adherence to the COVID-19 protocols by other SETA employees who may have had contact with the employee who tested positive.

An employee who tested positive can only return back to work once they have been given the all-clear by the relevant medical authorities.

All disciplinary and incapacity hearings must be suspended until the lockdown is lifted. Those employees who are suspended pending such proceedings will remain on paid suspension.

All staff recruitment in the process and/or planned is suspended until Accounting Authorities pronounce otherwise after the lockdown period.

2. Suspension of physical meetings

All non-essential physical contact meetings of the SETA both internal and external are suspended.

All meetings of the SETA shall be conducted via electronic methods, e.g. e-mails, teleconferences, Skype, Zoom Application, video conferencing, etc.

SETAs will support employers remotely with regard to their Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) submissions. The date for the submission of WSPs will be extended to 31 May 2020, as provided for by the Skills Development Levies Act.

3. Travel Ban

All international and domestic business-related travel is suspended with immediate effect and until further notice.

The above includes a ban on all site visits conducted by the SETA in the execution of its mandate.

4. Finance and related matters

All compliance related matters regarding the PFMA, National Treasury Regulations/ Instructions/Notices and the Auditor-General are fully operational.

SETAs are to refer to the National Treasury Instruction No.08 of 2019/20: **Emergency procurement in response to the National State of Disaster** and exemptions as gazetted by the Minister of Finance, in terms of Gazette No. 43188 in dealing with procurement matters.

The publication and awarding of tenders and the appointment of service providers will be suspended with immediate effect and will be in force during the nation-wide lockdown period. Tenders that are closing during the nation-wide lockdown period should be handled in line with the above-cited National Treasury Instruction.

5. Governance

Each SETA will determine ways to hold its Accounting Authority and related committees' electronic meetings during the lockdown.

The induction of SETA AAs is suspended, until after the lockdown. This must not be read as a suspension of AA activities where these are absolutely crucial. Similarly,

preparations for these inductions must continue between the Chairpersons and the Chief Executive Officers.

SETAs will have to consider how to address their Annual Performance Targets after the lockdown period.

6. Skills Development Implementation

Where theoretical training is continuing through e-learning and there is relevant evidence of the training and learner participation, those learners who are participating must be paid their stipends.

Where learners in workplaces are part of their host companies' working from home arrangements and there is relevant evidence of this, they must be paid their stipends.

Outstanding stipends due to learners before the lockdown must be paid out.

Bursary funding by the SETA to students must continue to maintain the registration of learners in their programmes and their institutions.

Documentation relating to training can still be sent to the SETAs through electronic means.

Trade testing is suspended until further notice.

Desktop research and analysis can continue to be done.

7. Quarterly Reporting

Quarterly reporting remains in force and SETAs are to submit their Quarterly Management Reports by the relevant due dates. .

REFERENCES

- A. Statement by President Cyril Ramaphosa on escalation measures to combat COVID -19 pandemic.
- B. Higher Education in a time of Coronavirus; A handy guide on what's happening in the Post School Education and Training Sector.
- C. Circular No 07 of 2020 State of Disaster: Guidelines for the Containment and Management of the Coronavirus (COVID 19) in the Public Sector issued by the DPSA.
- D. Regulations issued in terms of section 27(2) of the Disaster Management Act, 2002.
- E. Notice on Compensation for occupationally Acquired Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID 19) under Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 130 of 1993, as amended.
- F. Department of Employment and Labour "Workplace Preparedness: COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-19 virus).
- G. Unemployment Insurance Fund "Easy- Aid Guide for Employers
- H. National Treasury Instruction No. 08 of 2019/2020 – **"Emergency procurement in response to National State of Disaster"**

SOME CONTACTS:

- Artisan related queries : 086 999 0125 ; Email nadscinfo@dhet.gov.za

Yours sincerely



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Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology

Date: 08/04/2020