



water & sanitation

Department:
Water and Sanitation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NO 2551

(INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO. 31)

2551. Ms C Seoposengwe (ANC) to ask the Minister of Water and Sanitation:

In view of the various presentations that the Portfolio Committee on Water and Sanitation has received from water boards and other government water authorities regarding challenges in the sector, how does his department intend to improve human capabilities in the sector in order to address the challenges facing the water infrastructure, so as to avoid reliance on the outsourcing of critical functions necessary for the efficiency of managing the water treatment value chain?

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MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION

The Department of Water and Sanitation has a Learning Academy which is a technical and scarce skills development programme which was initiated in 2007 as a response to the specific skills shortage challenge affecting the national water sector. It represents an investment in sustaining quality in department of Water and Sanitation (DWS) entry level human resources, thereby ensuring that in the long term, the department will remain competitive and be able to deliver on its mandate.

The Learning Academy is designed to meet specific organisational requirements, lead a sustained campaign to secure a steady supply of high-level skills in water-related science, engineering, and technical disciplines to meet projected demands within DWS and the water sector.

The Academy responds to the imperatives mentioned with a dual focus by addressing both the academic and professional development components to provide aspiring engineers, scientists and technicians with the opportunity to be exposed to real-time professional experiences and valuable work experience which enables them to register with relevant professional bodies. Other components of the skills development programme of the department are indicated in **Annexure A** below.

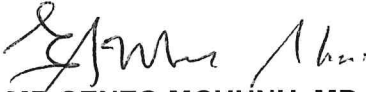
The Water Boards improve human capabilities in the sector through Graduate Training programmes, Learnerships, In-service skills development programmes and through providing bursaries to employees and an external bursary programme in fields that are relevant for the water sector. Kindly refer to **Annexure A** below for details of skills development programmes implemented by the different Water Boards.

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DRAFT REPLY: RECOMMENDED/ ~~NOT RECOMMENDED~~/ AMENDED


DR SEAN PHILLIPS
DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 18/2/22

DRAFT REPLY: APPROVED/ ~~NOT APPROVED~~/ AMENDED


MR SENZO MCHUNU, MP
MINISTER OF WATER AND SANITATION
DATE: 01/03/2022

ORGANISATION	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
<p>Department of Water and Sanitation</p>	<p>Bursaries</p> <p>The Learning Academy has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with strategically selected Institutions of Higher Learning. The Institutions of Higher Learning serve as administrators of the bursaries and administer the funds on behalf of the DWS.</p> <p>As the bursary scheme feeds the Professional Development Component, bursaries are granted across all levels of studying, i.e. pre-graduate to post-graduate within a wide variety of scarce, critical and technical skills that can address the needs of DWS, and the broader water sector.</p> <p>Learner Internships</p> <p>The Learner Interns are defined in the context of the Learning Academy as individuals who have to successfully undertake a period of Experiential Training in order to obtain their academic qualifications. The Learning Academy supports the Learner Interns through structured training programmes that speak to both the need of the relevant tertiary institution and the DWS branches.</p> <p>Professional Development Component</p> <p>The Professional Development Component deals with the development of Graduate Trainees. The Graduate Trainees are predominantly bursars of DWS who, on completion of their qualifications, are appointed and placed in the workplace for a minimum period of four years, where they are exposed to real-time service delivery aspects, skills development and Departmental projects (on-the-job training) under the guidance of a mentor. The trainees are thus guaranteed practical, instructional and hands-on experiences which will allow them to acquire relevant professional knowledge and skills.</p> <p>All Learner Interns and Graduate Interns are appointed as per Directive on Developmental Programme in the Public Service (18 May 2018).</p>

RAND WATER

Capacity Building

Rand Water has built its foundation by providing learning and development initiatives for its employees, that are predominantly aligned to the National Qualification Framework (NQF). This targeted strategic intent is with a view to enhancing Rand Water's business efficiencies and productivity; and providing support for building the organisation's strategic pillars by increasing the capacity and capabilities of its people. These organisational learning and development initiatives are clearly articulated and executed through the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and Annual Training Plan (ATR), submitted to the Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA) on an annual basis.

Compliance, Conference and Functional Training

Learning projects implemented for the 2020/21 financial year are: 4 (four) learnership programmes, namely Water and Wastewater Treatment Process Control Supervision (Level 4); Water and Wastewater Treatment Process Control (Level 3); Horticulture (Level 2) and Business Administration Services (Level 3); graduates development/internship programmes within various disciplines and external bursaries. Three (3) learners and 13 (thirteen) graduates were employed permanently internally, and four (4) of the 13 (thirteen) graduates were absorbed through Technical Career Path.

Water Treatment Technology Training

Since the inception of Blue Drop Certification, which is regulated by Department of Water and Sanitation, Water Technology Training (WTT) has managed the Rand Water Blue Drop Process Controllers Training profile through implementation of Learnership Programmes. These programmes have assisted in building a positive attitude to learning and effective planning. Over and above this, WTT has introduced electronic/online learning, which has brought positive changes, including minimising administration, reducing printing costs, reducing travelling and training time. Furthermore, the laboratory aspect stimulates the learners so that they develop an interest in the subject matter, which increases their confidence in performing practical work.

According to draft Regulation 813 of the Water Services Act (No. 108 of 1997), there shall be no person operating water treatment works without a Process Controller license, hence the need to license Process Controllers as guided by one of the criteria for Blue Drop compliance, which forms part of the Water Safety Plan. Water Technology Training is also involved with implementing the Water and Wastewater Reticulation Services Learnership to Bulk Distribution personnel to address Water Use Efficiency and Water Loss Management.

Rand Water Academy

Rand Water Academy was inspired by needs identified within Rand Water, the water and sanitation sector in South Africa, and the continent. Key issues within the country that contributed to the creation of the Rand Water Academy relate to scarce and critical skills, water losses, water quality, poverty, and unemployment. The Rand Water Academy has, since its inception, been geared to be solution-based, aiming to be the first choice provider of global solutions, and implementing interventions that will address socio-economic challenges. The initiatives include National Treasury's graduate internship programme (NTGIP), the 'War on Leaks' programme, and the Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE) Delft Institute for Water Education postgraduate pilot programme.

National Treasury Graduate Internship Programme

South Africa faces an alarming shortage of skilled workers in almost every sector. This highlights the importance of the investment in skills development programmes like the graduate internships, to address these shortfalls and add needed capacity to the economy. This necessitates development within a framework of inclusivity and development that is transformative as presented in the National Development Plan (NDP). National Treasury responded to the NDP's objective of building a capable state by creating some levels of accountability within the system and by building appropriate professionalism in the public service through the establishment of the Infrastructure Skills Development Grant (ISDG) in terms of the Division of Revenue Act. Rand Water has been in a partnership with National Treasury and various municipalities since 2012 to train and professionalise graduates and artisans. The ISDG aims to expand the professional technical skills base within each of the participating municipalities. Govan Mbeki Municipality appointed Rand Water, through the Academy, to implement this project and create a long term and sustainable pool of young professionals within the built environment with technical skills such as engineering, town planning, architecture, quantity surveying, geographic information systems and construction project management; all geared towards improvements in infrastructure management.

The Rand Water Academy (RWA) has professionally registered seven graduates for the reporting period 2020-2021 and has been recognised by National Treasury among seven Municipalities/entities that were able to implement the programme under challenging conditions.

The rapid adoption of technology, in response to the challenge of recruitment while adhering to lockdown restrictions, enabled the organisation to complete 106 virtual interviews, successfully implemented the usage of an applicant tracking system and ensured the entire recruitment cycle was conducted fully online. National Treasury has recognised the Rand Water Academy for successfully recruiting 32 graduates, using completely online processes from advert to appointment.

Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE) Postgraduate Pilot Programme

Rand Water and the Infrastructural, Hydraulic and Environmental Engineering (IHE) Delft Institute for Water Education are in a partnership which is dedicated to contributing to the improvement of the water and environmental sector and have a history of collaboration since 2012. The outcomes as listed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) contains multiple outputs related to education, research and institutional strengthening in the water and sanitation sector.

The Postgraduate Pilot Programme is aimed at capacitating Rand Water employees with postgraduate qualifications in various fields of water-related courses that will positively impact on the water sector. Three Rand Water employees were selected to participate in the programme, with two candidates pursuing a Master of Science (MSc) degree and one a Postdoctoral degree in Water Governance. The Master of Science (MSc) candidates have successfully completed their study programme and will graduate via an online ceremony in August 2021. The Postdoctoral candidate is still participating in the programme and is currently conducting research in South Africa. The Postdoctoral candidate's study programme has been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and will be carried out over an extended period beyond the official dates. The candidate's research thesis will be kept in the Rand Water knowledge-hub to promote knowledge sharing.

ORGANISATION	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
MAGALIES WATER	Magalies Water has in line with the Skills Development act budget for training and development of employees in the workplace. This is done through various programmes such as Learnerships for those in employments and those seeking employment. The learnerships are focused on water and wastewater treatment. Internships and graduate programmes are implemented as part of Talent Management to create a pool for future human capital needs. Furthermore, the entity provides bursaries to employees to develop themselves as part of Individual Development Plans. The external bursaries focus on critical Magalies water skills such as Water care and the various Engineering fields.
LEPELLE NORTHERN WATER	Lepelle Northern Water has entered into partnership agreements with the Local Government SETA, Energy and Water SETA, National Treasury and DHET National Skills Funds with the purpose of improving human capabilities within LNW and in order to address water and energy skills challenges.
MHLATHUZE WATER	Mhlathuze Water has number of programmes in to retain, train and secure current and future human capacity to exercise its mandate of providing bulk water services and disposal of bulk effluent over the current and next 5 years. There are currently seven employees who are registered with the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), two of which are in possession of a Government Certificate of Competency (GCC) and one is a Candidate Engineer.
OVERBERG WATER	In partnership with Water Research Commission and EWSETA, Overberg Water is accelerating its training, recruitment of technical personnel into water supply positions.
SEDIBENG WATER	In order to build capacity within the institution and indeed the sector, young graduates in the fields of engineering and science are enrolled on the internship programmes wherein they are mentored by experienced professionals within the institution. Bursaries are also offered to deserving students to pursue studies in the technical field where the entity has capacity challenges.
UMGENI WATER	<p>The Bursary Scheme/Programme of the Umngeni Water (UW) is aimed at attracting critical, scarce and core skills required to meet strategic objectives and ensuring business continuity. Currently, UW funds a total of twenty (20) students as shown below who are at different Years of Study. Over and above its own bursary programme, UW is in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA) for implementation in the 2022/2023 financial year to offer eighty (80) bursaries to Umngeni Water employees in Project Management, Quantity Surveying, Geology, Electrical Engineering, Maintenance Engineering, and Fitter and Turner. UW is expected to provide one hundred and twenty (120) workplace learning opportunities for unemployed youth that will be funded by the SETA in the same identified fields within the communities where it operates.</p> <p>Umngeni Water continues to provide workplace exposure and training to trainees and interns through various training programmes. From 2017 to date, there has been 1020 beneficiaries of various programmes for skills development including Apprentices, Process Controllers, Bursaries, Graduate Trainees, In Service Trainees as well as Internships.</p>

ORGANISATION	SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES
AMATOLA WATER	<p>Human Capabilities are improved through employment of the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Management initiatives and skills transfer, through mentoring of identified individuals in line with Succession Planning Policy • Targeted training interventions are put in place on an annual basis, through consolidation of individual development plans, and training needs analysis. • Retention of skilled employees in line with the retention and Remuneration Policies. • Ongoing implementation of inhouse Artisan Aid development program. • Multi skilling of employees, and artisan development i.e. development of electricians and fitters into becoming millwrights. • Continuous Professional Development with relevant Professional Bodies i.e. WISA, ECSA. • Partnership and Memoranda of Agreements in place with certain local municipalities to exploit more available training opportunities.