



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



United States - South Africa
HIGHER EDUCATION NETWORK

University Capacity Development Programme/ United-States South Africa Higher Education Network 2018-2020 collaboration programme

Concept Note and Call for Expressions of Interest

Background

The South African Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr BE Nzimande, released the Ministerial Statement on the Implementation of the University Capacity Development Programme through Effective Management and Utilisation of the University Capacity Development Grant 2018 – 2020 on the 31st March 2017, with the overall goal of ‘*Transforming teaching, learning, researching and leading towards enhanced quality, success and equity in universities*’

The University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) is a comprehensive programme of the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) that is designed to build capacity in South African universities in the important areas of student, staff and programme/curriculum development.

The United States - South African Higher Education Network (US-SA HE Network) provides a vehicle for encouraging exchange and interaction between higher education institutions in South Africa and the United States.

The US-SA HE Network initiative follows a visit by the Minister of Higher Education and Training to the United States in May of 2016 to seek partnership opportunities in the United States to support capacity development in South African universities. Historically Disadvantaged Institutions in

South Africa were a strong focus of the Minister's engagements with potential partners in the United States.

The US-SA HE Network is being developed a collaborative initiative between higher education institutions in the United States and South Africa, in collaboration with the South African Department of Higher Education and Training, with Rutgers University - Newark playing a strong role to support the establishment of the network.

The US-SA HE Network aims to promote collaborations that:

- Seek to increase the number of academics with Ph.D.s (including enhancing the infrastructure and resources for Ph.D. And M.A. supervision).
- Contribute to building an inclusive professoriate.
- Enhance student learning and success.
- Enable curriculum renewal.
- Develop research and innovation capacity (not research itself).

It is expected that US-SA HE Network collaboration possibilities between universities in the two countries will:

- emerge organically and be driven by the collaborating universities themselves. Several such partnerships already exist, and one of the functions of the US-SA HE Network would be to establish the range of partnerships that already exist with a view to learning from them, and building on them.
- Be formally structured partnerships established through a programme which could add resource value to the partnership to improve its chances of success and its potential impact.

Progress to date in establishing the Network

In May of 2017, a website was established for the US-SA HE Network to serve as a means of developing a web-presence for the network. The website can be found at: <https://www.ussahighereducationnetwork.org>. Additionally, an e-newsletter mechanism has been established, and plans are underway for beginning circulation of a bi-monthly e-newsletter for the network beginning in September 2017.

In May of 2017, a financial commitment was made by one of the U.S.-based partners, Rutgers University-Newark, to assist with the development of the US-SA HE Network. Currently additional funding is being sought to support the development of network activities.

In early June 2017, a statement of interest form was circulated to institutions that had expressed an interest in being part of the network. Over sixty responses were received. In total, from the survey form responses, expressions of interest through the website, and other expressions of interest there are presently 118 members of the US-SA HE Network.

Next Steps in the development of the US-SA HE Network

The next step is to circulate a concept paper that describes focus areas for collaborations in a US_SA HE Network 2018-2020 programme, and which invites universities to work together to conceptualize possible collaborations and to submit Expressions of Interest. The circulation of this document represents that step.

Once submissions are received, an initial review will be conducted and feedback will be provided to the various parties. The closing date for submissions is the 15 September 2017.

Thereafter, a face-to-face working meeting is planned, where proposals can be refined and thereafter finalized. This will take place in October 2017.

Final proposals must be submitted by 15 December 2017.

A decision on proposals that can be taken forward will be communicated to the partners by the end of January 2018.

The UCDP / US-SA HE Network 2018-2020 collaborative programme is intended to be a structured programme that supports university collaborations to strengthen and transform the academic doctoral pipeline in South Africa.

The imperative to strengthen and transform the academic staff doctoral pipeline in South Africa

The relationship between the extent to which academic staff hold doctoral degrees and research productivity of an institution is well documented, and the figure below illustrates this relationship for South African universities.¹

¹ Unless otherwise stated, data in this document has been derived from the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), or from data presented in Department of Higher Education and Training reports.

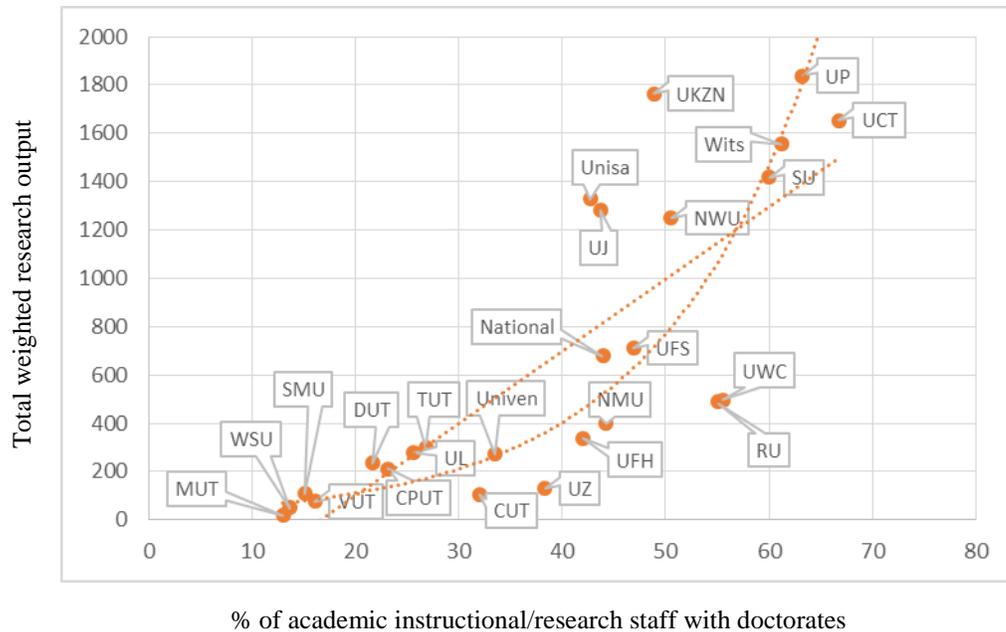


Figure 1: Percentage of permanent instructional/research staff at South African universities who held doctoral degrees in the 2015 academic year against the total weighted research output for the university in 2016

An illustration such as the one above has to be interpreted cautiously to avoid the perception being created that all universities in the country are expected to be highly research productive. The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013, p35) is clear about this when it states that ‘In a differentiated university system it is unrealistic for all universities to have similar research goals. However, all universities must be research-active.’

The figure above show that:

- There is a positive relationship between academic staff doctorate % and research productivity of an institution, and the relationship may be exponential rather than linear.
- With the exception of the University of the Western Cape, the other historically disadvantaged institutions which are Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT); Sefako Makgatho University (SMU); University of Fort Hare (UFH); University of Limpopo (UL); University of Venda (Univen); University of Western Cape (UWC); University of Zululand (UniZulu) and Walter Sisulu University (WSU) are amongst the group with the lowest academic staff doctorate percentage and research output.
- All the universities of technology also feature in the lower half of the group, and questions have to be asked about South Africa’s ability to drive innovation through research if the potential of these institutions is not fully harnessed.

The focus on strengthening the academic staff PhD pipeline is not a new one. Government and universities have been paying attention to strengthening this pipeline over a number of years and

a range of programmes have been implemented. Gains are being made as shown by the percentage of permanent instructional/research staff at universities who hold doctoral degrees increasing from 37% in 2013 to 43.8% in 2015.

When the data is analysed more deeply to understand how doctoral degrees are distributed amongst staff members, the following picture emerges:

Table 1: Headcount of instruction/research professionals with permanent appointments at South African universities according to highest most relevant qualification and rank in 2015

Highest qualification	Professor	Associate Professor	Director	Associate Director	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer	Junior Lecturer	Below Junior Lecturer	Undesignated/ Other	Total
Below masters degree	33	48	1	9	580	2041	739	82	46	3579
Masters degree	111	187	2	45	1465	4438	217	52	33	6550
Doctoral degree	2053	1653	9	33	2734	1506	21	56	71	8136
None of the above/unknown	22	25	0	0	58	141	26	12	18	302
Total	2219	1913	12	87	4837	8126	1003	202	168	18567

The bulk of the academic staff at South African universities are lecturers or senior lecturers (12 963 or 69.8% and 8524 or 65.8% respectively) of the staff in these two groups still need to achieve a doctoral degree.

Table 2: The number and percentage of permanent university instructional and research staff that hold doctoral degrees in 2015

	Number	%
Overall Staff	18,567	100.0
Overall PhD	8136	43.8
Female	3315	17.9
Male	4821	26.0
African	2118	11.4
Coloured	462	2.5
Indian	634	3.4
White	4672	25.2
Population group not declared	250	1.3

The data presented above shows that:

- 43.8% of the permanent university instructional and research staff at South African universities hold doctoral degrees.
- Male staff are more likely to hold doctoral degrees than female staff.
- White academics are more likely to hold doctoral degrees than black academics.

The data shows that South Africa is clearly not where it needs to be in terms of the percentage of academic staff that hold doctoral degrees. There are also still prevailing patterns of inequality in terms of who is more likely to be qualified at the doctorate level.

There is agreement across the system that efforts to increase the number of academic staff who hold doctorates must be accelerated. In this regard the National Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2013, p.267) states that ‘In 2030, 75% of university academic staff should hold PhDs. PhD graduates, either as staff or post-doctoral fellows, will be the dominant drivers of new knowledge production within the higher education science and innovation system’. The extent to which this ambitious target can be achieved will be largely dependent on the resources that can be brought to bear, including financial resources and supervisory capacity.

The Department of Higher Education and Training is implementing the Academic Doctorate Advancement Project towards Transformation to assist to address the challenges described above.

The Academic Doctorate Advancement Project towards Transformation

The Academic Doctorate Advancement Project towards Transformation (ADAPTT) is an initiative under the ‘Staffing South Africa’s Universities’ Framework (SSAUF), specifically as part of the Existing Academic Staff Capacity Development Programme (EASCEP).

The overall objective of ADAPTT is to ensure more academics in South African universities achieve high quality doctorates over a shorter period of time.

ADAPTT has the following features:

- Universities identify permanent instructional/research staff that are ready to embark on doctoral studies, and support the academics to enroll for a doctoral programme at appropriate universities that are strong and enjoy high recognition in the disciplinary area. Ideally this should be an institution other than the home institution, unless the expertise in the disciplinary area at the home institution enjoys national and international recognition.
- The registration could be at an international institution, or parts of the study programme could be undertaken at an institution abroad, for example through use of ‘sandwich’ PhD programmes, and through use of blended modalities.
- There could be dual supervision of students, with the intention of building supervisory capacity in South Africa.
- ADAPTT is intended to be a supported doctoral programme, where sufficient opportunity is created to enable students to dedicate sufficient time to their doctoral work and to submit their

work for assessment preferably in 4 years, but maximum of 5 years. Thus, supportive conditions, including providing adequate time for doctoral work must be created.

- The doctoral students could undertake their studies at part of already established and funded research projects.
- The costs associated with implementing ADAPTT are covered on a cost-sharing basis, with the benefitting academics, the institutions and the national Department of Higher Education and Training covering relevant parts of the cost.
- ADAPTT is intended to assist to address the inequitable distribution of doctorates amongst academic staff at South African universities and therefore must prioritize the achievement of doctorates by black and women academics.
- Participating academics, referred to as ADAPTT scholars, must not be more than 45 years of age on the project inception date.

Some examples of collaboration models are described in **Annexure A**. Please note that these are just examples, and possible collaborations are not limited to the models.

Call for expressions of interest for university collaborations in implementing ADAPTT

The UCDP / US-SA HE Network 2018-2020 collaborative programme is intended to contribute towards the implementation of ADAPTT.

Universities in SA and their USA counterparts are requested to submit initial Expressions of Interest to collaborate in a project aligned to, and designed to achieve the objective of ADAPPT.

Proposed collaborations should meet the following requirements:

- A tripartite approach is required, where the partnership involves at least one historically disadvantaged South African university or university of technology, at least one historically advantaged South African university and at least one United States university.
- Collaborations are set up on a cost-sharing basis, with all partners contributing in some way towards the implementation of the project.
- Collaborations should be mutually beneficial, with each partner benefiting in some way from participation in the project.
- Collaborations must be cost-effective and represent value for money.
- Collaborations must contribute to advancing the higher education transformation agenda in South Africa.
- The expression of interest must be submitted by a South African university, through the office of the relevant deputy vice-chancellor.

Each Expression of Interest, which should not exceed four pages in length, should include the following information:

- Full contact details of the responsible person at each university, and the portfolio held by that person.
- The key features of the proposed collaboration including the main activities to be undertaken.
- The key outputs of the project, with timeframes.
- Key roles and responsibilities of partners.
- What the resource contributions of each collaborating partner be.
- What the resource contribution from the Department of Higher Education and Training is expected to be.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

The UCDP / US-SA HE Network 2018-2020 collaborative programme must still be approved by the Minister of Higher Education and Training.

The submission of an Expression of Interest in response to this call therefore does not represent any commitment on the part of the Department that the process will be taken further.

Annexure A

Example 1

Three universities decide they will develop a doctoral cohort in STEM fields. The members of the cohort will receive training in university and non-university (industry) labs in South Africa and the United States. A part of the broad experience that the participants receive will be the result of support provided by corporate entities working in the STEM fields who will be working with university partners. Doctoral students would take classes in South Africa and the United States. They would also be involved in lab experiences in both countries.

Example 2

Three universities decide to develop a doctoral program in the humanities and social sciences. They are able to develop a program whereby university faculty in universities throughout South Africa and the United States will be able to advise doctoral candidates largely through a distance learning platform that they develop. During one semester of the program, each participant will spend time in the U.S. teaching classes for the U.S. partner institutions – thus providing an opportunity for the implementation of learning opportunities in the United States.

Example 3

Three universities develop a doctoral program with an emphasis on mathematics. A cohort of student participants engage in quarterly retreats with faculty from the partner universities as well as other institutions. One element of the partnership is the development of retreats with primary and secondary school math educators and with university mathematics academics to explore improvements in pedagogical strategies for mathematics.

In all three examples, support for the programme is provided by a mix of resource contributions from the South African and U.S universities, and from the South African Department of Higher Education and Training, through the University Capacity Development Programme.