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GOVERNMENT NOTICE

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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**education**

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Department of Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, 1997(Act 101 of 1997)**

**MINIMUM ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

**for**

**Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes  
requiring a National Senior Certificate (NSC)**

**Pretoria  
August 2005**

**Revised: May 2008**



Government Gazette

**Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate**

**HIGHER EDUCATION ACT, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997)**

I, Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor, Minister of Education, hereby promulgate the revised policy for the Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate as set out in the Schedule, in terms of section 3 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997).

The policy will be applicable to all higher education institutions and will be effective from January 2009.

The development of this policy has benefited from extensive discussion and consultation, within and outside of higher education and initiated with the publication of the draft Higher Education Qualifications Framework (2004) and the Policy for the National Senior Certificate. As the National Senior Certificate replaces the Senior Certificate in 2008, it has become necessary for a new policy framework that outlines the entry requirements into higher education. The revisions to the policy were necessitated by a minor amendment to the promotion requirements of the NSC in 2007.

While this policy outlines the statutory minimum admission into higher education as the National Senior Certificate, the setting of the admission requirements is made in terms of section 74 of the Higher Education Act and section 16(7) of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act by Higher Education South Africa (HESA), being the successor to the South African University Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP). HESA has approved the contents of this policy as the statutory minimum entry requirements to higher education requiring a National Senior Certificate, in terms of section 74 of the Higher Education Act.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "G. N. M. Pandor".

G. N. M. Pandor, MP  
Minister of Education

Date: 10-06-2008

## SCHEDULE

### Minimum Admission Requirements For Higher Certificate, Diploma And Bachelor's Degree Programmes Requiring A National Senior Certificate

#### 1. Introduction

Higher Education Institutions currently provide qualifications in terms of the following policies:

A Qualification Structure for Universities in South Africa – NATED Report 116 (99/02)

General Policy for Technikon Instructional Programmes – NATED Report 150 (97/01)

Formal Technikon Instructional Programmes in the RSA – NATED Report 151 (99/01)

Revised Qualifications Framework for Educators in Schooling, in *Norms and Standards for Educators* (Government Gazette No. 20844, February, 2000)

The Education White Paper 3, *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (1997), proposed a single qualifications framework for higher education. In this regard, a unitary higher education qualifications framework will replace the above policies.

The purpose of this policy is to provide for a policy on the statutory minimum admission requirements in terms of the National Senior Certificate, for which specifications were approved by the Minister of Education in the *National Senior Certificate – A qualification at level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework*, *Government Gazette*, Vol. 481, No. 27819, July 2005, for undergraduate higher education qualifications and programmes, namely the Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree.

The National Senior Certificate will first be issued in 2008. Students entering higher education in 2009 must therefore meet the requirements of this policy. The policy will be implemented from 1 January 2009.

#### 2. Policy considerations

The Higher Education Act, 1997 ensures that policies of higher education institutions, including admissions policy, must be formulated with due regard for its relationship to and influence on education and training in other sectors. Institutions' admissions requirements, policies and practice are expected to advance the objectives of the Higher Education Act, 1997 and the National Qualifications Framework and must be consistent with the Minister's policies in terms of the Act. In particular, such requirements, policies

and practices are expected to advance the objectives of redress, equity and quality in higher education.

Consequentially, this policy outlines the statutory minimum or threshold norms for admission to the undergraduate Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree programmes. Such norms will apply to all public and private higher education institutions.

While this policy outlines the statutory minimum admission to higher education as the National Senior Certificate, the setting of the admission requirements is made in terms of section 74 of the Higher Education Act and section 16(7) of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act by Higher Education South Africa (HESA), being the successor to the South African University Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) and the Committee of Technikon Principals (CTP). In this regard, I am hereby recognising HESA as the body to set the minimum admission requirements for the Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree Programmes requiring a National Senior Certificate.

Although the National Senior Certificate is the primary gateway between school and higher education, it does not guarantee a learner's admission to any programme of study in higher education. Within the context of this policy, the right of higher education institutions to set specific admission requirements to particular programmes is confirmed in terms of section 37 of the Higher Education Act.

Many adult learners who have not achieved a National Senior Certificate or equivalent qualification can benefit from higher education. In keeping with the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework the Ministry of Education supports wider and more diverse access to higher education and fairer progression pathways within the system.

As at present, institutional admission policies must allow for alternative routes of entry that are equivalent to the National Senior Certificate standard, including the assessment of an adult learner's capacity to benefit from a particular programme by the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or other means. This document does not otherwise prescribe such alternative routes.

### **3. Recognised National Senior Certificate subjects**

The subjects listed in the appendix to this document are recognised National Senior Certificate subjects for the purpose of this policy. All recognised subjects have a credit value of 20, except Life Orientation (10).

The common basis of admission to a Higher Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor's Degree is the achievement of a National Senior Certificate according to the rules of subject combination prescribed in the policy for the *National Senior Certificate – A qualification at level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework, Government Gazette, Vol. 481, No. 27819, July 2005.*

Qualifications in higher education are designed to have high social and economic value for the country. They also represent significant learning achievement, but all qualifications are not alike. They make different intellectual demands and reflect different intellectual achievements on an increasing scale of difficulty, and this is reflected in the different requirements for admission to the Higher Certificate, the Diploma and the Bachelor's Degree, in terms of the National Senior Certificate.

The minimum admission requirements for the Bachelor's Degree are therefore particularly distinctive. They balance a number of important considerations. The bar must be set high enough to fairly reflect the cognitive demands that will be made on degree students but not to undermine the important objectives of equity and wider access. Higher education institutions admit applicants who are likely to succeed in degree studies given good teaching; good facilities and appropriate academic and other support, so the admission requirements must as far as possible predict student success in the programmes for which they are enrolled. In turn this means that the National Senior Certificate curriculum followed by aspiring degree candidates must equip them to meet the demands of degree studies.

The National Senior Certificate has to cater for the minority who aspire to degree study as well as those who will enter vocational higher or further education programmes or the world of work. Some subjects are designed to serve all those purposes and some are designed especially for learners who aspire to enter vocational preparation or employment.

For these reasons learners who aspire to degree study will be expected to perform satisfactorily in at least four subjects chosen from a designated list of recognised National Senior Certificate subjects. The list comprises NSC subjects that, when chosen as part of a complete National Senior Certificate programme, are expected to prepare learners well for the demands of first time degree studies.

The designated list will remain in place for three years from the commencement of the policy, during which time Umalusi and the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council on Higher Education, working together with the Department of Education and higher education institutions, will be requested to undertake an evaluation of its suitability and influence. The matter will then be reviewed in the light of the evidence.

All recognised NSC subjects, whether they are on the designated list or not, have value in their own right. Many different combinations of designated and other recognised NSC subjects will suit candidates for the varieties of Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree programmes. A heavy onus will rest on the higher education community to decide what those subject combinations are in respect of particular programmes and make them widely known so that provincial departments of education, parents, school principals and career guidance teachers are in a position to give the best possible advice to learners who aspire to enter higher education.

#### **4. Minimum requirements for admission to the Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelor's Degree**

##### *Higher Certificate*

The minimum admission requirement is a National Senior Certificate (NSC) with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution as certified by the Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi).

Institutional and programme needs may require appropriate combinations of recognised NSC subjects and levels of achievement. For example, an institution may determine that a Higher Certificate in Architectural Design requires in addition to the NSC a specified level of attainment in Design and an associated recognised subject.<sup>1</sup>

##### *Diploma*

The minimum admission requirement is a National Senior Certificate (NSC) with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution as certified by Umalusi, coupled with an achievement rating of 3 (Moderate Achievement, 40-49%) or better in four recognised NSC 20-credit subjects.

Institutional and programme needs may require appropriate combinations of recognised National Senior Certificate subjects and levels of achievement. For example, a Diploma in Datametrics might require a pass at a prescribed level in Mathematics or Information Technology.

##### *Bachelor's Degree*

The minimum admission requirement is a National Senior Certificate (NSC) with a minimum of 30% in the language of learning and teaching of the higher education institution as certified by Umalusi, coupled with an achievement rating of 4 (Adequate Achievement, 50-59%) or better in four subjects chosen from the following recognised 20-credit NSC subjects (which will be known as the designated subject list):

- Accounting
- Agricultural Sciences
- Business Studies
- Dramatic Arts
- Economics
- Engineering Graphics and Design
- Geography
- History

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<sup>1</sup> The examples given in this document are for purposes of illustration only and are not prescriptive in any way.

- Consumer Studies
- Information Technology
- Consumer Studies
- Information Technology
- Languages (one language of learning and teaching at a higher education institution and two other recognised language subjects)
- Life Sciences
- Mathematics
- Mathematical Literacy
- Music
- Physical Sciences
- Religion Studies
- Visual Arts

Adequate Achievement in four designated NSC subjects provides the primary basis for admission to a Bachelor's Degree programme. An institution is entitled to specify an appropriate level of subject achievement for a particular programme. For example, admission requirements for a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art or Music might include a specified level of achievement in the corresponding recognised NSC subjects. Similarly, an institution will be entitled to specify subject requirements for a particular programme. For example, Mathematics and Physical Sciences might be considered as requirements for admission to a Bachelor's Degree in Science.

**APPENDIX****RECOGNISED NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE SUBJECTS**

Subject to this policy the following National Senior Certificate subjects are recognised for entry into the Higher Certificate, Diploma or Bachelor's Degree. Each of the listed subjects has a credit value of 20 except Life Orientation (10).

**GROUP A*****OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AT HOME AND FIRST ADDITIONAL LEVEL***

Afrikaans Home Language  
Afrikaans First Additional Language  
English Home Language  
English First Additional Language  
IsiNdebele Home Language  
IsiNdebele First Additional Language  
IsiXhosa Home Language  
IsiXhosa First Additional Language  
IsiZulu Home Language  
IsiZulu First Additional Language  
Sepedi Home Language  
Sepedi First Additional Language  
Sesotho Home Language  
Sesotho First Additional Language  
Setswana Home Language  
Setswana First Additional Language  
SiSwati Home Language  
SiSwati First Additional Language  
Tshivenda Home Language  
Tshivenda First Additional Language  
Xitsonga Home Language  
Xitsonga First Additional Language

***MATHEMATICAL SCIENCES***

Mathematical Literacy  
Mathematics

***HUMAN AND SOCIAL STUDIES***

Life Orientation



## **GROUP B**

### ***AGRICULTURE***

Agricultural Management Practices  
Agricultural Science  
Agricultural Technology

### ***CULTURE AND ARTS***

Dance Studies  
Design  
Dramatic Arts  
Music  
Visual Arts

### ***BUSINESS, COMMERCE AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES***

Accounting  
Business Studies  
Economics

### ***OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AT SECOND ADDITIONAL LEVEL, AND NON-OFFICIAL LANGUAGES***

Afrikaans Second Additional Language  
English Second Additional Language  
IsiNdebele Second Additional Language  
IsiXhosa Second Additional Language  
IsiZulu Second Additional Language  
Sepedi Second Additional Language  
Sesotho Second Additional Language  
Setswana Second Additional Language  
SiSwati Second Additional Language  
Tshivenda Second Additional Language  
Xitsonga Second Additional Language  
Arabic Second Additional Language  
French Second Additional Language  
German Home Language  
German Second Additional Language  
Gujarati Home Language  
Gujarati First Additional Language  
Gujarati Second Additional Language  
Hebrew Second Additional Language  
Hindi Home Language

Hindi First Additional Language  
Hindi Second Additional Language  
Italian Second Additional Language  
Latin Second Additional Language  
Portuguese Home Language  
Portuguese First Additional Language  
Portuguese Second Additional Language  
Spanish Second Additional Language  
Tamil Home Language  
Tamil First Additional Language  
Tamil Second Additional Language  
Telegu Home Language  
Telegu First Additional Language  
Telegu Second Additional Language  
Urdu Home Language  
Urdu First Additional Language  
Urdu Second Additional Language

***ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY***

Civil Technology  
Electrical Technology  
Mechanical Technology  
Engineering Graphics and Design

***HUMAN AND SOCIAL STUDIES***

Geography  
History  
Religion Studies

***PHYSICAL, MATHEMATICAL, COMPUTER AND LIFE SCIENCES***

Computer Applications Technology  
Information Technology  
Life Sciences  
Physical Sciences

***SERVICES***

Consumer Studies  
Hospitality Studies  
Tourism

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