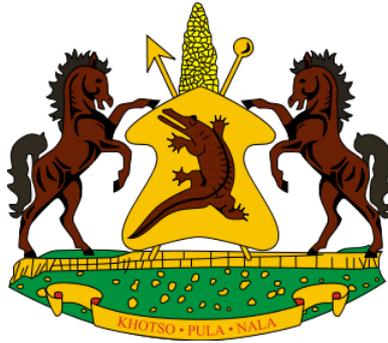Kingdom of Lesotho

Higher Education Policy
for the
Kingdom of Lesotho

Approved by Cabinet in
November 2013

Council on Higher Education

Foreword

The Kingdom of Lesotho has set itself lofty targets in the National Vision 2020 document. With regard to education, the target is for the country to have a well established human resource base by 2020. Higher education has a major role to play towards achievement of this target. It is critical therefore, for the higher education sub-sector to be well regulated and focused. This policy framework is a major step towards regulation of the sub-sector. It forms part of the general guide for all key players such as the Ministry of Education and Training, Council on Higher Education, Higher Education Institutions, and statutory professional bodies that have a stake in the provision of higher education.

This policy articulates key areas in the provision of higher education and equitable access is one of them. Efforts will be made by the Ministry of Education and Training in collaboration with the Ministry of Development Planning towards introduction of a rigorous system of means-testing *(testing financial capacity)* for all higher education students who apply for state funding. The system will enable Government to enter into cost-sharing arrangements with those who can afford to pay for their studies, while it finances the needy ones fully. Improving teaching and learning in higher education institutions and building their research capacity are some of the key areas which the policy addresses.

Other issues covered by the policy include improving the interface between HEIs and the communities around them and beyond; alignment of programme offerings to the national priorities while being mindful of the need for the higher education institutions to produce broad-minded graduates who are able to adapt easily to changing circumstances in the world. The need for HEIs to harness information and communications technologies and the need for Government to support initiatives in this regard cannot be overemphasised. Higher education is a quality sensitive area, and as such quality assurance is one of the pillars of a robust regulatory framework. It is incumbent upon all higher education institutions to ensure that they have quality assured systems, programmes, and processes. The policy also deals with issues of compliance with the Higher Education Act of 2004. All higher education institutions, whether public or private should comply with this law. The Ministry of Education and Training together with the Council on Higher Education will enforce the law and thereby ensure that quality is not compromised.

Honourable Mrs. 'Makabelo Mosothoane
Minister of Education & Training

Preface

This document is the product of a lengthy policy formulation process, during which the Council on Higher Education (CHE) engaged all key stakeholders in the higher education sub-sector. The process began with the development of a detailed concept note which conceptualised and mapped-out the whole process of policy development. The stage that followed was to undertake a thorough situational analysis. This entailed review of documentation and soliciting of stakeholders' views on the current state of Lesotho's higher education system through individual interviews with key informants, focus group sessions and workshops with representatives of key Government Ministries and agencies, higher education institutions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector and civil society organisations.

This process led to the compilation of a comprehensive *Situational Analysis* report. Subsequently, there was a series of consultative workshops in different regions of the country to gather suggestions and aspirations of a broad cross-section of Basotho. Furthermore, the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on the Social Cluster which includes education among other things, was consulted to obtain their inputs representing legislators in both Houses of Parliament. Both the Situational Analysis report together with the Report on Stakeholder Consultations were used as a basis for policy formulation and the drafting that followed. Once a Draft Policy document had been developed it was further subjected to critical review and validation by a range of stakeholders through a series of consultative meetings and workshops. This policy has therefore, not only been truly informed by people's suggestions and aspirations, but it is also anchored on solid policy issues based on national priorities in the higher education sub-sector.

The Council on Higher Education will ensure that the necessary plans are developed to implement this policy and that regular monitoring and evaluation of progress is institutionalised. A comprehensive strategic plan will be developed periodically to translate the policy into action. CHE will also engage all key stakeholders in the sub-sector through regular joint review exercises to consistently review progress on the implementation.

Mr. Matjato Moteane
Chairperson, Council on Higher Education (CHE)

Acknowledgements

The Council on Higher Education wishes to acknowledge with thanks all the people who participated in one way or another during processes leading to the development of this policy document. Higher Education Institutions through their various representatives both at Management and Student Representative Councils (SRC) levels have been at the centre of the policy formulation process. For this, CHE wishes to express heartfelt gratitude. We also wish to thank Government Ministries together with members of non-governmental organisations, teacher formations, Principals' Association, District Administrators' offices in all the ten districts, Local Government structures, and the private sector institutions that participated at different levels of the process.

CHE benefited immensely from insightful contribution of experts who were members of the Higher Education Policy Formulation Committee which was established as a Reference Group to advise CHE on key issues relating to this policy document. They are Dr. Pulane Lefoka (Chairperson), Mr. Kuena Phafane, Professor Sharon Siverts, Dr. Thabiso Nyabanyaba, Associate Professor Ntimo-Makara, Dr. John Oliphant, Mrs. Jane Ramokhitli-Mofoka, Mrs. 'Makeke Ramokoena, Mrs. 'Mapaseka Kolotsane, Dr. Letholetseng Ntsike, Dr. Mohlalefi Sefika, and Mr. Nkopane Ramaphiri. We remain indebted to them for their selfless contribution.

We would like to extend a special word of thanks to the Southern African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) consultants, namely, Dr. Ephraim Mhlanga and Mr. Ed Du Vivier. They did a sterling job under trying circumstances.

Last, but not least a word of appreciation goes to members of the CHE Secretariat who were involved in and led this exercise. They worked tirelessly for the policy to evolve into its current form.

Mrs. 'Makotelo Teboho Motseko
Chief Executive, Council on Higher Education (CHE)

Acronyms & Abbreviations used in this Document

A-Level	A senior secondary school subject examination and/or qualification at the Advanced Level, awarded as part of the General Certificate of Education in the United Kingdom and parts of the Commonwealth
CHE	Council on Higher Education in Lesotho
COSC	Cambridge Overseas School Certificate, currently the terminal qualification for senior secondary learners in Lesotho
ECOL (or Ecol)	Examinations Council of Lesotho
GoL	Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQAC	Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee, established as part of CHE in terms of the Higher Education Act, 2004
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resources Development
ICT(s)	Information and Communications Technology(-ies)
LQA	Lesotho Qualifications Authority (proposed)
MOET	Ministry of Education & Training, Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho
MOET TED	Tertiary Education Department, Ministry of Education & Training
MODP	Ministry of Development Planning
MOF	Ministry of Finance
NMDS	National Manpower Development Secretariat, MODP
ODeL	Open, Distance and e-Learning (see Glossary for definitions of component terms)
OERs	Open Educational Resources (see Glossary)
O-Level	A secondary school subject examination and/or qualification at the Ordinary Level, formerly awarded as part of the General Certificate of Education in the United Kingdom and parts of the Commonwealth. O-Levels were replaced by the General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations and awards in 1988.
QFL	Qualifications Framework for Lesotho (Provisional)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIDE	South African Institute for Distance Education
SMME	Small, Medium and/or Micro-Enterprise
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics disciplines/subjects
T&L	Teaching and Learning, one of the three core functions of HEIs
TVT Dep't.	Technical and Vocational Training Department, Ministry of Education & Training
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education & Training
SRC	Student Representative Council

Glossary of Terms[i]

In order to ensure consistency and promote a shared understanding, the following definitions are offered for the terms used in this policy document:

Accreditation is a systematic assessment of an academic programme to ascertain whether it does or does not meet set standards. In terms of Section 2 of the Higher Education Act, 2004, accreditation refers to "… the process leading to the issuance of a certificate of accredited status by an educational institution or recognised local or international body attesting to the quality or standards of one or more educational programmes and to the effectiveness of the management and operations of the higher education institution offering the programme."

Assessment is the process of measuring the extent to which learners have mastered the concepts, knowledge, skills and behaviours that have been prescribed as outcomes for a programme or a course of study.

Assessment of Prior Learning (APL) or *Assessment of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)* is a practice that measures the knowledge, skills and behaviours that learners exhibit as a result of their past education and experience on the job and of life, with a view to exempting them from some of the requirements of a programme of study that they wish to follow.

Audit: In the context of quality in higher education, auditing entails a systematic review of the entire operations of an institution of higher learning including policies and systems, plans, processes and resources that are in place to assure quality, integrity or standards of provision and outcomes. Normally, audits investigate whether institutions have in place internal quality-monitoring procedures, including identification of responsibilities and intra-institutional communication and co-ordination of practices.

Award: Any formal recognition of an achievement in which there has been an official decision to grant such recognition. Within the Qualifications Framework for Lesotho, awards can be made at ten different levels.

Blended Learning: This term refers to any approach that combines elements of face-to-face teaching, distance education and/or e-learning to enable academic staff members to deliver a programme in various ways that both suit their subject matter and meet the needs of their students.

Certification means a formal acknowledgement, by way of documentation, of the attainment of a specified combination and aggregation of learning outcomes that represents a particular qualification. The issue of a Certificate, Diploma, Degree or other award signifies that a learner has studied to a satisfactory standard.

Chancellor: In terms of Section 22(1) of the Higher Education Act, 2004, the Chancellor is the titular head of any HE Public Institution.

College: Although the term denotes different things in specific contexts, for the purpose of this document, a 'college' is any higher education institution that provides programmes

higher than the General Certificate of Education (QFL Level 4) and up to bachelor's degree level (QFL Level 8).

Course is a distinct and identifiable component part of a programme of study, successful completion of which leads to the award of a specified number of credits towards the total required to obtain a qualification.

Course Level is the level at which a course is taken. The *course level* is normally related to the year of study in an overall programme.

Credit Accumulation: The process by which an individual learner adds the number of credit points gained through successful completion of a course towards the points required to obtain a particular qualification.

Credit Transfer: the process that allows a learner to apply credits gained in one programme of study towards the credit requirements laid down in another programme of study. Credit transfer may be within two programmes in the same faculty or between two faculties at the same institution, or it may operate between two different HEIs.

Distance Education is a form of study in which learners spend all or most of their time separated from their teacher(s) in time or in space. This divide is bridged by using a variety of technologies, which means that distance education programmes can vary considerably in the mix of media they use.

e-Learning is a type of education that utilises computer technologies and applications to access learning materials. Where e-learning is mediated through the Internet it is sometimes referred to as *online* or *virtual learning*.

Evaluation is the process whereby monitoring and other information collected about a programme or institution is used to make judgements, based on a defined set of values, principles or standards. Typically, the information used to evaluate a programme or institution also suggests ways in which it can be changed and improved. *Evaluation of quality or standards* is the process of examining and passing a judgment on the appropriateness or level of quality or standards.

Face-to-Face Education: This term is normally used to describe a situation in which the teacher and one or more learners interact with one another at the same time in the same physical space, typically a classroom, lecture hall, training workshop or laboratory.

Further Education (FE) is a term used in Britain and other countries of the Commonwealth of Nations to refer to work-oriented programmes of post-compulsory education from the equivalent of junior secondary up to undergraduate diplomas (QFL Levels 3-6). Typically, Further Education & Training programmes are designed to upgrade the skills and employment opportunities for school-leavers or drop-outs who did not qualify for entry to or who are not interested in attending an academically-oriented higher education institution.

Graduate is the term used in this document to refer to any person who has successfully completed a programme of higher education leading to the award of a post-COSC certificate, diploma, bachelor or higher degree.

Higher Education Institution is any legal entity that meets the requirements detailed in the Higher Education Act, 2004, and that has been declared or registered as a HEI. The Act makes provisions for two types of HEIs:

- ***Higher Education Public Institution*** refers to any university, polytechnic or college that is established with moneys appropriated by Parliament, or any existing HE provider that has been declared by the Minister of Education as a HE Public Institution.

- ***Higher Education Private Institution*** is any other provider of courses and programmes at this level that has been registered as a HE Private Institution in terms of Part VI of the Act.

Higher Education Provider is a generic term used throughout this document to refer to any entity that offers courses and/or programmes at post-COSC level in Lesotho, regardless of whether it has been declared as a HE Public Institution or registered as a HE Private Institution.

Media is the plural form of the term ***medium***, which refers to any generic form of communication associated with particular ways of representing knowledge, viz. print, audio, video, face-to-face, and computer-based environments.

Module refers to a "chunk" of learning that is less than a whole course, but comprises more than a single "lesson objective" or Specific Learning Outcome. Modules can be thought of as the coherent parts or "chapters" within a course.

Open Educational Resources (OER) : The term OERs refers to "… teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use or re-purposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge."[ii]

Open learning: A philosophy or value system inspiring the design of educational programmes, which aims to make programmes more *learner-centred* by increasing flexibility and choice for the learner.

Polytechnic: This term refers to an institution of higher education offering courses at bachelor degree level (QFL Level 8) and below, especially in technical and vocational fields.

Programme of Study is the sum of all the modules and/or courses that a learner is required to take in order to obtain a qualification. Successful completion of the programme of study will be based upon the accumulation of a specified number of credits, and will lead to the award of the qualification.

Qualification means any award which represents the attainment, following robust assessment processes, of a coherent cluster of specified outcomes of learning to prescribe standards of performance. A qualification is a certificate, diploma, degree or other academic award issued on completion of a period of defined study. Certificates of attendance or completion of a particular course of study are not recognised as qualifications.

Quality Assurance refers to any process, mechanism or system applied or adopted to ensure that a product or service meets specified standards. As a regulatory mechanism, quality assurance focuses on both accountability and improvement, providing information and judgments through an agreed and consistent process and well-established criteria. The processes can be internal to an organisation and/or can be applied by an external body or agency.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) refers to a practice that enables learners to use credits or qualifications obtained earlier in their lives to exempt them from some of the requirements of a programme of study that they wish to follow.

Rector: This term is normally used to refer to the chief executive and accounting officer of a polytechnic or college. In terms of Section 2 of the Higher Education Act, a rector is treated as equivalent to a university vice-chancellor.

Registrar: This term has two distinct meanings:

- In terms of Section 22(2) of the Higher Education Act, every HE Public Institution must appoint a ***Registrar*** to act as its chief academic officer, overseeing processes such as admissions, maintenance of programme standards and issuing of awards.

- In terms of Section 37(2) of the Higher Education Act, the Principal Secretary for Education shall designate an employee in the Ministry as the Registrar to perform certain functions relating to the registration and regulation of HE Private Institutions. To avoid confusion, this person is referred to as the ***Registrar for HEIs*** in this document.

Student Support (Learner Support): A generic term covering a range of services that may be offered to learners, including:

- **Academic Support**, covering the support that a teacher provides to a learner as an integral part of their academic study of a course, including feedback on their performance, clarification of areas where they indicate they are having difficulties or where it is likely learners will have difficulties;

- **Study Support**, covering such as areas as learning skills (writing skills, note taking skills, revision and examination skills, etc.), learning styles, etc.;

- **Advice and Guidance**, covering such areas as career advice and guidance, course choice, further study options after graduation, etc.;

- **Counselling**, covering areas of life that may impinge on study success, for example, health problems, how to deal with unsympathetic spouses or employers, etc.;

- **Administrative Support**, covering such as issues the clarification of regulations and procedures, processes to gain financial aid, rectification of operational failures (e.g. non-delivery of course materials), etc.

Technology refers to various means of communicating or delivering a learning programme through a particular medium. For example, when delivering learning content through the

medium of audio a variety of technologies can be used, including: radio broadcasts, audio-cassettes, CDs, podcasts, telephone, or Voice Over Internet Protocol (e.g. Skype).

University is the apex category for HEIs. Universities normally offer post-secondary programmes up to and including Masters and Doctoral degrees (QFL Level 10). In terms of Section 2 of the Higher Education Act, a university is any HEI established as such by an act of the Lesotho Parliament or declared as such by the Minister of Education in terms of Section 18 of the said Act.

Vice-Chancellor: This term is typically used to refer to the chief executive and accounting officer of a university in Commonwealth countries, while alternatives such as *President* or *Provost* are used elsewhere. In terms of Section 22(2) of the Higher Education Act, 2004, all HE Public Institutions must have a vice-chancellor or rector.

Executive Summary

The world over, massive investment is made in higher education because of the role it is expected to play in enhancing national economic, social and cultural development. This is particularly true in developing countries where economic growth is constrained by shortages of skilled human resources. This document represents the first comprehensive policy for the higher education sub-sector in Lesotho.

The overarching aim of this policy is to ensure that Lesotho's higher education system produces graduates with the knowledge, skills and values to contribute to the nation's development, as well as the capacity to respond to challenges and exploit opportunities that will arise in the future. For this to happen, there is a need for Basotho to forge a shared understanding of the shape, size and purpose of the higher education system that is required to meet the nation's needs. The purpose of developing this detailed policy framework is to articulate this collective vision for the future, which will build consensus on the direction for development and provide guidance for various components of the overall system. For this reason, during the policy formulation process the Council on Higher Education (CHE) adopted a consultative approach, which provided opportunities for different stakeholders to identify concerns about the existing system that this document addresses.

CHAPTER 1:   Background and Overview of Higher Education in Lesotho

This chapter provides an overview of the current status of higher education in Lesotho and of the context within which this policy was developed. Like other countries in the region, higher education (HE) in Lesotho is provided by both public and private institutions. In the 2010/11 academic year, over 26,000 students were enrolled with local higher education institutions (HEIs), while a further 2,400 received financial assistance for HE studies abroad. There are considerably more female than male students at this level of the education system. Government expenditure on education is very high by international standards and is skewed in favour of the higher education sub-sector. There are major challenges for sustaining such high levels of public funding into the future as more and more demands are placed on the national budget. The Constitution for the Kingdom of Lesotho commits the State to making higher education equally accessible to all Basotho. The fundamental law for the sub-sector is the Higher Education Act, 2004, which established the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to perform specified functions. In formulating the document, due consideration was given to other policy documents and international conventions that impact on the higher education sub-sector.

CHAPTER 2:   Values, Principles and Goals

In line with stakeholders' views and the broader policy environment in Lesotho, this document is premised on certain shared values, which are articulated in this chapter. These values include *botho*, quality, equity, diversity, creativity and innovation, and patriotism. Additionally, certain fundamental principles were adopted to guide all stakeholders in plotting the future direction of the sub-sector. These guiding principles include: institutional autonomy, academic freedom, democratic participation, openness, public accountability, efficiency and cost-effectiveness, relevance and forward-looking. Eleven key

policy goals for the higher education system as a whole are also listed there, as well as being summarised later in this Executive Summary.

CHAPTER 3:   Teaching and Learning

Traditionally, higher education has three main functions to fulfil: disseminating existing knowledge through the teaching and learning process, advancing the frontiers of knowledge through research, and maximising benefits to society through community outreach. Chapter 3 articulates how more creative, imaginative and responsive approaches can be adopted to improve teaching and learning in Lesotho's higher education institutions.   First and foremost, it is necessary to ensure that academic staff members are suitably qualified and have sufficient expertise in the subjects they teach. There is also a need to build capacity through the professional development and training of academic staff in the most effective approaches to teaching and learning at HE level. In addition, feedback from students can prove an invaluable source of information for higher education institutions to improve the quality of service delivery.

In order to achieve the broad policy goal of improving teaching and learning in higher education institutions, the following objectives have been articulated in this chapter:

- To build capacity and expertise among academic staff members employed by local HE providers to deliver a high-quality teaching and learning experience for their students; and

- To promote greater responsiveness among HE providers to the needs and perceptions of the students they serve.

CHAPTER 4: Research and Innovation in Higher Education

This chapter addresses the current shortcomings of the higher education system in Lesotho with regard to research and innovation. The chapter restates the Government's commitment to establishing a National Research and Innovation Council and to mobilise resources to fund research. The policy also highlights the importance of integrating research with teaching and learning processes. Measures are also outlined for building capacity and encouraging academic staff at higher education institutions in Lesotho to engage in such activities. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ways in which research and innovation by students can be supported.

Pursuing the overarching goal of strengthening research and innovation in higher education institutions involves the following policy objectives:

- To put in place national mechanisms for promoting, supporting and coordinating research and innovation activities across different sectors;

- To promote more high-quality, original research at HE institutions in Lesotho;

- To encourage academic staff and students to carry out research on issues that will have direct benefits for the people of Lesotho;

- To guarantee that the teaching and learning process experienced by HE students is informed by current scholarship and recent research in the discipline being taught;

- To ensure that HE students are exposed to the principles and practices of research in their respective disciplines at all stages of the programmes they are pursuing;

- To encourage academic employees in local HEIs to take a more active part in research by enhancing the status of such activities;

- To provide the infrastructure and facilities required for staff at the HE Public Institutions to engage in high-quality, original research;

- To promote networking among researchers both within Lesotho and between local researchers and those outside the country in order to create linkages and to support the development of critical masses of researchers in specialised fields;

- To promote increased engagement in research and innovation by students in HE institutions; and

- To ensure that any profits arising from student projects or rights to any original intellectual property created as a result of student involvement in research activities are fairly allocated.

CHAPTER 5: Engagement with Wider Society

This chapter deals with the third core function of higher education providers – engagement with wider society. By emphasising interactions with public and private-sector entities and involvement with local communities, this policy brings to the fore the need for higher education institutions in Lesotho to proactively respond to local contexts.

The following policy objectives have been devised to achieve the broad goal of improving community engagement by higher education institutions:

- To promote and facilitate engagement by students and staff members of HE providers with entities in both the public and the private sectors; and

- To strengthen linkages between HE Institutions and local communities throughout the country.

CHAPTER 6: Adapting Higher Education for a Changing Society

Ways in which the nation's higher education system will need to adapt in order to meet changing economic and social demands are outlined in this chapter. Currently, there is a mismatch between the output of local HEIs and the labour market, and policies are set out to enhance the relevance of the programmes they offer. The overall aim is to ensure that the sub-sector produces graduates in specific disciplines or fields of study where the shortage of skilled manpower constrains development. Consideration is also given to improving the interface between higher education and other forms of post-secondary education and training by developing a national framework for the assessment and recognition of prior learning. Policies are also articulated for enhancing students' preparedness for the working world after graduation, including greater use of work attachments and innovative ways of promoting and supporting entrepreneurship among students.

However, higher education is not only about training human resources for the labour market. For this reason, a balance should be struck and ways should be found to inculcate

the aptitudes and capacity for graduates to continue learning throughout their lives. Finally, the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Lesotho poses particular challenges for the higher education system. Each HE institution must develop policies and procedures for raising awareness among its students and staff members, as well as ensuring that they have access to prevention, testing, treatment and support services.

In order to achieve the overarching goal of aligning higher education programmes with national priorities, the following policy objectives are spelt out in this chapter:

- To guarantee that the output of the higher education system is aligned with the requirements of the country's developing economy;

- To facilitate planning for the future development of the higher education system so that it is aligned with national development needs;

- To improve the employment prospects of graduates by ensuring that the knowledge and skills they have acquired through participation in higher education are in demand by employers;

- To provide greater flexibility for Basotho who wish to pursue education and/or training at post-secondary level;

- To improve articulation between the different sub-systems for providing education and training in Lesotho;

- To obtain feedback from employers about the shortcomings of the output of the HE system in Lesotho and about problems that graduates have integrating themselves in the workplace;

- To ease the transition for graduates from the environment in a higher education institution to the world of work;

- To ensure that higher education students are adequately prepared for the working environment through practical experience in the workplace;

- To re-orient graduates of HEIs to create employment for themselves and others, rather than expecting to be given a job;

- To ensure that HE students have skills and experience needed to start up a successful small, medium or micro-enterprise;

- To preserve the range of choice for prospective students, by maintaining a balance across the HE system as a whole between programmes targeted at gaps in the labour market and broad-based education in different disciplines;

- To ensure that HE graduates have the generic skills to adapt to future challenges and opportunities and to be effective lifelong learners;

- To promote the health and welfare of students and staff members at HEIs; and

- To guarantee that the work force and student population within HEIs are HIV and AIDS competent.

CHAPTER 7: New Information Technologies – New Approaches

This chapter highlights some of the pertinent challenges faced by higher education institutions in general as a result of the ever-changing global environment. The process of formulating this policy provided a unique opportunity to reconsider the models currently used for organising and delivering HE programmes, to discard out-dated approaches and to adopt new ways of doing things in order to address the challenges of the future. The chapter underscores the need for higher education institutions to take advantage of the affordances of new information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as adopting more flexible approaches to programme delivery. One option is to make greater use of open, distance & e-learning (ODeL) methods. Not only does ODeL facilitate greater access to studies at this level, particularly for non-traditional students, but it also tends to involve a more learner-centred approach that allows students greater choice in terms of the timing and organisation of the learning process.

In order to enhance the quality of course design and enrich learning experiences in cost-effective ways, greater use of open educational resources (OERs) is advocated. The chapter also flags the common problem of acute shortages of well-resourced libraries to support effective teaching and learning in higher education institutions in Lesotho. Fortunately, digital technologies are in the process of transforming educational publishing and the provision of library services, and Lesotho is well-placed to take advantage of the reduced costs that these new systems can offer. ICTs have also opened up opportunities for both lecturers and students to access a wealth of electronic resources that exist on the Worldwide Web or in various digital repositories.

In order to achieve the broad goal of harnessing ICTs in higher education, the following policy objectives have been articulated:

- To support the transformation of HE Public Institutions in order to keep abreast of international trends;

- To enhance the competitiveness of the HE sub-sector in Lesotho in an increasingly globalised market for higher education;

- To enable all HE Institutions in Lesotho to upgrade their ICT facilities in order to enhance and support teaching and learning, research and other functions;

- To devise and implement strategies for HE Public Institutions to make effective use of ICTs in order to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of their operations;

- To enable students to access high-quality learning materials by promoting greater use of Open Educational Resources by HE providers in Lesotho;

- To encourage academic staff members and researchers in HEIs to contribute to the creation of intellectual property for use by their own students as well as for sharing with others inside and outside the country;

- To enable academic staff members, researchers and students at HE Public Institutions, as well as officials in the public service, to access a wide range of current literature, research resources and learning materials in their disciplines; and

- To facilitate access to these resources by users throughout the country in a cost-effective manner.

CHAPTER 8:   Access to Higher Education

No higher education policy would be complete without addressing the critical dynamics of supply and demand, as well as ways of ensuring equitable access. Chapter 8 of the policy document addresses these often highly-contested issues. The number of HE places will need to more than double over the next ten years in order to accommodate the demand from different groups of prospective students, including school leavers, delayed entrants to the system, those upgrading their qualifications, mature-age entrants and international candidates. The policy outlines ways in which the HE system should be made more equitable by broadening access to those from economically-disadvantaged and minority groups, and by systematically addressing other barriers to participation. This chapter includes policy proposals to improve the provision of information and facilitate application procedures, to decentralise HEIs, to ensure that students have the knowledge and skills to make a success of their studies, to remove restrictions for prospective adult students, to enhance accessibility for people living with disabilities and to introduce more flexible rules for HE programmes.

The goal of improving access to higher education in Lesotho involves the following policy objectives:

- To increase the number of places available and to broaden the range of programme offerings for Basotho who wish to pursue higher education;

- To ensure that each and every Mosotho, regardless of his or her economic circumstances or other characteristics, has an equal chance to participate and succeed in higher education;

- To increase transparency and restore public confidence in the system of allocating State financial assistance to higher education students;

- To ensure equality of access to information about different HE providers in Lesotho and the programmes they offer, and to facilitate its dissemination to secondary schools, career guidance teachers, learners in senior secondary, parents and members of the public;

- To offer prospective students greater choice and flexibility by enabling them to apply for programmes with a number of different HE providers;

- To ensure that Basotho living in different parts of the country can access opportunities to participate in higher education;

- To ensure that students who enter higher education have sufficient general knowledge and skills to progress and succeed in their studies;

- To enable students to make a successful transition from secondary school to higher education, thus decreasing failure and drop-out rates;

- To ensure that the process of preparing students for higher education is carried out in an efficient and cost-effective manner;

- To open up access to higher education for prospective students who are not recent school-leavers but who are capable of making a success of their studies at this level;

- To facilitate access for employees who wish to pursue further education and training;

- To safeguard the right of equitable access to higher education for people living with disabilities;

- To guarantee that Lesotho lives up to its international obligations, specifically in relation to the UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*;

- To promote greater flexibility and openness for those taking part in higher education; and

- To enhance horizontal and vertical integration in the nation's higher education system.

CHAPTER 9: *Configuring the Higher Education System*

In this chapter, the policy document deals with the overall structure of the higher education sub-sector in Lesotho and argues that the country needs a pluralistic system with different types of providers capable of meeting the nation's diverse learning and development needs. While the variety of HE programmes available offers prospective students a range of choices, a number of concerns have been raised about the overall configuration of the HE system in Lesotho, including the existence of many relatively small institutions, the feasibility and cost-effectiveness for these to adopt the prescribed governance and management structures, the potential for overlap and duplication in the fields of study offered by publicly-funded HEIs and the lack of articulation between programmes offered by different providers.

In order to ensure the optimal mix of providers, the Council on Higher Education will review the existing configuration of HE Public Institutions and advise the Minister of Education and Training on the option for mergers, as envisaged in the Higher Education Act, 2004. The policy also restates the Government's commitment to drafting legislation to establish a number of publicly-funded colleges residing in other ministries on a statutory basis. The globalization of higher education also poses challenges for Lesotho, and the concluding section of this chapter sets out policies to ensure that cross-border providers conform to the same laws and standards as all other HEIs in Lesotho.

The policy objectives below will need to be achieved in order to address the broad goal of diversifying the higher education system:

- To ensure the most cost-effective use of State resources for the provision of higher education in Lesotho;

- To strengthen institutional capacity through the creation of a number of centres of excellence in different disciplines;

- To preserve diversity in the sub-sector by maintaining an appropriate balance between different types of HE providers with different missions;

- To ensure that HE Private Institutions operating in Lesotho meet minimum standards in terms of institutional capacity and programme quality; and

- To safeguard the general public against unregistered HE providers.

CHAPTER 10: Coordination and Regulation of the Sub-Sector

This chapter addresses important matters of coordination, governance and regulation of higher education in Lesotho. While the principle of institutional autonomy should be respected, nevertheless, the Government of Lesotho has an obligation to play an important role in defining the national policies, broad strategies and the level of public funding for the HE sub-sector; developing the legislative framework to ensure that the policies and strategies can be implemented; and overseeing their implementation. In carrying out these functions, the Government intends to progressively move towards an approach combining traditional State control and incentive frameworks to encourage self-regulation by HEIs.

An important aspect of regulation of higher education in Lesotho is the role of the Council on Higher Education. In terms of Part II of the Higher Education Act, 2004, CHE was established to advise the Minister on any aspect of HE, to monitor the implementation of policy by higher education institutions (HEIs), to publish information regarding developments in HE and to promote access by students. The Act further prescribes that the CHE will establish a Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee (HEQAC) to perform its quality promotion and quality assurance functions, including the accreditation of all HE programmes. In addition to CHE, a number of other bodies have been given statutory powers to regulate the assessment and certification of higher education. In order to eliminate possible confusion arising from these overlapping functions, the third section of Chapter 10 sets out the Government's intention to re-assign such responsibilities, pending amendments to existing legislation. (Details of the interim allocation of responsibilities are given in Section 10.3.) Proposals for coordinating the activities of CHE with those of other regulatory bodies are also spelled out. The concluding section of this chapter reaffirms the Government's intentions to ensure that all HE providers implement the governance structures prescribed in the HE Act.

Achieving the overall goal of strengthening institutional arrangements for improved coordination and regulation of the higher education sub-sector will involve the following policy objectives:

- To ensure coherence and continuity in guiding the development of Lesotho's HE sub-sector;

- To align policies across different sectors to facilitate cooperation between Ministries and State agencies;

- To ensure that the MOET Department(s) with specific responsibility for aspects of the higher education sub-sector have the capacity to carry out their mandate in a timely and effective manner;

- To provide effective mechanisms for coordinating developments across the higher education sub-sector in Lesotho;

- To establish a system of financial incentives to encourage and support initiatives targeted at specific developments across the HE sub-sector;

- To safeguard the general public by ensuring that all programmes of education and training are subjected to uniform and rigorous vetting procedures before they are approved/accredited and prospective students/trainees are allowed to enrol;

- To eliminate any possible confusion that may have arisen as a result of overlapping areas of responsibility in existing legislation for the education and training sector;

- To further the process of establishing a single regulatory framework to ensure that comparable standards are maintained at high levels in both the TVET and the HE sub-sectors;

- To ensure effective coordination between stakeholders from both the public and private sectors in planning the development of the nation's higher education system;

- To facilitate harmonisation between the criteria for accrediting higher education programmes and the criteria for graduates to qualify for membership of different professional bodies; and

- To promote sound governance and strengthen corporate oversight in all HE providers in Lesotho.

CHAPTER 11: Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Chapter 11 examines aspects of quality assurance in higher education and defines the roles of different stakeholders in the process. Through the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee (HEQAC), CHE performs designated functions in relation to quality promotion and assurance. The quality standards, norms of operation and monitoring mechanisms devised by HEQAC form broad quality frameworks within which higher education institutions must operate.

In line with developments on the rest of the African continent, and indeed with international trends, higher education institutions in Lesotho need to strengthen their own internal quality assurance systems. In order to enhance their credibility, such systems should periodically be subjected to external scrutiny by relevant national and international quality assurance agencies – through institutional audits and programme accreditation and re-accreditation processes. To further enhance the quality of higher education in Lesotho, linkages should be established with key quality assurance bodies on the continent and beyond. The Ministry of Education and Training will play a facilitative role, by creating and maintaining a policy environment that promotes provision of high quality education and by providing the necessary guidance.

Within the broad policy goal of strengthening mechanisms for quality assurance in higher education, the following objectives have been articulated:

- To reassure prospective students and members of the public that the programmes offered by HE providers in Lesotho meet or exceed minimum quality standards;

- To provide a clear framework for guiding the efforts of HE providers to improve the quality of the programmes and other services they provide;

- To strengthen the institutional culture and build the internal capacity of HE providers in Lesotho to carry out quality assurance functions on a sustainable basis;

- To align the practices of HEIs in Lesotho with international trends in the area of quality assurance, as a means of making them internationally competitive as well as promoting transnational mobility of students and their qualifications;

- To prioritise implementation of quality assurance in higher education by creating a conducive policy environment and providing adequate resources for quality enhancement in the system; and

- To ensure that the mechanisms for quality enhancement and quality assurance adopted across the HE system are effective and sustainable by providing support to institutions.

CHAPTER 12: Financing Higher Education

This chapter sets out the framework for an efficient, equitable & sustainable approach for financing higher education in Lesotho. It articulates policies on direct subventions from the State to HE Public Institutions and how these should be administered. Mechanisms for cost-sharing and promoting increased contributions from students, their families and private-sector interests are discussed. The chapter concludes with a review of the arrangements for providing financial assistance for those who wish to study at HE level.

In order to devise an equitable and sustainable approach to the financing of higher education in Lesotho, the following policy objectives will need to be addressed:

- To ensure that publicly-funded HEIs are operating at optimal efficiency and utilising funding provided by the State or other sources as cost-effectively as possible;

- To create an enabling environment that encourages individuals, charitable bodies and private sector entities to make donations, endowments and bequests to HE providers that are constituted as not-for-profit bodies;

- To develop robust mechanisms to enable HEIs to finance a higher proportion of their development and operating costs from non-Government sources;

- To ensure consistency in the allocation and administration of Government funds to HE Public Institutions;

- To facilitate monitoring of how State funds are spent by HE Public Institutions;

- To ensure that Government funds are allocated to HE Public Institutions in a fair and transparent manner;

- To restore confidence among all stakeholders that the mechanisms for funding HE Public Institutions are genuinely equitable;

- To promote greater transparency and accountability by HE providers in reporting the expenditure of funds received from the State as well as from other sources;

- To reaffirm the Government of Lesotho's commitment to the principle of cost-sharing by ensuring that higher education institutions collect appropriate fees for the services they provide to students;

- To provide mechanisms for the Government of Lesotho to register its concerns, as well as those of the general public, about fee levels for HE programmes and the ways in which they are structured;

- To ensure that adequate consultations take place before any fee changes are introduced by HE Public Institutions in Lesotho;

- To increase the financial contributions made by students and their families to the costs of higher education;

- To align the system of allocating loans/bursaries with national human resource requirements in key fields;

- To facilitate access to higher education for all Basotho who qualify for studies at this level but who cannot afford to do so; and

- To ensure that the country has competent human resources in specialised fields essential for national development.

CHAPTER 13: Monitoring and Evaluating Implementation of Policy

This chapter outlines how the implementation of these policies will be monitored and evaluated. Unless responsibility for monitoring implementation is assigned to particular bodies or designated officials, there is a danger that the policy will have only limited impact on the way in which the higher education sector will develop. For this reason, the responsibilities of the Minister of Education and Training, the Council on Higher Education and HE providers are defined.

Achieving the policy goal of regular and consistent monitoring of higher education policy implementation is dependent upon meeting these objectives:

- To guarantee that systems for monitoring the implementation of this policy are producing the information required to evaluate the outcomes;

- To provide effective mechanisms for collecting information and for reporting progress on the implementation of national policies for the HE sub-sector; and

- To promote self-regulation and mutual improvements across the HE system in Lesotho, while ensuring compliance with standards.

Role Players in this Policy

Provision and support for higher education requires a multi-sectoral approach because education is not only a critical prerequisite for socio-economic development, but is broad and has many facets. It is for this reason that there are a number of organisations that will play important roles in one way or another in the implementation of this policy. The policy has implications for the Ministry of Education and Training, Council on Higher Education, Higher Education Institutions, and statutory professional bodies such as Lesotho Nursing Council, Lesotho Institute of Accountants, Lesotho Medical, Dental and Pharmaceutical Council, Law Society etc. Furthermore, the policy with its various pronouncements has a bearing on other players. There is a definite role that the Ministry of Finance has to play towards implementation of this policy in providing an enabling legal environment for higher education institutions to mobilise resources effectively and get donations without those who provide them being taxed; and to explore options towards provision of an enabling policy environment for students to contribute more towards higher education in financial terms. Other Ministries and agencies have tangential and yet important roles to play   as   well.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1: Background and Overview of Higher Education in Lesotho

This chapter is intended to set the scene for the detailed discussions which follow about different aspects of higher education (HE) in Lesotho. It begins by stating the overall purpose of this document, then provides a brief overview of the HE sub-sector and outlines the legal and policy framework within which this document has been formulated.

1.1 Purpose of this Policy

The overarching aim of this policy is to ensure that Lesotho's higher education system produces graduates with the knowledge, skills and values to contribute to the nation's economic, social and cultural development, as well as with the capacity to address future challenges and exploit emerging opportunities. Because this overarching aim touches on many sectors of society, shaping Lesotho's higher education system requires a consistent approach that cuts across the boundaries between Government ministries and other national institutions.

The overall purpose of developing a detailed policy framework for the HE system in Lesotho was to articulate a shared vision for the future, to build consensus on the direction for development and to provide guidance for its various components. This policy document reiterates the Government's commitment to make higher education equally accessible to all Basotho who have the capacity to undertake studies at this level. The policy formulation process also identified stakeholder concerns about potential shortcomings of the existing system, which this document aims to address.

1.2 Overview of Higher Education in Lesotho

Lesotho is a constitutional monarchy with a *de jure* population of 1.877 million in 2006. Integrated early childhood care and development is available for three to five-year-olds through privately-provided reception classes. The formal education system includes seven years of primary schooling and three to five years of secondary education. Non-formal education programmes are available for adults who did not complete their basic education, while out-of-school learners can pursue junior and senior secondary studies through open and distance learning methods. Relatively few learners progress through all stages of schooling and qualify for entry to higher education. A separate stream of technical & vocational education and training (TVET) is open to qualified applicants.

1.2.1 Higher Education Providers

HE programmes in Lesotho are provided through a variety of institutional arrangements, including:
- three publicly-funded, autonomous institutions;
- four college-level institutions that are constituted as departments of Government ministries;
- four denominationally-owned and -administered schools/colleges of nursing;
- four church-run seminaries/colleges of theology;

- one international school that offers post-COSC courses leading to the International Baccalaureate;
- one private (for-profit) entity, with links to an international university;
- one inter-governmental institute that operates on commercial lines; and
- a number of private providers offering HE programmes validated by foreign institutions, which may or may not be properly accredited.

A relatively small, but significant, number of Basotho travel to study at higher education institutions (HEIs) abroad. In addition, several public and private institutions outside the country's borders recruit students residing in Lesotho for HE programmes that are delivered through open & distance learning methods. For a full list of higher education providers in Lesotho, please refer to Annex A.

1.2.2 Participation in Higher Education

In the 2010/11 academic year, roughly 26,500 Basotho were enrolled for studies at local higher education institutions,[iii] while a further 2,400 were studying at HEIs outside the country's borders.[iv] In addition, an unknown number of students were privately financing their own studies at both domestic and foreign institutions. Female students outnumber males at all HEIs in Lesotho with the exception of Lerotholi Polytechnic, where the trade and craft courses offered attract more male students. Overall, the gender parity index at this level of the education system is 1.46.[v]

1.2.3 Government Spending on Higher Education

In the 2001/02 Financial Year, the Government of Lesotho devoted almost a third of its recurrent budget to education. Though this figure has been reduced over the last ten years, total spending on education still accounts for over a quarter (26.6%) of all public expenditure. By international standards, this figure is exceptionally high, and the higher education sub-sector consumes the lion's share. State support for the HE system in Lesotho comes in two forms: direct subventions from the Ministry of Education and Training and other parent ministries to HE Public Institutions in respect of recurrent and capital expenditure, and financial assistance for students at public and private HEIs at home or abroad. In the 2011/12 Financial Year over M950 million was spent by the State to provide HE for the country's citizens, and this represented 35.7% of all public expenditure on education. Sustaining such high levels of expenditure on higher education will be difficult to justify in the face of national and international pressure to meet Lesotho's commitments to primary education and adult literacy embodied in the *Education for All* targets and the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, the average unit fiscal cost of providing HE in Lesotho is higher than in many other countries. Although it will always be more expensive to educate a student at this level, the Government of Lesotho spends fifty times more for each HE student than it does for a learner in primary school.[vi] While this ratio is much greater than the international norm, the real problem lies with how these costs are shared. At present, because of the low repayment rate on loans provided as financial assistance for HE students, the State shoulders most of these expenses. In order to broaden access to HE and improve equity in the system, it is necessary to rectify this imbalance by ensuring that those who benefit directly from participating in higher education – students and their families – bear a greater share of the costs.

1.3 Legal & Policy Framework

The development of a policy on higher education does not take place in a vacuum, but reflects the values and principles embodied in existing policies and plans, as well as conforming to the legal requirements of various statutory instruments, both national and international.

1.3.1 Legal Basis

Section 28 of the Constitution for the Kingdom of Lesotho pledges that the State shall endeavour to make education available to all Basotho and shall adopt policies aimed at ensuring that, *inter alia*:

> (*d*)   *higher education is made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education; ….*

The fundamental law governing this sub-sector in Lesotho is the Higher Education Act [Act No. 1 of 2004], which established the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to advise the Minister on any aspect of HE, to monitor the implementation of policy by higher education institutions (HEIs), to publish information regarding developments in HE and to promote access by students. In terms of Section 2 of the Act, higher education is defined as "… a learning programme leading to qualifications higher than COSC or its equivalent …"**,** which has been accredited by CHE. As discussed later in this document, the Higher Education Act, 2004, also created structures and requirements for HE programme accreditation, system-level quality promotion and assurance, registration and regulation of HE institutions.

1.3.2 Policy Environment

A number of important documents have contributed to the formulation of this policy, including:

- *Lesotho National Vision 2020,*[vii]
- *National Strategic Development Plan*, 2012 – 2017,[viii]
- *Qualifications Framework for Lesotho* (provisional, see Section 10.3.2),[ix]
- Draft *National Policy on Open and Distance Learning in Lesotho,*[x]
- *Lesotho Science and Technology Policy,*[xi]
- Draft *Teacher Education and Training Policy.*[xii]

The most detailed articulation of policy prior to approval of this document can be found in the *Lesotho Education Sector Strategic Plan, 2005-2015,*[xiii] which includes a separate chapter on higher education. Four broad goals were articulated for the HE system:

- Increasing access on an equitable basis, to higher education;
- Improving the relevance of higher education in order to ensure that it is responsive to the demands of the labour market;
- Enhancing internal efficiency in institutions of higher learning;
- Mainstreaming gender, HIV and AIDS in the HE curricula and activities.[xiv]

However, the formulation of a more detailed policy for the sub-sector was delegated to the Council on Higher Education, which was in the process of being established at the time. In the interim, the development of Lesotho's HE system has been driven largely by the

institutions that provide education at this level, which have evolved in response to perceived priorities for the nation's development and to the expectations of prospective students and their families.

1.3.3 International Commitments

This policy for higher education in Lesotho takes into consideration regional and international protocols that the country is a signatory to, including:

- Article 7 of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) *Protocol on Education and Training;*[xv]

- The Arusha Convention on the recognition of higher education qualifications;[xvi]

- The World Trade Organisation's (WTO) General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which opens up higher education services to international providers.[xvii]

For a more detailed discussion of the implications of these international conventions, please see Section 9.3 of this document.

CHAPTER 2:   Values, Principles & Goals

This chapter articulates a collective vision for the development of higher education. This vision is underpinned by certain mutual values, which embody the people's aspirations for a stable, prosperous and peaceful nation with a healthy and well-established human resource base. The document is grounded on this shared value system, and it is guided by certain principles that will determine the Government's future course of action in relation to the HE sub-sector.   The overall aim is to achieve certain system-level goals to the benefit of all Basotho.

2.1   Values

The system of values underpinning the country's Constitution, the *Lesotho National Vision 2020* document and the *National Strategic Development Plan* were reviewed to provide an authoritative basis for this policy. A number of universal values have been selected to shape the development of the national system of higher education, including:

2.1.1 'Botho'

Botho refers to an indigenous humanist philosophy or set of ethical principles encapsulated in the common Sesotho aphorism *Motho ke motho ka batho*, which can be loosely translated as "I am what I am because of who we all are". While the term is often used to describe the positive qualities of an individual, it also refers to a social contract of mutual respect, responsibility and accountability that members of society have towards each other.

2.1.2 Quality

Quality refers to the pursuit of ideals of excellence, not only in terms of the academic standards maintained by higher education institutions, but also in relation to the services they provide. While these ideals may differ from context to context, the pursuit of quality entails evaluating HE programmes against a defined set of standards and international benchmarks, with a view to improvement.

2.1.3 Equity

The value of equity means that Lesotho's HE system is fair in the allocation of opportunities for all Basotho who meet the minimum entry requirements, not only to register for HE programmes, but also to succeed in their studies.

2.1.4 Diversity

Diversity means recognition and respect for different points of view, which can be used as starting points for a debate that will lead to mutual understanding.   Ensuring diversity also demands that everyone involved in higher education demonstrates tolerance and treats others with dignity and respect.

2.1.5 Creativity and Innovation

Creativity refers to the application of the human intellect, imagination and other faculties to bring into existence original ideas, inventions or material products. When creativity is applied to existing problems or products to devise new solutions or refinements, this is referred to as innovation.

2.1.6 Patriotism

Patriotism refers to the belief that the benefits of higher education should accrue to the nation as a whole. While students and their families typically enjoy monetary gains from participating in HE, they are expected to use their knowledge and skills for the social and economic development of all Basotho.

2.2   Guiding Principles

Additionally, when planning for the development of Lesotho's HE system, certain fundamental principles will guide all stakeholders in plotting the future direction of the sub-sector. While the values presented above define where the nation wishes to go, principles help decision-makers determine how best to get there. These guiding principles include:

2.2.1 Institutional Autonomy

The principle of institutional autonomy refers to a high degree of self-regulation and administrative independence with respect to staff recruitment, student admissions, curricula, methods of teaching and assessment, research, academic regulations and the internal management of resources generated from private and public sources. Such autonomy is a condition of effective self-governance, but it must always be exercised within the confines of national laws and policies.

2.2.2 Academic Freedom

The principle of academic freedom implies the absence of outside interference, censure or obstacles in the pursuit and practice of academic work. It is a precondition for critical, experimental and creative thought and, therefore, for the advancement of intellectual inquiry and knowledge. While academic freedom should apply at all levels in HEIs, it does not mean that a person's views will not be subjected to critical scrutiny or that staff and students have licence to ignore institutional rules and regulations.

2.2.3 Democratic Participation

This principle requires that governance of the system of higher education and of individual institutions be participatory, by including representation from different stakeholders. A representative institution is characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and the maintenance of a well-ordered and peaceful community life.

2.2.4 Openness

The principle of openness involves removing unnecessary barriers and restrictions to participation by prospective students in higher education and giving students greater choice in the learning process. By introducing greater openness and flexibility, the national HE system will become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of Basotho who previously have not had opportunities to study at this level.

2.2.5 Public Accountability

The principle of public accountability implies that institutions are answerable for their actions and decisions, not only to their own governing bodies and the institutional community, but also to society as a whole.

2.2.6 Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness

An efficient system or institution is one which works well, in terms of its own internally-determined objectives. A cost-effective higher education system or institution functions in such a way that the available resources are used optimally to produce a range of benefits for the nation as a whole.

2.2.7 Relevance

Relevant programmes of higher education are appropriate to the needs of participants and capable of addressing wider societal requirements and emerging challenges. HE Institutions must also regularly reassess the relevance of the approaches they adopt to the creation and reproduction of knowledge, in light of evolving understandings of these processes and changing social expectations.

2.2.8 Forward-Looking

Any plans for developing Lesotho's HE system must take into account current trends and anticipate future conditions. Insofar as possible, the policies outlined in this document should enable all partners to adapt to the changing demands on the higher education system in the future.

2.3 Policy Goals

The country's shared system of values creates the context within which the higher education sub-sector and individual HEIs will develop, while the principles discussed above define the parameters to guide this process. The goals outlined below specify the outcomes that can legitimately be expected from both the system and the institutions that provide HE programmes in Lesotho.

2.3.1 Goals

The policy goals for the higher education system as a whole include:

a) Improving teaching and learning in higher education institutions;

b) Strengthening research and innovation in higher education institutions;

c) Improving community engagement by higher education institutions;

d) Aligning higher education programmes with national priorities;

e) Harnessing new information and communications technologies in higher education;

f) Improving access to higher education in Lesotho;

g) Diversifying provision of higher education in Lesotho;

h) Strengthening institutional arrangements for improved coordination and regulation of the higher education sub-sector;

i) Strengthening mechanisms for quality assurance in higher education;

j) Devising an equitable and sustainable approach to the financing of higher education; and

k) Regular and consistent monitoring of higher education policy implementation.

CHAPTER 3:   Teaching and Learning

GOAL	Improving teaching and learning in higher education institutions

Higher education providers have three core functions, and the first of these is the passing on of existing knowledge through teaching and learning (T&L). In recent decades, T&L in HEIs around the world has been radically transformed. Standards among academic staff members in HEIs, in terms of the minimum qualifications required for permanent appointments, have improved. In addition, T&L has been enhanced by the introduction of new forms of pedagogy and the adoption of new technologies to support the process, which lecturers need to be trained to exploit. There is also a growing recognition that students have an important contribution to make in planning how to improve the experience.

This chapter considers how more creative, imaginative and responsive approaches can be adopted to improve teaching and learning in Lesotho's higher education institutions. It also includes a series of policy objectives and policy statements intended to guide the process of strengthening different aspects of T&L.

3.1   Developing Expertise in T&L for Higher Education

Most academics in Lesotho have been hired because of their qualifications and expertise in the discipline that they are expected to teach, but relatively few of them have any training in the art of teaching at tertiary level. By contrast, in other parts of the world HEIs have established centres to promote improvements in academic practice, and it is increasingly common for lecturers to undergo professional training in the approaches and techniques most suitable for teaching at this level. With the introduction of new technologies and media, such training is essential if members of academic staff are to keep abreast of best practice in their profession as HE teachers.

3.1.1   Policy Objective

- *To build capacity and expertise among academic staff members employed by HE providers to deliver a high-quality teaching and learning experience for their students.*

3.1.2   Policy Statements

Primary responsibility for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning lies with each HE provider, which will:

   a) *Devise mechanisms to support the continuous professional development of academic staff members in the principles and practices of teaching at HE level.*

The Government of Lesotho will:

b) *Create a special fund for targeted initiatives to support projects proposed by HE Public Institutions that promote innovation in and enhancement of teaching and learning.*

3.2   Student Involvement

As the consumers of higher education services, students have a major contribution to make in shaping the ways in which those services are delivered. Instead of treating feedback from students merely as uninformed opinion, HE providers need to take such comments seriously and use them to improve the design of curricula and the choice of methods for delivering HE programmes. This is critically important to improve student satisfaction with the service they receive and to promote confidence that the institution's management and academic staff are concerned about their views.

3.2.1   Policy Objective

- *To promote greater responsiveness among HE providers to the needs and perceptions of the students they serve.*

3.2.2   Policy Statements

HE providers in Lesotho should:

a) *Devise mechanisms for involving students in governance and programme planning to improve the quality of the teaching and learning experience.*

The Council on Higher Education will:

b) *Undertake research regularly to assess the quality of the teaching and learning experience, as well as other aspects of the higher education system in Lesotho.*

CHAPTER 4:   Research and Innovation in Higher Education

GOAL	Strengthening research and innovation in higher education institutions

This chapter considers the second of three interrelated functions that form the core mission of higher education. While several proposals have been drafted to strengthen the country's capacity for research and innovation, not enough consideration has been given to the role of higher education institutions in advancing the national agenda. The chapter begins with an overview of the system-level challenges for enhancing research and innovation that this policy is intended to address. The following section includes a number of national initiatives aimed at supporting increased activity at HEIs and other bodies involved with research and innovation. Approaches for including a research dimension in the teaching and learning process are discussed in Sub-section 4.3, which is followed by measures to build local capacity to conduct research at HE Public Institutions. The chapter concludes with policy objectives and statements on supporting research and innovation by HE students.

4.1   System-Level Challenges

Knowledge development is increasingly at the heart of the modern economic enterprise with the ability to control and direct its creation, production, dissemination and application proving to be the key determinants of success and prosperity. Formerly, HEIs around the world enjoyed a virtual monopoly in terms of knowledge creation, but in recent years they have had to contend with the emergence of a range of new knowledge producers, many of them with a commercial focus, developing and applying knowledge as a key economic resource.

Lesotho does not enjoy a reputation for knowledge-based innovation, nor does it have a significant record of investment in the production of new knowledge. It is handicapped by its relatively lowly-skilled work force, a small domestic market and a limited private sector, which is dominated by subsidiaries of international and, particularly, South African businesses (where the creativity, innovation and intellectual property reside). Local HEIs currently do not have a strong research focus, there are few other research-orientated institutions, and the nation has only limited capacity to critically evaluate information, knowledge resources and technologies sourced outside the country.

In the globalised knowledge economy, the disciplines of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) form the core for innovation. However, determining how best to improve general standards in these fields of knowledge is a chicken-and-egg situation. Currently, the majority of school-leavers in Lesotho are not equipped with a sufficient background in STEM subjects. As a result, the HE system struggles to produce graduates with the requisite skills that are fundamental for a knowledge economy. Many of those who graduate from teacher training institutions do not have a satisfactory foundation in STEM subjects to inform and inspire the next generation of learners in primary and secondary

schools. Research and innovation are not, however, confined to STEM subjects, but involve the full range of disciplines in local HEIs and research units. Moreover, while applied research may bring immediate practical or monetary benefits, the importance of basic research should not be overlooked.

4.2   National Policies/Strategies for Research and Innovation

Building Lesotho's capacity to compete in the face of the globalisation of knowledge creation will require coordination and collaboration between a number of Government ministries, national institutions and private-sector entities. In 2006 a process was undertaken to devise a policy framework for addressing national research and innovation needs and priorities.[xviii] This document highlighted the relatively limited facilities in Lesotho, the low output of graduates in relevant disciplines and inadequate resource allocations, all of which contribute to low levels of research and innovation. Among the measures recommended to promote these activities were two key initiatives – the establishment of an Advisory Commission and the endowment of an Innovation Trust Fund. Although these proposals targeted the STEM disciplines, there is a clear need to broaden the focus of national policy to support research and innovation across all sectors and disciplines.

4.2.1   Policy Objectives

- *To put in place national mechanisms for promoting, supporting and coordinating research and innovation activities across different sectors;*

- *To promote more high-quality, original research at HE institutions in Lesotho; and*

- *To encourage academic staff and students to carry out research on issues that will have direct benefits for the people of Lesotho.*

4.2.2   Policy Statements

The Government of Lesotho will give priority to:

    a) Establishing a National Research and Innovation Council;

    b) Devising a national agenda for research and development in priority sectors; and

    c) Establishing a Research and Innovation Fund to be managed by the Council.

In order to preserve the focus on Science & Technology, the Research and Innovation Council will include a separate sub-committee to support activities in STEM disciplines. This approach to promoting research and innovation across all sectors will provide a platform for collaboration between different Ministries, Government-funded research units, HEIs and private-sector entities. It will also eliminate overlap and duplication in the functions assigned to State agencies, capitalise on potential synergies and minimise costs.

4.3   Integrating Research with T&L

The connection between investment in research and any discernible impact on the wider economy is complex and often indirect. However, research carried out in HEIs has a direct bearing on the development of students. This is most obvious at the post-graduate level, though it should also inform the curricula for undergraduates. Exposing all students to the passion and insights of research-active academic staff members can be a special force for

both personal development and professional creativity. These students will be the primary engines for the subsequent transfer of knowledge developed through research to the wider society.

It is for this reason that research must be integrated in the teaching & learning process, and good lecturers already do this as a matter of course. Nevertheless, every HE student should learn in an environment that is informed by research, scholarship and up-to-date knowledge and practice. Among HE providers in Lesotho, however, little reference to recent research is made when teaching undergraduate students.

4.3.1 Policy Objectives

- *To guarantee that the teaching and learning process experienced by HE students is informed by current scholarship and recent research in the discipline being taught; and*

- *To ensure that HE students are exposed to the principles and practices of research in their respective disciplines at all stages of the programmes they are pursuing.*

4.3.2 Policy Statements

Higher education providers in Lesotho will:

a) *Put in place mechanisms to encourage all members of academic staff to keep abreast of recent research in the disciplines and subjects they are teaching; and*

b) *Monitor how such research is being incorporated in the programmes delivered to students.*

4.4 Building Research Capacity in HEIs

At least some academic staff members in local higher education institutions have had only limited experience of designing and conducting original research. In addition, a 2010 review[xix] of Lesotho's research capacity highlighted the absence of national statistical databases and the lack of State assistance to HEIs to enable researchers to forge linkages with existing research networks. In addition, the relatively small size of academic departments in local HEIs makes it difficult to create a critical mass of researchers in specialised fields. For this reason, building domestic capacity to undertake original research will depend upon academics in Lesotho creating linkages with HEIs and research networks outside the country.

4.4.1 Policy Objectives

- *To encourage academic employees in HEIs to take a more active part in research by enhancing the status of such activities;*

- *To provide the infrastructure and facilities required for staff at the HE Public Institutions to engage in high-quality, original research; and*

- *To promote networking among researchers both within Lesotho and between local researchers and those outside the country in order to create linkages and to support the development of critical masses of researchers in specialised fields.*

4.4.2 Policy Statements

The Government of Lesotho, through the National Research Council, will:

a) *Introduce a national scheme to recognise and provide incentives for staff in HE Public Institutions who carry out and publish high-quality, original research;*

b) *Give priority to financing improvements to the infrastructure and facilities for research, particularly in the fields of science and technology, at HE Public Institutions; and*

c) *Support HE Public Institutions to forge inter-institutional research networks.*

HE providers in Lesotho, with support from the Council on Higher Education, should:

d) *Update or develop internal policies that promote, strengthen and regulate research and innovation activities;*

e) *Ensure that academic employees and researchers have essential research skills appropriate to the disciplines they teach;*

f) *Mobilise funding to finance research activities;*

g) *Support networking between academic staff members and researchers in HEIs and other research bodies.*

4.5 Supporting Research and Innovation by Students

Engaging in original research is not simply an activity for academic staff, but is also central to the development of students at HE level. During the course of their studies, students should be trained in the principles and methods of enquiry appropriate to their discipline. In addition, they should be afforded opportunities to gain experience with key research processes.

Innovation in HE institutions can be encouraged by providing appropriate recognition and rewards for the staff and students who take part in such projects or research activities. This is particularly important where the output of student projects or research has the potential for commercial exploitation. In the absence of clear policies on the allocation of profits arising from student projects or entitlements to the rights of any intellectual property created, conflict is likely to arise between different parties. In addition, students will lose interest in contributing to innovation both inside and outside the classroom.

4.5.1 Policy Objectives

- *To promote increased engagement in research and innovation by students in HE institutions; and*

- *To ensure that any profits arising from student projects or rights to any original intellectual property created as a result of student involvement in research activities are fairly allocated.*

4.5.2 Policy Statements

HE providers in Lesotho should:

a) *Create an environment that enables, supports and promotes research and innovation by students;*

b) *Devise mechanisms for encouraging and supporting students to engage in research and innovation; and*

c) *Develop policy framework on the allocation of commercial benefits arising from research and other study-related activities to participating students, staff members and the institution itself.*

CHAPTER 5: Engagement with Wider Society

GOAL	Improving community engagement by higher education institutions

The third key function of higher education is to engage with wider society. The image of higher education institutions as 'ivory towers' existing in isolation from events in the world around them has long been outdated. Most HEIs accept that engaging with wider society is central to their mission and that such collaboration is essential if they are to remain relevant. However, 'engagement' can be defined in a variety of ways, including various interactions with business and industry, with civil society groups, with local communities, with public policy and practice, with artistic, cultural and sporting life, and with international events.

This chapter addresses two aspects of the engagement issue, including: interactions between HEIs and private-sector interests, and linkages with local communities.

5.1 Engaging with Commercial Enterprises

Strong interactions between higher education and industry/enterprise have the potential to play a vital role in enhancing Lesotho's economic competitiveness and growth. Currently, however, there appears to be little or no engagement with local business and industry, though staff from local HEIs do serve in their personal capacities on various professional and government bodies. Clearly, then, there is scope for HEIs to be more pro-active, coherent and consistent in their approach to collaboration with the business and professional community.

Collaboration between industry/enterprise and academic institutions can take many forms, ranging from joint research and knowledge transfer, to the provision of training for employees, to problem-solving and consulting services. Business-academic partnerships can also facilitate high-quality internships and work placements for students, which can provide valuable feedback from potential employers to inform curriculum design.

5.1.1 Policy Objective

- *To promote and facilitate engagement by students and staff members of HE providers with entities in both the public and the private sectors.*

5.1.2 Policy Statement

Higher education providers in Lesotho should:

> *Forge strong working relations with both public- and private-sector bodies.*

5.2 Engaging with Local Communities

Links between HEIs and communities throughout Lesotho should also be strengthened, extended and formalised. Community engagement can take a variety of forms, including educational and cultural activities, as well as projects in specialised disciplines. Partnerships between HEIs and local communities can be important to advance community development, social innovation and income-generation initiatives. Community outreach is also essential in

order to attract non-traditional students whose participation in higher education can be channelled back into the development of their local areas.

Ideally, HE providers should ensure that community engagement is integrated in their annual plans so that it is done in a systematic and sustainable fashion. It should also be coordinated from within institutions to avoid haphazard and *ad hoc* interactions with communities, which can cause confusion and resentment.

5.2.1 Policy Objective

- *To strengthen linkages between HE Institutions and local communities throughout the country.*

5.2.2 Policy Statement

Higher education providers in Lesotho should:

Develop systematic and institutionalised ways of engaging with communities.

CHAPTER 6:   Adapting Higher Education for a Changing Society

GOAL	Aligning higher education programmes with national priorities

Education in general and higher education in particular, is an enabling factor for individual growth, societal progress and cultural development. In broad terms, education helps people to understand the world in which they live, to find a productive role for themselves in it and to pass on their knowledge, beliefs and values to others. However, the changes that have taken place in Basotho society over recent decades challenge some of these traditional notions of higher education. While public expectations of the benefits of higher education may be unrealistic, they do reflect the tensions between a country's HE system and perceptions in the wider society during periods of rapid social change.

This chapter considers what the country's HE sub-sector needs to do in order to adapt to social and economic changes. The first section presents policies to ensure closer alignment between the output of the HE system and the requirements of the domestic labour market. This is followed by policies for improving the interface between higher education and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training system, as well as the world of work that students enter after graduation. In an increasingly-specialised labour market, HE graduates need a broad-based general education and the capacity to continue learning throughout their lives in order to address the unknown challenges that will arise in the future. Measures for ensuring that HE graduates have these generic skills are presented in Section 6.4. The concluding section of this chapter considers how the HE sub-sector can address the HIV and AIDS pandemic, which has had a profound impact on all levels of society in Lesotho.

6.1   Higher Education and Economic Development

In an increasingly-globalised economy, all nations seek to enhance their productivity and competitiveness. In terms of developmental stages, there is evidence to suggest that Lesotho is falling behind neighbouring countries whose economies have moved towards more efficient production processes and increased product quality. By contrast, Lesotho's economy is characterised as 'factor-driven', relying on its factor endowments of natural resources and a largely unskilled labour force. [xx]

There is no single approach that can be advocated as a panacea for national competitiveness. What might work well for one country may not address the economic and social needs in another. This is particularly true when considering the role of higher education and training systems in improving national competitiveness. However, higher education institutions in Lesotho have been constrained in planning for a changing labour market by the absence of a national *Human Resources Development (HRD) Strategy*. A national HRD Strategy will set out broad macro-level goals for skills development and identify specific sectors of the economy where there are existing or projected shortages of qualified staff.

In making the transition from a factor-driven to an efficiency-driven economy, Lesotho needs more competent graduates to fill mid-level posts in an increasingly complex and

technology-driven labour market. The nation's HEIs need to look beyond the disciplines traditionally taught and diversify their programmes to address growth areas of the economy where there are current skill shortages. This analysis implies that, rather than focusing on bachelor-level graduates, Lesotho's higher education system should be producing considerably more certificate- and diploma-holders in a variety of technical and vocational fields.

6.1.1   Policy Objectives

- *To guarantee that the output of the higher education system is aligned with the requirements of the country's developing economy;*

- *To facilitate planning for the future development of the higher education system so that it is aligned with national development needs; and*

- *To improve the employment prospects of graduates by ensuring that the knowledge and skills they have acquired through participation in higher education are in demand by employers.*

6.1.2   Policy Statements

The Government of Lesotho will:

a) *Formulate a National Human Resources' Development Strategy to articulate key areas of focus for the country's human resource base.*

Pending the publication of the National HRD Strategy, the Government of Lesotho will:

b) *Review the criteria used to allocate financial assistance to students to ensure the appropriate balance between degree and pre-degree programmes; and*

c) *Develop policies that will ensure more students enrol for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), as well as for programmes in the 'hard sciences', technology, engineering and mathematics.*

6.2   Improving the Interface between HE and TVET

The development and adoption of the provisional Qualifications Framework for Lesotho (QFL) created a platform for transforming access to education and training opportunities, as well as facilitating the transfer and progression of students through an integrated system. However, this did not take place as anticipated; general and academically-oriented education, including higher education, and the TVET sub-sector continue to operate as parallel systems, with little interaction between the two. However, the dividing line between TVET and general education has become increasingly blurred, particularly at higher levels. Many other countries have devised programmes of Further Education that span the divide, in order to provide opportunities for an increasing number of secondary school leavers who cannot be accommodated in HEIs to develop work-oriented skills.

Improving the interface between the HE sub-sector and other forms of post-secondary education and training will have many benefits for Lesotho. By enhancing articulation between programmes and by introducing mechanisms for credit accumulation and transfer,

prospective participants will have greater mobility. Opening up routes to higher education and advanced TVET for the many adults who have developed competencies through their work or other life experience will also go a long way towards meeting the challenge of upskilling the nation's labour force.

6.2.1 Policy Objectives

- *To provide greater flexibility for Basotho who wish to pursue education and/or training at post-secondary level; and*

- *To improve articulation between the different sub-systems for providing education and training in Lesotho.*

6.2.2 Policy Statement

In collaboration with the Technical & Vocational Training Department in the Ministry of Education and Training, as well as with HE providers, the Council on Higher Education will:

> *Develop a national framework for the assessment and recognition of prior learning.*

6.3 Improving the Interface between HE and Work after Graduation

The phenomenon of graduate unemployment is relatively recent in Lesotho, but it is nevertheless alarming. Not only are these former students unable to earn a living (or to repay their study loans) while they remain unemployed, but the country does not realise any return on its investment in their education. In part, the phenomenon can be attributed to the global economic downturn and its impact on Government spending and business activity in Lesotho. However, it is also an indication of the mismatch between the output of HEIs and the labour market. Improved mechanisms to plan for the country's human resource requirements will alleviate much of this problem in future. Nevertheless, local HE providers in Lesotho need to become more proactive in establishing linkages with employers and in responding to the changing work environment by adapting their curricula, syllabi and teaching methods to enhance the employability of their graduates.

Around the world, the nature of employment is changing, as jobs become increasingly skill-intensive, and this trend is set to continue. Future employment opportunities are unlikely to be uniform across occupational groups, and those with higher skill levels will have a competitive advantage. A country's capacity to create jobs – both through indigenous enterprises and by means of foreign investment – is predicated on the quality of its workforce. For this reason, Lesotho's HE system needs to produce graduates with 21st Century skills in order to:

- Create a workforce capable of dealing with the demands of the technology-mediated workplace; and

- Attract value-added investment and support the creation of jobs for highly-skilled workers.

6.3.1 Preparing Graduates for the Workplace.

Increasingly, employers are expecting graduates to be able to hit the ground running with minimal orientation, though such expectations are often unrealistic. However, even when additional training is provided, concerns have been expressed by at least some employers in Lesotho that graduates have difficulty adapting to the demands of the workplace. Recent graduates may struggle to apply specialised, theoretical knowledge acquired in an academic environment to the practical realities of business or government affairs. Others may find it difficult to adjust to the change in their role from students to employees.

6.3.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To obtain feedback from employers about the shortcomings of the output of the HE system in Lesotho and about problems that graduates have integrating themselves in the workplace; and*

- *To ease the transition for graduates from the environment in a higher education institution to the world of work.*

6.3.1.2 Policy Statements

The Council on Higher Education will:

a) *Identify and document issues relating to graduate employment; and*

b) *Include representatives of employers and professional bodies in the process of HE programme review and accreditation, in order to ensure that curricula and learning approaches inculcate the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for different working environments.*

Higher education providers in Lesotho should:

c) *Carry out tracer studies or other types of research to investigate issues related to the employment of their graduates; and*

d) *Improve the mechanisms they use to interface with employers for the benefit of their students.*

6.3.2 Work Attachments

Some undergraduate programmes offered by HEIs in Lesotho already include an element of work attachment, placement or internship, but more opportunities need to be provided. There is evidence to suggest that such attachments are beneficial for students and are welcomed by employers, especially when the placements are well-planned and the students are appropriately supervised and/or mentored. Nevertheless, it can be difficult to find suitable placements for large numbers of students. In principle, however, the Government of Lesotho encourages greater use of this approach.

6.3.2.1 Policy Objective

- *To ensure that higher education students are adequately prepared for the working environment through practical experience in the workplace.*

6.3.2.2   Policy Statements

The Government of Lesotho will:

> a) *Introduce an incentive scheme to encourage employers to facilitate work attachments by students pursuing programmes of TVET or higher education.*

The Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee of the Council on Higher Education will:

> b) *Promote quality criteria that prioritise relevant practical experience, work attachments, internships and/or volunteer activities when evaluating HE programmes for accreditation.*

6.3.3   Promoting Entrepreneurship

Historically, graduates of HEIs in Lesotho have had little difficulty finding jobs in the public or private sectors. As a result, relatively few took the risk of starting up their own small, medium or micro-enterprises (SMMEs), at least until they had gained some practical work experience. However, with the decline in opportunities for employment in the formal sector, self-employment and entrepreneurship can provide graduates with viable options for earning a living.

6.3.3.1   Policy Objectives

- *To re-orient graduates of HEIs to create employment for themselves and others, rather than expecting to be given a job; and*

- *To ensure that HE students have the skills and aptitudes needed to start up a successful SMME.*

6.3.3.2   Policy Statements

Higher education providers in Lesotho should:

> a) *Develop innovative ways of promoting and supporting entrepreneurship among their students.*

The Council on Higher Education will:

> b) *Facilitate research to inform strategies in the area of entrepreneurship development by the HE sub-sector.*

The Government of Lesotho will:

> c) *Devise ways of enabling recent graduates to access capital so that they can start up their own businesses and create employment for others.*

6.4   Promoting Lifelong Learning

Higher education is not only about training human resources for the labour market. Placing too much emphasis on the economic benefits of HE and relying too heavily on manpower planning approaches have a number of drawbacks. First, most national human resource development plans aim to provide short- to medium-term projections that are typically valid

for no more than ten years. When the global business environment changes, this has a differential impact on different sectors of the national economy, with the resulting danger that graduates in particular fields can no longer be absorbed into the workforce. Second, providing increasingly specialised courses creates the risk of producing graduates who are unable to adapt to new production practices, especially in technological disciplines where rapid change is the norm. Finally, focusing exclusively on the economic rationale for supporting HE tends to disadvantage the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, where the externalities are not immediately evident.

With the increasingly rapid pace of change in the modern world, Lesotho's welfare is dependent upon producing graduates who are able not only to perform competently in the current working environment, but who can also adapt to the challenges and opportunities of an unknown future. For this reason, a balance must be struck between the economic demand for the HE system to train human resources to fill existing gaps in the labour market and the need to inculcate the aptitudes and capacity for graduates to continue learning throughout their lives.

6.4.1 Policy Objectives

- *To preserve the range of choice for prospective students, by maintaining a balance across the HE system as a whole between programmes targeted at gaps in the labour market and broad-based education in different disciplines; and*

- *To ensure that HE graduates have the generic skills to adapt to future challenges and opportunities and to be effective lifelong learners.*

6.4.2 Policy Statements

Higher education providers in Lesotho should:

a) *Incorporate learning outcomes related to generic skills in undergraduate and taught post-graduate programmes.*

The Council on Higher Education, through its Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee, will:

b) *Monitor the mix of programmes offered by local HE providers to ensure balance across the sub-sector.*

6.5 Higher Education and the HIV and AIDS Pandemic

Another key issue that must be taken into account is the impact of HIV and AIDS on many aspects of social and economic life in Lesotho. The multi-faceted nature of the pandemic requires effective responses at national, sectoral and institutional levels. First and foremost, each HE provider has a duty of care to its staff and students, which can be met by putting in place mechanisms to ensure awareness and prevention, and by making arrangements for them to access testing and treatment services. In terms of manpower planning, the impact of HIV and AIDS must be factored into any projections of the national requirements for skilled human resources and for the development of the HE system. Although increasing numbers

of HIV positive people are able to access treatment, more investment in higher education will be needed to compensate for increased mortality and resulting deficits in the workforce.

6.5.1 Policy Objectives

- *To promote the health and welfare of students and staff members at HEIs; and*

- *To guarantee that the work force and student population within HEIs are HIV and AIDS competent.*

6.5.2 Policy Statement

Each Higher education provider will:

> *Develop and implement comprehensive HIV and AIDS policies and programmes for both staff and students.*

CHAPTER 7:   New Information Technologies – New Approaches

GOAL | Harnessing new information and communications technologies in higher education

One approach to solving the problems currently faced by Lesotho's HE system lies in going back to established ways of doing things and getting the basics right. The imagined solution would seem to lie in enhancing the quality of lectures, providing all students with prescribed textbooks, increasing the number of tutorials and practical sessions, and making available adequate library facilities. While all of these are important elements of the traditional higher education institution, such an approach does not take account of influences that are shaping the evolution of this sub-sector outside Lesotho.

In recent decades, higher education institutions around the world have undergone a number of significant transformations. To date, however, local HE providers appear to have been only minimally influenced by the changes that have taken place outside the country's borders. In an increasingly globalised market for higher education, the nation's HE system cannot afford to ignore these developmental trends. The process of formulating this policy provided a unique opportunity to reconsider the models currently used for organising and delivering HE programmes, to discard out-dated approaches and to adopt new ways of doing things in order to address future challenges.

This chapter starts with a discussion of open, distance and e-learning approaches, which offer a cost-effective means of making HE programmes more flexible and capable of accommodating students from a variety of backgrounds. The following section emphasizes the importance of upgrading information and communications technologies at HEIs. Policies to promote greater use of Open Educational Resources and to update the regime for copyright and intellectual property rights are also articulated. The concluding section of this chapter proposes the establishment of a national digital repository in order to provide students and staff at HEIs with online materials for study and research purposes.

7.1   Increasing the Flexibility of Provision

A direct consequence of the increased importance placed on higher education is the pressure that the system is facing globally to meet rising demand. This is particularly so in countries of the Global South where there has been a long-standing culture of elitism at this level of education.

In the coming decades, the delivery of higher education in Lesotho must be characterised by greater flexibility and innovation. People learn in a variety of ways and settings, and the higher education system needs to have sufficient flexibility to support and accredit alternatives to the traditional, campus-based approaches that have been used in the past. This will become progressively more important not only to accommodate increased demand

from school-leavers, but also to attract students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse needs.

One option for increasing the flexibility of HE provision is greater use of open, distance & e-learning (ODeL) approaches. In addition to facilitating greater access to studies at this level, particularly for non-traditional students, ODeL methods tend to involve a more learner-centred approach that allows students greater choice in terms of the timing and organisation of the learning process. ODeL approaches also hold out the potential to reduce unit costs by achieving economies of scale.

7.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To support the transformation of HE Public Institutions in order to keep abreast of international trends; and*

- *To enhance the competitiveness of the HE sub-sector in Lesotho in an increasingly globalised market for higher education.*

7.1.2 Policy Statements

Ultimate responsibility for determining the direction of future developments and securing the funding needed for them lies with the management of each HE provider.

Nevertheless, the Government of Lesotho will:

> *Mobilise resources to provide additional financial support and seek technical expertise to enable HE Public Institutions to engage in a process of transformation to update their operations in line with global trends.*

7.2 Access to Information and Communications Technologies

One of the most important changes in the global environment for higher education has been brought about by the introduction of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). In recent years, there has been a growing trend of incorporating these technologies, both within and beyond the classroom, to support and mediate the learning process and to provide access via the Internet to rapidly burgeoning information, resources, and communities of practices available through global knowledge networks. The range of new educational opportunities and methods made possible by ICTs has significant potential to contribute to improvements in the quality of the teaching and learning experience. Increasingly, e-learning options are transforming the way in which lecturers perform their duties in mainstream HEIs, as well as the way in which students learn.

Although many HEIs in Lesotho have attempted to keep abreast of these changes, institutional computer networks are unable to cope with the demand from lecturers, researchers and students. In many cases, staff members and students do not have access to basic equipment, institutional intranet services are limited or non-existent, internet bandwidth is inadequate to support all users, and institutional policies reflect limited commitment to effective integration of ICTs in education. These factors have led to continued dependence on traditional teaching and learning methods, thus removing the imperative for effective integration of ICTs into educational programmes.

7.2.1 Policy Objectives

- *To enable all HE Public Institutions in Lesotho to upgrade their ICT facilities in order to enhance and support teaching and learning, research and other functions; and*

- *To devise and implement strategies for HE Public Institutions to make effective use of ICTs in order to improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of their operations.*

7.2.2 Policy Statements

The Ministry of Education and Training will:

a) *Liaise with the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology to review national policies and strategies for ICT and Internet connectivity in order to ensure that they make provision for ongoing improvements in access for academic staff and students at HEIs;*

b) *Engage with key telecommunications providers to ensure that high quality, broadband Internet connections are made available at affordable prices to HE providers and their students, both on campus and off campus in support of ODeL students; and*

c) *Coordinate with HE institutions to use economies of scale in purchasing to provide affordable access to a wide range of ICT hardware and software.*

Higher education providers in Lesotho should:

d) *Upgrade their ICT infrastructure in order to facilitate access for both academic staff members and students to the Internet;*

e) *Develop clear strategies to integrate ICTs into educational and research activities in ways that improve both quality and cost-effectiveness;*

f) *Adopt internal policies that encourage optimal use of ICT infrastructure and e-learning options to enhance the quality of educational and research experiences.*

7.3   Open Educational Resources in Higher Education

The globalization of higher education and the increased use of ICTs at this level have brought new inequities, in particular by helping "… to concentrate ownership of publishers, databases, and other key resources in the hands of the strongest universities and some multinational companies, located almost exclusively in the developed world."[xxi] At the same time, digitization of information in all media has introduced significant challenges regarding how to deal with issues of intellectual property and copyright. Copyright regimes, and their associated business models, that worked effectively prior to the development of ICTs are increasingly under threat and, in some cases, are rapidly becoming redundant.

One response to these changes has been the Open Educational Resources (OERs) movement, which has been popularised by UNESCO and the Commonwealth of Learning. Given the challenges faced by higher education institutions, particularly in Lesotho, OERs have

tremendous potential to contribute to improving the quality and effectiveness of education. The benefits of OERs revolve around four linked possibilities to:

- Reduce the cost of accessing study materials;
- Enable educational materials to be adapted to local contexts;
- Encourage students to take a more active part in the learning process;
- Build local capacity for more effective instruction.

One of the most cost-effective ways of enhancing the quality of teaching & learning is to harness the potential of OERs. Over time, those involved in OER development can engage in communities of practice that support ongoing quality improvement and quality assurance.

7.3.1 Policy Objectives

- *To enable students to access high-quality learning materials by promoting greater use of Open Educational Resources by HE providers in Lesotho; and*

- *To encourage academic staff members and researchers in HEIs to contribute to the creation of intellectual property for use by their own students as well as for sharing with others outside the country.*

7.3.2 Policy Statements

The Ministry of Education and Training will:

a) *Liaise with the ministry responsible for intellectual property rights (IPR) and copyright to ensure that existing policies, legislation and practices in the public service are in line with best practices in digital and online publishing for higher education; and*

b) *Help all higher education stakeholders to understand issues surrounding IPR, as well as how these are being challenged and re-shaped by the rapid digitization and online sharing of information and resources.*

Higher Education institutions should:

c) *Put in place cost-effective mechanisms for facilitating the identification, adaptation, creation and use of Open Educational Resources.*

7.4   Making available Digital Resources for Research & Study

Traditionally, a well-resourced library at a higher education institution has been central to support teaching and learning, as well as research activities. In Lesotho, however, few institutional libraries have sufficient funds to provide a wide selection of books, maintain an up-to-date collection of academic journals or ensure study places for all students. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that funding from the Government is spread thinly to provide library resources in a number of HE Public Institutions, with consequent duplication and the curtailment of opportunities to exploit economies of scale.

Fortunately, digital technologies are in the process of transforming educational publishing and the provision of library services, and Lesotho is well-placed to take advantage of the

reduced costs that these new systems can offer. ICTs have also opened up opportunities for both lecturers and students to access a wealth of electronic resources that exist on the worldwide web or in various digital repositories. This is particularly important in higher education contexts where the scarcity of resources for learning and research poses serious quality challenges.

7.4.1 Policy Objectives

- *To enable academic staff members, researchers and students at HE Public Institutions, as well as officials in the public service, to access a wide range of current literature, research resources and learning materials in their disciplines; and*

- *To facilitate access to these resources by users throughout the country in a cost-effective manner.*

7.4.2 Policy Statement

The Ministry of Education and Training will:

Work with higher education providers to determine the most cost-effective ways in which to facilitate the organization, electronic management and sharing of digital resources.

CHAPTER 8: Access to Higher Education

GOAL	Improving access to higher education in Lesotho

This chapter aims to estimate how many places will be required to accommodate prospective higher education students in the future and considers the demographic sources of such demand. It also considers ways in which the HE system can be made more equitable by broadening access to those from economically-disadvantaged groups and by systematically addressing other barriers to participation.

8.1 Future Demand for Higher Education

Future demand for higher education places in Lesotho will come primarily from five sources:

- **School-Leavers** – This group has traditionally provided the majority of new entrants to higher education institutions and it is expected to do so into the future.

- **Delayed Entrants** – Many school-leavers who do not achieve high enough marks in the COSC examination prepare to re-sit it in subsequent years in order to obtain a place at an HEI.

- **Those Upgrading their Qualifications** – Another category of potential students is made up of those who successfully completed a certificate or diploma programme at a college-level HEI and wish to upgrade their qualifications to a bachelor's degree.

- **Mature-Age Entrants** – There are also many adults working in the private and public sectors who wish to return to education in order to obtain advanced qualifications, to keep abreast of changes in their professions or to change their careers.

- **International Students** – The demand for higher education places still outstrips the supply in most countries, and Lesotho is well-placed to recruit more international students.

The demand for places in HEIs is expected to more than double over the next ten years. In addition to the categories outlined above, there are also very large numbers of young people who complete secondary education but fail to meet the standards required for entry to higher education institutions.

8.1.1 Policy Objective

- *To increase the number of places available and to broaden the range of programme offerings for Basotho who wish to pursue higher education.*

8.1.2 Policy Statements

The Government of Lesotho will:

a) *Expand and strengthen the capacity of existing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions to accommodate additional students/ trainees and to offer a variety of work-related programmes at post-secondary certificate and diploma levels;*

b) *Investigate the feasibility of establishing additional HE Public Institutions in different parts of the country;*

c) *Create an environment that encourages private-sector investment in the provision of high-quality TVET and HE programmes; and*

d) *Maintain existing partnerships between Government bodies, non-governmental organisations, international development agencies and the private sector, as well as forging new ones, to support improvements in Lesotho's HE sub-sector.*

8.2 Widening Access to and Participation in Higher Education

In common with other countries around the globe, the Government of Lesotho made a commitment to achieve the goals of the *Education for All (EFA)* initiative. Two of these targets – *access* and *equity* – are of particular relevance in the context of Lesotho's development. Traditionally, the debate on these issues has revolved around three related measures:

- Equality of Opportunity,
- Equality of Participation,
- Equality of Achievement.

Currently, most HE providers in Lesotho admit prospective students on the basis of their results in the COSC or other standardised examinations. Likewise, financial assistance from the State for prospective students is awarded on the basis of academic merit alone, without considering the financial circumstances of applicants or their families. This approach is superficially fair, because it appears to ensure equality of opportunity by selecting candidates on the basis of common standards. However, it is based on the assumption that all applicants are competing on a level playing field, and this is clearly not the case.

8.2.1 Policy Objectives

- *To ensure that each and every Mosotho, regardless of his or her economic circumstances or other characteristics, has an equal chance to participate and succeed in higher education; and*

- *To increase transparency and restore public confidence in the system of allocating State financial assistance to higher education students.*

8.2.2 Policy Statements

The Council on Higher Education will:

    a) Research issues of equity and access in relation to higher education in Lesotho; and

    b) Monitor participation and achievement in higher education by different groups or categories of Basotho.

The Government of Lesotho will:

    c) Ensure that mechanisms to provide financial assistance from the State to HE students are equitable and transparent.

The Government of Lesotho, through the funding agency, will:

    d) Devise a scheme for giving preference to economically-disadvantaged candidates for financial assistance to study with a higher education provider. Any such scheme will take into account each applicant's individual financial circumstances, as well as those of near relations.

8.3 Overcoming other Barriers to Access

Central to the nation's shared vision for higher education is the concept of equitable access. At present, however, the HE system is structured in ways that inhibit participation by different categories of prospective students. Access to higher education in Lesotho is constrained by a number of factors, including:

- Difficulty of obtaining information and applying to HEIs,
- Geographical centralisation of HEIs,
- Insufficient knowledge and skills to make a success of HE,
- Restrictions for prospective adult students,
- Limited accessibility for people living with disabilities,
- Inflexible rules for HE programmes,
- Limited number of places in local HEIs (see Section 8.1 above),
- Not enough bursaries/loans (see Section 12.4),
- Limited range of programme offerings (see Section 12.5.2).

8.3.1 Providing Information and Facilitating Application Procedures

Most school-leavers in Lesotho do not have sufficient information about the differences between local higher education providers, the programmes they offer, the entry requirements for different programmes and the types of careers that graduates can pursue. In addition, many prospective students apply for admission to several HEIs so that they can choose their preferred programme from the variety of places they are offered. This can be costly and time-consuming, and it also complicates admission processes for HEIs.

8.3.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To ensure equality of access to information about different HE providers in Lesotho and the programmes they offer, and to facilitate its dissemination to secondary schools, career guidance teachers, learners in senior secondary, parents and members of the public; and*

- *To offer prospective students greater choice and flexibility by enabling them to apply for programmes with a number of different HE providers.*

8.3.1.2 Policy Statements

The Council on Higher Education will, for the time being:

a) *Compile and disseminate basic information on registered HE providers in Lesotho and the various programmes they offer.*

HE providers in Lesotho should explore the feasibility of:

b) *Establishing a common application system to simplify and speed up the processes involved in applying for admission, screening applicants to ensure that they meet the entry requirements, selecting them and sending out offers of places on particular programmes; and*

c) *Integrating the common application system with the system for awarding financial assistance from the State to HE students.*

8.3.2 Decentralisation of HEIs

A number of HE providers maintain a presence outside Maseru. Despite these efforts to bring higher education to other parts of the country, the vast majority of HE places are at institutions in Maseru or at the National University of Lesotho campus in Roma. The geographical centralisation of higher education institutions makes access difficult and expensive for prospective students who live in other districts. Although the financial assistance available from the State covers some of these additional costs, students living away from home may experience difficulties that their local counterparts do not have to face.

8.3.2.1 Policy Objective

- *To ensure that Basotho living in all parts of the country can access opportunities to participate in higher education.*

8.3.2.2 Policy Statements

HE providers should:

a) *Strengthen their decentralised programmes; and*

b) *Where a HE provider does not offer decentralised programmes, consider introducing such programmes.*

The Government of Lesotho will:

c) *Encourage additional private-sector providers to make their programmes available at venues in under-served areas of the country.*

8.3.3 Ensuring that Students have the Knowledge and Skills to make a Success of Higher Education

HE programmes in Lesotho last roughly a year longer than in many other countries to obtain qualifications at a comparable level, and this indicates that entry requirements are already lower than the international norm. The extra year is used to compensate for the fact that school-leavers in Lesotho have only completed the equivalent of O-Levels in the British system, while many other Commonwealth countries require entrants to higher education to have completed A-Level or equivalent studies. Although it is not a stated policy, many HEIs in Lesotho have devised compensatory programmes for first-year students to ensure that they are adequately prepared for higher level studies. However, using the resources of HEIs to upgrade the knowledge and skill levels of secondary school leavers is not cost-effective, particularly when these are heavily subsidised by the State.

The solution to this problem lies in restructuring the secondary education system so that those who wish to pursue HE can gain the knowledge and skills they need before leaving school. Various options for extending the senior cycle of secondary education beyond the COSC are currently under discussion and, in the long term, it is expected that the majority of school-leavers entering higher education will follow this route. At the same time, the secondary education curriculum cannot be re-oriented exclusively for the purpose of preparing learners for HE, as the majority of school-leavers may never progress to this level. Alternative opportunities and pathways must be devised to enable school-leavers with a Junior Certificate, a GCE or a COSC Pass to pursue further education and training.

8.3.3.1 Policy Objectives

- *To ensure that students who enter higher education have sufficient general knowledge and skills to progress and succeed in their studies;*

- *To enable students to make a successful transition from secondary school to higher education, thus decreasing failure and drop-out rates; and*

- *To ensure that the process of preparing students for higher education is carried out in an efficient and cost-effective manner.*

8.3.3.2 Policy Statements

Making the transition to a new system of preparing students for entry to higher education will involve intensive discussions and planning between all stakeholders, and these changes can only be effected over a period of several years.

The Government of Lesotho will:

a) *Continue to devise and implement plans for improving the secondary education system; and*

b) *In the interim, encourage various education providers to offer transition programmes to assist students who wish to pursue higher education.*

Higher education providers should:

c) *Collaborate with the primary and secondary education sub-sectors in initiatives to review and reform the curricula and syllabi in order to ensure that they are congruent with the requirements of the HE sub-sector; and*

d) *Devise cost-effective means to facilitate the transition of students from secondary schools to higher education.*

8.3.4 Removing Restrictions for Prospective Adult Students

Another aspect of the access issue is the potential for entry requirements to act as barriers to participation in HE education for adults who wish to further their studies. In many cases, these adults have not achieved the minimum marks required of school-leavers. Suggesting that they repeat the COSC or equivalent examinations in order to upgrade their marks is unhelpful. HEIs in other parts of the world exempt mature-age entrants from entry requirements, though they may be required to demonstrate their general knowledge and ability to cope with the demands of higher education.

Adults may also be constrained from taking part in HE by the attitudes and policies of their employers in relation to such studies. In most cases, a better-educated workforce will provide both direct and indirect benefits for employers. Progressive arrangements for study leave and study loans can go a long way towards overcoming such barriers to access for employees, as well as providing positive returns on the investment made by the employer.

8.3.4.1 Policy Objectives

- *To open up access to higher education for prospective students who are not recent school-leavers but who are capable of making a success of their studies at this level; and*

- *To facilitate access for employees who wish to pursue further education and training.*

8.3.4.1 Policy Statements

Private sector employers should:

a) *Develop and implement HR policies that enable and support employees who wish to further their education.*

HE providers should:

b) *Devise non-traditional entry routes for their programmes, consistent with the maintenance of quality and academic standards.*

The framework devised for the assessment and recognition of prior learning (see Section 6.2 of this document) will also facilitate access for adult students.

8.3.5 Enhancing Accessibility for People with Disabilities

The UN *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* was adopted in 2006 and ratified by the Lesotho Parliament in December 2008. Article 5.2 of the *Convention* reads as follows:

> *States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.*

Unfortunately, it appears as if the situation in some local HEIs contravenes Lesotho's commitments in terms of this *Convention*. Many existing buildings are inaccessible for the physically disabled, few concessions are made for blind and deaf students, and specialised support is not available for those who require it. As a result, those living with disabilities face numerous barriers that must be overcome if they wish to take part in higher education.

8.3.5.1 Policy Objectives

- *To safeguard the right of equitable access to higher education for people with disabilities; and*

- *To guarantee that Lesotho lives up to its international obligations, specifically in relation to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.*

8.3.5.2 Policy Statements

Higher education institutions will:

a) *Ensure that all new construction projects are based on the principles of universal design or incorporate other features to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities; and*

b) *Prioritise in their programmes of capital expenditure the retro-fitting of existing structures with features to provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities.*

The Council on Higher Education will:

c) *Monitor the efforts of HE institutions, both public and private, to accommodate students with disabilities.*

The Government of Lesotho will:

d) *Revise the criteria for student financial assistance to enable those with disabilities to avail themselves of up-to-date assistive technologies in order to facilitate their participation in HE programmes.*

8.3.6 More Flexible Rules for HE Programmes

Many programmes offered by HE providers in Lesotho follow what is referred to as the 'silo' system, where students are locked into a particular combination of courses until they complete the prescribed programme for the qualification they are pursuing. If a student wishes to switch to another programme after one or two years of study, they must start

again at the bottom of the silo – Year One – and follow the predefined pathway towards completion. Critics of the 'silo' system argue that it is unnecessarily inflexible, restricting students who need to interrupt their programme of studies, switch to another programme or transfer to another HEI in response to changing circumstances.

8.3.6.1 Policy Objectives

- *To promote greater flexibility and openness for those taking part in higher education; and*

- *To enhance horizontal and vertical integration in the country's higher education system.*

8.3.6.2 Policy Statements

Higher education providers should:

a) *Develop academic policies that provide alternative routes for progression and transfer between programmes or modes of study within the same institution;*

b) *Facilitate credit accumulation and transfer with other higher education providers, consistent with the maintenance of standards and coherence between programmes; and*

CHAPTER 9: Configuring the Higher Education System

GOAL	Diversifying provision of higher education in Lesotho

This chapter considers the overall configuration of Lesotho's higher education system and how it should be re-structured to meet the nation's needs. It also outlines policies for dealing with the growing phenomenon of cross-border provision of higher education programmes.

9.1 Current Context

Lesotho needs a pluralistic higher education system, with different types of providers capable of meeting the diversity of learning and development needs in the country. As UNESCO advises:

> *To meet the rapidly increasing demand for higher education and research in Africa, there is an urgent need for differentiated institutions – ranging from research universities to polytechnics and technical colleges, with diversified programmes within each institution – to cater for different types of learners as well as the needs of the country.[xxii]*

Currently, several different entities provide higher education programmes in Lesotho. While the variety of HE programmes available offers prospective students a wide range of choice, a number of concerns have been raised about the overall configuration of the nation's HE system.

- A number of these HE providers are quite small – with fewer than 500 students – which makes it difficult to achieve a critical mass of academic staff to ensure quality in teaching & learning and research activities.

- It is neither feasible nor cost-effective for smaller institutions to implement the governance structures prescribed in the Higher Education Act.

- There is a degree of overlap and duplication in the fields of study offered by different HE Public Institutions, which increases the cost of providing these programmes and may result in a waste of State resources.

- Programmes offered by HE Public Institutions do not articulate with one another, with the result that graduates from college-level bodies must repeat a number of years of study in order to qualify for a higher award. The time it takes such students to achieve an ordinary bachelor's degree can be as much as seven years – twice as long as in many other countries.

In addition to the concerns outlined above, there are not enough places to meet current and future demand for higher education in Lesotho.

9.2   Merger of Higher Education Public Institutions

Diversity is a positive characteristic of Lesotho's HE system because prospective students are offered greater choice in terms of programmes and providers. Likewise, competition is arguably a healthy way to ensure that no institution can abuse its monopoly over certain types of programme to cut corners and provide sub-standard services.

However, given the competing demands for State funding, the country cannot afford to continue supporting the current configuration of HE Public Institutions. Section 20 of the Higher Education Act, 2004, confers powers on the Minister of Education to effect mergers between HE Public Institutions or between a sub-division of one HEI and another HE Public Institution.

9.2.1 Policy Objectives

- *To ensure the most cost-effective use of State resources for the provision of higher education in Lesotho;*

- *To strengthen institutional capacity through the creation of a number of centres of excellence in different disciplines; and*

- *To preserve diversity in the sub-sector by maintaining an appropriate balance between different types of HE providers with different missions.*

9.2.2 Policy Statements

The Council on Higher Education will:

a) *Identify areas of significant overlap or duplication in the provision of higher education in such disciplines and fields of study as CHE may determine; and*

b) *Advise the Minister of Education and Training on possible mergers of HE Public Institutions or their sub-divisions.*

The Government of Lesotho will:

c) *Place all HE Public Institutions that currently reside under different ministries on a statutory footing in order to ensure their full compliance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, 2004.*

9.3   Globalization of HE and Cross-Border Provision

In 2002, Lesotho acceded to the World Trade Organisation's *General Agreement on Trade in Services*, which liberalised the regime with regard to the cross-border provision of higher education as a way of meeting the growing demand for places. For many years, Basotho have registered for studies with publicly-funded HEIs in South Africa that deliver programmes through open and distance learning methods to students living in Lesotho. In addition, an increasing number of for-profit bodies are entering the local market for higher education, offering courses accredited by various bodies in South Africa and further afield.

International institutions and cross-border providers are subject to the same rules and standards as any other entity that wishes to offer HE programmes in Lesotho. However, Article 7 of the SADC *Protocol on Education and Training* binds Lesotho to work towards the development of comparable standards in higher education among countries in the region,[xxiii] while the Arusha Convention, concluded in 1981 and updated in 2002, commits Lesotho to recognising HE qualifications awarded by accredited institutions in other African countries.[xxiv] The definitions in the Higher Education Act, 2004, make no provision for publicly-funded HE Institutions outside Lesotho to be treated any differently than other cross-border providers of HE programmes.

The situation with HE Private Institutions is, however, a bit different. It is important to ensure that private-sector providers of HE, including cross-border and virtual learning institutions, offer relevant programmes and produce high quality graduates as opposed to focusing only on profits. Consumers in Lesotho also need to be protected from unscrupulous or fly-by-night operators offering courses leading to qualifications that are not internationally recognised. For these reasons, the existing regulatory framework provided in the Higher Education Act, 2004, must be implemented rigorously in this regard, and designated officials must ensure that such institutions are managed effectively and comply with the laws of the land.

9.3.1 Policy Objectives

- *To ensure that HE Private Institutions operating in Lesotho meet minimum standards in terms of institutional capacity and programme quality; and*

- *To safeguard the general public against unregistered HE providers.*

9.3.2 Policy Statements

In terms of Part VI of the Higher Education Act, 2004, the Registrar of HEIs has primary responsibility for registering HE Private Institutions, as well as pursuing unregistered HE providers and investigating complaints against them.

The Registrar of HEIs will, in consultation with Council on Higher Education:

a) *Monitor the higher education sub-sector to rid it of unregistered HE providers; and*

b) *Put in place mechanisms for members of the public to lodge complaints against cross-border providers and HE Private Institutions in Lesotho.*

CHAPTER 10:   Coordination and Regulation of the Sub-sector

GOAL	Strengthening institutional arrangements for improved coordination and regulation of the higher education sub-sector

Since Lesotho gained its Independence, and particularly in the last few decades, new higher education providers have entered the market, the number of students has grown significantly and the job of managing the system has become more complex. Robust structures are needed to provide the leadership and oversight for creating and maintaining the national system of higher education envisaged in this document. This chapter sets out the roles and responsibilities of those entrusted with key functions in the coordination, governance and regulation of the nation's higher education sub-sector.

10.1   Role of the Government and of the Minister

There are two dominant models for the regulation of higher education institutions: *state control* and *state supervision*. State control is based on the assumption that the higher education system is a project of the state, is almost wholly funded from the national Treasury and, therefore, its key aspects will be managed by government officials rather than by institutions. The prime objective of state control is harmonisation and standardisation of the system in order to meet national development priorities.

Unlike state control, the state supervision approach involves the devolution of decision-making processes and responsibilities. Under the state supervision model, the role of the state is to monitor and influence the framework of rules that guide the behaviour of institutions. There is respect for the autonomy of institutions, and government encourages the self-regulating capabilities of institutions, hence the divergence of institutional cultures this approach promotes. A distinctive feature of the state supervision model is the replacement of detailed regulations for higher education institutions with an incentive framework.[xxv]

Overall responsibility for higher education in Lesotho lies with the Government and with the Minister of Education and Training. The key functions of the Government in this regard include:

- Defining national policies, broad strategies and the level of public funding for the HE sub-sector;
- Developing the legislative framework to ensure that the policies and broad strategies can be implemented; and
- Overseeing their implementation.

In addition to her/his role in the decision-making processes in Cabinet, the Minister has specific responsibility for identifying national development priorities, setting medium-term goals and specifying key objective indicators against which the performance of different

bodies in the HE sub-sector can be monitored and evaluated. In particular, the Minister has a critical role to play in articulating the whole Government agenda and its priorities. These priorities set a framework in which institutions can plan how best to make their own contributions to meeting national needs, depending on their different missions and strengths.

10.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To ensure coherence and continuity in guiding the development of Lesotho's HE sub-sector; and*

- *To align policies across different sectors to facilitate cooperation between Ministries and State agencies.*

10.1.2 Policy Statements

In planning for the national higher education system, the Government of Lesotho and the Minister of Education and Training will:

a) *Provide overall guidance for the HE sub-sector through a devolved regulatory framework that recognises the operational autonomy of HEIs.*

Where necessary, the Government of Lesotho and the Minister of Education and Training will:

b) *Employ a mixture of traditional state control and arm's length steering approaches in its regulatory mechanisms.*

Within this regulatory framework, higher education institutions will enjoy academic freedom.

10.2 Role of the Ministry of Education and Training

The Higher Education Act, 2004, assigns specific roles and responsibilities to designated officials in the Ministry of Education and Training. In keeping with best international practice, the Ministry's officials have taken a step back from the day-to-day operations of the sub-sector. Instead, their roles include monitoring the implementation of national policies, administering public funds and carrying out certain statutory functions, such as the registration of HE Private Institutions. In addition, as outlined in Chapter 9, the Registrar of HEIs has been assigned a key role in policing the system to identify and eliminate unregistered HE providers and to investigate complaints against HE Private Institutions.

10.2.1 Policy Objective

- *To ensure that the MOET Department(s) with specific responsibility for aspects of the higher education sub-sector have the capacity to carry out their mandate in a timely and effective manner.*

10.2.2 Policy Statements

The Ministry of Education and Training will:

> a) *Review the structure and staff complement of the Tertiary Education Department and other responsible units with a view to strengthening them; and*

> b) *Allocate additional funding to the Tertiary Education Department and other units as required.*

10.3   Role of the Council on Higher Education

In terms of Part II of the Higher Education Act, 2004, the Council on Higher Education was established to advise the Minister on any aspect of HE, to monitor the implementation of policy by higher education institutions, to publish information regarding developments in HE and to promote access by students. The Act further prescribes that the CHE will establish a Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee to perform its quality promotion and quality assurance functions, including the accreditation of all HE programmes.

10.3.1 Stimulating Development in Higher Education Institutions

The multiplicity of expectations for the HE system will require a strong central mechanism for coordinating the different institutional actors and for driving change.

10.3.1.1   Policy Objectives

> • *To provide effective mechanisms for coordinating developments across the higher education sub-sector in Lesotho; and*

> • *To establish a system of financial incentives to encourage and support initiatives targeted at specific developments across the HE sub-sector.*

10.3.1.2   Policy Statements

In terms of Section 5(1)(d) of the Higher Education Act, 2004, the role of the Council on Higher Education will be expanded to include specified developmental functions, such as:

> a) *Administering the allocation and distribution of a special fund to which HE Public Institutions can apply for additional funding for targeted initiatives.*

Higher education providers should:

> b) *Form a representative body to articulate common concerns and promote inter-institutional collaboration in pursuing initiatives to improve system performance.*

10.3.2 Regulatory Functions of CHE

In June 2005 the Ministry of Education and Training formally adopted the Qualifications Framework for Lesotho (QFL), though this document has yet to be given statutory footing through promulgation in the *Government Gazette.* Figure 10.1 (following page) illustrates the ten levels in the national framework, along with the placement of named qualifications at different levels.[xxvi] As is the case in many countries, Technical and Vocational Education and

Training in Lesotho has evolved as a separate stream from the general or academic education system, with only a limited number of points where learners can transfer from one to the other.

The creation of a Lesotho Qualifications Authority (LQA) to oversee the implementation of the QFL has been mooted and a bill to establish this body is being drafted. The expectation is that the Authority will take over responsibility for evaluating all education and training qualifications, whether locally- or externally-awarded, and establishing where to place them on the Qualifications Framework. At present, an Interim Evaluation Body within MOET is performing these functions. However, the details of how the LQA will interface with other bodies that have statutory powers to accredit programmes and/or qualifications have yet to be worked out.

FIGURE 10.1 Provisional Qualifications Framework for Lesotho

TVET System	*QFL*				*General (Academic) Education System*
Doctoral Degree	10			**D**	**Doctoral Degree**
Master's Degree	9			**E** **G**	**Master's Degree**
Honours Bachelor's Degree **Post-Graduate Diploma** **Post-Graduate Certificate**	8	**C**	**D** **I**	**R** **E** **E**	**Honours Bachelor's Degree** **Post-Graduate Diploma** **Post-Graduate Certificate**
Ordinary Bachelor's Degree	7	**E** **R** **T**	**P** **L** **O** **M**		**Ordinary Bachelor's Degree** **Graduate Diploma** **Graduate Certificate**
National Diploma	6	**I** **F**	**A**		**National Diploma**
National Craft Certificate **Trade Test A**	5	**I** **C**			**National Certificate**
					A-Levels
VET Certificate **Trade Test B**	4	**A** **T**			**COSC (O-Levels)**
Basic Vocational Training **Trade Test C**	3	**E**			
Trade Test: Operatives	2				**Junior Certificate**
Sub-Junior Certificate Training	1				**Primary School Leaving Certificate**

There are a number of different bodies that have been given regulatory powers in relation to education and training at different levels. The Examinations Council of Lesotho (Ecol) has statutory responsibility for school-level assessment and certification. The authority to regulate TVET up to pre-degree level has been assigned to the Technical and Vocational Training Board and Department in the Ministry of Education and Training. Finally, the Higher Education Act, 2004, assigns responsibility for accrediting all programmes at post-COSC level to the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee of CHE. The existing statutes create overlapping areas of responsibility, which have the potential for causing confusion among representatives of education and training providers, as well as members of

the public. There is also some evidence to suggest that the lack of coordination between the different State agencies has enabled some education and training providers to engage in unscrupulous or fraudulent practices.

10.3.2.1 Policy Objectives

- *To safeguard the general public by ensuring that all programmes of education and training are subjected to uniform and rigorous vetting procedures before they are approved/accredited and prospective students/trainees are allowed to enrol;*

- *To eliminate any possible confusion that may have arisen as a result of overlapping areas of responsibility in existing legislation for the education and training sector; and*

- *To further the process of establishing a single regulatory framework to ensure that comparable standards are maintained at higher levels in both the TVET and the HE sub-sectors.*

10.3.2.2 Policy Statements

The Minister of Education and Training will assign responsibility for the regulation and accreditation of:

a) *All programmes of general or academic education up to and including advanced level high school qualifications (QFL Level 5, such as the South African Matric, the International Baccalaureate or British A-Levels) to the Examinations Council of Lesotho (see area highlighted in yellow in Figure 10.1);*

b) *All technical and vocational education and training programmes up to and including the National Diploma (QFL Level 6) to the Technical & Vocational Training Board and the TVET Director in the Ministry of Education and Training (highlighted in light green in Figure 10.1); and*

c) *All programmes of general or academic education from National Certificate (QFL Level 5) and above, as well as all technical and vocational education and training programmes from Ordinary Bachelor's Degree (QFL Level 7) and above, shall be subject to the accreditation processes of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee of the Council on Higher Education (shaded in dark green in Figure 10.1).*

In order to eliminate the issue of overlapping responsibilities, the Government of Lesotho will:

d) *Review and finalise the Qualifications Framework for Lesotho;*

e) *Introduce amendments to the legislation governing the various sub-sectors of the education and training systems ;*

f) *Review plans to establish the Lesotho Qualifications Authority to determine whether this is still necessary and cost-effective.*

In the interim, the Council on Higher Education, the Examinations Council of Lesotho and the Technical and Vocational Training Board/Director will:

g) *Perform other functions of the proposed LQA – such as the evaluation and recognition of foreign qualifications – in their areas of responsibility; and*

h) *Liaise closely with one another and collaborate in order to harmonise the criteria and quality standards used to evaluate and accredit programmes at different levels and in different sub-sectors of the national education and training system.*

10.3.3 Coordination between CHE and Other Ministries and Regulatory Bodies

Because higher education has an impact on many sectors of the economy, it is essential to solicit the views and coordinate the activities of a variety of stakeholders. Sub-section 6.3.1 of this policy document has already included proposals for involving representatives of the private sector in the process of shaping the higher education system. Policies and strategies devised for the development of the HE sub-sector must also be congruent with those articulated by other Government ministries and agencies.

In addition, a number of other bodies in Lesotho have statutory powers to regulate the standards of education and training required to be a licensed member of their respective professions, including (though not limited to):

- Lesotho Nursing Council,
- Lesotho Medical, Dental & Pharmacy Council,
- Lesotho Institute of Accountants (in terms of the Accountants Act, 1977),
- Law Society of Lesotho.

While Section 52(1) of the Higher Education Act, 2004, states that it "… shall prevail over any other law dealing with higher education except the Constitution", it is desirable to engage with existing bodies in the regulation of professional training programmes. This is particularly important to ensure that the different bodies do not devise schemes that are incompatible with one another or with the Qualifications Framework for Lesotho.

10.3.3.1   Policy Objectives

- *To ensure effective coordination between stakeholders from both the public and private sectors in planning the development of the higher education system; and*

- *To facilitate harmonisation between the criteria for accrediting higher education programmes and the criteria for graduates to qualify for membership of different professional bodies.*

10.3.3.2   Policy Statements

The Council on Higher Education will:

a) *Consult widely among stakeholders when reviewing policies and plans for HE in Lesotho;*

b) *Involve representatives of regulatory bodies in its structures, as appropriate; and*

c) *Forge partnerships with other statutory bodies in setting standards for the accreditation of HE programmes by:*

- *Including representatives of relevant bodies in the process of assessing programmes for the purposes of accreditation; and/or*

- *Delegating specified quality assurance functions to them, as contemplated in Section 13(3) of the Higher Education Act, 2004.*

10.4 Governance Structures in HE Providers

It is widely recognised internationally that the most appropriate governance system for higher education is one that supports institutional autonomy. However, increased autonomy needs to be balanced against greater accountability, not only to the government but also to the general public. The governance and management structures of both HE Public and Private Institutions need to account for their performance and use of State funds in ways that are sufficiently transparent and robust to inspire confidence in their stewardship of institutions of national importance.

Part IV of the Higher Education Act, 2004, prescribes a number of governance and management structures for HE Public Institutions in Lesotho. Although a HE Private Institution is not subject to the same requirements, it must still demonstrate the existence of "an adequate and appropriate governance and management structure" before it can be granted a certificate of registration. CHE's *Baseline Survey of HEIs* conducted in 2011 indicates that only three of the thirteen HE providers surveyed are currently close to meeting all of the requirements of the Act with respect to institutional governance structures. The majority of HE providers are, therefore, not fully compliant with the requirements of the Higher Education Act, 2004, for a variety of reasons.[xxvii]

10.4.1 Policy Objective

- *To promote sound governance and strengthen corporate oversight in all HE providers in Lesotho.*

10.4.2 Policy Statements

With respect to HE Public Institutions that currently are not compliant with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, the Government of Lesotho will:

a) *Facilitate granting of autonomy to HE Public Institutions that are under other ministries by placing them on a statutory footing.*

Non-compliant HE Private Institutions will:

b) *Make the necessary arrangements to ensure full compliance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act.*

CHAPTER 11:   Quality Assurance in Higher Education

GOAL	Strengthening mechanisms for quality assurance in higher education

Over the last few years, concerns have been expressed more frequently about a decline in the quality of higher education available in many African countries. Until recently, the main focus of national efforts has been to expand access to studies at this level, but there has been a shift of emphasis from quantitative towards qualitative improvements. Increasingly, countries have come to realize that improving the quality of education provided by HE institutions is essential to produce highly-skilled human resources capable of driving economic growth towards sustainable development in African societies. This notion of higher education institutions as engines for economic and social development only makes sense where quality forms the hallmark of HE provision. With a stronger focus on the cost-effective use of the limited funding available, quality assurance is essential to ensure that expanded access to HE translates into increased success for students.

This chapter examines aspects of quality assurance in higher education and defines the roles of different stakeholders in the process.

11.1   The Role of CHE in Quality Assurance

Since improving the quality of higher education is a prime concern of this policy, it follows that quality assurance is a vital requirement of the HE system. Responsibility for quality assurance rests, first and foremost, with those who offer higher education programmes. These providers should be able to emulate acknowledged standards of good practice by putting in place processes that contribute to continuing improvement.

In terms of Section 13 of the Higher Education Act, 2004, CHE has established the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee (HEQAC) to perform designated functions in relation to quality promotion and assurance. The quality standards, norms of operation and monitoring mechanisms set by HEQAC form broad quality frameworks within which higher education institutions must operate.

11.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To reassure prospective students and members of the public that the programmes offered by HE providers in Lesotho meet or exceed minimum quality standards; and*

- *To provide a clear framework for guiding the efforts of HE providers to improve the quality of the programmes and other services they provide.*

11.1.2 Policy Statements

The Council on Higher Education, through its Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee, will:

    a) Develop and disseminate quality assurance mechanisms and tools;

b) *Prescribe guidelines and procedures for the development of new programmes, as well as the revision and termination of existing programmes by HE providers;*

c) *Carry out accreditation processes for all programme offerings by higher education institutions in Lesotho, including those provided through various modes of delivery;*

d) *In collaboration with the Registrar of HEIs, facilitate the registration of HE Public Institutions in Lesotho;*

e) *Audit higher education institutions and provide them with constructive feedback for effecting improvements in the quality of the services they provide;*

f) *Monitor and evaluate the performance of higher education programmes; and*

g) *Provide on-going support to develop a culture of quality and quality assurance across the higher education system.*

11.2 The Role of Higher Education Providers

In line with developments on the rest of the African continent, and indeed with international trends, higher education institutions in Lesotho need to strengthen their own internal quality assurance systems. In order to enhance their credibility, such systems should periodically be subjected to external scrutiny by relevant national and international quality assurance agencies, through institutional audits and programme re-accreditation processes. This ensures that institutions remain well-managed and responsive, and continue to deploy relevant programmes in a manner that provides maximum benefits to individual recipients of higher education and to Basotho society at large. To further enhance the quality of higher education in Lesotho, linkages should be established with key quality assurance bodies on the continent and beyond.

11.2.1 Policy Objectives

- *To strengthen the institutional culture and build the internal capacity of HE providers in Lesotho to carry out quality assurance functions on a sustainable basis;*

- *To align the practices of HEIs in Lesotho with international trends in the area of quality assurance, as a means of making them internationally competitive as well as promoting transnational mobility of students and their qualifications.*

11.2.2 Policy Statements

HE Providers in Lesotho should:

a) *Devise and implement institutional policies and procedures for internal quality monitoring and improvement;*

b) *Mobilise resources to finance quality assurance initiatives;*

c) *Collaborate with other HEIs in Lesotho, as well as with regional and international quality assurance agencies, to enhance the quality of the programmes and services they provide; and*

d) *Subject their programmes, as appropriate, to national and international bench-marking processes.*

11.3   The Role of MOET

As the governing body for education in Lesotho, the Ministry of Education and Training plays a key role in shaping the country's higher education system, in terms of both its scale and scope. The international trend is for governments, through the relevant ministries, to provide guidance for the higher education system to ensure that it:

- Serves the public interest,
- Includes elements of higher education that would not be adequately supplied if left to the devices of the market alone,
- Promotes equity and quality, and
- Supports those areas of basic research relevant to the country's needs.[xxviii]

While such guidance is common in many countries, the approach used in doing so is an important factor to consider, and varies from context to context.

As discussed in Chapter 10, the Government of Lesotho has resolved to adopt a hybrid approach to the regulation of the higher education system, blending the traditional model of state control with state supervision, as appropriate. The conduct of HE providers, including how they address quality assurance issues, will be guided at arm's length using both enforcement and incentive mechanisms to deal with issues as they arise.

11.3.1 Policy Objective

- *To prioritise implementation of quality assurance in higher education by creating a conducive policy environment and providing adequate resources for quality enhancement in the system; and*

- *To ensure that the mechanisms for quality enhancement and quality assurance adopted across the HE system are effective and sustainable by providing support to institutions.*

11.3.2 Policy Statements

The Ministry of Education and Training will:

a) *Empower the Council on Higher Education to mobilise the resources needed to enable the Higher Education Quality Assurance Committee to continue to stimulate continuous quality improvement in the HE sub-sector;*

b) *Recognise and support the strengthening of internal quality assurance mechanisms within HE Public Institutions; and*

c) *Support the quality assurance efforts made by the institutions by facilitating infrastructure improvements and capacity-building for staff members.*

CHAPTER 12: Financing Higher Education

GOAL	Devising an equitable and sustainable approach to the financing of higher education

Over the last five years, recurrent public expenditure on the higher education sub-sector has increased by over 85%. The number of Basotho seeking places to study at HE level is expected to more than double over the next ten years, and meeting this demand will involve substantial additional investment in the sub-sector before any provision is made for inflation, development and quality improvements.

The Government of Lesotho cannot shoulder this burden on its own. Given the serious concerns about the level of resources required to support the higher education system that the nation needs, alternative mechanisms must be found to improve value for money and to generate funds for expanding HE study opportunities, while enhancing access and quality.

This chapter begins with consideration of ways to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness across the HE sub-sector, while alternative sources of funding for HEIs are also explored. This is followed by policies on direct subventions from the State to HE Public Institutions and how these should be administered. Mechanisms for cost-sharing and promoting increased contributions from students and their families are discussed in the following section. The chapter concludes with a review of the arrangements for providing State financial assistance for those who wish to study at HE level.

12.1 Improving the Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness of HE Public Institutions

Questions have been raised by stakeholders as to whether the operations of HE Public Institutions in Lesotho are as efficient as they can be and whether funding from the State is spent as effectively as possible. As is the case with most education institutions, classrooms and other physical facilities at HEIs lie idle for long periods during the year when students are not on campus. More intensive use of these resources can be made by re-arranging the academic timetable to accommodate additional full-time and part-time students in the evenings, over weekends and during vacation periods. Greater efficiencies might also be possible if HE Public Institutions worked together to procure goods and services (e.g. Internet bandwidth) or shared certain functions (e.g. joint pension scheme).

12.1.1 Policy Objective

- *To ensure that publicly-funded HEIs are operating at optimal efficiency and utilising funding provided by the State or other sources as cost-effectively as possible.*

12.1.2   Policy Statement

In terms of Section 5(4)(e) of the Higher Education Act, 2004, the Council on Higher Education is mandated to advise the Minister of Education and Training on appropriate incentives or sanctions to be imposed upon Higher Education Public Institutions in Lesotho based upon their performance.

The Council on Higher Education will:

> *After consultation with registered Higher Education Institutions, prescribe standards for the presentation of accounts to enable CHE to derive common indicators for comparing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of different HEIs.*

12.2   Alternative Sources of Funding

At present, higher education in Lesotho is heavily reliant on State funding. The problem is particularly acute among HE Public Institutions, but even those outside the public sector depend upon Government funds in one way or another. In some parts of the world, HEIs have broadened their income base by taking part in property developments or other business ventures that generate profits, but the record of such schemes in Lesotho has not been very promising.

Suggestions have been made for HEIs in Lesotho to mobilise additional financial resources through research, consultancies or other projects, but this is easier said than done. Even the best-managed and well-endowed HEIs in other parts of the world still rely heavily on government subventions and/or student fees to fund their teaching and learning activities. Philanthropic donations from private-sector entities and wealthy individuals are another potential source of funding, and measures to promote this form of charitable giving are outlined below.

Given the current degree of dependence on State funding among HE Public Institutions in Lesotho, the Government will facilitate and support institutional efforts to secure income from other sources.

12.2.1   Policy Objectives

- *To create an enabling environment that encourages individuals, charitable bodies and private sector entities to make donations, endowments and bequests to HE providers that are constituted as not-for-profit bodies; and*

- *To develop robust mechanisms to enable HEIs to finance a higher proportion of their development and operating costs from non-Government sources.*

12.2.2   Policy Statements

The Ministry of Finance will:

a) *Undertake a review of the tax code to explore the potential costs, benefits and feasibility of instituting exemption schemes or other ways of reducing liabilities in relation to such donations, endowments or bequests; and*

b) *Review the rules for making such donations in order to simplify the procedures for claiming such exemptions.*

Higher education institutions should:

c) *Explore all other possible avenues for securing revenue, including the use of their physical facilities to generate economic returns.*

12.3 Direct State Subventions for Public HEIs

In order to meet the challenges of creating the higher education system envisaged in this policy document, State investment will continue to be crucial to its development. Historically, the Government of Lesotho has provided direct grants or subventions to HE Public Institutions to cover their core costs.

12.3.1 Consolidating Administrative Arrangements

Currently, there are insufficient data available for measuring and monitoring the performance of HE providers, but the situation is exacerbated by the way Government funding is channelled to different institutions. While monies allocated for the autonomous HE Public Institutions appear on the MOET budget, some publicly-funded colleges and institutes receive subventions directly through their parent ministries. Moreover, even within the Ministry of Education and Training, not all funding for HE Public Institutions is channelled through the same department. This arrangement for administering Government monies complicates the monitoring of expenditure and creates the potential for different approaches to budgeting and the allocation of funds to emerge.

12.3.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To ensure consistency in the allocation and administration of Government funds to HE Public Institutions; and*

- *To facilitate monitoring of how State funds are spent by HE Public Institutions.*

12.3.1.2 Policy Statement

In terms of Section 34 of the HE Act, 2004, all funds from the GOL budget to HE Public Institutions must be allocated by the Minister of Education and Training. All direct subventions, both capital and recurrent, with respect to HE programmes offered by public-sector entities should be channelled through the Tertiary Education Department of MOET.

12.3.2 Increasing Transparency and Equity in allocating Public Funds

Currently, there are considerable variations in the *per capita* allocations to different publicly-funded HE providers. While such disparities may be entirely justifiable – based on differences between institutions and the types of education and training they offer – the lack of transparency in how such funding is allocated raises doubts about whether this system is equitable.

In many countries, governments have devised funding formulae to calculate how the overall budgetary allocation for HE will be divided between different publicly-funded institutions. Typically, such formulae take into account not only the number of full-time equivalent students, the academic disciplines and qualifications for which they are studying, but also

make allowances for institutional differences, including research output and qualifications of staff. In this way, the *per capita* subsidy for a student in one discipline or type of institution can be calculated equitably in relation to students in other disciplines or other types of institutions.

12.3.2.1   Policy Objectives

- *To ensure that Government funds are allocated to HE Public Institutions in a fair and transparent manner; and*

- *To restore confidence among all stakeholders that the mechanisms for funding HE Public Institutions are genuinely equitable.*

12.3.2.2   Policy Statements

In terms of Section 5(4)(d) of the Higher Education Act, 2004, the Council on Higher Education will:

a) *Advise the Minister on the development of a funding formula for direct subventions to HE Public Institutions, based on a set of principles, conditions and calculations that are generally accepted as fair and equitable by the concerned parties; and*

b) *Devise guidelines for a special scheme to fund targeted initiatives and innovative projects proposed by HE Public Institutions. Funding for this scheme will be earmarked in the GoL recurrent budget.*

12.3.3   Accountability for Funding received by HE Public Institutions

At present, not all HE providers in Lesotho publish accounts on a regular basis so that stakeholders and members of the public can assess their financial performance and expenditure of public funds. In relation to some HE providers, it is also unclear what proportion of their income comes from the Government and how much comes from other sources. Moreover, there are no accepted measures for monitoring the internal efficiency and cost-effectiveness of HE providers.

12.3.3.1   Policy Objective

- *To promote greater transparency and accountability by HE providers in reporting the expenditure of funds received from the State as well as from other sources.*

12.3.3.2   Policy Statements

In accordance with Sections 35 and 39 of the Higher Education Act, 2004, HE institutions in Lesotho will:

a) *Provide the Minister or Registrar of HEIs with audited statements of income and expenditure, balance sheets and cash flow statements for each financial year; and*

b) *Present their accounts in such a manner as may be prescribed by the Council on Higher Education, after consultation with HEIs.*

12.4 Cost-Sharing through Student Fees

The most common approach to cost-sharing in higher education is to introduce fees for tuition and other services provided to students. The case for cost-sharing can be made on several grounds, including:

- Governments lack the resources to fund expansion of the higher education system, because they must balance the demands from this sub-sector against competing priorities for public funds.

- Benefits accrue to those individuals who take part in higher education, in terms of the increased salaries they can command over their working lives, as well as to their families and employers. For this reason, it is only reasonable and fair to expect students and/or their families to share the costs of higher education.

- When individual beneficiaries make contributions to the cost of HE, the resulting savings of public funds can be channelled to improve equity of access and/or system quality.

- Another advantage of this approach is that it introduces the virtues of price as a mechanism for regulating the market.[xxix] When consumers make purchasing decisions on the basis of price, HE providers are forced to compete to give their customers better value for money. Although this does not necessarily ensure improved quality, consumers (i.e. students) typically benefit when the market for services is liberalised.

For all of these reasons, the Government of Lesotho supports the retention of various types of fees for those who take part in higher education.

12.4.1 Fee Levels

Nevertheless, the question of fee levels is a contentious one. When fees for higher education are very high, this has the potential to exclude many prospective students. Variations in the fees charged for different HE programmes by different HE providers may also cause confusion among students and their parents. In addition, such disparities can lead to fewer registrations for programmes with high fees (e.g. medicine), despite the importance of these disciplines for the nation's development.

12.4.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To reaffirm the Government of Lesotho's commitment to the principle of cost-sharing by ensuring that higher education institutions collect appropriate fees for the services they provide to students.*

- *To provide mechanisms for the Government of Lesotho to register its concerns, as well as those of the general public, about fee levels for HE programmes and the ways in which they are structured; and*

- *To ensure that adequate consultations take place before any fee changes are introduced by HE Public Institutions in Lesotho.*

12.4.1.2   Policy Statements

Higher Education providers should:

a) *Regularly review their fee levels and fee structures;*

b) *Enter into consultations with the Minister of Education and Training about proposed changes in fee levels and/or fee structures well in advance of their planned introduction; and*

c) *Introduce any fee changes only after such consultations have been concluded.*

12.4.2   Increasing the Contributions from Parents and Families

Anecdotal evidence suggests that students, their parents and other family members make relatively little contribution to the costs of higher education, even when they can afford to do so. In many other countries, a considerable proportion of the full economic costs of studying at this level are met by parents, who must save for many years in order to finance higher education for their children. Alternatively, students themselves fund their own studies through various loan or work-study schemes. Governments have a role to play by putting in place different mechanisms to encourage parents and future students to set aside funds for this purpose and/or by introducing tax breaks for expenditure on higher education.

12.4.2.1   Policy Objective

• *To increase the financial contributions made by students and their families to the costs of higher education.*

12.4.2.2   Policy Statements

The Ministry of Finance will:

a) *Devise a policy framework for increasing individual and family contributions to HE to include, inter alia:*

   • *savings schemes, in conjunction with private financial institutions, where the Government of Lesotho tops up the amount saved by a specified percentage when the funds are withdrawn to finance higher education for oneself, a child or near relative;*

   • *tax exemptions for individuals who set aside funds in a financial instrument (savings account, pension plan, investment account) to fund higher education for oneself, a child or near relative; and*

   • *tax exemptions for direct expenditure on higher education and/or for interest paid on loans taken out to fund higher education for oneself, a child or near relative.*

12.5   Student Financial Assistance

Total Government expenditure on financial assistance for HE students has more than doubled over the last five years. In the current financial year, the total amount allocated to the National Manpower Development Secretariat for assisting HE students is roughly three and a half times the amount provided through direct Government subventions.

12.5.1 Prioritising the Allocation of Bursaries/Loans

In the face of exchequer constraints in the last two financial years, it has not been possible to provide financial assistance for all Basotho who wish to pursue studies at local HEIs. A quota system has been introduced, whereby the National Manpower Development Secretariat indicates to each HE provider the maximum number of new and continuing students it will fund in the coming academic year. Such restrictions are likely to continue in future. However, instead of supporting Basotho to study at domestic HEIs regardless of their field of study, it is desirable for student loans to be awarded for programmes in disciplines where a shortage of competent human resources is holding the country back from achieving its national development goals.

12.5.1.1 Policy Objectives

- *To align the system of allocating loans/bursaries with national human resource requirements in key fields; and*

- *To facilitate access to higher education for all Basotho who qualify for studies at this level but who cannot afford to do so.*

12.5.1.2 Policy Statements

The Government of Lesotho will:

a) *Put in place mechanisms to prioritise the allocation of loans and bursaries to students registered for programmes that are critically important for Lesotho's development; and*

b) *Introduce means-testing or comparable procedures to ensure that the most needy applicants receive State financial assistance.*

12.5.2 Financial Assistance to Study outside Lesotho

Because the HE sub-sector in Lesotho is relatively small, there will always be programmes in specialised fields of study that it will not be economically-feasible for local HEIs to offer. For this reason, sending some Basotho to study at HEIs outside the country's borders will still be necessary, despite the additional costs. In recent years, financial assistance for those who wish to study at HEIs in South Africa has been restricted to a limited number of priority disciplines, where comparable programmes are not available locally.

12.5.2.1 Policy Objective

- *To ensure that the country has competent human resources in specialised fields essential for national development.*

12.5.2.2 Policy Statements

The Government of Lesotho will:

a) *Continue to provide loans/bursaries for Basotho who wish to pursue programmes of study outside the country, where these disciplines are important for the nation's*

development and when comparable programmes are not available at HEIs in Lesotho; and

b) *Ensure that HEIs outside Lesotho for which students receive financial assistance from the State are fully accredited by the regulatory authorities in their home countries.*

CHAPTER 13: Monitoring and Evaluating Implementation of Policy

GOAL	Regular and consistent monitoring of higher education policy implementation.

A policy document such as this is intended to articulate general principles and broad guidelines to shape decisions taken at different levels to address recognised problems. However, without mechanisms for regular monitoring and evaluation, there is no guarantee that the policy will be implemented or that the desired goals will be achieved. Unless clear mechanisms are put in place for monitoring and evaluation, there is a danger that the policy will have only limited impact on the way in which the sub-sector develops. This chapter assigns responsibility for monitoring implementation of this policy and evaluating its outcomes to different actors in the HE sub-sector.

13.1 Responsibilities of the Minister of Education and Training and MOET

In terms of Section 3 of the Higher Education Act, 2004, the Minister of Education and Training has the authority to determine national policies for the HE sub-sector, which will be binding on all HEIs in Lesotho. Although primary responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this policy resides with CHE (see Section 13.2 below), the Minister and senior officials in MOET have a role to play in ensuring that systems for collecting the required information are in place and working effectively. In addition, the key function of evaluating such information – that is, making value judgements as to whether different components of the HE system are making adequate progress toward the intended objectives – lies with the Minister.

13.1.1 Policy Objective

- *To guarantee that systems for monitoring the implementation of this policy are producing the information required to evaluate the outcomes.*

13.1.2 Policy Statements

In consultation with other stakeholders, the Minister of Education and Training will:

a) *Provide oversight for the development of national strategic plans for the HE sub-sector, including responsibilities for reporting different types of information;*

b) *Ensure that the necessary capacity-building is carried out so that all of those with reporting responsibilities are able to provide the required information in a standard and predefined format; and*

c) *Facilitate regular reporting to Cabinet and to Parliament.*

13.2 Responsibilities of the Council on Higher Education

Specific responsibility for monitoring the implementation of policies for HEIs, as well as for gathering and publishing information on developments in the HE sub-sector, has been

assigned to the Council on Higher Education, in terms of Section 5 of the Higher Education Act, 2004.

13.2.1 Policy Objective

- *To provide effective mechanisms for collecting information and for reporting progress on the implementation of national policies for the HE sub-sector.*

13.2.2 Policy Statements

In order to carry out its responsibilities, the Council on Higher Education will:

a) *Determine what data is needed to monitor the key indicators in the Strategic Plans for the HE sub-sector, and prepare standard definitions and measures that can be applied to all HE providers in Lesotho;*

b) *Devise appropriate instruments and protocols to collect the required data; and*

c) *Report regularly to the Minister of Education and Training and other stakeholders on progress in achieving the targets in the Strategic Plan, as well as pertinent issues that affect policy implementation.*

13.3 Responsibilities of HE Providers

Not only do higher education providers in Lesotho have responsibilities with regard to the provision of information for monitoring policy implementation, they also have a stake in the data collected. Standardised approaches to reporting will provide a valuable source of data to enable HE providers to benchmark their operations against those of other institutions and to plan ways in which to improve their performance.

13.3.1 Policy Objective

- *To promote self-regulation and mutual improvements across the HE system in Lesotho, while ensuring compliance with standards.*

13.3.2 Policy Statements

Higher Education providers should:

a) *Regularly monitor and evaluate progress within their own institutions towards achieving the objectives described in this policy document; and*

b) *Contribute as appropriate to the process of monitoring and evaluating developments across the HE sub-sector in Lesotho.*

ANNEX A – Higher Education Providers in Lesotho

Publicly-funded, autonomous higher education institutions:
- National University of Lesotho (NUL)
- Lesotho College of Education (LCE), formerly the National Teacher Training College
- Lerotholi Polytechnic (LP)

College-level institutions constituted as departments of Government ministries:
- National Health Training College (NHTC), Ministry of Health
- Lesotho Agricultural College (LAC), Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
- Centre for Accounting Studies (CAS), Ministry of Finance
- Lesotho Institute of Public Administration and Management (LIPAM), Ministry of the Public Service

Denominationally-owned and -administered schools/colleges of nursing that form part of the Christian Health Association of Lesotho Nurse Training Institutions (CHAL-NTI) Programme:
- Maluti Adventist Hospital School of Nursing (Seventh Day Adventist)
- Paray School of Nursing (Roman Catholic)
- Roma College of Nursing (Roman Catholic)
- Scott Hospital School of Nursing (Lesotho Evangelical Church)

Church-run seminaries/colleges of theology:
- St Augustine's Major Seminary, Roma (Roman Catholic)
- *Lelapa la Jesu* Seminary, Roma (Anglican)
- Morija Theological Seminary (Lesotho Evangelical Church)
- W.J. Harvey Bible College, Leribe (Baptist)

International school offering post-COSC studies leading to the International Baccalaureate:
- Machabeng College, Maseru West

Private entity, operating as the local campus of an internationl university:
- Limkokwing University of Creative Technology Lesotho (LUCT)

Inter-governmental institute that operates on commercial lines:
- Institute of Development Management (IDM)

Private entities offering HE programmes validated by foreign institutions, e.g.
- Professional Graduate College
- International Business College

Foreign institutions providing courses to students in Lesotho through open & distance learning methods, e.g.:
- University of South Africa (UNISA)
- Management College of Southern Africa (MANCOSA).

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