

COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

STRUCTURE OF ORAL HEARINGS

1. The Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training (“the Fees Commission”) was established in January 2016. Its mandate is to inquire into the feasibility of a fee free higher education and training in South Africa.
2. The oral hearings will be divided into the following eight sets:

1.	SET 1	OVERVIEW OF THE RELEVANT ISSUES
2.	SET 2	POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA
3.	SET 3	THE FUNDING OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
4.	SET 4	FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING STUDENTS
5.	SET 5	THE MEANING OF “FEE-FREE” HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT
6.	SET 6	ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
7.	SET 7	THE BROADER SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF PROVIDING FEE-FREE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
8.	SET 8	THE FEASIBILITY OF PROVIDING FEE-FREE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

SET 1: OVERVIEW OF THE RELEVANT ISSUES

3. The first set will be introductory in nature. It will involve identified stakeholders making presentations to the Commission in which they provide an overview of their submissions to the Commission and discuss issues which they believe arise from the Commission’s terms of reference.

4. The Commission will hold hearings in identified areas in order to hear presentations from stakeholders. The timetable is as follows:

10 - 11 August 2016	Pretoria	(venue)
12 August 2016	Vanderbijlpark	(venue)
22 August 2016	Nelspruit	venue)
24 August 2016	Thohoyandou	(venue)
29-30 August 2016	Durban	(venue)
1-2 September 2016	East London	(venue)
5-6 September 2016	Cape Town	(venue)
8 September 2016	Bloemfontein	(venue)
9 September 2016	Kimberley	(venue)

SET 2: POST-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

5. SET 2 will be devoted to understanding post-school education and training in South Africa and entails an analysis of the broader policy decisions made by Government in respect of higher education and training.
6. During SET 2 the Commission will assess:
- 6.1 Government's policy framework on higher or post-school education and training;
 - 6.2 The types of institutions that provide public and private post-school education and training;
 - 6.3 Comparative institutional and sector sizes;
 - 6.4 The allocation of State funding for post-school education and training and what the policy choices are behind the distribution of funds to specific sectors and institutions.

7. The SET 2 hearings will take place from 29 September 2016 to 7 October 2016 and will be based in Pretoria.

SET 3: THE FUNDING OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND UNDERSTANDING THEIR OPERATIONAL COSTS (FUNDING STREAMS)

8. SET 3 will address:

- 8.1 The funding of institutions of higher education and training (the three income streams: government grants, student fees and own funding; and
- 8.2 The real cost of running a post-school/higher education and training institution. In this regard, the Commission will investigate competing demands on institutions including:
 - 8.3 Day to day operational costs;
 - 8.4 Research-focused prerogatives;
 - 8.5 Staffing: academic and support staff appropriations; and
 - 8.6 Transformation imperatives: including factors affecting “historically disadvantaged institutions”; curriculum reform; staff development (including career progression); student accommodation; access and throughput etc.

9. SET 3 will take place from 17 October 2016 to 4 November 2016 and will be based in Pretoria.

SET 4: STUDENT FUNDING

10. This set will probe the sources and modes of funding available to students in the higher education and training sector. In particular, it will engage with the nature, accessibility and effectiveness of such funding, including:
 - 10.1 An analysis of the prevailing student funding scheme, the NSFAS (including proposed reforms);
 - 10.2 The characterisation, content and rationale of the allocations made thereunder, i.e. bursaries/grants vs loans;
 - 10.3 An evaluation of its implementation;
 - 10.4 Student funding from the private sector; including foreign aid; and
 - 10.5 The lived reality of students who are funded through NSFAS.
11. The SET 4 hearings will take place from 14 November to 25 November 2016 and will be based in Pretoria.

SET 5: THE MEANING AND CONTENT OF “*FEE-FREE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING*”

12. The Commission will investigate the demand for fee-free higher education and training including:
 - 12.1 What is meant by “free”?
 - 12.2 What does “fee-free education” entail? Does this include tuition only or the “full cost of study” (which includes, for example, accommodation, transport costs, technology and all study-material)?;

12.3 Is the demand that everybody should be provided with fee-free higher education and training or should this only be provided to the poor? If so, how do you determine who qualifies for fee-free higher education and training?

13. The SET 5 hearings will take place from 23 January 2017 to 27 January 2017 in Pretoria.

SET 6: ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF FUNDING

14. During this SET, the Commission will investigate the available and/or alternative sources of funding post-school/higher education. In addition, the Commission will analyse models on funding of higher and training relied on in other jurisdictions and whether or not these are suitable in the South African context.

15. The SET 6 hearings will take place from 6 February 2017 to 10 February 2017 in Pretoria.

SET 7: THE SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. The Commission will consider the broader social, economic and financial implications of providing fee-free education for South African society.

17. This will entail an investigation into, among other aspects:

17.1 The impact on students of not providing fee-free higher education and training;

17.2 Competing interests in the South African context *vis a vis* the constitutional obligation on government to progressively and through reasonable measures, make further education available and accessible; and

17.3 Whether the introduction of fee-free higher education may have implications for:

17.3.1 The sustainability of institutions of higher education and training;

17.3.2 The quality of education;

17.3.3 Other sectors of education; and

17.3.4 The overall developmental goals of the State.

18. The SET 7 hearings will take place from 20 February 2017 to 25 February 2017 in Pretoria.

SET 8: THE FEASIBILITY OF PROVIDING FEE-FREE HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SOUTH AFRICA

19. This SET will focus on the central question posed, namely whether fee-free higher education and training is feasible in South Africa at present.

20. As is the case with Set 1, this set will also have a national footprint as set out below.

27 February – 3 March 2017	Pretoria	(venue)
6 March 2017	Polokwane	(venue)
7 March 2017	Mahikeng	(venue)
9 March – 10 March 2017	Durban	(venue)
13 March - 14 March 2017	East London	(venue)
16 March – 17 March 2017	Cape Town	(venue)
20 March 2017	Bloemfontein	(venue)
21 March 2017	Kimberley	(venue)

OVERVIEW OF TIMEFRAMES

SET 1:	10 - 11 August 2016 (Pretoria) 12 August 2016 (Vanderbijlpark) 22 August 2016 (Nelspruit) 24 August 2016 (Thohoyandou) 29 August – 30 August 2016 (Durban) 01 September – 02 September 2016 (East London) 05 September– 06 September 2016 (Cape Town) 08 September 2016 (Bloemfontein) 09 September 2016 (Kimberley)
SET 2:	29 September – 07 October 2016 (Pretoria)
SET 3:	17 October – 4 November 2016 (Pretoria)
SET 4:	14 November – 25 November 2016 (Pretoria)
SET 5:	23 January – 27 January 2017 (Pretoria)
SET 6:	06 – 10 February 2017 (Pretoria)
SET 7:	20 February – 25 February 2017 (Pretoria)
SET 8:	27 February – 03 March 2017 (Pretoria) 06 March 2017 (Polokwane) 07 March 2017 (Mahikeng) 09 March – 10 March 2017 (Durban) 13 March - 14 March 2017 (East London) 16 March – 17 March 2017 (Cape Town) 20 March 2017 (Bloemfontein) 21 March 2017 (Kimberley)
CLOSING SUBMISSIONS:	15 May 2017.