

Careers in high demand needed to thrive in 4IR

Higher Education and Training Minister Naledi Pandor says South Africa must up its game to drastically increase the numbers of Occupations in High Demand (OIHD) so it can participate in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).



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Occupations in High Demand are defined as jobs that show relatively strong employment growth and/or are experiencing shortages in the labour market, or which are expected to be in demand in future.

Pandor said currently, there are 11 universities in the country offering programmes and modules in 4IR and related fields of artificial intelligence and robotics.

“If we intend to take full advantage of 4IR, all our universities and colleges should be offering such courses,” Pandor said.

Pandor was speaking at the official opening of the National Skills Conference underway in Boksburg.

Hosted by the National Skills Authority (NSA) under the theme ‘Building a demand-led skills development system that focuses on inclusive economic growth’, the two-day conference seeks to find solutions to the challenges and blockages experienced in the implementation of skills development interventions.

Pandor said as part of its responsibility to identify skills needs in South Africa, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has developed a list of OIHD for a wide range of reasons, mostly to support enrolment planning at

universities and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, as well as macro-planning at national level.

The list of approximately 370 occupations specifically helps young people to make informed decisions regarding their subject choices in grade 10, which they can use to make informed choices regarding fields of study for further and higher education.

The list also assists the National Skills Fund (NSF), Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and other organisations that provide bursaries and scholarships to allocate resources directed to occupations that are in high demand.

The 2018 list of OIHD identified white-collar occupations in information and communications technology, including ICT project manager, data management manager, application development manager, information technology manager, information systems director, ICT systems analyst, software developer, ICT risk specialist, programmer analyst, developer programmer, and applications programmer.

The list also identified blue-collar occupations requiring intermediate level of skills as being in demand such as carpenter, plumber and pipe fitter, welder and sheet metal worker.

Local economic development

Pandor said skills training must be linked to local economic development priorities.

“We are here to identify and discuss practical steps to improve our skills training sector. The NSDS III [National Skills Development Strategy] and the White Paper for Post School Education and Training are the policy documents that set our targets and shape our planning. Our goals are to ensure skills training of a high standard.

“We have made credible progress in our efforts to improve skills and to give young people the opportunities to meet their aspirations. Our colleges and universities and the SETAs are receiving significant budget support to address their distinct mandates,” Pandor said.

Pandor will in the evening address the National Skills Awards, which are conferred on organisations and institutions that promote training programmes and widen access to work placement opportunities.

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