

New medical school slated for Eastern Cape

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[Nelson Mandela University \(NMU\)](#) will open South Africa's ninth medical school in 2020 when the school is expected to accept its first class of 100 aspiring doctors.



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In a move greenlighted by higher education minister Blade Nzimande last year, the Port Elizabeth university will expand its existing health science faculty to include an undergraduate medical degree, says NMU spokesperson Zandile Mbabela.

The school will eventually offer specialist training in fields such as radiography and emergency medical care, she says.

The faculty currently offers qualifications in psychology, nursing, social work, pharmacy and human movement sciences. By 2030, the university aims to train 200 new doctors each year, Mbabela explains.

Experts are optimistic that the new project will help to address the Eastern Cape's scarcity of doctors. Until now, [Walter Sisulu University](#) was the only school producing physicians in the province.

And with another medical school on the horizon, South Africa could also begin reducing its national shortage of doctors. The country has less than one such medical professional for every 1 000 citizens, according to 2015 World Bank data.

North-West University has also applied to open a new medical school at their Potchefstroom campus. Spokesperson Louis Jacobs says the university expects to know whether the application has been approved by the departments of health and higher education and training by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, the University of the Free State is planning to partner with Sol Plaatjie University and hospitals in Kimberley to increase its intake of medical students, says president of the [Public Health Association of South Africa](#) André Rose.

Read Bhekisia's full report [here](#).

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