



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

GREETINGS FROM THENSA!

Welcome to the first official monthly newsletter for Technological Higher Education Network South Africa (THENSA)! A space where we will update our strategic partners and the general public about the events, programmes and activities. Having [changed](#) our name from the South Africa Technology Network (SATN), this monthly newsletter will cement our exciting rebrand and keep our wider community in the loop about our projects and developments. The previous year proved to be one of the most challenging in South Africa's recent history. While the higher education sector hasn't been spared of these challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, Universities of Technology have continued to make strides in research and knowledge, acclimating to the so-called new normal and contributing towards the fight against the virus. As we prepare for the rollout of the vaccine, we believe it's important to approach this year with a sense of optimism and a commitment to rebuilding our country. We hope this newsletter will showcase our projects, promote our member institutions and reflect on the positive events happening within various sectors.

UPDATES FROM OUR SIDE

FROM SATN TO THENSA

As mentioned previously, the SATN has repositioned itself to THENSA. The change is a response to the broadening of a network which includes more member institutions and organisations, as well as a desire to align with the policy, curriculum and innovation agendas in the South African higher education sector. [Speaking](#) to *University World News*, Professor Lourens van Staden stated that the decision was taken after carefully reviewing the SATN's strategic objectives, mission and membership.





GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY APP

For South African students in higher education, the triumph of graduation is quickly met with the pressures of finding a job. THENSA's Graduate Employability App seeks to simplify the job-seeking process by providing a database where graduates can not only look for work, but allow for us to keep track of their employability status and progress. The official launch of the Graduate Employability App will be announced on our website and social media platforms in due time.

PARTNERSHIP WITH IBM

The IBM Digital-Nation Africa is an online learning and innovation platform that provides digital literacy to the continent's youth. An agreement was signed between THENSA and IBM where IBM's custom link to the Digital-Nation Africa application will be distributed by THENSA to allow authorised users access to free online courses. A link has already been sent to all member institutions to use within their own networks.

DHET/UCDP CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME

The partnership between THENSA, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the University Capacity Development Grant (UCDP) seeks to help academics at Universities of Technology, particularly young black female academics, obtain postgraduate degrees while sharpening their research skills and improving their publishing history. Despite the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we're pleased to announce that 31 PhD candidates from our cohort will submit dissertations for examination this year, while a further 16 will submit the following year.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE FUND (UIF) LEARNERSHIP PROGRAMME

In partnership with Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) and MILZET, this learnership programme upskills and reskills South Africans within the UIF database. Approximately 826 learners have been enrolled in theoretical training and placed at companies for work experience for the first phase of the programme. We're currently training and placing the remaining 1 174 learners from that cohort, as well as advertising to companies for the second phase of training and placing learners.

UPDATES FROM OUR MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

- The Durban University of Technology (DUT) was [given](#) the Feenix University of the Year Award 2020 for helping students meet their financial needs and obligations. Feenix is a public benefit organisation which was launched in 2017 as a response to the #FeesMustFall movement.
- The organisation uniRank [listed](#) Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and Vaal University of Technology (VUT) as two of the top five universities to attend in Gauteng.
- Six Industrial Engineering students from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) [came](#) second in the 2019/20 Design for People Challenge run by Engineers Without Borders (EWB) UK, and their bodies in the USA, Ireland and South Africa.
- The Central University of Technology (CUT) has [joined](#) the MIT Abdul Latif Jameel World Education Lab (J-WEL), a joint initiative by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Community Jameel. This makes CUT the first university in Southern Africa to join J-WEL.

UPCOMING EVENTS

HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM EXPERTS SOUTH AFRICA (HERESA) PUBLIC LAUNCH EVENT

We're delighted to announce the official date for the launch of the HERESA project, which will take place on [March 16th via Zoom \(link to be provided closer to event\)](#). HERESA is an Erasmus+ Capacity Building Project for Higher Education (CBHE), which was awarded to THENSA and OBREAL-Global Observatory in November 2020. It aims to develop a network of Higher Education Reform Experts in South Africa, modelled on the practice of the Higher Education Reform Experts (HERE) in the EU region. HERESA will be based in the member institutions of THENSA, and will focus on teaching and learning strategies in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), Entrepreneurship and Education for the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).

CONTACT US

+27 12 382 4896

+27 31 563 0504

INFO5@THENSA.CO.ZA

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FACEBOOK: @THENSAZA

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LINKEDIN: THENSAZA