



The Ministry & Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology

# QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Transition and Reform  
in Higher and Technical  
Education

Quality Higher Education

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## Foreword from the **MINISTER**

Higher Education, Research,  
Science and Technology

### PROGRESS & KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION 2019/2020

The June 2020 edition this Newsletter celebrates 12 months of milestone progress and achievements for the higher education sector. The Marape-Steven Government's support for the Higher Education Sector in Papua New Guinea is directing some of the most significant generational change in the Higher Education system for many decades.

Over the past 12 months, under the Marape-Steven Government, the National Executive Council (NEC), has made bold, far-reaching and courageous decisions to continue the reforming, transforming and unifying the Higher Education System in PNG.

Included among the many achievements over the past 12 months are the following key legislative and policy highlights that are already changing the landscape of higher education in Papua New Guinea:

- In June 2020 the **Higher Education Reform Bill Package** was referred to the National Parliament paving the way for significant reforms in the governance, management and quality of the Higher Education in Papua New Guinea.
- The **Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)** was launched by Prime Minister Marape in April 2020 and offers both HELP & HOPE to our young people, many of whom thought a higher education was beyond them due to the high costs.
- The launch in July 2019 of the **National Skills Development Agency**, one of my first priorities as Minister, designed to bring open dialogue and ideas to the table for practical action creating skills pathways to employment for Papua New Guinean men and women, including our School graduates.
- The introduction of the **Higher and Technical Education Medium Term Sector Plan and Budget**, converting the previously fragmented government funding systems for institutional types into a single coherent funding model, linking sector policies, plans and budgets in coherent and predictable ways that support efficient sector coordination and institutional governance.
- From First Semester 2020, introduction of the **Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Teaching Programme** in all Primary Teacher Education Colleges – making a sustainable difference in teacher education for the benefit of our children coming through the primary grades.
- Significant advances in the **Roll-out of Digitalization across the Sector**, changing the face of education access, education management, education delivery and education quality both on and off campus throughout Papua New Guinea.
- Significant improvements in **Regulation and Quality Assurance** of the sector that develop and protect the most precious commodity of our Higher Education Institutions: QUALITY...quality that meets national standards, social sector and industry relevance; and benchmarked international good practice.

Higher education plays a critical role in our country's social and economic development. For Papua New Guinea to become globally competitive, we must ensure that higher and technical education is equally accessible to all students and is of a quality and relevance to meet economic and local needs. At the same time we must be relevant and responsive to regional and global demands.

The Newsletter reflects 12 months of achievement in the context of ongoing Reform in higher education; as well as in the context of the Marape Manifesto and the Social, Law and Order Sector (SLOS) Strategic Framework 2019-2022.

May God Bless Papua New Guinea.

**Hon. Nick Kuman, MP**

Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology



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# Higher Education Reform Bills Package referred to Parliament

## EXPECTED AUGUST CONSIDERATION OF REFORM BILLS BY PARLIAMENT

The Higher Education Reform Bills Package has been referred to National Parliament paving the way for significant reforms in the governance, management and quality of programmes in higher education institutions (HEIs) in PNG.

The Reform Bills Package consists of eight Bills designed to reform the PNG higher and technical education sector by:

- bringing most HEIs under DHERST regulatory oversight;
- strengthening Governing Councils by ensuring they have strong financial, governance and industry representation;

- increasing the accountability of HEIs with robust planning, reporting and auditing requirements;
- improving the terms and conditions of employment of lecturers in HEIs
- building quality education through a system for national curriculum and national training packages; and
- reducing regulatory fragmentation by transferring the National Training Council's registration and accreditation functions to DHERST.

The Reform Bills Package was cleared by the Office

of Legislative Counsel in June and has been referred to the National Parliament. It is expected that the Reform Bills Package will be introduced in Parliament at the August sittings.

## IMPLEMENTATION PLANS ON TRACK

Implementation plans for the key elements of the

reforms are on track. DHERST will be working closely with HEIs to support them transition as the new regulatory requirements are introduced.

Fr Jan Czuba is pleased with progress on the Reform Bills Package.



The improvements to the higher and technical education sector that will flow from these reforms will be significant. I congratulate the PNG Government for supporting the reform process and I look forward to the challenge of seeing them successfully implemented



## The Reform Bills package





# Prime Minister Marape launches the Higher Education Loan Program



Prime Minister Hon. James Marape making his keynote address at the launch of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) on Friday May 15th.

## PRIME MINISTER'S OPENING ADDRESS

The Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) was officially launched by the Prime Minister Hon. James Marape at the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) office in Port Moresby on Friday 15th May, 2020. Among the DHERST staff members and others who officiated the ceremony were the Minister for Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology Hon. Nick Kuman, MP, Minister for Treasury Ian Ling-Stuckey, Minister for Finance & Rural Development Hon. Renbo Paita, Minister for Public Service Hon. Soroi Eoe, Minister for Communication & Information Technology Hon. Timothy Masiu and Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade Minister Counsellor, Mr Andrew Egan.

## INCREASING ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

DHERST data over the last two years, reveals approximately 31,000 students nationwide could not pursue tertiary education due to financial constraints - 15,500 Year 12 students each year who are affected, most of whom will not enter the workforce. The aim of HELP is to reduce the rising num-

ber of eligible students who are unable to secure placing at the tertiary level annually. The strategic design of HELP addresses the long term funding issue by utilizing loan, investment and endowment fund structures for the project's feasibility and long-term economic viability.

## RATIONALE FOR HELP

Professor Fr. Jan Czuba, DHERST Secretary clarified that HELP is also available for eligible students to enroll in PhD, Masters and other Post Graduate programs. This meets the Government's goal in providing a full range of quality education at the post-secondary level to provide a skilled and competitive workforce to realise Papua New Guinea's social and economic goals. The rationale for commencing a university student loans scheme is to partly reverse the long term deterioration in real government funding for the universities and our post-secondary institutions. This has in turn placed growing and immense pressure on students and their families to fund up-front the high costs of a higher education at a time when the quality of this education has been in decline.

## IMPORTANT FIRST STEP

Before the HELP initiative there was significant in-

quality of access, with only students of middle class families now having hope of attending university. While total funding arrangements for the higher education sector are in need of reform, commencement of a student loans program is an important first step in sector reform, providing opportunities for enhanced equitable access to places as well as improved education quality and greater efficiency within the higher education system. Without measures to turn around long term funding declines, matched by performance improvement, the higher education institutions will continue to flounder. The HELP program is one important part of the longer term funding improvement in higher education.

## FIRING THE IMAGINATION

The HELP program is a landmark policy initiative of the Marape-Steven Government. It is HELP by name and by nature but more importantly it offers HOPE to the many aspiring eligible students who thought that a quality higher education was beyond their reach because of cost. This will fire the imagination of younger students coming through the primary and secondary grades to know they have a future.

## Higher & Technical Education Medium Term Sector Plan & Budget (2020-2024)

NEC Decision NG179/2019 directing DHERST's transition to a five year Higher and Technical Education Sector Plan and Budget (2020-2024). DHERST has implemented this NEC Decision, strengthening DHERST's engagement with Treasury, Finance and Planning at a crucial time of financing across all Higher and Technical Institutions (HELs) for sub-sector planning and budgeting.

Preparation of the Sector Plan and Budget has been influenced by the latest National Medium Term Development Plan III 2018 - 2022; the Medium Term Fiscal Framework, 2018 - 2022; and the transition to Sector wide budgeting and Medium Term Budget Framework approaches under PNG's public financial management (PFM) reforms. The sector plan and budget addresses domestic government, external development partner (Donor Partner) and other sources of sector funding.

The Higher and Technical Education Sector Plan sets out clear objectives for Donor Partners and other external support in the sector and to ensure that any tangible external partner or stakeholder support forthcoming is properly planned, accounted for and reported, in line with international best practice for aid effectiveness.

The current five fragmented government funding systems for institutional types are converted into a single coherent funding model to effectively link sector policies, plans and budgets in coherent and predictable ways.

The Higher and Technical Education Sector Plan and Budget aims to support effective and efficient sector coordination and institutional governance that contributes to the provision of a robust Higher and Technical Education system.



## Next steps in pre-service primary teacher education

Teacher colleges have risen admirably to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, each of them now fully operational since the resumption

of lectures at the end of April.

As the academic year progresses, those colleges that have just implemented the new national curricu-

lum in pre-service primary education that leads to the award of a Bachelor of Education (Primary) are also engaged in 'teaching out' its predecessor, the National Department of Education Diploma in Education. This process will

mean that students who enrolled in 2019 and commenced this qualification will graduate in 2021.

College lecturers are therefore teaching two separate curricula with the first cohort of BEd students from these colleges graduating in 2023, as shown below.

2019		2020		2021		2022		2023	
NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3	
NDOE Y2		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3	
NDOE Y1		NDOE Y2		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3		NDOE Y3	
2019		BEd/DipT Y1		BEd/DipT Y1		BEd/DipT Y1		BEd/DipT Y1	
	2020			BEd/DipT Y2		BEd/DipT Y2		BEd/DipT Y2	
			2021			BEd/DipT Y3		BEd/DipT Y3	
					2022			BEd/DipT Y4	
							2023		

College lecturers are to be congratulated for the enthusiasm and effort they have committed to curriculum reform and review in primary teacher education, paving the way, as envisaged in the current national Medium Term Development Plan, for an all graduate teaching profession in Papua New Guinea. They themselves are keen to upgrade their qualifications since, in order to teach at undergraduate level, lecturers should possess a master's degree. In the fulness of time, it is the intention that lecturers appointed to a teachers' college will have a higher degree in their own subject area.

Several colleges, for example Enga and Madang, are now actively engaged in partnerships

with universities of the kind established by Divine Word University with its Wewak and Rabaul Campuses and Holy Trinity Hagen, where students have graduated with the new BEd/DipT qualification since 2018.

The watchword is quality. Well-led colleges, with highly qualified lecturing staff and able students all committed to teaching as a life-long profession will make a lasting impact on the lives of children, wherever they are taught in Papua New Guinea. Colleges in the new era will also become hubs of excellence, where serving teachers can work towards

improving their qualifications and updating themselves on pedagogy and practice relating to the Standards Based Curriculum they deliver in their classrooms.

Already, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is preparing to commence its four year programme that will enhance the teaching of mathematics and science in the primary teacher colleges. Japanese experts will work with college lecturers on the content knowledge and pedagogies required of their students to deliver the Standards Based

Curriculum in these subjects in primary schools. This is an exciting, innovative project that will underpin outstanding teaching in mathematics and science for years to come.

At such a difficult time for children and their teachers and students and their lecturers, these are promising signs of growth that will ultimately eclipse the pandemic as education plays its part in redeeming and restoring the balance of life and hope in the future.



## DHERST and Business Council – A Skills and Labour Market Partnership

The partnership between DHERST and the Business Council presents a perfect opportunity to provide the very essence of what is currently missing – reliable data on skills training priorities in relation to employment demand. This joint study aims to develop and benchmark indicators for measuring and matching skills and labour market demand. The Business Council is facilitating extensive access to labour market data across the BC-PNG member organisations and the opportunity to match that data to industry job-banding on the Demand side and the PNG-National Qualifications Framework on the Supply side.

### DEFINING THE SKILLS & LABOUR MARKET IN PNG & KEY OUTCOMES

In defining the Skills and Labour Market in PNG we need a clear focus on both the Supply Side and demand side features. The Supply side needs to include DHERST as planner and regulator as well as other government systems and training providers rel-

evant to both economic and social sector supply of skilled personnel. The Demand side must reference the role of human resource managers, recruitment companies and private sector business models that determine demand side needs.

### PLANNING FOR BOTH INDUSTRY & SOCIAL SECTOR NEEDS

The key outcome for the recently established National Skills Development Agency (NSDA) is the nexus between how the Supply and Demand sides engage and what initiatives are needed to develop a competitive national workforce capable of delivering the skills that both industry and the social sector require as well as providing employment security for Papua New Guinean men and women. Both DHERST and BC-PNG agree there is an urgent need and clear understanding that both Supply and Demand side systems will benefit from a practical approach to skills and labour demand – an approach that informs decision making based on rapid analysis and timely

forecasts that can be readily replicated at 6-monthly or annual intervals.

### SHARED VALUE IN A REGULATORY & BUSINESS FRAMEWORK

Enabling legislation for implementing NEC Decision NG 25/2017 is currently before the Parliament today impacts significantly on Government priorities in the skills space. Government policy, priorities and enabling legislation is moving rapidly to reform the skills sector. The National Higher and Technical Education Reform Bills Package to reform, transform and unify the higher education sector in PNG has been referred to Parliament. The new legislation expected to be considered at the August parliamentary sitting, contains a strong focus on linking skills training to private sector quality and demand. Through the Business Council, industry is playing a very proactive role in working with DHERST as regulator and host convener of the National Skills Development Agency (NSDA) a national partnership of Government, Indus-

try, Civil Society, Employers and Training Providers.

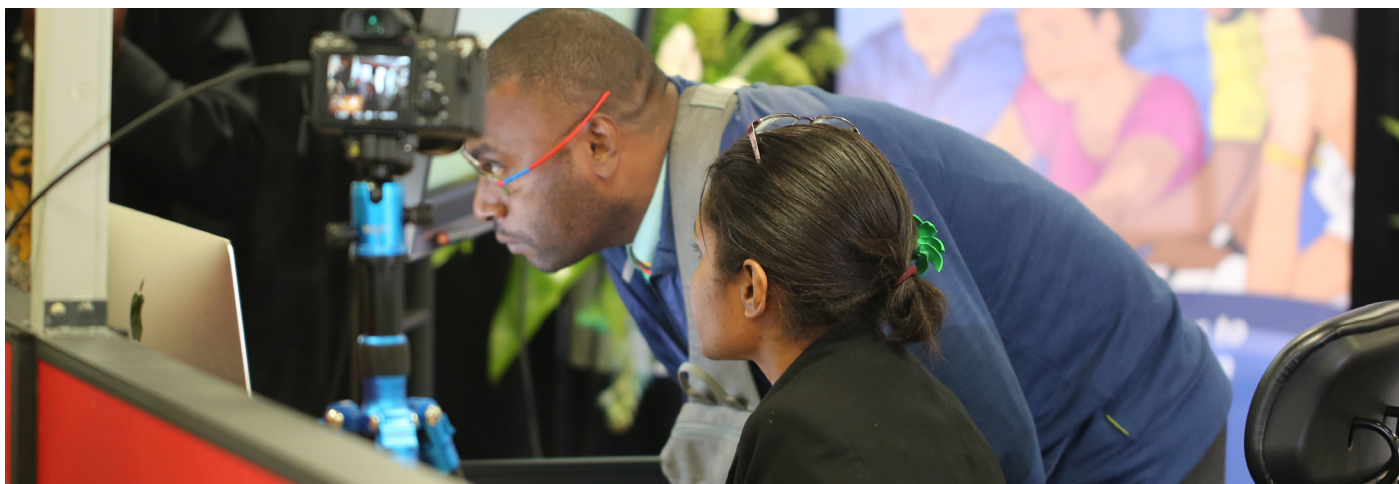
### A FAST-MOVING SUPPLY & DEMAND

On the demand side, currently there is an enormous vacuum in identifying collective, coherent and meaningful business demand across priority sectors of the economy. On the supply side combined factors of governance, management, funding, infrastructure and equipment, teacher quality and industry relevant curriculum are being urgently addressed to produce the graduates that meet industry needs.

The Labour Market Survey and accompanying reporting on demand indicators in priority industry sectors will assist all key stakeholders in accessing contemporary evidenced based data for better aligning Supply and Demand side priorities, both now during the COVID industry disruption and sustainably well beyond the post-COVID era. Stay tuned for the upcoming Skills and Labour Market Survey to be distributed in July.



Business Council members at a recent workshop with DHERST.



# The Higher Education Management Information and Networking System

## **NETWORKED SYSTEMS INCREASING ACCESS & IMPROVING QUALITY**

In his keynote address at the HELP launch on May 15th Prime Minister Marape announced that the National Executive Council had approved K8.8m investment for continuation of the roll-out of digitalisation in the Higher Education Sector in Papua New Guinea. The announcement re-activates DHERST's strategic plan priority for the innovative and cost-effective roll-out of networking systems aimed at increasing access to higher education and improving education quality. The quality of learning, teaching and research will be enhanced through the provision of e-libraries, significantly reducing the high cost costs of procuring outdated paper-based teaching, learning and research materials.

## **PNG AT THE FOREFRONT OF DIGITAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY**

Speaking at the launch after the Prime Minister's opening address, Minister Kuman said that "the steady roll-out

of the iPNG Higher Education Sector initiative marks Papua New Guinea's advancement at the forefront of digitalized service delivery in higher education". The Minister concluded that "these advancements will provide both greater access to higher education and improved education quality." The new funding allows existing IT and telecommunication service providers to collaborate with the Government in the development and roll-out of the National Higher & Technical Education Management Information System initiative, including the cloud-hosting of e-libraries, providing up to date teaching learning resources and access to quality research materials and researching processing facilities.

## **LINKED-UP NATIONAL NETWORK OF HEIs**

The i-PNG Management Information and Networking System incorporates both past and planned milestone achievements for the National Online Application System (NOAS); the National Online Selections System (NOSS); state of the art software systems for managing

the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP); hosting online Learning Management Systems such as Moodle; planned e-Library procurement with customized data bases for each Higher education sub-sector. The management information and networking system will also link to all Higher Education Institutions for online reporting, thus supporting the data collection for planning, monitoring and evaluation of all higher education institutions.

## **IMPROVED NATIONAL RESEARCH CAPABILITY**

The digitalization of higher education in our country, addresses long-standing issues of national research capability under DHERST's core charter. Students, Teachers and Researchers will be equipped with the digital skills needed for the optimal utilization of ICT in their specialized areas of learning, teaching and research. They will have access to relevant scientific publications, and contemporary research data across all disciplines and specialty areas of learning. Students, Teachers and Researchers

will have access to a full range of digital applications and support services with sufficient resources for data storage, statistical processing analysis, and advanced user support.

## **PAPUA NEW GUINEA PRODUCING DIGITAL CITIZENS CAPABLE OF MATCHING THEIR SKILLS & ABILITIES ANYWHERE ACROSS THE WORLD**

The i-PNG Higher Education Management Information and Networking system supports a very wide range of applications servicing all Higher Education Institutions in the pursuit of teaching, learning and research, providing both relevance and excellence in both on and off campus delivery of education. Papua New Guineans are coming of age in using the new technologies. They are using them in a number of innovative ways to overcome our geography and our history. Papua New Guinea is producing graduate Digital Citizens who are capable of matching their skills and abilities anywhere across the world. They are the new digital citizens of the world.





# Improving the Regulatory Function and Quality Assurance of the Sector

Quality human capital plays a critical role in growing the economy and sustain social well-being in the society. Hence, quality human capital depends on quality regulatory environment created by the government.

The recent policy shift in general education by the National Government has triggered major reforms in higher education. DHERST has commenced the process of 'reforming, transforming and unifying' the higher and technical education sector in response to increasing student population and bogus institutions offering diploma mills at exorbitant fees partly influenced by the Free Education Policy (Tuition Fee Free Policy/TFF).

The Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) has different functions ranging from programme Admissions and Scholarships to Infrastructure projects, data management, and quality assurance (QA).

The Quality Assurance program primarily focuses on improving quality of institutions and Programmes by establishing national standards and quality control systems based on regional and global best practices in accordance with Higher Education General Provisions Act 2014 (HEGPA).

## WHY HAVE A REGULATORY FRAMEWORK?

In the last 10 years, DHERST has reformed the regulatory environment. In the reform, HEGPA replaced the Higher Education Act 1983. This legislative arrangement enabled the establishment of a robust quality assurance system in PNG. More importantly, HEGPA established the National Higher Education Board (NHTEB) as the regulator of all higher education institutions and programmes in the country.

In accordance with HEGPA, NHTEB approved for implementing the following;

- The National Standards for Higher Education Institutional Registration
- The National Standards for Higher Education Programme Accreditation
- The Papua New Guinea National Qualifications Framework (PNGNQF)
- DHERST Manual for Providers on QA Reviews
- DHERST Panel of Experts Manual for QA Reviews

All the institutions and programmes are now subject to

PNGNQF Level	Qualification Award
10	Doctorate
9	Masters
8	Bachelor Honours, Post Graduate Certificate or
7	Bachelor
6	Advanced Diploma Associate Degree
5	Diploma
4	Certificate 4 or Certificate (higher education)
3	Certificate 3
2	Certificate 2
1	Certificate 1

Figure 1: Shows the PNG National Qualifications Framework with ten (10) Levels of Qualifications.

a cyclical process of quality assurance whereby a regular check should be conducted up to every five years. Institutions and their programmes are audited against the National Standards through an external process by experts from the DHERST Panel of Experts Registry. The Board and the Department are also required to continuously update the systems and processes so that they are on par with regional and global standards, and other quality assurance processes.

## NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR HEI REGISTRATION & PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

The National Standards provide the benchmark for all institutions to be assessed against. Over time, these Standards are reviewed to ensure they are compatible with standards used by the National Accrediting agencies around the world.

The PNG National Qualifications Framework (PNGNQF) supports the National Standards by regulating each level of qualification offered by any institutions in the country. PNGNQF is basically the system of formal

qualifications for post-secondary (tertiary) education in PNG.

The PNGNQF has 10 levels of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and the volume of learning, and design to ensure comparability in standards for qualification award nationally and internationally. To access the National Standards and PNGNQF, please use this link: <https://web.dherst.gov.pg>.

## BENCHMARKING WITH INTERNATIONAL QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCIES

As an accrediting body, one of the main focus of DHERST is to continuously update and review its systems and processes to ensure it is aligned to best practices accepted globally. Part of this strategy is through its membership to the International Network for QA Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN). DHERST through GoPNG is also an active member to UNESCO. DHERST adopted many of the good practices from these QA agencies as a benchmark to regulate higher education in the country. DHERST actively participates in the conferences that are mostly held biannually.

## HEI REGISTRATION & PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Figure 2 illustrates the registration and accreditation process for HEIs and their programmes in accordance with the Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014. All institutions and programmes are subject to this process to ensure they are continuously meeting the National Standards.



Figure 2 : This chart shows the process cycle of HEI Registration and Programme Accreditation.



# 2019 – 2020 External Quality Assurance Review

NHTEB and DHERST have conducted a good number of external reviews for registration and accreditation of institutions. The following institutions have undergone audits in 2018 and 2019 whilst others are on schedule to be externally reviewed. The following HEIs were quality assured from 2019/2020: PNG University of Technology, Divine Word University, University of Goroka, University of Natural Resources and Environment,

Southern Cross University, Don Bosco Technological Institute, International Training Institute, Catholic Theological Institute, Christian Leaders Training College, St Peter Chanel College of Secondary Teacher Education, and Sonoma Adventist College

At programme level, DHERST is working closely with HEIs and Professional Bodies in the country to implement the PNGNQF and

the National Standards for Programme Accreditation. For access to PNGNQF, National Standards, and National Register containing all registered higher education institutions and Accredited Programmes, please follow the link: <https://web.dherst.gov.pg>

## CHALLENGES

Some Higher Education Institutions, particularly the private Institutions have had

difficulty complying with the regulations. Institutions are encouraged to review the compliance requirements on the DHERST web-site as per the website address above and seek DHERST support. DHERST expects that the passage of the Higher Education Reform Bills will ensure an increase in quality assurance compliance. This will occur as HEI management transitions to DHERST under a unified regulatory framework.

## 2019 National Grade Twelve (12) Selection

No.	Institution	NEW INTAKE			CONTINUING		
		AES	HECAS	TOTAL STUDENT	AES	HECAS	TOTAL STUDENT
1	Universities	885	2086	2971	79	4444	4523
2	Teachers Colleges		1003	1003		1425	1425
3	Technical & Business Colleges		1825	1825		1237	1237
4	Nursing Colleges		170	170		499	499
5	Others		470	470		2732	2732
	<b>Total</b>	<b>885</b>	<b>5554</b>	<b>6439</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>10337</b>	<b>10416</b>

Figure 3: TESAS Awarding Summary for New Intakes and Continuing Students, 2020.

In 2019, a total of 28, 594 Grade 12 students sat for the National Examination. Out of the total, only 10,142 (35%) students were able to secure a placement in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country.

With limited capacity of registered HEIs in the country, a total of 10, 142 (35%) students were selected for 2020 enrolment based on GPA and subject related entry requirements whilst 18,452 (65%) students were not selected.

### ADMISSIONS POOL SELECTION

In comparison from 2019 to 2020, the Admissions quota has increased because of new programmes introduced by some institutions and participation of two new

institutions in the national selections this year.

Unfortunately, Mendi School of Nursing and St Barnabas School of Nursing were not able to participate and admit students due to administrative issues. They would have slightly increased the number of selected students if they participated in last year's round of selection.

In addition, from the 10, 142 students selected, 715 students were selected from the admission pool. The admission pool allows for HEIs to select GPA qualified students due to mismatches in entries after the initial selection.

### SELECTION BY GENDER

Information gathered from the National Online Selection System (NOSS) shows that more males were selected into various tertiary institutions compared to females as indicated by the graph. However, there may be various factors that have influenced this trend. One of the possible explanations could be related to school fee problem.

tion System (NOSS) shows that more males were selected into various tertiary institutions compared to females as indicated by the graph. However, there may be various factors that have influenced this trend. One of the possible explanations could be related to school fee problem.

### NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

The Tertiary Education Study Assistance Scheme (TESAS) provides financial assistance on behalf of the Government of PNG (GoPNG) to eligible students of targeted tertiary education programmes on a merit basis (TESAS Handbook of Policy and Procedures, 2016). TESAS is not a right but a privilege for students with high academic performance.

TESAS awarding in the recent years has given higher preference to government priority programmes which include Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) as well as Agriculture and Fisheries.

In 2020, the government allocated a total of K69, 864,000 million for TESAS.

### TESAS AWARDING SUMMARY

The 2020 TESAS awarding was based on final Higher School Certification results for New Intakes and final cumulative results for Continuing Students. In the process of awarding scholarships, the TESAS Committee has taken note of factors such as government budget allocation and priority program areas such as STEM.

From the total of 10, 142 selected students as New Intakes for 2020, 6,439 were awarded TESAS scholarship. A total of 10, 416 TESAS awardees have been confirmed for Continuing students. A grand total of 16, 855 students have been awarded TESAS for the year 2020. This is a huge increase in TESAS compared to 2018-2019 awards of about 13,000 plus students.



# Membership of Regional and International Quality Assurance Agencies

THE Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) is a member of the regional and international network of Quality Assurance Agencies, registered with both the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) and the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE).

The Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) is a regional network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education institutions across the Asia and Pacific region that are committed to ensuring and upholding robust quality assurance system and best practices in higher education institutions. APQN was inaugurated in 2003 in Hong Kong for Quality Assurance Agencies in the Asia-Pacific region to share ideas and information of quality as-

urance and recognition of qualifications in the region. APQN has a member base of 208 Quality Assurance Agencies and institutions across 40 countries and territories in the Asian-Pacific region with four levels of membership; Full Member, Intermediate Member, Associate Member and Institutional Member, whilst also accepting Observers.

Observers are from Quality Assurance Agencies and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and come, for example, from Croatia, Germany, India, Kuwait, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and the United Kingdom. APQN have annual General Meetings and Conferences annually.

You may also follow the link for more information <https://www.apqn.org> International Network for

Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is a world-wide association of near 300 organisations active in the theory and practice of quality assurance in higher education.

The great majority of its members are quality assurance agencies that operate in many different ways. The Network also welcomes (as associate members) other organisations that have an interest in Quality Assurance (QA) in Higher Education (HE).

INQAAHE offers members many services, including a Journal, Bulletin, Query service, Good Practice database, funding for projects and for Professional Qualification in QA. There are also annual Conferences and General Meetings. You may also follow the link for more information <https://www.inqahe.org>



## Audits and External Quality Assurance Reviews (EQAR) for Universities

All Universities in PNG operate under their own Acts but are subject to regular quality assurance reviews and audits in accordance with the Higher Education (General Provisions) Act 2014.

Since 2018, the Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology has audited the University of Goroka, Divine Word University, PNG University of Technology and the PNG University of Natural Resources and Environment. The Pacific Ad-

ventist University is yet to undergo its audit but will do so later this year. The University of Papua New Guinea audit has confirmed its audit, which will take place from 27–31 July 2020.

It is a mandatory requirement of the Act (HEGPA 2014) that all Universities must undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that their operations and programmes are quality assured against international standards and world's best practice according

to the National Standards for Higher Education Institutional Registration and Programme Accreditation requirements. It is essential also that University programmes are aligned with the requirements of the PNG National Qualifications Framework. The process ensures that there is public confidence in the higher education sector; and academic integrity and the recognition of qualifications that safeguard students' access to national, regional and international labour markets.



# Quality Assurance Systems and Processes in Papua New Guinea

It is important to record that the Department of Higher Education, Education, Research, Science and Technology has robust quality assurance systems and pursues international best practices in higher education.

Quality Assurance is a means of ensuring quality and compliance of higher education institutions in accordance with the legal framework and ensures that new and emerging institutions are in compliance with the HEGPA Act and the national standards, as well as maintaining consistency with the sector's policies.

The Quality Assurance system is a systematic approach to the registration of institutions, renewal of registration, recognition of overseas universities/HEIs and the accreditation of

programmes.

The various processes involved in Institutional Registration for Public Higher Education Institutions are:

- Proposal to establish Public Higher Education Institution;
- Assessment of the Application and Recommendation by the Board (NHTEB);
- Decision by National Executive Council (NEC);
- Terms of Approval;
- Recording and Issuance of Certificate and
- Quality Assurance (Quality Assurance Reviews/ Audits).

The process involved in Insti-

tutional Registration of Private Higher Education Institution are as follows:

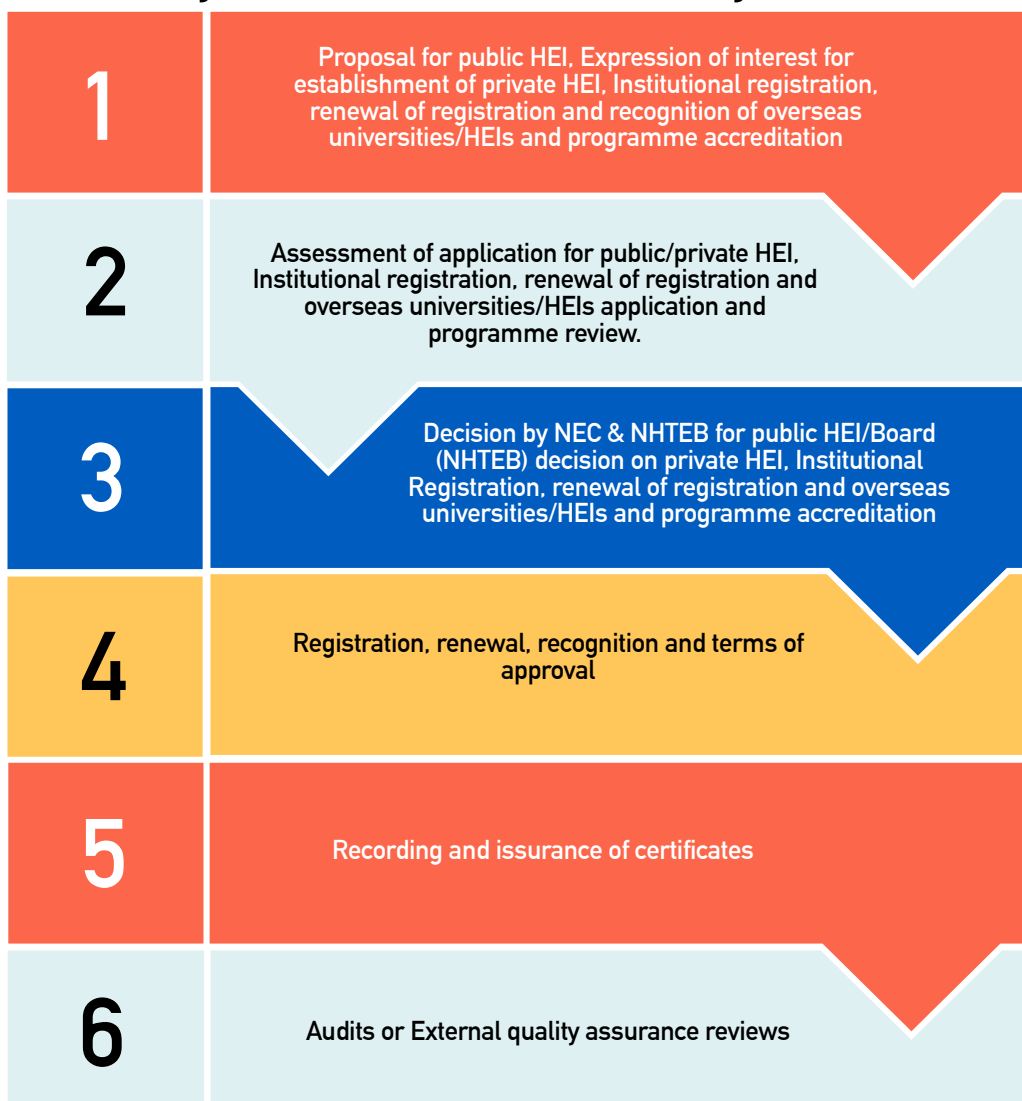
- Expression of Interest to establish Private Higher Education Institution
- Application for Registration
- Assessment of the Application by panel of experts
- Decision on Application by NHTEB
- Registration
- Term of Approval
- Recording and Issuance of Certificate
- Quality Assurance (Quality Assurance Reviews/ Audits)

Programme Accreditation refers to the process of programme assessment and review of programmes, courses or units to ensure the programme meets the requirements of the National Standards for Higher Education Programme Accreditation and aligned with the requirements of the PNG National Qualifications Framework.

The process involved in Programme Accreditation is:

- Application for Programme review
- Review of the Programme by panel or reviewer
- Decision of the Application by NHTEB
- Recording and Issuance of Certificate

## ► Quality Assurance Process Cycle



**Quality Assurance is a means of ensuring quality and compliance of higher education institutions in accordance with the legal framework and ensures that new and emerging institutions are in compliance with the HEGPA Act and the national standards, as well as maintaining consistency with the sector's policies.**



# Progress on Physical Infrastructure Development at Business, Technical, Polytechnic and TVET institutions

The Higher Education Sector Infrastructure Development Program is having significant impact in addressing access and quality in PNG. From 2017 to 2019, teaching and learning infrastructure projects have been implemented successfully. This is having direct impact on enrolment capacity and the quality of learning facilities for students.

It is anticipated that should this program continue into the future, most higher education institutions would be changed with improved infrastructures that will provide conducive teaching and study environment for staff and students.

The DHERST extends its gratitude to key stakeholders in the Higher Education Sector for their collaborative efforts in successfully achieving these milestones.



St Joseph Technical College, front view of the double classroom at the St Joseph Technical College. Each classroom can accommodate 40 Students.



Southern Highlands Technical College, exterior view of the staff housing.

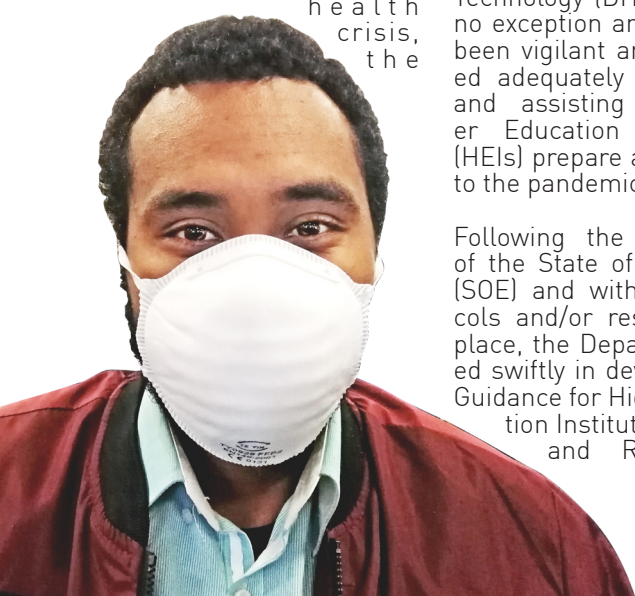


Southern Highlands Technical College, interior view of the student dormitory.

## “New Normal” as we aim for a proper closure of the academic year

### COVID-19 MEASURES & HEIs RESUMPTION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) announced that the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. In responding to this global health crisis, the



Government through the concerned agencies intensified its efforts in combating the crisis and containing the spread of the disease

The Ministry and Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) were no exception and have also been vigilant and responded adequately by advising and assisting the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) prepare and respond to the pandemic.

Following the declaration of the State of Emergency (SOE) and with the protocols and/or restrictions in place, the Department acted swiftly in developing the Guidance for Higher Education Institutions to Plan and Respond to

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Measures communicated and encouraged for HEIs to prepare for resumption of classes and to mitigate risks during the academic year included the following:

1. HEIs to readjust academic time tables;
2. Planned Graduation ceremonies to be rescheduled;
3. Contact classes to be in smaller groups; Innovative use of blended learning approaches; and
4. Put in place suitable facility for isolation and quarantine.

All of the HEIs have resumed classes as instructed by the SOE Controller and the Minister on the 27 April 2020 and these HEIs adopted and

adhered to the SOE protocols and/or restrictions and the Guidance Policy (Guidance for Higher Education Institutions to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)) prepared by the Department.

Now that the SOE has been lifted but with few restrictions remaining, the higher education sector have been urged to adapt to the new normal by observing social distancing, washing of hands and coughing into elbows and importantly ensure that the academic year comes to a proper closure.

The Department will maintain and continue to improve its efforts in providing leadership and guidance in such crisis in future.



DHERST staff assisting SDO for HAC, Ms. Sonia Bonnie with her Student Data Officer (SDO) account in Mount Hagen.

## Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) Awareness – Western Highlands & West New Britain Provinces

The Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) is an initiative by the Marape-Steven Government that was launched on the 15th of May, 2020 by the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea (PNG), Hon. James Marape. The program offers HELP & HOPE to our young people, many of whom thought a higher education was beyond them due to the high cost.

The Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) aims to enhance access to quality education.

A part of the DHERST's vision to facilitate and serve developments in the PNG Higher and Technical Education sector for economic, social growth and nation building. Thus, regular institutional visits are paramount.

The institution visits to the provinces were specifically for:

- The HELP Awareness Presentation(s) – for tertiary students and Student Data Officers (SDOs),
- Technical Assistance for students who are eligible and opting to apply for the HELP from the National Government and,
- Student Data Officer (SDO) Support – to provide HELP technical assistance to SDOs in confirming current and or registered students and print students credentials.

The first HELP trip for 2020 was to West New Britain Province (WNBP) to West New Britain School of Nursing (WNBSon) and Moramora

Technical College (MTC) from 9th-11th June, 2020.

The second HELP trip for 2020 was to Western Highlands Province (WHP) was to Highlands Agriculture College (HAC) from 11th June, 2020 and Mount Hagen Technical College (HATECO) from 12th June, 2020

There were increased activities in the [png.dherst.gov.pg](http://png.dherst.gov.pg) portal after the DHERST team visits to the Higher Education Institution (HEIs) in both provinces. Both the students and Student Data Officers (SDOs) were able to access their accounts in the system. The SDOs were able to login to their SDO accounts and print students' credentials which the students were able to access their HELP Online Application System students' accounts and apply for the loan amount which they intend to borrow respectively.

Both the WNBP and WHP teams compiled all students' data for DHERST record and packed students HELP Declaration Forms for the HELP finance team to begin vetting process to ensure that the applicants from these institutions are eligible and met all the requirements for the loan.

There were many recommendations given to the teams for the DHERST to look into in the near future to improve the HELP as we go forward.

The teams wish to thank the staff and students of West New Britain School of Nursing, Moramora Technical College, Highlands Agriculture College and Mt. Hagen Technical College for their cooperation and assistance in providing the venue and space for the teams to work while in WNBP and WHP.



## Digitalisation of Teachers Colleges

JICA (the Japan International Cooperation Agency) continues to work tirelessly in the cause of pre-service primary teacher education.

Negotiations conducted by their senior officials in PNG with the University of Electro-Communication in the city of Chofu, which lies in the Tokyo metropolitan area, are well advanced to bring 3,000 tablets to the country for use in the primary teacher colleges.

A further 1,000 will go to the Department of Education. In the case of the 3,000 tablets donated to DHERST, these will be used by lecturers and students at the primary teacher colleges for improving teaching and learning,

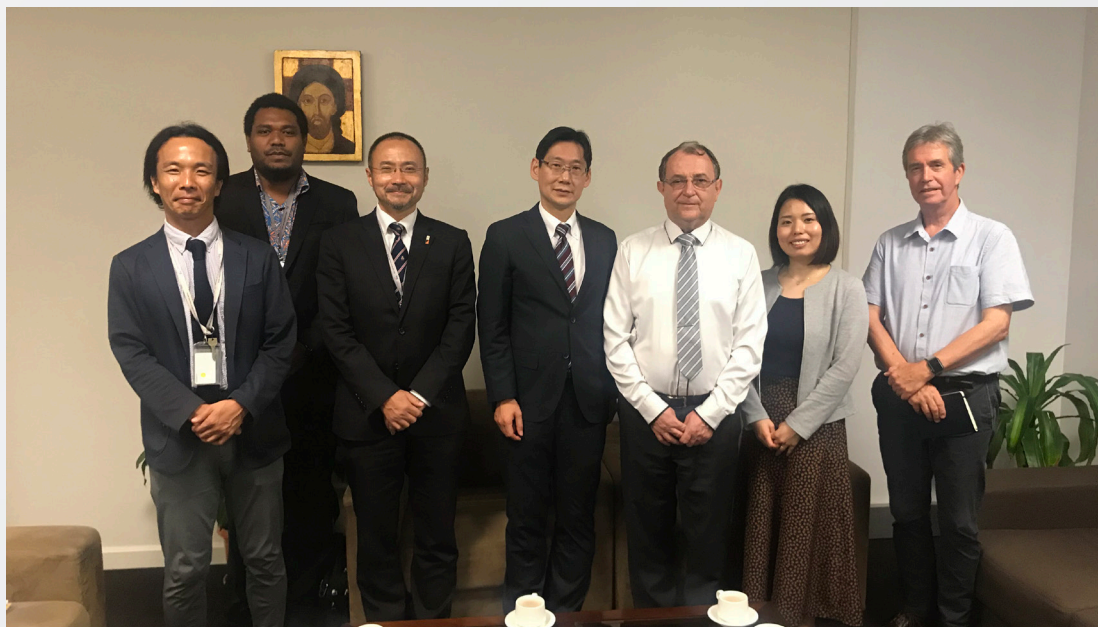
particularly in connection with the upcoming maths and science project that will be led by Japanese experts.

Students themselves will use the tablets for lesson preparation, research, implementation of lessons and self-learning with digital content in line with the new pre-service primary teacher education curriculum.

Professor Ishigaki of the University of Electro-Communication is spearheading the Smile Tablet Project for Improving Teaching and Learning, through which the tablets will be donated, with Video Research Ltd in Japan whose Corporate Social Responsibility programme is providing essential backing for the project.

Although these Samsung tablets will have had previous owners, the total value of the donation will be in the region of K4million. As they arrive in PNG, they will be checked by JICA project staff, initialised by experts in DHERST and then distributed to the primary teacher colleges.

DHERST is grateful to the donors and the many officials in Japan and PNG for their efforts in securing these machines, particularly at a time when digitalisation in the higher education sector is so vital to the process of continual quality improvement in learning and teaching for current and future generations of students.



DHERST Secretary Professor Fr Jan Czuba (third from right) with JICA delegates.



# DHERST Staff Capacity Development

Many DHERST staff have been taking on new and greater levels of responsibility in supporting transition and reform developments in the Higher Education Sector.

In 2019, DHERST standardized its recruitment process to attract people at Bachelor Degree level as an entry qualification into the Department. Through a capacity needs analysis, several staff were identified for further training to meet the new standards set at managerial and professional levels.

In the last two (2) years, quite a number of staff have returned from their formal studies to contribute to sector developments.

Recent 2020 Graduates are listed below.

## Doctorate

**Dr Francis Hualupmomi** completed his PhD at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

## Masters

**Miss Patricia Morea** completed her Masters in Commerce at the University of Sydney

**Bachelor in Business Management, Divine Word University (DWU) 2020**

**Miss Nancy Papo, Mr. Mike Peke,**

**Miss Jenny Gaiyam**

**Diploma in Business Management Divine Word University (DWU) 2020.**

**Mrs. Sharon Napoleon,**

**Miss Kaia Arere,**

**Miss Dorothy Tony,**

**Miss Quin Maluan,**

**DHERST staff currently undertaking studies in various universities in country and overseas include:**

**Mr. Gideon Kaevakore,** *Masters Economics & Public Policy*, University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG);

**Miss Jennifer Kinandi,** *Graduate Diploma of Economics and Public Policy* – University of Papua New (UPNG);

**Mr. Samuel Vulai,** *Masters in Business Administration* at Beijing University of Science and Technology (China);

**Mr. Terence Pogo,** *Masters of Public Administration* at Huazhong University of Science and Technology (China);

**Mr. Thimon Bune,** *Graduate Diploma of Economics and Public Policy* – University of

Papua New (UPNG)  
**Miss Stella Marie Martin,** *Masters Economics & Public Policy*, University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG);

**Mrs. Elsie Mandeakali and Mrs. Ruth Mokae** – *Bachelor in Management* at Divine Word University (PNG).

**Diploma in Management at Divine Word University (PNG).**

**Mrs. Gloria Kolou Sinai,**

**Miss Florence Vaisime,**

**Miss Susan Lolove,**

**Miss Roselyn Simon**

**Mr. Homoka Charlie,**

**Miss Jessica Gaiyam**

**Miss Sasha Kora**

Several staff under the Division are currently studying to obtain necessary professional qualifications, through CPA PNG and quality assurance programs offered online.

**Miss Rachel Oa,** obtained qualification as Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

DHERST is proud of staff commitment and achievements and congratulates those officers who have graduated and

who are now contributing significantly to the Department.

Developing our Human Resources is a key factor in driving efficiency, setting performance benchmarks and achieving results in a modern and progressive public sector Agency. Having good organizational structure and operational systems, though vital, is of little value if we cannot deploy the right people with the right skills and attitudes. Staff know-how and capacity to maintain performance is critical as DHERST plays its key role and regulator, developer and catalyst in the roll-out of large scale changes in sector transition and reform.

