

## COMMUNICATION SERVICES AND CUSTOMER CARE

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## PRIORITISING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

15 July 2016

The Eastern Cape Department of Education is prioritising the quality of Early Childhood Development by ensuring that our Grade R Teachers are adequately qualified. This will directly and effectively elevate the quality of teaching in Grade R classes, specifically in the vast rural parts of this province where the greatest need exists for quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) programmes.

1 175 student registered for the Grade R Teaching Diploma programme on the 15 July 2016 at 24 support centres across 20 districts of this province. These students comprise of in-service practitioners and ECD district coordinators. The Eastern Cape Department of Education (EC DoE) is providing bursaries for these students for the duration of their studies at SANTS Private Higher Education Institution.

This constitutes the 3<sup>rd</sup> intake of in-service practitioners for this programme in the province over the past few years. The first cohort of students was registered in 2014, and the second intake during the first semester of 2015. The minimum qualification for Grade R Teachers is the *Diploma in Grade R Teaching NQF Level 6* qualification, which is in accordance with the *National Qualifications Framework act 67: Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualification of 2011*.

ECD has been recognised as critical for establishing the foundation of academic success, particularly for young children from disadvantage backgrounds associated with limited access to quality ECD programmes. The early years are crucial for the acquisition of concepts, skills and attitudes that lay the foundation for lifelong learning. These include the acquisition of language, perceptual-motor skills required for learning to read and write, basic numeracy concepts and skills, problem solving skills and keenness for learning.

On Completion of SANTS' Diploma in Grade R Teaching, student teachers will be qualified and recognised teachers who will be able to teach Grade R learners in formal schooling. The qualification has been approved and recognised by the Department of Higher Education and Training for employment in education, accredited by the Council on Higher Education, and is registered with the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). Beyond the Diploma in Grade R Teaching, candidates who are successful are able to further upgrade to qualify for the B Ed Foundation Phase Teaching programme.

SANTS uses a distance mode of delivery with face-to-face support at Student Support Centre's. Well-qualified, experienced tutors facilitate these support sessions. Our user friendly training packages have been specifically developed and tailor- made for this programme to ensure that students will become competent and highly skilled Grade R teachers. Through this model SANTS students are afforded every opportunity to succeed in their studies.

The most fundamental prerequisite for quality, planned and structured teaching in Grade R classes is the provision of knowledgeable, skilled, professional and qualified Grade R teachers.

The Diploma in Grade-R Teaching addresses a national strategic priority. Focusing on the quality of Grade R programmes may offer the most effective solution yet to the complex challenges facing the South African education and training system.

**Issued by: EC Department of Education & SANTS Private Higher Education Institution**

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