

# Council on Higher Education Initial Teacher Education

## National Review Project

### Introduction

Initial teacher training (ITE) is offered at 24 public and 15 private higher education institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, through the Bachelor of Education (BEd) and the Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). However, there is a lack of consistency in the standards of these courses offered across these institutions, which ultimately affects a consistent throughput of teachers entering the schooling system. In seeking to address these disparities, the Council for Higher Education (CHE), an independent statutory body, part of whose responsibility is providing quality assurance for academic programmes, is conducting a compulsory Initial Teacher Education National Review (ITE-NRP) in all 39 HEIs.

### Overview

As part of a donor collaborative, the ITE Donor Group, Zenex is contributing funding towards this initiative, which takes place between 2024 and 2026. The national review will include assessing all programmes against the minimum quality standards for qualifications, making recommendations for improvement, and ensuring that recommendations are implemented.

Phase 1 prepares and guides the HEIs on the purpose, aims, procedures, and expectations of the National Review. An external review panel consisting of a minimum of three members nominated by each HEI, having a sound knowledge of educational phases and representing both BEd and PGCE programmes, will be established and trained to conduct the review.

Phase 2 involves HEIs submitting self-evaluation reports, covering appraisal of current qualifications and details of any proposed institutional improvement plans with timelines for implementation. Site visits will be conducted by the Independent Review Panel (IRP) and will present a report with recommendations for improvement to the CHE for approval.

Phase 3 includes the development and publication of a National Review Report, holding a national ITE colloquium, monitoring institutional improvement plans, and identifying and implementing policy and

strategic initiatives. Where institutions fail to respond adequately, they risk facing the withdrawal of their accreditation.

## Objectives

The National Review's goal is to quality assure the two teacher qualifications (BEd and PGCE) towards enhancing the value and consistency of both qualifications delivered across HIEs in South Africa. The quality of instruction that student-teachers receive is critical for producing competent teachers, who can contribute best practice teaching skills in all phases within the education system across the country.

## Outcomes

The desired outcomes of this national review include:

- Student teachers can be confident that the standard of their training is consistent with the highest levels set for all institutions offering BEd and PGCE courses;
- Graduated teachers are assured of their competence to contribute to school-based education through all the phases of the system, with the beneficiaries being the learners;
- Strengthened qualifications framework accepted throughout the education sector.

## Conclusion

This National Review, which the CHE is conducting, aligns with the Zenex Foundation's focus on ITE curriculum and quality, and is a powerful lever for change, given the high-level mandate of the Review and the credible participatory processes involved. It thus has the potential to impact positively on learner educational outcomes.