

Sacap steps up to help address SA's need for teachers

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The delivery of quality education remains the single most critical factor in the attainment of true individual freedom and the improvement in the quality of living for all. Despite massive government investments and wave after wave of curriculum reform there has been scant progress made in the provision of quality teaching and learning in South Africa. The enduring poor performance of the country's learners in national and international standardised tests attests to insufficient improvement of actual skills and knowledge, and an education system that falls short of being transformative.



This is in no small part impacted by South Africa's drastic shortage of experienced educators, which is compounded by a high rate of attrition due to retirement, emigration and career changes. Government has made repeated calls for the private tertiary education sector to join forces in addressing the need for intensifying the training of educators to facilitate a curriculum relevant to today's world.

[Sacap](#) (The South African College of Applied Psychology), one of the country's top private tertiary institutions, is rising to this challenge. Sacap has announced the launch of its first postgraduate certificate in Education in Senior and Further Education and Training Teaching (PGCE) aimed at student teachers who are interested in qualifying as Senior Phase (SP) and Further Education and Training (FET) Life Orientation and Guidance, Counselling and Specialised Learner Support Educators.

According to Dr Rajandran Naidoo, who is the programme head for Sacap's new PGCE, schools in South Africa are faced with severe resource limitations, particularly in terms of psychosocial support and counselling. He says: "Based on the current staffing of specialised learner and educator support (SLES) at district level, it is not uncommon to find only one psychologist and one social worker carrying responsibilities for the psychosocial and emotional needs of approximately 20,000 children across fifteen to twenty-five schools. This means that teachers working in schools where communities are challenged by poverty, crime, violence and gangsterism have to deal with considerable trauma and mental health issues every day without access to psychosocial support in the school community.

"However, this scenario is not limited to communities where poverty is prevalent. Learners from the more affluent schools also experience social and emotional challenges. Children are children, irrespective of where they come from, and are all

vulnerable to the significant trials of contemporary life. Without appropriate support, these social and emotional stress tests could be highly debilitating and devastating to the psyche of learners and impact on their learning capabilities. Therefore, teachers holding qualifications in Life Orientation and Guidance, Counselling and Specialised Learner Support are critical to ensuring the physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of learners across all our school communities.”

Sacap’s PGCE programme with its focus on Life Orientation and Guidance, Counselling and Specialised Learner Support will be available at both its Johannesburg and Cape Town campuses. The PGCE is a NQF 7 vocational training programme and extends over 12 months full-time.

Registration is open to holders of undergraduate degrees with a psychology major who aim to develop focused knowledge and skills as classroom teachers. Graduates of Sacap’s PGCE will be eligible to register with the South African Council of Educators (SACE) as teachers.

Dr Naidoo says: “While many public tertiary institutions do offer both the bachelor of education (BEd.) degree as well as the PGCE, Sacap believes that given the critical role education plays in building a nation and the magnanimity of the task of educating our youth to equip them with skills, knowledge and values requisite for today’s fast-paced world, there is a critical need for teacher training programmes that focus not only on content-based subjects but also on the social and emotional development of the learner. In fact, a focus on the social and emotional development of the learner ought to be a prerequisite to all other learning, in order to ensure the learner is free of all impediments that might hinder learning, engages fully with the lesson content and is thereby able to maximise their potential.”

With its institutional focus rooted in applied psychology, Sacap’s PGCE will build teaching skills in the subject area of life orientation as well as core guidance and counselling skills for specialised learning support educators. Graduates of this programme will develop the ability to provide psychoeducation as well as offer transformative counselling support to learners. The educational programme is also designed so that students actively develop an enhanced personal ability to manage trauma and stress more effectively.

Dr Jaclyn Lotter, academic dean of Sacap, highlights the practical component of the PGCE. “Sacap’s PGCE offers intellectual enrichment as well as intensive, focused and applied specialisation, which meets the requirements of a specific niche in education,” she says. “Our programme includes a relevant, structured and supervised work integrated learning (WIL) component that is formally assessed. WIL provides exposure to concrete experiences of the varied and contrasting contexts of schooling in South Africa and enables student teachers to put theory into professional practice. Sacap is focused on training competent teachers dedicated to providing quality education, with high levels of performance as well as ethical and professional standards of conduct that are in line with the needs of the country.”

Sacap PGCE graduates will be well-prepared to not only deliver high quality education but also embark on further studies such as honours or masters degrees, thereby enhancing their knowledge and professional skills while becoming eligible for further career prospects.

To register for Sacap’s [postgraduate certificate in Education in Senior and Further Education and Training Teaching](https://www.sacap.edu.za/postgraduate/certificate-in-education-in-senior-and-further-education-and-training-teaching), visit www.sacap.edu.za.

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