



**MINISTRY: PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR ORAL REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 144.**

**Ms Z S Dlamini-Dubazana (ANC) to ask the Minister of Public Service and Administration:**

- (1) In the light of the fact that the Public Service has the responsibility to build the skills base for its capacity needs and to ensure that public sector workplaces become training places where entrants are adequately supported in order to develop their skills, what progress has been made with regard to closing the skills gap among young people;
- (2) does the Government have any mechanisms in place to monitor whether internship programmes offered by the various departments are adding value towards building a capable public service?

NO1918E

**REPLY**

- (1) The Human Resource Development Strategic Framework: Vision 2015 and the Skills Development Act, 1998, provide for the placement of young people in Learnership and Internship programmes in national and provincial departments. The intention is to establish an effective and efficient internship programme aimed at bridging the gap between academic study and competent performance in the workplace by offering structured internship opportunities to students and unemployed youths. The intended outcome of this internship programme is

enable school leavers and unemployed graduates to gain practical work experience over a maximum period of 12 months.

In 2009 the Minister for Public Service and Administration issued a Determination on Internship Programmes, as well as a Step-by-Step Guidelines for public service. The Determination defined the scope of internship programmes, the conditions of service, including minimum stipend amounts and leave dispensation for the interns.

Following the signing of the National Skills Accord in October 2011 and a Youth Employment Accord in April 2013, the Department for Public Service and Administration (DPSA) issued a Circular directing the scaling up of the internship, learnership and apprenticeship programmes in the public service departments. Through the same circular the scope of internship programmes in the public service was expanded to include graduates, learners seeking work-integrated learning (experiential learners), graduates seeking to meet statutory requirements for professional registration and those seeking minimum work experiences for employment purposes both within the public service and/or elsewhere in the economy.

The annual target for internship, learnership and apprenticeship programmes each department is an equivalence of five (5) percent of its fixed staff establishment on annual basis.

The requirement is that when implementing internship, learnership and artisan development programmes departments must align the programmes with their respective internal skills development initiatives, integrating human resource development human resource planning processes of the department. Special attention must be placed on building capacity for technical and specialist professions addressing scarce and critical skills essential to the departmental, sectoral and/or occupational priorities.

The monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the programme by departments formally commenced during the 2009/2010 financial year. It was also during the same Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) (2009 – 2012) that annual targets for the entire public service were set which started with 25 000 for each of the financial years falling within the 2009-2012 MTSF period. The following numbers were reported 4002 (2009/10), 19 278 (2010/11) and 20 370 (2011/12).

For the 2012-2015 MTSF Period, a revised target of 50 000 was set broken down into 15 000 for the first two (2) financial years (2012/13 and 2013/14) and then 20 000 for the 2014/15 financial year. The following numbers were reported 17 820 (2012/2013), 27 351 (2013/14) and 40 891 (2014/15).

As at 30 September 2015, a total of 9 320 interns, learners and apprentices have been reported to have been recruited since 01 April 2015. For the period since January 2012 to 30 September 2015 a total of 50 988 individuals who had been recruited as either interns, learners or apprentices have been absorbed into departments on permanent or contract employment.

Following consultation with national and provincial departments, the DPSA is in the process of reviewing the Determination issued in 2009 to address concerns raised by departments regarding amongst others, the duration of the internship programme, especially for individuals involved in regulated programmes, and to facilitate recruitment and retention of scarce skills. A revised determination will be issued during the 2016/17 financial year.

Furthermore, following the adoption of the National Development Plan, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), has, for the period over the 2014/19 Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), committed to piloting a formal graduate recruitment scheme to support departments in attracting and developing young talent. During 2014/15 financial year, a feasibility study was undertaken to inform the approach and practical steps on how the graduate recruitment scheme can be linked to the building of technical and professional skills in the public service.

Furthermore, proposals have been made as part of the process to amend the Public Service Regulations to accommodate the retention of individuals recruited into the department via internship, learnership and apprenticeship programmes when filling entry level posts. This proposal assumes that the recruitment into internship, learnership and apprenticeship programme is rigorous, equitable and fair, including all forms of legally acceptable suitability checks as per the existing provisions of the regulations.

- (2) The Department of Public Service and Administration monitors the implementation of Internship, Learnership and Apprenticeship programmes on annual basis, through tracking the placement of interns into vacancies in the Public Service against the annual target of 20 000 (Public Service-wide). Assessment is also made on the retention into permanent or contract

employment as well as against development indicators i.e. gender, disability and race.