



## Overview

Since 2008, the Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative (SSACI) has been assisting public Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in South Africa to align their training, especially in engineering programmes, more closely with the needs of industry through a combination of in-service development for lecturers and workplace-based experience for students. The project is currently under way in 47 of the 50 public FET colleges.

## Objectives

The objectives of the programme are to:

- Develop a model of workplace-based experience for college students that can be incorporated into core curricula
- Assist public colleges to make experiential and work-integrated learning part of all programmes within the National Certificate (Vocational)
- Develop the technical knowledge and pedagogical skills of college teaching staff
- Assist colleges to establish close, on-going links with local industries that will enable them to offer more relevant and cost-effective training

## Rationale

Research in South Africa and elsewhere has consistently shown that providing workplace experience for college students and teaching staff has a strong positive effect on the students' pass-rates and prospects of employment. It also motivates teachers and lecturers to "raise their game", helps to bring the classroom curriculum into closer alignment with the skills needs of industry and generally promotes long-term cooperation between college and company.

## Outputs and Outcomes to Date

- A comprehensive manual on implementing workplace-based experience in FET colleges has been developed
- A series of students' task books at Levels 2-4 have been developed for mechanical and electrical engineering programmes, and at Level 4 for Metal Fabrication, Tourism and Hospitality, with work under way on task books in other programmes; a generic template allows colleges to develop their own task books as required
- Out of a total of 7'000 college lecturers and managers in the country, 990 have been directly trained by SSACI in implementing WBE, and another 300 by the Cape University of Technology and the University of the Free State using SSACI materials
- 3'000 students (out of a total of 123'000) have been placed in workplace-based experience at 160 companies; these numbers will increase exponentially each year as colleges incorporate WBE into more courses
- A peer-learning forum has been established through which college lecturers can exchange experience
- **Since January 2012, all public colleges have been required by the national Department of Higher Education and Training to implement SSACI's model of WBE into their curricula**