

SECURITY POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Factors identified as causes of safety concerns at the institutions of higher learning:

- Geographic location of Campuses and off campus student residences where students stay in areas that are not safe. (safety in and around campus)
- Violent protests that have resulted to damage to universities properties and injuries to students and staff members.
- Security threats targeting senior managers and executives (infrastructure tenders) as a result some executives have opted on VIP protection
- GBV: violence against female students/ staff members, harassment, rape, etc
- Substance abuse and intolerant behaviour by students
- Lack of an integrated plan and coordination with relevant agencies (security machinery)



Response by the Department

In ideal circumstances, institutions of higher learning should be free of violence and danger and allow space for a peaceful and productive learning and living environment.

In 2022 the Minister commissioned a study on the state of security at universities (security audit) . The report highlights few challenges of safety and security :

- Capacity and resources to deal with safety and security in universities. (Funding for security interventions
- Inadequate Infrastructure (access control, CCTV camera, perimeter fencing and lightening, control rooms not utilized, etc)
- Unstructured relations between private security, the police, security managers, highlights the external factors that contributes to safety challenges at the universities.

- Mistrust between students and management and security management.
- Lack of awareness campaigns
- Poor response rate and no action / consequence
- Lack of a comprehensive security plan, emergency/OHS not complied with
- Security technology – a need to advance the security methods
- internal challenges which include student funding, accommodation issues, etc that remain main triggers of student protests.

- The Department undertook to develop a programme of engagement with all relevant stakeholders with the aim of developing strategic partnerships across the sector to address issues of safety and security on campuses.
- There have been numerous engagements with CAMPROSA, USAf SAPS and university executive managers responsible for campus safety.
- The purpose of these engagements were to understand different threats experienced by universities, identify urgent matters that need to be addressed, including identifying areas of collaboration with different stakeholders and,
- To improve the capacity at institutional level to maintain peace and keep campuses safe and secure.

Responses by the Department

- There is an agreement that there is a need to develop a framework at national level in a form of a blueprint for universities which will serve as a guide to standardise the systems on physical security measures across the sector.
- SAPS has been requested to assist the Department and CAMPROSA in developing the blueprint.
- The process of developing a national policy framework on safety and security to enable universities to develop their own policies on safety and security is underway.
- The framework will enable universities to develop their own policies relevant to their institutional context but following the national guide.

Responses by the Department

- Level of training of security officers. USAf is managing a programme of training security officers. There is a contract of 3 years with SASSETA, training provided is very basic at NQF level 3, concern has been raised with USAf that the programme must be reviewed to at least level 6.
- The university Branch in collaboration with DHET security is working on ensuring that the next cohort receive an upgraded training.
- The MTT on GBV recommended that all security personnel should receive training around GBV which should also equip them with first responder skills . In addition to the Departmental protocols that institutions should follow to address gender based violence developed by Higher Health, universities will be directed to ensure that security personnel receive the recommended training.

Response by the Department

- In terms of IEG allocations an amount of R105 ,443 million was allocated for safety and security related projects (upgrade of the security system, installation of parameter walls, etc) for the six-infrastructure cycle (2022/23 to 2024/25).
- Universities were requested to submit their policies on safety and security. The analysis of these policies will feed into the work of the development of a National Policy Framework for safety and security on campuses.
- 22 universities have submitted their policies. Outstanding –
 - SAPS has been brought on board to lead a programme of undertaking risk assessments at the universities to enable a strategic risk based approach in providing security for the different risks identified.

Response by the Department

Conclusion

- The Department will continue to encourage universities to conduct threat and risk assessments by SAPS to ensure risk based approach to identified threats. (Justify Security interventions)
- Development of the blue-print- minimum physical standards.
- Development of the national policy framework (a national guide to develop Policies)
- Intensify stakeholder engagement (universities, SAPS, Natjoints and Prov Joints)
- Continue to engage USAf on the training of security officials at the right NQF level

Thank You!

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