

For immediate release

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Re. PSETA Funded Learnership awarded to Vusheni Learning Academy

Following allegations of fraud on the PSETA funded Public Administration learning programme awarded to Vusheni Learning Academy, PSETA wish to clarify the following:

1. Do you as a funder do your background check before issuing contracts?

In terms of the Discretionary Grant Policy of the PSETA, when awarding grants to Skills Development providers, background checks are done with regard to company registration, tax compliance with the relevant Authorities and accreditation as a skills development provider with any of the Sector Education & Training Authority (SETA) and this applied to Avusheni Learning Academy as well. In addition to this, learners' induction and orientation is conducted with learners to explain the process and procedures for the duration of the training, and this is usually done at the training provider's offices at the commencement of the programme.

2. How is it possible that a learning academy like VLA with a reputation of ripping students gets a contract?

When the PSETA invites stakeholders and Skills Development Providers (SDP) to apply for Discretionary Grant Funding opportunities, it is always indicated what kind of documents are to be submitted and if the applicant fails to adhere to requirements,

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the application is rejected. And those that meet all the requirements will be awarded funding and deliver the training programme in accordance with the accredited learning programmes that are registered with the relevant quality assurance institutions. Prospective training providers submit the required documents and if they meet the set criteria for funding, they are subsequently awarded grants to carry out the training. PSETA currently relies on the Hotline number (0800 202 586) email pseta@behonest.co.za for reporting any dissatisfaction and corruption activities and it is expected that should any of these arise, stakeholders need to inform PSETA as soon as possible. Should any maladministration from the side of the training provider arise (with evidence) PSETA will report the training provider to the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) for possible blacklisting and subsequently de-accredit them.

3. Are you aware of the office closure by VLA as students do not know where the office is?

The PSETA conducts monitoring visits at various workplaces and training centres to ascertain that learners are receiving training both theoretically and practically as required in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998 as amended. In December 2018 mid-term verification was conducted at Avusheni offices in Nelspruit and the offices were still open and fully functional. There is a verification due to this academy and will be conducted on 16 & 17 June 2019. PSETA wish to further confirm that a meeting with the training provider is scheduled for 6 June to look into the matters raised by learners.

4. Are you aware of the stipends non-payments?

The issue of the stipend was brought to the attention of the PSETA by learners affected. PSETA intervened and the stipends were subsequently paid by the training provider. The last monitoring was done in February 2019, and there were no issues raised by learners at this stage, until non-payment of stipends was raised by learners in March 2019.

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5. How is Bushbuckridge Municipal involved in this issue?

A Learnership programme is structured in a way that requires the learner to receive 30% theoretical knowledge and 70% workplace based training by attending lectures and also being exposed to the workplace. With regard to the involvement of Bushbuckridge Municipality, the service provider entered into an agreement with the employer which in this case is the municipality to host learners for practical component of the programme. PSETA has monitored the learners learning progress at the workplace and according to our records only two learners are hosted at the municipality.

6. What's the way forward for those students regarding their certificates and payments?

The final verification will determine the awarding of the certificates based on the learner's performance. PSETA can confirm that the issue of payments has been addressed.

7. How are you going to deal with VLA and to ensure that such situations doesn't repeat?

PSETA will conduct its own internal investigations to probe on the allegations in question. In cases where training providers are found to have contravened the conditions of the Memorandum of Agreement, the PSETA is legally empowered to suspend the contract issued to that provider. Where a service provider contravenes the code of conduct signed with the PSETA quality their accreditation will be suspended or terminated.

End.

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