

Mr Duncan Hindle  
Director-General  
Department of Education  
123 Schoeman Street  
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Dear Duncan

### **Creation of a semi-autonomous higher education based adult education institute**

In my interview with you on Tuesday last week about the possibility of a higher education adult education agency, as the base for the National Literacy Secretariat that would implement the campaign, you expressed your enthusiasm for this model. You also noted the possibility that such an agency would be in a position, with some suitable partners for logistics, financial management, payrolls and fundholding, etc. to win a tender for the implementation of the campaign. I believe that a highly effective consortium could be put together for this implementation.

However, one of the preconditions for responding to such a tender, would be that the UNISA ABET Institute (and perhaps other Higher Education bodies such as the Centre for Adult Education of the University of KwaZulu-Natal which might be interested in joining a new national institute for adult education) be released from the current controls exercised by the University. As you are aware, UNISA has inhibited the ABET Institute from responding to recent state initiated programmes of educational development even after tenders have been awarded. In order to respond to such a tender, the ABET Institute would need to be given autonomy as an independent body in control of its own activities and finances whilst retaining a link to the university for reasons of the granting of qualifications. (There are of course many existing models of such autonomous but university linked institutes – at the University of KwaZulu-Natal the Institute for Commercial Forestry Research and the Institute for Natural Resources are good examples, as are some of UNISA's own institutes.) In the case of the ABET Institute, it would be necessary to ensure that the existing Institute qualifications (at NQF levels 5 to 7) will continue to be granted and recognised by UNISA and that the ABET Institute's substantial financial reserves remain with the newly autonomous body.

For a consortium to be constructed to take advantage of a soon to be published tender, it would be imperative that this granting of autonomy take place as soon as possible.

Is it possible to get an assurance that immediate steps will be taken by Department and Minister to ensure that this happens?

Would it be possible to have an urgent meeting between yourself, Veronica McKay, myself and the Dean of Humanities and prospective Pro-Vice Chancellor of UNISA, Professor Mandla Makhanya?

Yours sincerely

John Aitchison