



**UNIVERSITY OF
ZULULAND**

Strategic Plan 2016 - 2021

University of Zululand

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Executive Summary

The University of Zululand (UNIZULU) presents its strategic vision for 2021. The vision is intended to unite the University communities and refresh our academic purpose and identity. UNIZULU aims to contribute to the growth of the South African tertiary education sector and leverage off its rural, comprehensive character to respond to the growth opportunities presented to it. Producing the highest quality of graduates remains core to the University, thus Teaching and Learning, Research and Community Engagement remain priorities. The University will also re-examine its current academic suite given its status as a rural comprehensive university, and will explore a School of Engineering, an expanded Health Sciences Faculty and a Business School.

The key outcomes of the strategy are to produce a strategic framework able to drive an action-oriented plan to document the journey to be undertaken by all stakeholders. The creation of a teaching and learning environment conducive to excellence for both students and staff is essential and will require UNIZULU to encourage, support and facilitate a culture of research and scholarship against the background of a fiscally sound institution. Contextual environmental factors that impact on the University's operations require that the University be responsible and flexible. The opportunities and challenges presented by technology are to be addressed. Governance and reporting directives remain imperative and the management and monitoring of research, research ethics and the protection of the University's intellectual property is important.

UNIZULU seeks to occupy its rightful place in the university system and to meet the oversight requirements set by government. UNIZULU will contribute actively in its areas of strength to the sector, seeking innovative strategies to source both the funding and staffing needed to achieve its goals and targets.

1. Introduction

The strategic vision for 2021 encapsulated in this document has been initiated by the Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Mtose at the behest of Council. It forms part of the ongoing exercises needed to unite the University communities and all its stakeholders to redefine and refresh the University of Zululand's academic purpose and identity as a comprehensive university in a complex and rapidly transforming society. In order to do so, the University needed to engage all parties on the strategic challenges facing the institution at a joint session of Council and University senior and executive management. The determination of strategic priorities and the identification of goals and objectives attendant to these took place within the context of the need to ensure the long-term viability, effectiveness and sustainability of the University.

UNIZULU wishes to position itself to be able to contribute significantly to the growth of the South African tertiary education sector, as well as to be able to respond to the growth opportunities presented to it by its location regionally and nationally. UNIZULU's historical status and rural location needs to be acknowledged as well as any residual concerns identified and addressed, while at the same time not losing sight of the need for forward-looking planning and strategic processes.

The University is driven by the desire to place UNIZULU and its graduates among the foremost institutions and graduates in the country, and to overcome residual negative perceptions. In order to do so, it will need to continue its ongoing efforts to professionalise all the University's activities by providing effective and integrated leadership at all governance, management and administration levels in the institution.

The interests of the University in addressing these strategic priorities are paramount, and all University activities and engagements ought to be driven by this overriding consideration. Of course, and directly linked to the University's interests, is the fact that producing the highest quality of graduates remains one of the core functions of the University. Thus Teaching and Learning, Research and Community Engagement priorities remain in focus for the period set out in this document.

The University will also re-examine its current structure and academic suite, and determine whether and where new offerings are needed to address its role and status as a comprehensive university. The possibilities of a School of Engineering, an expanded Health Sciences Faculty and a Business School are to be explored in the upcoming period.

The key outcomes of the strategy are to produce a strategic framework able to drive an action-oriented plan that documents the journey to be undertaken by all stakeholders such it is clear and unambiguous what needs to be done, and who is to be accountable.

The creation of a teaching and learning environment conducive to excellence for both students and staff is essential. The University needs also to encourage, support and facilitate the establishment a culture in which research and scholarship are recognized and rewarded. A transformed and transformative culture that optimises the growth and potential of all staff and all students is core, and requires a solid, fiscally sound strategy. In this context, institutional processes, systems and infrastructure will be enhanced to promote a vibrant staff and student life on all campuses.

2. Vision 2021

Vision

To be a leading comprehensive University providing quality education.

Mission

To produce globally competitive graduates, relevant for the human capital needs of the country, by providing quality education which upholds high standards of research and academic excellence.

The Vision of the University and its accompanying mission remain as relevant now as when they were devised. The challenge facing the University now is to convert the visions and the mission

into strategic directives the adherence to which will facilitate the achievement of the subordinate goals identified to effect change.

To this end, the UNIZULU values remain central, and these need to be realized in ways that enhance and encourage an enabling and empowering institutional culture:

Values	
Innovation	Promoting attributes of excellence, creativity and discovery among students and staff
Teamwork	Working together to accomplish a common goal
Efficiency	Sustaining high levels of productivity
Accountability	Subscribing to integrity and transparency
Mutual trust	Inculcating dependable and trustworthy relationships and mutual respect

2.1 University of Zululand in Context

The University of Zululand continues to operate within the national context, set by the state, as well as within the context of other identified stakeholders. Student political activities remain fluid, unpredictable and impact on teaching and learning. Ministerial appointees to Council too are subject to change, and new membership may have an impact on the direction and composition of Council. In the UNIZULU context, the role of traditional leaders in the area continues to impact on local politics, and thus on the University and its work. Likewise, changes in regional politics too impact on the relationships the University enjoys in its region.

Importantly, the economy continues to impact on the University's financial status, as the local and global economic downturn impacts on government funding and donor funding, placing strain on the University's ability to fund its activities. Thus, for example, the demands on the National Students' Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) for more and additional funding continue unabated. High levels of unemployment persist nationally, and student debt increases proportionally. The knock-on effect of financial constraints on students is seen also in the section for studies that students make – choosing programmes for which funding is accessible rather than selecting programmes based on affinity or ability. All of the above has a negative effect on dropout and

retention rates, students' performance and success rates, and throughput rates across the institution, as in the rest of the country. An added external factor that must be taken on board is the implication of the DHET new funding strategy and an assessment of the impact of this on the University.

Social factors impinge upon the lives of the University's stakeholders which in turn impacts on the University, as in the case of unemployment above. Other social factors in addition to poverty and unemployment impacting on the University include HIV and AIDS and other illnesses, and difficulties experienced in adjusting to the university environment (which may affect staff as well as students). Crime and drug abuse in the region, and a lack of appreciation of and respect for the University's assets resulting in damage and neglect of University property. Academically, the University also faces the need to address the academic under-preparedness of school leavers. Many school-leavers are ill-prepared for university-level studies, and their previous experiences of learning may not stand them in good stead in the University context.

Technology continues to be a challenging aspect of provision for UNIZULU, as the majority of the poor still do not have ready access to technology, and are consequently ill-prepared for its uses in learning contexts. By the same token, the University wishes to leverage off current IT trends, but faces certain limitations on its existing IT infrastructure and Wi-Fi connectivity. Students' access continues to constitute a limiting factor in the use of technology in the teaching and learning context, and plans to equip students with the necessary technology are in place. Often, the University is the place for the students' first encounter with computers and this makes it our responsibility to provide the required training. The University needs to stay abreast as best it is able as technological advances and frequent changes to applications and software are standard.

The broad regulatory and legal framework is a key platform against which the University operates. The *Protection of Personal Information Act* is set to create new reporting and communication requirements for students and third parties, the Auditor General's reporting

guidelines and King IV imperatives impact on financial and general governance; the management and monitoring of research, research ethics and the protection of the University's intellectual property is important, and finally, the monitoring of compliance with the University's ethical framework for research is key. Additionally, the *Annual Reporting Regulations* (DHET, 2014) creates the need for the development by the University of more robust accountability requirements. The University continues also to address the direction provided by the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training: Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School System* and to consider the impetus for enhanced offerings in the context of new funding proposals. Finally, the changes to qualifications required in response to the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework, and the new opportunities created by the framework feed also into the context of a changing higher education environment.

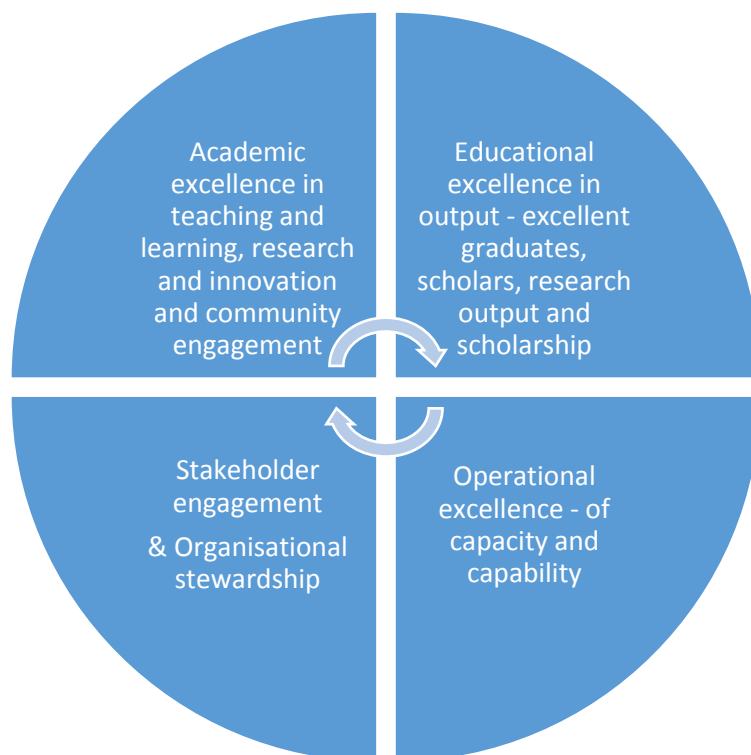
UNIZULU continues to operate within this national framework of a university system in which oversight is provided by both the DHET framework of governance for public institutions and other regulatory bodies. Against this background, UNIZULU will continue to contribute in its areas of strength to the higher education sector, a sector that is characterised by institutions with different missions and visions, and will seek to source the funding and staffing needed to achieve its goals and targets.

2.2. SWOT analysis

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to high speed bandwidth • Proximity to industry and rural communities • Access to indigenous research • Access to sea and harbor • Strong alumni • Accessibility of the University • Research capability • Strong policy framework • Access to land • Strong IT backbone • Strong balance sheet • Good postgraduate programmes • Innovative academic staff 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding available for building infrastructure • National Development Plan and Provincial Growth and Development Plan • Student engagement (i.e. alumni) • Faculty of Engineering • School of Medicine • Best Science Centre in Africa • State of the art Nursing Simulation Laboratory • Good academic programmes • Industry-related programmes, e.g. maritime studies • isiZulu cultural and language preservation • Agricultural Studies • Attract high caliber leadership and staff
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low public image (brand image) • Inadequate student accommodation • Insufficient lecture venues and infrastructure in general • Poor work ethic of staff • Weak managerial leadership and staff • Lack of staff retention strategy • Poor corporate governance • Structural and systemic inefficiencies • inability to integrate community engagement into academic programmes 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsecured land rights (legal agreement with Mkhwanazi Traditional Authority) • Crime & theft of University assets • High student debt • Lack of succession planning and a high vacancy rate • Unaccredited programmes (e.g. Faculty of Education) • Changing leadership of the university • Competition

2.3. The Strategy

The strategy for the University will be built on a number of pillars that form the substructure onto which the strategy articulates, and in terms of which action must take place. These are illustrated graphically below. The strategy itself comprises 6 strategic priorities which express the key concerns that must dominate the University's work, governance and management in the next 5 years.



3. Strategic Priorities and Goals

The University has identified 6 strategic priorities for the period 2016 – 2021. These are:

- 1** Improve governance through enhanced operations to support the academic enterprise and ensure sustainability.
- 2** Create a quality teaching and learning environment as a comprehensive University.
- 3** Enhance research and innovation.
- 4** Enhance the quality and profile of UNIZULU graduates.
- 5** Develop ways to manage the national, regional and international reputation of UNIZULU.
- 6** Accelerate infrastructure development.

Strategic Goal 1:	Objectives	Activities	Performance Indicators
<i>Improve governance through enhanced operations to support the academic enterprise and ensure sustainability.</i>	To have a broad spectrum of programmes characteristic of a comprehensive university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Ensure appropriate mix of career- and vocational-focused programmes. + Obtain accreditation for all existing programmes and new programmes identified. + Expand on Health Sciences School offerings. + Establish new structures to manage the new offerings. + Evaluate existing offerings for alignment to UNIZULU 2021. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Develop curricula for marine studies and engineering (2016) + Ensure appropriate approvals are sought and obtained (2017) for delivery of the new programmes in 2018. + Identify new programmes in Health Sciences + KPIs for levels and categories of staff to be made more concrete (2016)
	Develop, amend, implement policies, rules & procedures and maintain policy register	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Assess all existing policies and procedures + Identify gaps in existing policy set + Establish timelines for policy drafting, redrafting and amendment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Compilation of an updated policy register (2016); + Review, amend and approval of policies.
	Develop and entrench an appropriate institutional academic philosophy and approach which integrates teaching and learning, research and community engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Workshop, consult and draft institutional philosophy + Increased research output + Exploring advancing professional teaching skills of academics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + By 2017, have documented philosophy in place, approved by Senate and other relevant University structures. + 2018 – a documented road map for the improvement of teaching, learning and research.
	Review, develop and implement review findings in existing curricula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + A Director for Teaching and Learning has been appointed. The focus continues to be in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Continue to address curriculum development (new) and enhancement (existing)

		<p>the management and implementation of the following key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Student academic support initiatives ○ FYE ○ Programmes for the professionalization of academic staff ○ Induction and orientation for new academics ○ Promote the scholarship of teaching and learning for the institution. 	<p>programmes (2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Budget, plan and appoint evaluators, and conduct team evaluations of curricula as necessary (2016) + Establish working programme development parameters
	Recruit and retain a qualified cohort of academic staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Continue with current recruitment and retention strategies and approaches. + Review HR recruitment strategy + Timelines for recruitment 	+ 2016
	Integrate Human Resource Management and development	+ Develop policies and procedures for the development, monitoring of performance and reward of staff	+ 2016, for implementation 2017 / 2018
	Devise a Charter to guide relations between the University and its students.	+ Given the general importance of this Charter and its specific impact on Strategic Goal 5, the development of a Charter is key to good student and	+ June 2016

		University governance and relations	
	Develop an appropriate rural strategy for the University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Development of a framework that addresses epistemological issues of being a rural institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Alignment of programmes to rural development directives, + Focus on knowledge transfer between communities and the University + Explore strengthening of links with other national universities that are rural in character (e.g. CUT, Venda).
	Ensure effective service delivery to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Effective use of student I-Enabler + Implementation of a help desk + Improve image of the Registrar's Division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + All students to use I-Enabler 2016 + Counter Established with Student support 2017 + Enhanced Governance and Student Administration
<i>Strategic Goal 2: Create a quality teaching and learning environment as a comprehensive University.</i>	Enhance the Humanities and Social Sciences programme offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Change the Faculty of Arts to Faculty of Humanities and the Social Sciences + Review of organizational structure of the university + Develop plan for implementation of faculty structure in 2017 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Obtain Senate and Council approval (2016) + Plan prepared 2016; implementation 2017
	Creation of career focused programmes deepening and entrenching the synergy between conventional university programmes and vocational offerings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Curriculate new and re-curriculate existing programmes of learning accreditation for all existing programmes and new programmes identified. + Establish new structures to manage the new offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Evaluate existing and develop new curricula for qualifications as identified (2016) + Ensure appropriate approvals are sought and obtained (2017) for delivery of the re-curriculated programmes in 2018.

		<p>identified and developed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Develop strategies to manage and implement WIL in ways that enhance the curriculum and add to the employability of the graduate 	
	Enhance teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Identify subjects in which pass rates require urgent and specific attention. ✚ Implement compulsory tutorials for all first year students in these subject areas. ✚ Implement tracking systems for courses ✚ Undertake cohort analyses with a view to designing interventions in courses where this is required ✚ Strengthen tutorial systems ✚ Implement and expand on the usage of the e-learning platform 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Issue list of subjects for which compulsory tutorials are needed (2016) ✚ Define and describe tutorial purpose and function for distribution to academic staff (2016) ✚ Implement tutorials in all subjects for all first year students (2017) ✚ Improve success rates of first year students in high risk modules ✚ Develop a robust student retention strategy
	Design and develop a cohort analysis for effective institutional planning and monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Develop functional specifications for the system ✚ Implement changes ✚ Integrate into the planning cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Obtain estimates of costs and necessary approvals and plan (2016) ✚ Implementation of plan (2017) ✚ Complete integration (2018)

	Early identification and tracking of at risk students to be instituted via the student management system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Develop functional specifications for the system + Implement changes + Integrate into the planning cycle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Obtain estimates of costs and necessary approvals and plan (2016) + Implementation of plan (2017) + Complete integration (2018)
	LIS to provide quality service to support teaching and Learning and Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Assessment of current services; + Benchmark against other institutions; + Develop a coherent strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Explore ways in which current information may be used more effectively (2016) + Determine recommendations improvements and implement t (2017) + Complete integration (2018)
<i>Strategic Goal 3: Enhance research and innovation</i>	Enriched community engagement through the development of a CE Centre as a means to open pathways to what the community can bring to the institution and vice versa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Appoint Director for Community Engagement to manage and implement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o CE engagements with existing partners o Identify new opportunities and facilitate initiation of new projects o Interact with postgraduate and undergraduate Teaching and Learning structures to promote 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Obtain the necessary approval (2016) + Budget, plan and appoint (2016) + Establish working programme + Analysis to be undertaken of UNIZULU's current research performance + Roll out of research programme for both academics and postgraduate students

		<p>CE, whether curriculum weighted or not.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Develop a comprehensive research strategy with a detailed action plan for development of research capacity and increasing postgraduate numbers where capacity exists 	
	Active mentoring of young / new researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ 40% of research output is to be linked to international conference presentations which should translate into publications ✚ Staff retention is key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Increased conference attendance (2016-2017) with commitments to firm research outputs ✚ Increased research output per Faculty (2018)
	Promote, advocate and raise awareness of the value of innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Establish institutional forums for idea-generation and sharing ✚ Develop systems to reward initiative and innovation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ 2016 – 2017
	Engage emerging researchers and support / reward research activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Hold faculty workshops ✚ Concerted effort to recruit more PhDs ✚ Faculty Research plans to address research production and reward 	
	Develop Research Operational Plan		
	Engage the Postgraduate office in training around ethics and ethical		

	clearance to improve the standard and quality of Master's and Doctoral dissertations		
	LIS to provide quality service to support teaching and Learning and Research		
	Staff retention strategies to be developed		
<i>Strategic Goal 4: Enhance the quality and profile of UNIZULU graduates.</i>	Provide a supportive learning and teaching environment for UNIZULU students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Establish tutoring systems (above) and mentoring systems to support students in their studies and to support at risk students once identified. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Develop a mentoring plan for the most vulnerable students and implement (2016 – 2017).
	General support continued technological and collaborative specific institutional support for students and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Establish faculty teams to promote strategy ✚ Generate use friendly and accessible e-learning platforms ✚ Identify groups of students facing barriers to learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Faculty teams ToR developed (2016) ✚ E-learning platform identified and costing conducted 2016 – 2017 ✚ Implemented 2018
	Engage with alumni to maintain lifelong relationships with UNIZULU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Strategic communications plan ✚ Increased communication volume and effectiveness ✚ Expand opportunities for alumni involvement in University actives ✚ Enhanced connections between alumni and current students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Implementation 2017
	Development of a core module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Benchmark module with UFS, UFH, SPU ✚ Workshop development of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Implement a core module in 2017

		core module for UNIZULU	
	Revisit Teaching and Learning with a view to the development of academics and entrenchment of scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Draw up Teaching and Learning policy ✚ Implement staff retention strategies to build institutional culture and memory 	✚ Implement 2016
<i>Strategic Goal 5: Develop ways to manage the national, regional and international reputation of UNIZULU.</i>	Identify and implement strategies to internationalize the institution and its curricula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Establish a coordinated strategy to recruit international staff and student recruitment and implement the strategy in line with diversity and other Human Resources requirements of the University ✚ Develop a shared understanding of the meaning of 'internationalisation' of the institution ✚ Explore ways in which to internationalize the curriculum and implement changes recommended ✚ Review MoUs and MoAs with local, regional and international organizations ✚ Facilitate and consolidate a support base for international staff and students ✚ Engage directly in reputation management activities on an ongoing basis 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Build UNIZULU brand and image by getting academics to comment on topical issues + Focus on advantages of a comprehensive university and its rural base to provide input into key development issues + Ensure publication of conference proceedings, and significant research advances to be publicized + Develop a concerted communications plan for internal and external stakeholders + Develop and implement an aligned media strategy 	
	Develop staff and student competence in learning platforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Incremental rollout of tablets, online registration and learning support / delivery 	
<i>Strategic Goal 6: Accelerate infrastructure development.</i>	Explore alternate avenues of funding to address the uncertainty of the government subsidy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Problems of NSFAS funding to be addressed + Re-assess fee-setting parameters 	
	Review, assess and replace software as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Implement electronic management system for all statutory bodies + Implement Biometric System for examinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Implementation 2016 + Implementation 2017
	Align system to restricted academic entities as applicable		

	Campus Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance security in examination centres and examination centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install security cameras by 2016
	Develop an ICT strategy able to adapt and respond to the needs of the University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure ICT service continuity, confidentiality and integrity (DRP and BCP) Address SLAs and assess server space requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion 2016
	Develop the single, virtual campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental rollout of tablets for students / staff 	
	Staff capacity development (ICT staff)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully fledged service desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017
	Enhanced ICT competence among academic staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully fledged service desk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017
	Obtain Occupational Health and Safety Certification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule three year roll out of improvements and repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2016-2018
	Develop Infrastructural Master Plan for the University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning cycle to be accounted for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A year in advance for each year in the cycle, ongoing
	Design Online Registration Pilot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Phased online registration platform with effect from 2016. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement phase 1 of online registration pilot 2016 to full completion in 2020