

MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF PROVINCES

FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION 152

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INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 12 OF 2024

Provision of learning resources

Ms K M Muthwa (KwaZulu-Natal: EFF) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:

(a) Why vital learning resources such as computer laboratories, laptops and internet connection are not provided for students at the Durban University of Technology at the eThekwinini Campus and (b) what are the further relevant details in this regard?

CW160E

REPLY:

The NSFAS Laptop project was only available for the 2021 academic year.

The statistics for the 2024 NSFAS learning material allowance paid to funded students are shown below. This reflects both NSFAS DHET and NSFAS pre-funder funding.

NSFAS Funders	Number of students	Amount paid
DHET General/Disability	23299	R 125,800,530.00
NSFAS Pre-funders	134	R 1,049,994.00

Usage of Computer Laboratories and Laptops

The library has a large number of pcs and laptops that are available for students to loan for a specified period of time. There are **13 ezones/ computer laboratories** and **four (4) specialised Postgraduate Research Commons** located in the six (6) libraries. Students have access to **519 pcs and 88 laptops**. Pcs are booked by students using the library open source booking system, and laptops are loaned to students as per the library laptop usage

guidelines. **Table 1** (below) highlights the increase in the demand for library pcs and laptops from 2022. The combined usage for both pcs and laptops has more than doubled from 2022 to 2023, and the usage in 2024 is promising, with 46101 combined bookings and loans thus far.

Library Site	No. of pcs available for use	No. laptops available for loan	2022	2023	2024 (Jan – April)
ML Sultan	84	27	12842	31669	5289
Steve Biko	239	24	33856	62344	14947
Brickfield	11	3	51	1490	1540
City	34	5	249	1004	871
Riverside	77	24	4661	11416	10031
Indumiso	74	5	5292	16675	13423
Totals	519	88	56951	124598	46101

Table 1: Combined usage of pcs and laptops

Table 2 (below) highlights the use of pcs in the computer laboratories. ML Sultan and Steve Biko sites have shown significant year-on-year increases usage, with increases of 135% and 67% respectively.

	2022	2023	2024 (Jan-April)
ML Sultan	10094	23800	2802
Steve Biko	28502	47554	10790
Brickfield	1403	1531	239
City	419	786	116
Riverside	5786	8043	919
Indumiso	10675	12581	2802
Totals	38792	89637	36533

Table 2: Usage of pcs computers

Laptop usage has increased significantly across all sites in 2023. **In table 3** (below), there is compelling evidence for the need for laptops for loan. Usage at the ML Sultan and Steve Biko sites have almost tripled in 2023, and the usage for 2024 is significantly high for the first four (4) months.

	2022	2023	2024 (Jan-April)
ML Sultan	2748	7869	2487
Steve Biko	5354	14790	4157
Brickfield	40	87	9
City	215	585	85
Riverside	4584	5630	1988
Indumiso	5218	6000	842

Totals	18159	34961	9568

Table 3: Usage of Laptops

Network and Internet Connectivity

In line with our ENVISION2030 strategy, DUT is undergoing a large-scale IT infrastructure upgrade. This includes a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system and network refresh project across all campuses.

DUT is aware of recent challenges at the Indumiso Campus residence, where vandalism severely impacted internet connectivity for over 1,000 students. DUT sincerely apologizes for the inconvenience and stress this has caused.

The situation is receiving urgent attention. Assessments and solutions are complete, a service provider identified, and an expedited procurement process is underway. Internet services will be restored before May 24th, 2024.

DUT and its ICT Services department acknowledge the difficulty faced by the students and remain committed to a swift resolution. Network refresh across other campuses may cause minor disruptions, but the university strives for minimal impact and clear communication.