

**North-West University
Faculty of Education Sciences
(Potchefstroom Campus)**

**The ETDP-SETA Research Chair
&
Research Professor in Schooling**

There are four sections to this document which describes the scope and range of work undertaken by the ETDP-SETA Research Chair in ECE and the Research Professor in Schooling. This document thus provides framing and positioning information as regards the rationale for the Chair and Professor, the vision and roles associated with the Chair and Research Professor in the Faculty of Education Sciences, and in relation to the ETDP-SETA nationally. The document finishes by describing the location, working relationships, supervisory and other support functions ascribed and related to the Chair by the Faculty of Education Sciences. Though the discussions for the Chair were initiated by the NWU and the ETDP-SETA in 2014, the Chair and Professor were appointed in 2015 and commenced activities associated with the Chair and Research Professor, the actual launch and academic celebration (colloquium and inaugural lecture) to mark the institution of the Chair and Research Professor in the Faculty will occur in late 2016.

1. The ETDP-SETA Research Chair at NWU: global to local

The Global Education for All (EFA) Monitoring Report 2005 (UNESCO, 2004) focuses on “the quality imperative as a most important challenge of education.” The Dakar Framework for Action in 2000 recognised the quality of education as a prime determinant of whether Education for All is achieved. The sixth EFA Dakar goal (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2005, 28) includes commitments to, “Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.” The United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD, 2003-2012) proposed a new vision of literacy by situating *Literacy for All* at the heart of *Education for All* (EFA). The UNLD reaffirms “that literacy for all is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goals of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, curbing population growth, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.” Literacy for All has to address the literacy needs of the individual as well as the family, literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in society and in the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people. Literacy for All will be effectively achieved only when it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture, ensuring gender equity and equality, fulfilling learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people. Literacy must be related to various dimensions of personal and social life, as well as to development.

The European Commission (2007) identified the quality of teaching and teacher education as key factors in securing the quality of education systems and improving the educational attainment of young people. A study of the common characteristics of the most successful school systems highlights the central role of teachers, asserting that “the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers” and that “the only way to improve outcomes is to improve instruction” (Barber and Mourshed, 2007). Teacher training programmes often cannot meet the challenge in preparing teachers for highly complex and increasingly diverse schools and classrooms, the challenge of keeping abreast of current developments in research and practice, the complexity of the reading knowledge base, and the difficulty of learning many of the skills required to enact the knowledge base (Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998).

As regards schooling, the key issue in education in South Africa has to do with access to quality education. In 2006 it was noted that there were still severe problems concerning the quality of education provided to learners in schools, and also the quality of support (whether by way of infrastructure, resources or competent and qualified teachers). The education crisis is thus not newly known (Planting, 2014) and has been described by scholars such as Jansen and Taylor since the early 2000s. The Apartheid legacy’s persistence in all aspects of education in South Africa has also been well-documented (Balfour, 2015). Spauld noted in 2013 that the efficiency of the schooling system, and the effectiveness of education in South Africa, had deteriorated to such an extent that approximately 80% of all the schools were classified as dysfunctional. In 2005 the results were so poor that only 150 000 Grade 12 learners (representing 12.5% of the initial 1.2 million Grade 1 learners) achieved a matric pass that was of an acceptable standard. Thus access is as much desired by people to attain education in South Africa as it is about sourcing quality with a view to later success in higher education and secure employment thereafter.

High quality language education is commensurate with high quality education. As the desire, by parents, for quality education has grown, pressures have increased on schools perceived as offering such quality to learners and their parents or families. Unsurprisingly, provincial departments have similarly had to initiate measures to enable provision and access to schools that might otherwise have wished to restrict these on the basis that quality in education becomes difficult to ensure where larger groups, or fewer teachers, are entailed (Smit, 2007, p.5).

Presently, not only are far too few teachers proficient in scientifically based reading instruction, but far too many of the programmes that prepare the country's teachers are failing to give them the grounding they need in order to become proficient. The stringent demands of teaching reading have been unrecognised in the design of teacher preparation programmes. Professional preparation programmes have a responsibility to teach a defined body of knowledge, skills, and abilities that are based on the best research in the field. Comprehensive redesign of teacher preparation in reading is possible, but it must begin with a definition of the knowledge and skills necessary for effective practice and demonstration of how these are best learned.

The ETDP-SETA Research Chair aims to strengthen the quality of teacher preparation in reading as well as the practice of reading instruction by addressing the lack of alignment with scientifically based reading instruction and scientifically based reading research in the Foundation Phase. More than this, however, is the wider focus on schooling in which reading development and literacy enhancement are to be seen as benchmarks for quality education, in general, in the sector. In order to address the challenges facing South African teachers in the domain of reading literacy teaching, the research chair is structured into two programmes with each addressing one of the major challenges facing quality teacher preparation in the reading literacy domain. Programme one addresses the Reading Theory–Practice Nexus (Knowledge and skills development). To prepare effective teachers in the domain of reading literacy for 21st century classrooms, teacher education must shift away from a norm which emphasises academic reading preparation and course work loosely linked to school-based experiences. Rather, it must move to programmes that are fully grounded in practical learning and interwoven with academic reading content and professional courses. This demanding, practical learning approach will create varied and extensive opportunities for teachers to connect what they learn about reading with the challenge of using it, while under the expert tutelage of skilled practical educators/mentors. Teachers will blend practitioner knowledge with academic knowledge as they learn by doing. They will refine their practice in the light of new knowledge acquired and data gathered about whether their learners are learning. In order to make this change, teacher education programmes must work in close partnership with school districts to redesign teacher preparation to better serve prospective teachers and the learners they teach. Programme two focuses on progress monitoring assessment. Assessment is the cornerstone of effective teaching practice; the degree to which teachers are comprehensive and timely in supporting readers varies as a function of whether they are comprehensive and timely in assessing reading competencies. Indeed, good reading instruction starts with comprehensive assessment.

The ETDP-SETA Research Chair will address the literacy challenges faced within early childhood education. Pandor (2007) stated that, “Our performance in the Early Childhood Development domain is one of our poor performance areas.” She also placed emphasis on improving “access to quality ECD opportunities”.

The ETDP-SETA Research Chair is aligned with the following international priorities, as also supported by the Department of Basic Education:

- EFA Global Monitoring Report 2005. *Education for all: The Quality Imperative* (UNESCO, 2004);
- EFA Global Monitoring Report 2006. *Literacy for Life* (UNESCO, 2005)
- EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007. *Early Childhood Care and Education* (UNESCO, 2006);
- The EFA Global Monitoring Report (2006) aims to shine a stronger policy spotlight on the more neglected goal of literacy - a foundation not only for achieving Education for All but, more broadly, for reaching the overarching goal of reducing human poverty.

Therefore, the following Millennium Development Goals are applicable:

- Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger (goal 1);
- Achieve universal primary education (goal 2)
- Promote gender equality and empower women (goal 3);

South African education priorities are focussed on addressing the above-mentioned international priorities. The research chair is aligned with the following specific National priorities:

- The *Medium Strategic Framework (MSTF) priority areas 2009-2014* emphasises *Delivering quality outcomes through access to quality education*. The elements of strategy (which the proposed chair will focus on developing) include:
- Creating a culture of achievement and improving learner outcomes with a target of an overall 20% improvement in the key education indicators by 2014;
- Increase participating in and improved quality of early childhood development services;
- Supporting and developing a teaching profession that is dedicated to providing education of high quality.

The primary outcome of the *Integrated Strategic Plan for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2026* is to improve the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of teachers and teaching in South African schools. The Plan is strongly aligned with national imperatives that are currently in place, including the following:

The DBE's *Action Plan 2014: Towards the realisation of schooling 2025*, which has among its goals the following, towards the achievement of which this Plan will directly contribute:

- Goal 1: Increase the number of learners in Grade 3 who by the end of the year have mastered the minimum language and numeracy competencies for Grade 3 (linked to *Foundations for Learning* and the *Annual National Assessments*)
- Goal 11: Improve access of children to quality early childhood development below Grade 1
- Goal 14: Attract a new group of young, motivated and appropriately trained teachers into the teaching profession each year.
- Goal 16: Improve the professionalism, teaching skills, subject knowledge and computer literacy of teachers throughout their entire careers.
- Goal 17: Strive for a teaching workforce that is healthy and enjoys a sense of job satisfaction.

The research chair is directly aligned with the above-mentioned goals and will strengthen and improve the research capacity in this area.

The DHET's *Revised Strategic Plan (2010/11–2014/15)*, which has among its strategic objectives the following, towards the achievement of which this Plan will directly contribute:

- To monitor the production of initial teachers and the development of practising teachers for the pre-school and school system through qualification programmes, in order to inform planning and determine enrolment and graduation targets.
- To strengthen the capacity and capability for the provision of pre-school and school teacher education in universities in order to produce and develop sufficient quality teachers for the pre-school and school system in line with Ministerial targets.

In the context of this Plan, the universities that provide teacher education programmes, supported by the DHET, have the responsibility for ensuring that: their programmes are accessible to teachers and aspirant teachers; the programmes being offered are responsive to national, provincial and individual teacher priorities and needs; and the programmes are of high quality and lead to meaningful development for teachers. In particular, universities will need to implement innovative mechanisms to strengthen the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) component of teacher education programmes.

In addition, the Plan outlines *Output and Activities* to be led by the *Provincial Education Departments* as well as by the *Department of Higher Education and Training*. These include:

- Output 3: Teacher support is enhanced at the local level
- Output 4: An expanded and accessible formal teacher education system is established.

Formal teacher education provisioning is located within the higher education system. Currently, this system is not producing sufficient new teachers to meet the needs of the schooling system. The schooling system needs both more teachers and better teachers: more teachers, qualified and competent enough to teach specific subjects or learning areas, in specific phases, in specific languages, in all schools, including special schools, in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, and in rural and remote schools. Foundation Phase teacher (and specifically Grade R teacher) production has been identified as an area needing urgent intervention.

Teacher quality has also been identified as an area that needs attention. The *Policy on the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications* defines standards at a generic level for all teacher education qualifications, in line with the requirements of the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF). More specific standards need to be developed that relate to the areas of expertise in which teachers need to specialise. The intention is to cater for the multiple and varying needs for more and better teachers, and to give particular consideration to ECD practitioners and Foundation Phase and Special Needs teachers. TED programmes will be enhanced by the development of teacher knowledge and practice standards, which will inform curriculum and programme design, and the establishment of Teaching Schools (TSs) and Professional Practice Schools (PPSs) to ensure meaningful Work Integrated Learning (WIL).

Teacher knowledge and practice standards are statements that describe what a teacher needs to know and be able to do to carry out their core function professionally and effectively. The standards are not tied to a particular school curriculum statement. They relate more to the academic and practical knowledge required to teach a particular subject or discipline well and, if met by teachers, will allow them to deliver the curriculum that is in place at a specific time, and to adapt effectively when the curriculum changes. Teacher knowledge and practice standards will also be used by the NICPD located in the DBE to inform the development of teacher diagnostic self-assessments, and the development of the content-rich, pedagogically sound short courses for teachers described in Activity 1.2 (Output 1). Activity 4.4 focuses on strengthening Foundation Phase teacher provisioning. In 2009, the North West Province delivered 177 graduates within the Foundation Phase; of these graduates 143 were Afrikaans teachers, and 34 English teachers. No Setswana mother tongue foundation phase teachers were delivered. ETDP-SETA Research Chair will therefore be focussed on expanding scientific research in the field of Early Childhood Literacy, as well as increasing the production of masters and doctoral candidates while responding to national as well as local societal literacy challenges facing learners and teachers alike in at least three of South Africa's official languages.

2. The ETDP-SETA Research Chair in ECE and NWU Research Professor in Schooling: expanded concepts of literacy and best practices in private as well as public schools

Three foci form part of the brief provided by the ETDP-SETA to the Faculty of Education Sciences to host the ETDP-SETA Research Chair. The first such focus relates to Grade R, the second is on quality teacher preparation and knowledge and skills development within the domain of reading literacy, and the third relates to research on best-practice (in relation to Grade R in relation to private and public higher education).

With regard to Grade R, research consistently shows that teachers are a crucial factor in making the difference to student outcomes in reading literacy (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rowe, 2003; Kannapel and Clements, 2005). Better prepared teachers who are competent to teach reading are essential if national goals for reading literacy are to be achieved. The demands of competent reading instruction, and the training experiences necessary to learn it, have been seriously underestimated by universities. The consequences for teachers and learners alike have been disastrous. The aim of the research chair is to contribute to the basic and applied evidence-based research scholarship on challenges teachers face in becoming quality teachers of reading literacy (specifically, theory-practice nexus – skills development and progress monitoring assessment).

In South Africa independent education (in the form of private schooling) is focused mostly on providing values-based education on the basis of religious belief systems. At the same time independent schools are known, in general, as high quality providers of education to children; albeit often in the form of exclusive access owing to the fact that these schools are mostly supported on a fee-paying basis. The Report of Ministerial Committee: Schools that Work (Christie, Butler, and Potterton, 2007) confirms that best practice in relation to education is dependent on a range of factors, not least of which is the approach taken by teachers to children, when interpreting the outcomes of the Curriculum relevant to the age-group.

It is appropriate given the high levels of organization (ISASA) and impact (in terms of throughput rates associated with private schools in South Africa), that the focus on an expanded concept of literacy within the ETDP-SETA Research Chair for Grade R, ought thus also to take account of and actively research best-practice as in evidence in the private schooling sector (see also Potterton, Johnstone, 2007 in the *International Handbook of Catholic Education*). There is much to be learnt from private education which is wider than expanded conceptions of literacy and which attends to whole-child development. For example, Potterton and Johnstone (2007) comment that the distinguishing feature of independent schooling (as regards Catholic schools, for example) is an explicit focus on “the dignity of the child is seen as central in the education process”. Other significant values underpinning education in Catholic schools include: “Respect for the diverse backgrounds and traditions represented in the school community; Educational accountability for the content,

teaching methods, finance, and quality of education; School community participation in decision- and policy-making; and finally the redress of social and economic imbalances in education” (Potterton and Johnstone, 2007, 1).

In relation to the third focus, it is well-established that research on skills development planning considers mostly the graduate attributes and skills meant to be achieved by school leavers or graduates (for example, the study by Cosser: “The skills cline: higher education and the supply-demand complex in South Africa”, 2010). Further studies, also by Cosser, one of the most prominent researchers in this field in South Africa, focus alternatively on graduate ambitions and aspirations as regards higher education and the levels of preparedness (including the availability of adequate career counselling (Cosser, Perchance to teach: aye, there's the rub, 2009). Yet, Grade R teachers require a special set of skills in order not only to provide education to learners (a conventional expectation as regards teaching), but also to diagnose and remediate problems identified as barriers to learning at an early age. Grade R teachers should not only be able to teach effective literacy skills, but they should also be able to analyse, evaluate and remediate all aspects of the literacy learning process, including the barriers to general and specific literacy proficiency.

3. Uniqueness and importance of the ETDP-SETA Research Chair: ECD and Schooling in SA

The ETDP-SETA Research Chair is unique in that it aims to focus on two crucial priorities in education, namely teacher preparation and reading literacy in English, Setswana and Afrikaans in the full range of subject areas meant to be mastered by Foundation Phases teachers. The second priority to ensure that within an expanded conceptualization of literacy, that life-skills, values education and whole-child development is not neglected.

Currently, there is no research chair in South Africa that addresses both of these priorities in a coherent and cohesive manner. Teacher preparation is the key to teaching learners to read and to learn from reading. The quality of the teacher is consistently found to be an important predictor of student reading achievement. The International Reading Association (2003, 2) states that, “Only if teachers are well prepared to implement research-based practices and have the professional knowledge and skill to alter those practices when they are not appropriate for particular children will every child learn to read”. Research also indicates that the theory-practice divide is a major area of concern in teacher training. The ETDP-SETA Research Chair is unique in that it aims to turn teacher preparation in the domain of reading literacy ‘upside down’ by moving to programmes that are fully grounded in practical learning and interwoven with academic reading content and professional courses. This aim will be achieved by engaging in university-school-district partnerships.

In recognition of the breadth of the SETA’s focus on ECD as well as Schooling in South Africa, the NWU in 2015 additionally established the Research Professorship in Schooling. The role of this Research Professor will be specifically in line with the third focus of the Chair initiative as mentioned in section 2 of this document.

3.1 Scientific focus of the ETDP-SETA Research Chair: ECD & Schooling in SA

The ETDP-SETA Research Chair focus is on quality teacher preparation within the domain of reading literacy in English, Setswana and Afrikaans in the full range of subject areas required to be mastered by Grade R and Foundation Phase teachers – hence our understanding of an expanded conceptualisation of literacy practices as embedded constructs support by social and cultural capital brought to the classroom by both the child and the teacher.

Excellent reading instruction has been identified by the National Research Council (1998) as an aspect that promotes effective reading. Preparing teachers in South Africa to teach reading well must be a top priority. Research consistently shows that teachers are a crucial factor in making the difference to student outcomes in literacy (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Rowe, 2003; Kannapel and Clements, 2005). Better prepared teachers who are competent to teach reading are essential if the South African Department of Basic Education’s goals of quality teaching and addressing the reading literacy “crisis” are to be achieved. Successful reading instruction demands knowledgeable teachers. Teachers need to understand the structure of English, Setswana and Afrikaans, they need a strong knowledge of child development, they need to be good diagnosticians of reading problems, develop appropriate assessments, interpret assessment data, be up-to-date with research in reading, and they need to have a sophisticated training in teaching reading (Snow et al., 1998). The demands of competent reading instruction, and the training experiences necessary to learn it, have been seriously underestimated by universities. The consequences for teachers and learners alike have been disastrous. The aim of the research chair is to contribute to the basic and applied evidence-based research scholarship on

challenges teachers face in becoming quality teachers of reading literacy (specifically by addressing the theory-practice nexus (knowledge and skills development and progress monitoring assessment)).

3.2 Scientific focus of the NWU Research Professor in Schooling

The scientific focus of the NWU Research Professor in Schooling concerns both private and public schools in South Africa. It is widely recognised that accurate delivery of a the Skills Plan in terms of sector skills development of in-service teachers, is a key challenge experienced by the SETA. Thus the Professor of School draws from the work undertaken by the Chair in relation to the ECD and primary schools, and extends and supplements this work with reference to middle and high schools in South Africa, working with the stakeholders identified by the ETA (departments of Basic as well as Higher Education) as the SETA chambers in relation to providing the SETA with analysis of the sector, and teachers' needs. This research involves consultations with provinces, districts and area officials as well as selected visits to a wide range of schools such that the focus on distilling and describing best practices for teaching in South Africa can be channelled into the Sector Skills Plan as developed annually by the SETA.

3.3 Vision and strategic aim for the ETDP-SETA Research Chair

The vision of the ETDP-SETA Research Chair is to produce basic and applied scientifically evidence-based reading literacy research which will function as a tool for teacher and learner empowerment and socio-economic development, as well as providing support through innovative reading literacy programmes and district-school-university partnerships that will contribute to national policy-related issues.

3.3.1 The general strategic aims of ETDP-SETA Research Chair And Research Professor are to:

- Support the North-West University's mission to develop and sustain high-quality, relevant and focused research, aligned with national priorities, supplying innovative solutions to challenges faced by the scholarly community, the country, the continent and the world.
- Foster responsible university, district, school, community engagement through the research and advocacy pertaining to ECE and schooling throughout South Africa.
- Influence reading literacy policy formulation and practice at all education levels.
- Empower academics with insights arising from the research in relation to improving the quality of pre-service and in-service teachers by addressing the quality of their teacher training.
- Improve assessment, monitoring and evaluation of ECE and schooling in general so as to provide relevant stakeholders, and specifically the ETDP-SETA with timely, valid and reliable data on teachers' development needs throughout the schooling sector.

3.3.2 A specific strategic aim of ETDP-SETA Research Chair is to:

- Explicitly explore with reference to Grade R, through research, the redefinition of "literacy" as a multi-layered trans-disciplinary endeavour with the consequential multifocal view on structuring of research in this domain.

Concept formation goes hand in hand with the mastering of all the semiotic and cultural tools to our disposal, and the question of learning in general, through language in a narrow context, is guaranteed to have disastrous results and perpetuates damaging assumptions as regards literacy as a discrete 'discipline' from a teaching perspective but also from a research perspective in ECE. The ETDP-SETA Chair is thus a timely intervention to enable the NWU (Faculty of Education Sciences) to take the lead in defining literacy as a socio-cultural construct and investigate its development in all the domains of learning from the Early Years (that includes all the sciences, art, music movement etc.). When learners reach adolescence it is found that they do not have the competencies to master their so-called language/literacy skills in other subject domains. This is not only the case with students that are weak and coming from multilingual backgrounds but also with academically advanced students who are working in their first language. It is known that the use of language in everyday situations differs from the use of language in subject specific situations. It is furthermore a barrier that is hard to overcome once these learners are beyond primary school.

One of the reasons for the perpetuation of this problem is due in part to the way in which "literacy" for early childhood is defined and consequently taught, The initial development is mainly done within a narrow context mainly focusing on the everyday-use of terms, instead of a wider range including science, art, (in other words the approach that focuses on literacy across the curriculum as an embedded social and cultural practice).

The Early years (3 to 9 years) lends itself perfectly to develop literacy skills in a trans-disciplinary way based on the overall structure of the curricula for the early years. Major research is needed to see what the impact

would be if the focus of “literacy” as guiding principle is changed, in simultaneously moving between the context of everyday use and use in a specific domain, during the Early years. For example, if spatial terminology is learnt/taught in everyday situations, how would those terms change/stay the same, when simultaneously learnt/taught in the context of mathematics or biology or science during the early years? These and other questions will be addressed in the course of the three years of funding anticipated for the ETDP-SETA Research Chair.

4. Location, capacity, and role development associated with the ETDP-SETA Research Chair in ECE and Research Professor in Schooling at NWU

The Faculty of Education Sciences recognizes the need, once having established the Chair, to provide for its support, context, long term sustainability and role development as part of our strategic vision to become the leading provider, not only of teacher education in SA, but also the leading academic research institution on teacher education. In order to do this it is important to locate the Chair strategically close to the resources (human and other) in the Faculty and to define clearly the roles and expectations associated with the ETDP-SETA Research Chair.

At the outset it must be acknowledged that although the externally provided funding is for a limited period, the role of the Chair together with the Research Professor in Schooling complements exactly the Faculty’s strategic priorities of growing postgraduate research and linking it closely with innovative teaching and learning.

4.1 Location

The School for Social Sciences and Humanities in Education, within the Faculty of Education Sciences at the NWU (Potchefstroom Campus) is ideally suited as context for the location of the ETDP-SETA Research Chair since this School also hosts the Subject Group: Early Childhood Education as well as the Grade R, BEd and ACT programmes, in which the Foundation Phase is strongly represented.

The Chair will thus have access to the support of a dedicated group of professionals, of senior rank, with research experience who can support the research initiatives of the Chair. The ETDP-SETA Research Chair will thus report to the Director of the School and will conduct research with a range of disciplines and groups or other entities in the Faculty, but will retain a distinctive focus in Grade R and teacher development (skills planning included therein). The Research Professor’s work is coordinated within the general activities of the Chair, but has a dedicated and specific focus on schooling as part of the ETDP-SETA mandate as set out in the MoU signed with NWU in 2014.

4.2 Role development: ETDP-SETA Chair in ECE and NWU Research Professor in Schooling

The Chair, though especially named in recognition of the relationship with and funding provided by the ETDP-SETA, holds the rank equivalent to that of a Research Professor in the Faculty in accordance with the job description as standardised by the NWU. The Chair leads in ECE research in terms of surveying the sector and developing an analysis of trends, needs and developments pertaining to ECE across SA. The NWU Research Professor in Schooling assists in this work by providing a survey of national schooling whether through private and public education, and related teacher skills development planning as pertaining to teaching corps. The Chair also leads and coordinates the broader initiative in which the NWU Research Professor in Schooling is located.

The ETDP-SETA Research Chair will be expected over the years to liaise closely with the ETDP-SETA, academics and postgraduate students on sister campuses (Vaal and Mafeking) with the idea of drawing into closer collaboration in terms of research, those colleagues also involved in ECE across the wider University context. Supervision of postgraduate students and the development of the capacity of the ECE Subject Group, are thus key roles to be performed by the Chair.

Similarly, the NWU Research Professor in Schooling will also be expected to establish collaboration in terms of research with colleagues involved in schooling or curriculum across fields and across the wider University context. Supervision of postgraduate students within the Research Professor’s own field is part of the broader capacity development of the Faculty, and the Faculty will support the allocation to students to the Research Professor such that these students are within his field of specialisation.

The ETDP-SETA funding is committed (potentially) for a period of three years. Thus one of the roles associated with the Chair, once established, will be to secure additional project funding with a view to ensuring the continued longevity of the Chair.

The NWU Research Professor in Schooling is a post funded by the Faculty of Education Sciences to complement the work of the Chair such that the mandate as established by the ETDP-SETA may be fulfilled. Together both Chair and Professor will report to the ETDP-SETA as required and to the Faculty through their annual Task Agreements. Internally to the Faculty the Task Agreements pertaining to the expected outputs associated with Research Professors are signed off by the Director for the School for School for Social Sciences and Humanities in Education. Finance management of SETA and NWU incentive funding for the Chair is managed through the Faculty's Research Administration as is normal for all research entity, research projects and research funds. This finance management process is overseen by the Director of Research in the Faculty.

4.3 Capacity, support and sustainability

The Subject Group Early Childhood Education comprises highly qualified staff (three of the five academics possess doctorates and are senior lecturers with established research records as well substantive teaching experience). In addition to the above the Subject Group is fortunate to have a Professor of Language Education whose focus is on literacy from an applied linguistics perspective, in ECE.

As noted previously the NWU additionally committed to the support of a further Research Professor whose special focus is on schooling in South Africa. This Research Professor, whose background is in Science Education is affiliated thus, for collegial purposes, to the Faculty's School for Natural Sciences and Technology in Education.

The NWU Potchefstroom Campus committed itself to provide supplementary funding worth R500 000. This funding will be used in the form of one full-time dedicated Masters and one full-time dedicated Doctoral bursary for a period of 2-3 years, and or for the purposes of further supporting the Chair initiative in terms of enabling both colleagues to meet the mandate described by the ETDP-SETA for the Chair.